The university has become a global institution in three important respects: the university has greatly expanded in the last fifty years, universities increasingly operate within a global frame of reference, and lastly, university organization and management has increasingly become professionalized. The expansion of the university reflects the triumph of human capital ideas. The global frame of reference emphasizes the value of broad accessibility, social usefulness, and professionalized organization. The university as a global institution influences university developments throughout the world. University developments are shaped by the demands of both universal templates of excellence and their particular historical roots. We address these developments via a theoretical framework that emphasizes the centrality of nation-state and organizational identity and legitimacy.

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