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**Author**

CARNOY, Martin

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**Abstract**

Because higher education serves both public and private interests, the way it is conceived and financed is contested politically, appearing in different forms in different societies. What is public and private in education is a political?social construct, subject to various political forces, primarily interpreted through the prism of the state. Mediated through the state, this construct can change over time as the economic and social context of higher education changes. In this paper, we analyze through the state?s financing of higher education how it changes as a public/private good and the forces that impinge on states to influence such changes. To illustrate our arguments, we discuss trends in higher education financing in the BRIC countries?Brazil, Russia, India, and China. We show that in addition to increased privatization of higher education financing, BRIC states are increasingly differentiating the financing of elite and non-elite institutions.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Carnoy,

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Martin, E-Mail: [carnoy@stanford.edu](mailto:carnoy@stanford.edu)