Abstract title: Restructuring of European Higher Education: The Role of the European Round Table of Industrialists

Submitting Author: Ilkka Kauppinen
Position: post doc researcher
Affiliation: University of Jyväskyla
Institute address: PO Box 35, FI-40014 University of Jyväskyla
E-mail address: ilkka.j.kauppinen@jyu.fi
Country: Finland

Other authors:

Preferred session: Sociology of education

Equipment required:

Keywords:
transnational academic capitalism, higher education

Abstract:
Restructuring of European Higher Education: The Role of the European Round Table of Industrialists

Ilkka Kauppinen
University of Jyväskylä
Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy
PO Box 35
FI-40014 University of Jyväskylä
ilkka.j.kauppinen@jyu.fi

The theory of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades 2004) has been one of the most influential higher education theories during the last decade. This presentation draws on scholarly work on the theory of academic capitalism, and sympathetic critique towards the theory of academic capitalism is presented. The main argument is that the theory of academic capitalism can be further developed by recognizing that academic capitalism is not blurring the boundaries between higher education, markets and states only in different nation-state contexts, but also on transnational scale. (e.g. Kauppinen 2012a; 2012b).

The main aim of this presentation is to advance my theory construction process
regarding transnational academic capitalism (TAC). One part of this process is to study the role of the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) in promoting policies that have contributed to the emergence of TAC. Primary empirical material consists of selected reports which the ERT has produced since 1985. In this presentation of particular interest is the ERT’s report Education and European Competence (1989). Analysis of this report is based on qualitative content analysis. The main research question is “why the ERT promotes restructuring of European higher education and how their recommendations reflect this process of restructuring in the context of globalizing knowledge-based economy”.

In conclusions I present the research findings in a broader conceptual framework that debates the relations between TAC and the ERT as one of the policy-making group within transnational historical bloc. The main conclusion is that while this study in itself does not make it possible to argue that the ERT has causally influenced the restructuring of European higher education, it is nevertheless case that this process of restructuring reflects the interests of emerging transnational capitalist class (on the relation between this class and the ERT, see Carroll 2010).

Keywords: transnational academic capitalism, higher education

References