

**18.2.2026****Author**

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**Title**

Quality assurance in Europe and the U.S. : professional and political economic framing of higher education policy / Gary Rhoades ; Barbara Sporn

**Publication year**

2002

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 43 (2002) 3, S. 355 - 390

**Inventory number**

14253

**Keywords**

Qualitätssicherung ; Ausland : USA : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Österreich : Hochschulwesen allgemein

**Abstract**

In this article we study globalization in terms of the diffusion of quality assurance models and practices between two ``core'' regions, the U.S. and Europe, as well as within Europe, concentrating particularly on Germany and Austria. We examine the timing of the emergence and diffusion of quality assurance and relatedly of strategic management practices. We then consider the prominence of U.S. models and voices in Europe, addressing the professional and political economic framing of higher education policies. Finally, we explore local variations in the meanings and practices of quality assurance and strategic management. We emphasize the ways in which in these ``core'' settings, professionals are implicated in the diffusion and adaptation of policies and practices in higher education, even as their activities are shaped by larger structures of global professional and political economies. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Rhoades, Gary, E-mail: grhoades@mail.ed.arizona.edu