Employment Opportunities and Barriers on the Russian and German Labor Market for International Graduates with Domestic Degrees

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Abstract

Assuming that employment prospects in the country of education represent a pull factor for international students to enroll in higher education programs abroad and a selling proposition for higher education institutions campaigning for international students, this study aims at investigating the validity of these prospects. Using a qualitative research approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with recruiters of 12 companies in Germany and Russia. A content analysis was applied to identify and compare employment opportunities and barriers for international graduates with domestic degrees at individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Findings include that country-specific human capital components are highly valued by employers, that the organization’s stage of internationalization determines the valuation of human capital components as well as the availability of customized recruiting practices, and that the institutional framework—particularly the law on labor migration—influences employers’ receptivity for international graduates as well as their international staffing strategies in general. Findings are interpreted on the background of pertinent theoretical perspectives. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations given for international students, higher education institutions, employers, and policy-makers.

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