

Wednesday 12 May 2021, 9.50am-10.40am**KEYNOTE – Globalisation: The good,
the bad and the ugly***Chair: David Mills**Speaker: Simon Marginson*

Luhmann remarked that the decisive step towards world society was 'the full discovery of the globe as a closed sphere of meaningful communication', and knowledge and higher education are at the centre of world-spanning practices. Although higher education is entrenched in nation-states, no sector is more global (especially science) aside from communication itself. At best globalisation, which in neutral terms means worldwide integration and convergence, offers a pathway out of the national container that blocks our normative interdependence and global ecology. There science is the best hope. But globalisation is not neutral in practice, it is soaked in relations of power, with more than one project and claim upon it. In the last three decades the dominant form of globalisation has been Anglo-American in language and knowledge, neo-imperial in form, and high capitalist and white supremacist in culture. It has been no coincidence that in the last decade, when the slippage of Anglo-American power has become apparent, with the rise of China and global middle powers like India and Iran independent of Euro-America, that there has been an upsurge of activism pitched against the white supremacist culture embodied in the hitherto dominant Anglo-American forms. The shifts in global geo-politics pose immense challenges for higher education and science because the Western 'World-Class University' is implicated in the hegemonic project on and offshore, not just in terms of racism but in the imposition of knowledge hierarchies that exclude non Anglo-American content to a quite remarkable extent (though the same universities also enable anti-hegemony within spaces that in some countries are relatively free). Global science and social science are autonomous, which is really essential if they are to flourish, yet are largely closed to non-English language and indigenous knowledges. How to diversify and open up higher education and science, on the basis of a global unity-in-diversity, while fostering, protecting and advancing their autonomous agency, in the face of pressures from companies to commercialise and nation-states to seize control of science as an instrument of technological nationalism?