Author

NETZ, Nicolai

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Abstract

This study examines factors that deter students in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands from studying abroad. Using an adaptation of the Rubicon model of action phases, the path to gaining study abroad experience is conceptualised as a process involving two thresholds: the decision threshold and the realisation threshold. Theoretical predictions drawn from rational choice, migration and reproduction theories are integrated into this framework. On the basis of nationally representative and internationally comparable student survey data, logistic regressions are calculated for the two thresholds. Five implications for higher education policy are derived: First, the fact that there are various obstacles to studying abroad means that some students may face multiple disadvantages and might therefore need additional support. Second, mobility schemes might have to reflect better that obstacles at the decision threshold differ from obstacles at the realisation threshold. Third, the

self-perpetuating nature of mobility makes the moments of political intervention crucial. Fourth, the similarity of obstacles between countries suggests certain supranational initiatives. Finally, the achievability of the European mobility targets could be discussed, as increasing mobility and creating equitable access to it might be conflicting goals. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)