

International Student Mobility between the South and the North. Public Lecture



Student Mobility in Europe: Trends and Future Perspectives

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Abstract

International student mobility and migration (ISM) has increasingly caught the interest of scientific researchers over the last ten years. Part of this rising popularity can be attributed to the increasing number of students participating in the Erasmus program, surpassing 3 million. In this lecture, I take stock of the most important trends in ISM-research over the last decade and suggest directions for future research. First, I discuss the main concepts and approaches used in studies into international student mobility, arguing that international students can be considered to be a specific category of international migrants. Thereafter, I discuss the methodological challenges in ISM-research, which encompass data availability, definitions and sampling problems. Subsequently, I provide an overview of general patterns of student mobility at a global and European scale, covering the main countries of origin and destinations. Finally, I discuss the spatial distribution of European exchange students at the city level, based on a unique dataset from the European Commission containing micro-level data on the full population of Erasmus students for study purposes in 2012-2013 ($n = 211,267$). This last part of the lecture reveals that European exchange students are mainly attracted by capitals and second tier metropolitan cities. Furthermore, significant variation regarding the main region of origin of mobile students within most destination countries can be detected.