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The role of the state in the internationalization of universities in catching-up countries : an analysis of the Portuguese higher education system

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**Abstract**

In this article the role of the state in the internationalization of national prominent universities in a catching-up country is analysed. Taking into account the changes in higher education in the last 60 years, including the changing relationship between the state and the universities, the article takes a longitudinal analytical approach on the importance of state-led science and higher education internationalization initiatives in the integration of Portuguese universities in the global higher education arena. It is found that the state played (and still plays) a critical role in the internationalization process of universities by supporting the build-up of institutional knowledge capacity and by rewarding internationally oriented scholarly activities. Although these public policies did not lead to the emergence of national prominent universities able to compete with global research universities, they allowed for the internationalization and integration of the Portuguese universities in the global higher education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)