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**Abstract**

This article argues that in moving from being self governed to being state governed the policy drivers for higher education are no longer those of the system itself but are derived from a set of policies designed for the reform and modernisation of the public sector of the economy. The formation of higher education policy therefore needs to be reinterpreted as an adjunct of public policy, rather than as something intrinsic to higher education. The impact of 'new public management' approaches and of political interventions are explored in illustrating the consequences of the centralisation of the management of the public services and of higher education becoming an issue in national politics. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)