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**Abstract**

This paper first discusses the theoretical approaches regarding the choice of participating in post-secondary (or "higher") education, starting with a presentation of the standard neoclassical economics approach, and then adding concepts taken from the emerging behavioural economics literature to take into account "cultural" factors that affect access. The paper then presents the results of an empirical analysis based on a very rich Canadian dataset, the Youth in Transition Survey, which follows youth from ages 15 to 25. It includes remarkably detailed information on family and other background factors, as well as schooling experiences, which provides evidence that points to the importance of cultural influences on PSE choices. Policy implications are then discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)