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**Abstract**

This paper takes an apparent knowledge paradox as its point of departure. "Knowledge" has acquired a more all encompassing meaning today, yet this has not strengthened the support for and confidence in higher education institutions. On the contrary, it is often claimed that they have outlived their usefulness. In trying to understand the development behind this paradox, we deal with three issues. We discuss first the widening concept of knowledge and the claim that there is emerging a new mode of knowledge production. Secondly the widening concept of knowledge is put into a social and political context, where massification and its social implications are discussed. Thirdly we develop a theoretical framework based on the concept of knowledge regimes. In this part we discuss how the concept of knowledge regimes and the related concepts of knowledge interests and knowledge alliances may be helpful in understanding the complexities and ambiguity of higher education development. Finally we discuss some implications regarding knowledge's role in social development. We question the assumption that there is a necessary relationship between a widening concept of

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knowledge and a given form of knowledge development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Bleiklie,  
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