

Panel 1: The ‘nation’ in global higher education*

Panel speakers:

The changing geopolitics of higher education and research policy: challenges to openness and global collaboration

Hannah Moscovitz and Katja Brogger, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University

Nationalism, new nationalism and neo-nationalism in higher education literature: A conceptual analysis

Annette Bamberger, Faculty of Education, Bar-Ilan University and Hans Schildermans, Department of Education, University of Vienna

Perforated nations, universities, and the zonal politics of knowledge production

Susan Roberston, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Academic diaspora and the rise of transnational repression in international higher education

Annette Bamberger, Faculty of Education, Bar-Ilan University

Higher education institutions are entangled in political struggles and contestations over space, territory, and identity prompted by rising politics of re(nationalisation), illiberal politics, national and regional protectionism. At the same time, the university has also been the focus of grassroots social movements and appeals for de-colonial perspectives and redistributive justice. In this context, universities find themselves in a tug of war between ideals of integration and internationalization, parochial notions of safeguarding the “nation’s” wellbeing, and emerging calls from below for unsettling the nation-state’s hold.

This panel explores the shifting relationship between the university, nation-state and international alliances. We critically examine the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism,' advocating for greater conceptual clarity to better understand their influence on global higher education today. Additionally, we seek to shed light on actors, spaces and scales which extend beyond fixed notions of ‘nation’ and ‘state’. As national governments increasingly intervene in the higher education sphere in the pursuit of national interests, and as universities become either partners to or opponents of particularistic ambitions, it becomes imperative to examine the implications of (re)nationalisation on the higher education sector. This discussion is critical for understanding the current and future landscape of global higher education, marked by its potential to either bridge or widen geopolitical divides.

*The panel is based on: Brogger, K., Moscovitz, H., Robertson, S., & Lee, J. (Eds.). (2026). *World Yearbook of Education: The changing geopolitics of higher education and research university futures reimagined*. Routledge.