

19.2.2026**Author**

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Title

Making the case for policy – persuasiveness in higher education, science and technology policy discourse / Terhi Nokkala

Publication year

2016

Source/Footnote

In: European journal of higher education. - 6 (2016) 2, S. 144 - 158

Inventory number

39644

Keywords

Ausland : Finnland : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Großbritannien : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Portugal : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : USA : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Hochschule und Staat : allgemein

Abstract

Policy texts present problems, propose solutions to those problems and persuade multiple audiences of the legitimacy of the proposed problems and solutions. The rhetorical analysis of two decades of higher education and science and technology discourse in Finland, Germany, UK, Portugal and USA highlights the discursive elements that contribute to persuasiveness of policy, construe it as rational and logical, and create a sense of urgency in bringing it about. I argue that the analytical and hortatory registers of policy discourse foreground competitive and hierarchical relations of countries and their higher education systems. By construing certain state of affairs and courses of action as self-evidently desirable and true, they contribute to the emergence and reproduction of the neoliberal political rationality proposed by the Foucauldian governmentality theory. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)