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The social representations of students on the assessment of universities? quality : the influence of market- and managerialism-driven discourse / Sónia Cardoso, Rui Santiago and Cláudia S. Sarrico

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**Abstract**

Although students are considered major actors in the quality assessment of universities, the way they perceive this process and the meanings they ascribe to it are still neglected as a research subject. This article aims to reduce this gap by focusing on the social representations of students on quality assessment. Specifically, it tries to understand how these social representations reproduce elements of two common discourses thought to exist on higher education, universities and the assessment of their quality: one more traditional, the other more driven by managerialism and market assumptions. Based on the findings of a study taking the Portuguese case as a reference, it is possible to conclude that students' social representations seem to be shaped by and replicate many of the features characterising the latter discourse. Because these social representations certainly influence the relation of students with quality assessment, it would be appropriate to take them into account when (re)defining quality assessment systems. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)