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Conference: ECER 2014, The Past, the Present and the Future of Educational Research

Network: [22. Research in Higher Education](#)

Format: Symposium

Session Information

22 SES 07 D, Responding to Theoretical, Analytical and Methodological Challenges in Higher Education Research- Alternative Approaches

Symposium

Time: 2014-09-03
17:15-18:45

Room: B019 Anfiteatro

Chair/Discussant: Pavel Zgaga/ Roger Dale

Contribution

Responding to Theoretical, Analytical and Methodological Challenges in Higher Education Research- Alternative Approaches

Although there is a significant body of research on higher education, much of this research has been developed through comparative studies of national higher education systems and has been underpinned by policy, organisational change and institutionalism theories and approaches, e.g. it is looking at national or regional policy messages, how expectations are changing, the emergence of so called third mission of universities and so on. However, today when the reconfiguration of the state is evident through several areas of transformation: (1) economic transformation, (2) political transformation, (3) transformation of sovereignty and (4) transformation of the (political) community, theoretical and analytical approaches to higher education research need to be developed to account for a more complex reality. This panel takes this challenge seriously, arguing that a critical theory approach helps raise questions about the basic premises upon which research is performed, helps to think about new approaches to challenge such taken for granted assumptions and is always looking for adapted analytical and methodological conceptualisations. The symposia will argue that we need a new conceptual framework in higher education research that would provide answers to questions like: what are the processes that are transforming higher education, who do they work for, why and with what consequences. The symposia will offer papers which will try to show examples of alternative approaches to higher education research that share a broad commitment to critical theory.

This proposal violates the ECER demand that at least three different national or countries perspective must be presented to guarantee an international perspective. All the contributions in the proposed symposia work within international or global perspective and do not focus on particular national systems (in line with the above critique). Thus international / global approach is inherent in the conceptualisations of the contributions as well as the panel participants will reflect on the context of the countries in which they work or come from.

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