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Abstract

Drawing from quantitative and qualitative data collected by the European research project GOETE in eight European countries, the article focuses on the experiences of so-called "disadvantaged students" at the end of lower secondary and analyzes how access to higher education is negotiated in the interaction of structural/institutional frameworks and student agency. After elaborating an intersectional framework on disadvantage, the article showcases that access to higher education is defined by national schooling regulations, but also by educational professionals' discourses and by students' attitudes. Through professional discourses, representations, and normative expectations, students are differentiated and hierarchized according to class, ethnicity, and gender. In the schools investigated, located in deprived areas, students experience these differentiations through stigmatization or discrimination, and build different types of agency in their life contexts. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)