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**Abstract**

This article examines changing ideas about the relationship between the nation-state and the university in international higher education development discourse through a quantitative content analysis of over 700 academic articles, conference proceedings and research reports published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It finds that since the 1990s, emphasis on the private sector grows, the nation-state's role shifts from one of manpower planning to strategic planning, and higher education is increasingly expected to promote standardized development goals and economic competitiveness in the global arena. However, it also finds that the role of the nation-state does not disappear—although no longer portrayed as the primary funder and provider of higher education, the nation-state is imbued with important regulatory functions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Buckner, Elizabeth S., E-Mail: esb2174@tc.columbia.edu