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Why study abroad in East Asia? Motivating factors shaping European students' mobility decisions

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Miloš Debnar
(Ryūkoku University) & Wolfram Manzenreiter

Thursday
2023-03-30
12³⁰~14⁰⁰



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Research on international student mobility (ISM) represents a growing field of study and contributes to the understanding of mobility decisions, how they are embedded in institutional, social and national contexts, and how participation in mobility programs contributes to the reproduction of class status. Yet previous studies largely fail to acknowledge the increasing diversity in patterns and directions behind the complex motivations leading to study abroad decisions. Using a mixed methods data set on students of East Asian Studies from Austria, Czech and Slovakia, we question the validity of neoliberal explanations that often “reduce mobility goals to pure economics” (Lipura and Collins 2020). Our results, by contrast, demonstrate

that study abroad in the fields of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Studies is perceived as essential part of studies and expectations on the outcome of studying abroad are less oriented on the career. Rather, it is a combination of non-material and cultural dimensions that emerge from our questionnaire and interview data as crucial in prompting students' motivation. We discuss differences in relation to institutional arrangements, national contexts and wider social changes that contribute to shaping motivations of study abroad across our sample. Finally, we discuss the possible theoretical implications of our findings for furthering research on international student mobility.



Miloš Debnar is Associate Professor of Sociology at Ryūkoku University and currently Visiting Scholar at the Department of East Asian Studies. His research focus lies on international migration.

Wolfram Manzenreiter is Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Vienna. His research interest is concerned with globalisation issues and the question of happiness in contemporary Japan.



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