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**Abstract**

Higher education is increasingly acknowledged by national governments and international agencies as a key driver of development, and systems are expanding rapidly in response to rising demand.

Moreover, universities have been attributed a central role in the post-2015 development agenda and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Yet questions of institutional models and their differential impact on society have not received sufficient attention. This paper presents an analysis of the ‘anatomy’ of the university in order to identify the salient changes in the institution across time and location in relation to knowledge and relationships with society. A framework is proposed structured around three key dimensions: first, ‘value’—the extent to which knowledge is treated as intrinsically or instrumentally worthwhile; second, ‘function’—the role of the university in terms of storage, transmission, production or application of knowledge; third, ‘interaction’—the flow of ideas and actors between the university and society. This analytical framework is then utilised to assess two dominant tendencies in global higher education: commodification and unbundling. Finally, implications are drawn out for universities’ potential impact on development in low- and

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middle-income countries in the context of these contemporary trends. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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