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**Title**

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**Abstract**

State-university relations across Europe have undergone massive transformations, ranging from establishing new control institutions to reaffirming institutional autonomy. In this reform wave Denmark can in many ways be seen as an extreme case as the reforms affecting the Danish higher education system have gone further than in many of the comparable European countries. In this article, Danish higher education policy is examined as an exemplary case of how differing ideas transform the perception of the higher education system over time. The Danish case is thus in addition to being an exemplary case of a common European trend an excellent opportunity for examining the dynamics of a reform process within higher education and particularly the notions of autonomy and control have taken on different meanings over time, changing how the role and governance of higher education institutions is perceived. The most recent developments in Danish higher education policy are discussed in terms of the concept of the competition state and the notion of 'conduct of conduct',

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in order to offer new insights into the state-university relation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Degn,  
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