Abstract

It seems very difficult to analyze private universities in Europe in the context of entrepreneurialism in the form the concept has emerged in the basic literature and available case studies. The private sector in higher education, in general, from the point of view of both numbers of institutions, share of enrolments in the sector, and study areas offered, has been a phenomenon of the transition/accession countries. At the same time, the conceptual framework currently used to analyze “entrepreneurialism” in higher education seems somehow restricted in use to public sector institutions. Very few scholars ever refer to private institutions in their discussions of entrepreneurship. On European grounds, not only experiences with private higher education have been very limited – but also the emergent concepts related to entrepreneurialism derived from analytical work on the public sector and rarely touched on the private sector. The present paper is based on the conceptual work on “entrepreneurial” and “proactive” universities (by Burton Clark), “self-reliant” and “enterprising” universities (by Michael Shattock and Gareth Williams) and Barbara Sporn’s notion of “adaptive” universities. In empirical terms, it is based on case studies of entrepreneurial universities, both from Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe. We have a closer look at entrepreneurialism of private institutions studied within the EU 6th Framework Programme EUEREK European Universities for Entrepreneurship – Their Role in the Europe of Knowledge project in the context of what Clark, Shattock, Williams and Sporn suggest mostly for the study of public institutions. Therefore a context of entrepreneurialism in the form of Clarks’ five elements: a strengthened steering core, an expanded developmental periphery, a diversified funding base, the stimulated academic heartland, and the integrated entrepreneurial culture is revisited, and referred to the private sector, followed by conclusions.