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**Abstract**

The growing importance of knowledge, research and innovation are changing the social role of universities in the globalized world. One of the most popular concepts used to approach these changes in post-industrial and post-modern societies is the concept of 'Knowledge Society'. In this paper, we will analyse the roles higher education is expected to play with regard to various knowledge society discourses. We will begin with analyzing the uses of knowledge society as an intellectual device and continue by reflecting on how changes in higher education are related to knowledge society discourses in national, regional and global levels. In the final section we will reflect on current challenges and expectations generated within these discourses for higher education and the implications these expectations have for higher education research. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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