Does Students' International Mobility Increase Their Employability?

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Introduction

The Polish system of higher education has fundamentally changed during the last twenty years. The decade of the 1990s was characterized by an unprecedented dynamic growth in the number of students, a progressive commercialization of the study process and a distinct change in the structure of the study offer [Sojkin, Barkowiak, Skuza, 2012]. In recent years, the process of rapid growth in the number of students has slowed down (the number of students started to fall recently as a result of demographic changes), but the system of higher education has faced some new challenges, primarily related to the implementation of the Bologna process [Dobbins, Knill, 2009]. Its aim was to increase the competitiveness of the European system of higher education and to improve the employability of university graduates. The programme was clearly associated with a need to raise employment rates in the EU countries (in accordance with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy) and included such elements as the introduction of the ECTS, the implementation of the two-cycle studies, quality assurance measures (accreditation, certification, etc.), as well as the promotion of lifelong learning.

Promotion of students' mobility has been one of the key elements in the Bologna process. It was aimed at increasing the flexibility of the European market of higher education, curriculum enrichment, allowing students to gain foreign study and work experience and at broadening opportunities for students' personal development, in particular by contact with other cultures. Indeed, in recent years the frequency of Polish students' stays abroad grew significantly.

In part, it was directly related to the educational process (students' exchange, scholarships, summer schools, etc.), while some cases were related to professional activity sometimes in (association with the profile of study), and in some other cases personal reasons and interests were curcial. It was a result of growing openness of the Polish economy and society and the accession to the EU with liberalisation of people's mobility and the EU-financed mobility programmes (such as Tempus, Erasmus etc.). All types of such activity entail significant costs, at private or public level, both in terms of direct or alternative costs. It is therefore a primary interest of economics to assess the results of growing students' mobility in terms of the benefits it brings to individual students and the society. That has been a key motivation for this writing paper.

The aim of this article is to examine whether the experience of international mobility improves the employability of Polish higher education graduates, as proponents of the Bologna process often claim. The article uses data on higher education graduates' labour market history in a 2-year period after graduation to examine if the experience of international mobility significantly shortens the duration of first job search. Due to the nature of the data used in the analysis, a survival methodology has been applied.

The conclusion of the analysis is that students with past mobility experience are characterised by shorter search time duration. However, regression analysis suggests that mobility *per se* cannot be treated as a positive predictor of employability. The fact of mobility may be correlated with other characteristics that contribute to increasing probability of finding a job. It seems then that international mobility experience can be treated rather as a signalling device than a method to accumulate human capital.

The remaining part of the paper is organised as follows. First we present the theoretical context of the links between mobility and employability. Then the data used for our study is described. In the next section we analyse basic facts on the international mobility of Polish students. In the subsequent section we present the empirical model of the job search duration for Polish graduates and discuss the regression results. The paper ends with conclusions, references and an appendix.

1. Theoretical context

The potential link between international mobility experience and later professional career path can be explained by several theoretical frameworks, including such theories as *human capital theory*, *signalling theory*, and *search and matching theory*. In all of these theories, an experience of staying abroad during a period of education may be treated as one of individual's characteristics having impact on their attractiveness in the employer's eyes. Mobility experience may act as productivity-increasing device, as a factor distinguishing a candidate for a job from other candidates or as a factor potentially increasing search intensity and/or the quality of matches. Therefore

it may affect graduates' employability by increasing probability of finding a job, shortening job search duration and increasing later job satisfaction.

1.1. Human capital theory

According to the human capital theory, employee's productivity depends not only on their innate traits, but also on the investments undertaken to gain additional knowledge and skills. International mobility may be assumed to be an investment, which generates additional skills and—by leading to a higher worker's productivity—improves graduate's attractiveness for employer. Potential gains may have several sources. First of all, international mobility may result in an access to a higher education institution of a better quality (possibility to use better equipment, study latest technology, co-operate with world-class scholars). Second, it may significantly increase language skills, which are crucial in many professions, particularly typical for tertiary education graduates. Third, it may add to soft skills, such as openness for new experiences, independence, communication skills and interpersonal skills [Williams, 2005]. As a result, an experience of international mobility can help to make a successful entry into the labour market after graduation and also help get a high quality job. At macroeconomic level, in the context of human capital theory, we can assume that international mobility can lead to a more productive workforce, higher salaries and higher GDP [Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1962].

Although a link between mobility and productivity may be theoretically claimed, it remains an open question whether a fact of spending part of the education period abroad develops skills that can directly be used by firms as production input.

1.2. Signalling theory

Signalling theory [Spence, 1973] reduces the function of individual mobility experience to a signalling device reporting higher unobservable abilities: jobseekers with international education experience are presumably more adaptive, more motivated and have greater learning skills.

In fact, in many empirical papers signalling theory was confirmed. Jaeger and Page [1996] use a dataset from a matched sample of the 1991 and 1992 March Current Population Survey for the US labour market that provides information on both years of education and diplomas received. According to signalling theory, the net effect of diplomas should still be positive after controlling for other education variables like years of schooling. They improve on earlier empirical estimates of returns to education and find that using 'true' information on degree receipt substantially increases estimated sheepskin effects of high school and college degrees as compared to other levels of education completed. Therefore, this might suggest that the signalling effects are important.

Dupray [2001] seeks to separate the signalling effect on first entry into the labour market and the long-term influence of its human capital component on earnings. Using a multinomial logit selection model, he shows that large

firms attach more importance than small ones to the signalling component. Therefore, highly experienced young people are more likely to be recruited by large companies. Returns to professional experience and education (including international mobility) are depreciating faster in large firms than in small ones once the influence of education on the first appointment has been taken into account. The findings support the idea that the signalling impact is stronger in large firms than in small ones, which might explain wage inequality among workers endowed with similar level of human capital.

It may be claimed that the spread of higher education has led to a weakening of the signals related just to acquiring a higher education degree. It may be a problem in such countries as Poland, where the growth in the number of students has been particularly rapid. As a consequence, other factors have started to play an important role for employers to distinguish between more and less capable job candidates. These are for instance the prestige of the higher education institution, the type of study programme or the mode of studies (full-time or part-time). International mobility can be seen as one of them.

1.3. Search and matching theory

The impact of mobility on employability can be also interpreted in the context of search and matching theory [Mortensen and Pissarides, 1994]. This approach reflects the permanence of the mismatch in the labour market between labour supply and demand. The nature of this mismatch is a result of costs devoted by both sides to search appropriate job opportunities and appropriate candidates to make a productive employment. The other important aspect of matching activity is that the process is decentralized and not coordinated. Employers bear the costs of resources devoted to recruitment and acquiring information about a candidate's quality, while the employees bear the costs of gathering information, travel expenses, writing applications and so on. Labour market equilibrium, characterized in this theory by an equilibrium unemployment rate, strongly depends on the search intensity of both sides of the labour market. It may be argued that graduates with international experience are potentially characterized by higher job search effort. Secondly, past mobility experience can be interpreted as potential readiness for greater adaptability for not typical forms of employment and more mobile behaviour in general (in terms of readiness to change the place of living). On the other hand, employers may use the information on international experience to screen the candidates, which might reduce the costs of recruitment (signalling theory). Both of these aspects result in a reduction of the mismatch and in equilibrium unemployment rates as well as in shorter average unemployment (job search) duration.

As for empirical studies concerning students' international mobility, they are relatively scarce so far and limited mainly to research on mobility determinants. According to Rosenzweig [2006] international migration of students can be explained both by differences in the quality of education between

countries (education abroad leads to greater human capital) or by differences in returns to education between countries. These findings were confirmed by several other empirical studies, e.g. Rosenzweig [2008], Bratsberg [1995], Gordon and Jallade [1996], Aslangbengui and Montecinos [1998], Szelenyi [2006]. Other studies find support for a significant network effect in the migration of students [Beine et al., 2012]. As for studies of the consequences of growing trans-European mobility of students, there is a vast literature on general consequences of growing mobility, including further study activities, prolongation of the total period of study, use of competencies acquired abroad, self-rating of competencies, ways of keeping up contact and language proficiency etc. [Maiworm, Teichler, 1996; Teichler, Jahr, 2001; Rivza, Teichler, 2007], but relatively few papers have been published on the impact of international mobility on graduates' labour market position. Usually they were based on analyses of qualitative data (interviews with experts, graduates' opinions etc.), not on rigorous quantitative approach [Maiworm, Teichler, 1996; Lindberg, 2009]. The aim of our study is to fill this gap.

2. Data used in the analysis

In order to analyse the link between mobility experience and graduates' employability, we need a specific dataset that would provide us with information both on the characteristics of graduates' education process (including mobility experience) and information on their further labour market experience (including labour market status, characteristics of employment, wage level, job satisfaction etc.). In Poland there is no public statistics that would include this kind of information. The only potential data sources are special graduates' surveys. In recent years there have been two such countrywide surveys conducted. The first one was realised on a representative group of Polish households in 2004 and surveyed Poles' Educational Paths [GUS, 2005]. The other one—more recent—was a special graduates' survey carried out in 2007. It examined the labour market participation of school leavers in the context of the governmental "First Job" programme (*2007 Graduates' survey*)—a special public policy framework aimed at reducing youth unemployment. In our empirical study of an impact of mobility on university education graduates' employability we used results of the latter study.

Although 2007 Graduates' survey data was collected five years ago, according to our best knowledge, it remains the best available source allowing for examination of our research question. Data in the survey was gathered between late November 2006 and late February 2007. The sample included graduates of different types of school and comprised for 20 thousand participants. Only persons not continuing education were included in the survey and graduates were defined as persons fulfilling all of the following criteria:

- completing education between January 1998 and December 2005,

- having graduated from secondary level schools (high schools and vocational schools) upper secondary and tertiary (undergraduate and graduate level) schools,
- being less than 27 years old at the moment of graduation,
- without a break of more than 12 months between the last and last-by-one stage of their education career.

The questionnaire consisted of several parts (177 questions) concerning: level of education and education path, process of looking for a first job during the period of 12 months after graduation, economic activity after graduation, detailed characteristics of jobs undertaken, questions on the entrepreneurship, impact of employment offices on the graduates' professional careers and spatial mobility of graduates. As for international mobility during and immediately after graduation, the survey included two types of information. The first one was strictly related to the process of formal education (spending a whole semester of study abroad). The other one addressed broader aspects of international mobility during or after the last stage of formal education. In this part of survey respondents were asked about the characteristics of their stays abroad (whether those were related to their studies or not) lasting at least two weeks. Main aim of a stay characteristics included such dimensions as a country of destination abroad , the fact of undertaking employment during their stay abroad and a general assessment of the stay abroad for further professional career. The total sample was comprised of 20,181 observations, out of which 5,566 graduated from higher education institutions (HEIs) and was representative of our target population.

3. International mobility of Polish students: stylised facts

There are several channels through which international mobility of Polish students is being realised. The most significant channels include:

- EU programmes (such as Erasmus),
- other institutionalised programmes (bilateral and multilateral agreements etc.),
- individual students' activity.

Dispersion of types of mobility results in lack of aggregate data on its scale and structure. There is only fragmentary information available for institutionalised programmes such as Erasmus. This data clearly shows a massive increase in popularity of stays abroad during the period of higher education (Figure 1): between academic year 1998/99 and 2009/2010 the number of outgoing students rose ten times. However, the share of students' participation in Erasmus programme remains very low (less than 1% of the total number of students).

Data used for further econometric analysis comes from the special 2007 Graduates' Survey (described above) and it will also be used for the purpose of portraying international experience of Polish higher education (HE) graduates. According to this dataset, spending at least one semester of study

abroad was declared on average by 3.1% of Polish tertiary graduates who left schools between January 1998 and December 2005. Shorter stays abroad were significantly more frequent: more than 11.8% of tertiary graduates declare to have spent at least two weeks abroad for work or study purposes. For more than a half of outgoing students their mobility experience included only one stay. As for the length of stays abroad, large majority included short ones up to 3 months (74.6% of all reported stays). Only 7.5% of stays abroad lasted for 6 months or more.

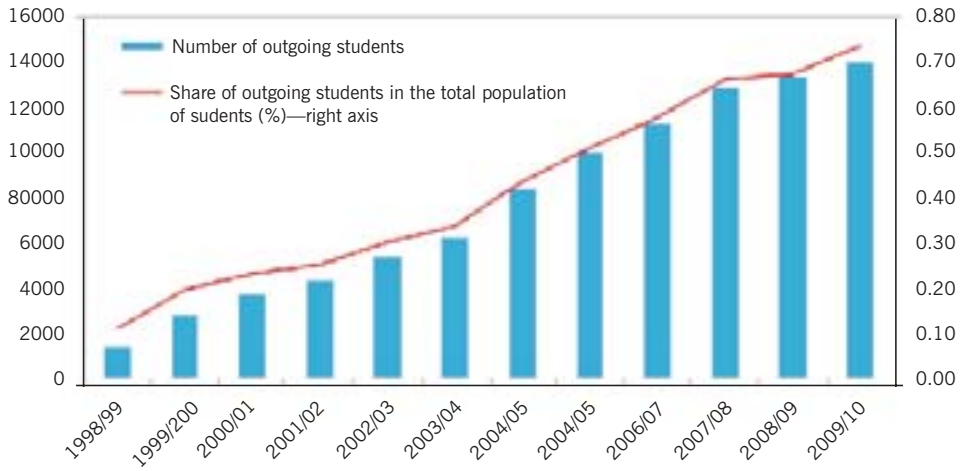

Figure 1.

Erasmus programme in Poland: number of outgoing students
Source: Foundation for the Development of the Education System data.

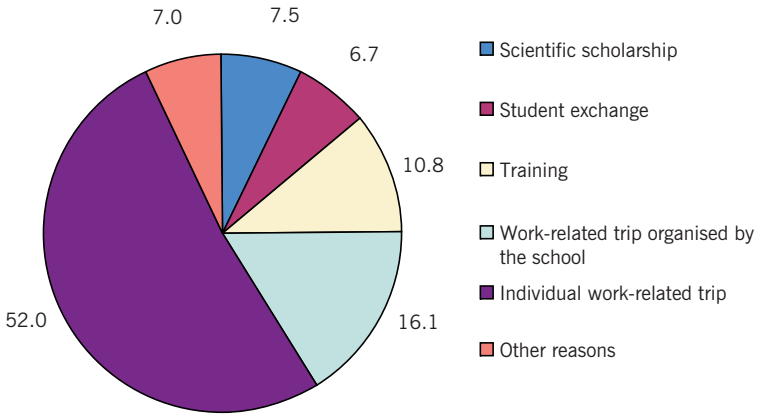

Figure 2.

Aim of stays abroad of tertiary graduates during their educational career
Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

Contrary to popular belief, a majority of stays abroad were related to work (68.1% or even 78.9%—including training as employment-related activity) and only 14.2% of stays were related to education in the form of student exchange or scientific scholarship (Figure 2).

The issue of undertaking employment during a stay abroad is a different question. It often happens that even an education-related stay gives a chance to undertake employment and gather skills and work-related experience. A vast majority of students declaring an international experience (77.6%) have worked during their stay abroad. However, for most of them the job was not related to their field of study and qualifications. Only 22.4% of outgoing student declare that they haven't worked and for 13.0% of them—it was their choice not to work (Figure 3).

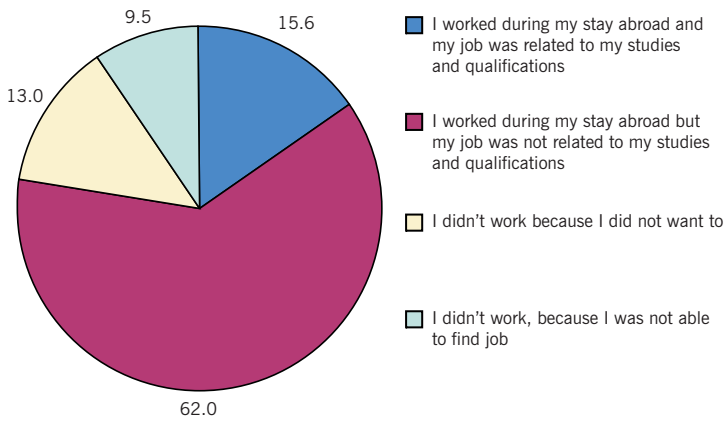

Figure 3.

Aim of stays abroad of tertiary graduates during their educational career
Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

Almost half of the graduates with international experience assess their stay abroad as beneficial for their future career (48.4%). One in ten graduates (9.1%) perceives their stay abroad as harmful to their career (Figure 4).

For the majority of graduates, their stays abroad are related to work purposes, not education. This implies that their international experience is mainly associated with accumulation of human capital by acquiring professional experience, not by gaining additional academic knowledge and skills (although there is not much support for the claim that work related stays are for jobs which are in line with students' qualifications). However, it may not hold true with regard to exchange students for whom a stay abroad usually means academic experiences. Second, relatively small scale of international mobility of Polish students makes it a potentially effective screening device for employers. The impact of foreign graduates' experience on search intensity remains unclear, although data on assessment of a stay abroad suggests that for almost a half of the mobile students' population, such experience in-

creased their self-confidence on the labour market. However, the actual impact of international experience on graduates' employability remains an open question to which we will now turn.

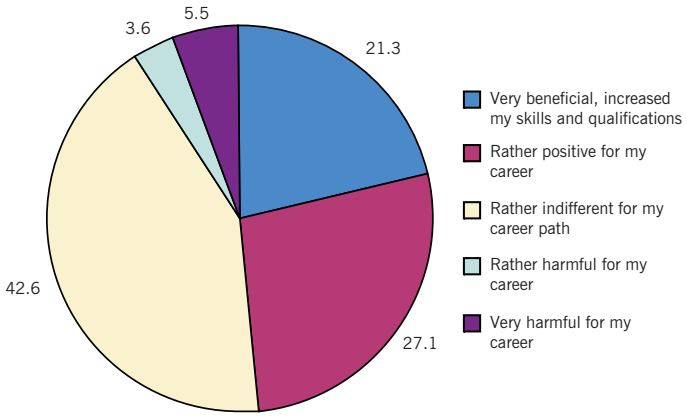

Figure 4.

Assessment of stays abroad of tertiary graduates during their educational career
Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

4. Mobility and employability—empirical analysis of the first job search duration

4.1. Basic definitions and stylized facts

In our study the term 'employability' refers to the first job after graduation of a given graduate. In the following subsection we present some stylized facts on the links between the duration of job search after graduation and the fact of having international experience. In order to distinguish between different types of employment, the following definitions of the labour market status of graduates were adopted:

- (U)—unemployment—person not having paid employment and declaring search for job;
- (N)—inactivity—person not having paid employment and not declaring any search for job;
- (E1)—employment type 1—person having paid employment: permanent contract;
- (E2)—employment type 2—person having paid employment: temporary contract, civil contract;
- (E3)—employment type 3—person having paid employment: self-employment, apprenticeship contract, helping member of a family business or in agriculture.

The employment rate (for the broadest measure of employment: E1 + E2 + E3) evolution in the period of 24 months after graduation is shown in Figure 5

below. It indicates that the 'employability' of those who had at least one semester of their study abroad seems to be higher. The difference in employment rates of those two groups of graduates is observed already in the initial period after graduation and continues to exist onwards. This suggests that there are potentially some structural differences between these groups, which are not dicreased over time, and are possibly correlated with the fact of international experience. These might be individual characteristics.

Figure 5.

Employment rates for graduates who had at least one semester of their study abroad (1) versus those who had not (0)
Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

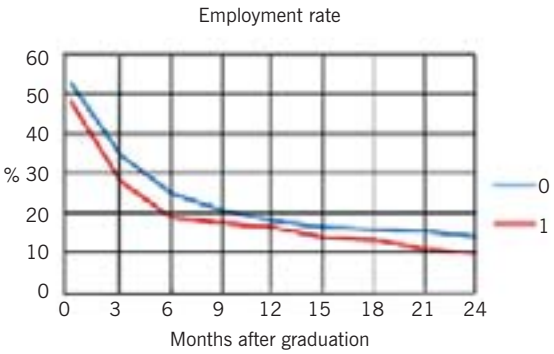

Figure 6.

Unemployment rates for graduates who had at least one semester of their study abroad (1) versus those who had not (0)

Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

Figure 6 shows unemployment rates of two groups of graduates in the period of 24 months after graduation. The unemployment rates of graduates

with at least one semester of study abroad are reported to be lower in the whole period after graduation. The highest difference is observed in the third month after graduation (in favour of mobile graduates) and amounts to 5.03 percentage points. The difference then diminishes to 0.7 pp. one year from graduation to increase again 12 months later to 3.5–3.8 pp.

Table 1 below shows percentages of the graduates who found their first jobs within the first 6 months after graduation. It is easy to see that the share of successful job seekers is substantially higher (with difference reaching almost 20 percentage points) among those who declare to have had at least one semester of studies abroad. However, the difference is twice as small when we enlarge the group of those who declare international experience to include all graduates who have spent at least two weeks abroad for study or work purposes. Studying abroad therefore seems to be a stronger determinant of employability.

Table 1.

International experience and employability

International experience	Job found during the first 6 months after graduation	
At least one semester of study abroad		
No	36.8	63.2
Yes	17.7	82.4
Total	36.3	63.7
At least 2 weeks abroad for study or work		
No	37.3	62.7
Yes	27.9	72.1
Total	36.3	63.7

Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

The average duration of the search for first jobs is shown in Table 2. There are clear differences in means observed in the populations divided by mobility experience. The average first job search duration is 6.7 months for those who declare to have spent at least two weeks abroad for study or work purposes as compared to 8.3 months for those without such experience (*t* test statistic for equality of means equals 2.7967 suggesting strong rejection of the hypothesis of equality). For those declaring at least one semester of study abroad the difference is even higher *vis-à-vis* those without such experience. It is 5.3 months versus 8.2 (*t* test statistic for equality of means equals 3.0625 suggesting strong rejection of the hypothesis of equality).

Table 2.

Average duration of the search for first jobs (in months)

Group		Mean	Std. dev.	1st quartile	Median	3rd quartile
Gender	Female	8.4	9.3	2	5	12
	Male	7.5	9.5	2	4	9
Education	BA in public HEI	10.5	11.3	3	6	17
	BA In non-public HEI	9.7	10.5	2	6	13
	MA in public HEI	7.1	8.2	2	4	9
	MA In non-public HEI	9.2	11.4	2	5	11
Class of settlement unit	Town 100,000+	7.2	9.2	2	4	8
	Town up to 100,000	8.3	9.2	2	5	12
	Rural	9.1	9.9	3	5	12
At least two weeks abroad for work or study	No	8.3	9.5	2	4	12
	Yes	6.7	8.2	2	4	8
At least one semester of study abroad	No	8.2	9.5	2	4	11
	Yes	5.3	5.4	2	3	6
Total		8.1	9.4	2	4	11

Source: authors' own calculations based on 2007 Graduates' Survey results.

4.2. Does international mobility shorten job search duration—survival analysis

For the empirical analysis of search time for first jobs of graduates—the Cox proportional hazards model was chosen. It allows testing hypothesis of a positive impact of mobility experience on the hazards of finding employment. Proportional hazards model assumes that the hazard functions for all subjects are proportional, according to the following formula:

$$h\left(t|x_j\right) = h_0(t)\exp\left(x_j\beta\right)$$

where t is job search duration, β is a vector of coefficients to be estimated from the data. The vector x_j is a set of explanatory variables which are external factors assumed to influence the hazard function. The explanatory variables are the following: gender (male/female), domain of study (economics, law, teaching, social sciences, engineering, health, science, other), knowledge of foreign language (yes/no), practical experience (yes/no), driving licence (yes/no), high computer skills (yes/no), having contacts in professional environment (yes/no), disability (yes/no), type of degree (BA/MA), class of settlement unit (big town, small town, rural), year of graduation (1999–2005), international experience (at least one semester of study abroad, at least two weeks spent abroad for work or study purposes, none).

The most convenient feature of this model is that the baseline hazard function $h_0(t)$ can be left unestimated and does not require any particular functional form. However, for the model to be properly estimated it needs to be tested for the assumption of proportionality of hazard functions.

Eight versions of semi-parametric Cox models were estimated, depending on the definition of the 'failure' event:

- in model (1) it is assumed that a failure is the ending of job search by finding first job of any kind, which is described by being in the status E1, E2 or E3;
- in model (2) it is assumed that a failure is the ending of job search by finding first job described by being in the status E1;
- in model (3) it is assumed that a failure is the ending of job search by finding first job described by being in the status E2;
- in model (4) it is assumed that a failure is the ending of job search by finding first job described by being in the status E3;
- and the definition of the students' international experience:
- at least two weeks spent abroad for work or education purposes (specification A);
- at least one semester spent abroad for reasons of education (specification B).

In general it was found that the hazards of finding employment were higher for tertiary MA graduates then for BA graduates (reported in Table A1 in the Appendix). Male graduates performed better than female graduates only in terms of finding permanent jobs (40% higher hazard rates). Inhabitants of the largest town experienced on average shorter job search durations than others. We also controlled the study domain to see if the labour market opportunities are different for graduates in different fields. It occurred that only two domains make any difference, i.e. engineering and health. Graduates in those fields of study perform much better in finding employment and exhibit on average shorter durations of search for first jobs. Good knowledge of foreign language proved to be an important covariate of finding employment with permanent contract. As opposed to this, having a driving license allows finding jobs with fixed-term or civil contracts sooner with no influence on permanent contract jobs. Having contacts in professional environment is strongly positively affecting chances of finding jobs with both permanent and fixed-term contracts. What is a little surprising, practical experience did not play any role in determining search durations. Computer skills also did not turn out to be important.

Regression results suggest that in general there is no significant impact of international mobility on job search durations. Of all models that were estimated only in one case (model 3B) statistical significance of international experience was found. For those graduates who declared having at least one semester of studies abroad the hazard rate of finding employment with fixed--term contract or civil contract was much higher than for those without international experience all else equal. A broader measure of international mo-

bility (at least two weeks spent abroad for study or work purposes during the last level of education) did not turn out to be a significant predictor of search durations. This finding is clearly at odds with what was shown using simple descriptive analysis of the data. It may be argued that it is probably not the fact of mobility *per se* that is affects employability of graduates, but there are probably some other unobservable characteristics which make better students more likely to be mobile, on one hand, and more successful on the labour market, on the other. If this is the case, employers could effectively screen potential candidates for jobs by simply using the information on international mobility experience.

Conclusions

In recent 20 years we have observed a dynamic increase in mobility of Polish students. Most of students going abroad during studies do it for work purposes and organise a stay on their own (without any institutionalised support). Short stays dominate in picture. Students with mobility experience are characterised by higher incidence of finding a job and shorter search time when other characteristics of the population are not controlled for. However, regression analysis (Cox models of job search duration) suggests that mobility *per se* does not impact job search durations. The fact of mobility may be correlated with other characteristics that contribute to increasing probability of finding a job. It seems then that international mobility experience may serve as a screening device and be used by firms for the purpose of recruiting better candidates. A natural next step of the analysis would be to extend the study for the determinants of international mobility and set up a model with some kind of a selection mechanism.

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Appendix

Table A1.

Cox model regression results for first job search duration

	(1A)	(2A)	(3A)	(4A)	(1B)	(2B)	(3B)	(4B)
VARIABLES	E = 123	E = 1	E = 2	E = 3	E = 123	E = 1	E = 2	E = 3
Men	1.1025	1.4105**	1.0688	0.8264	1.1055	1.4221**	1.0821	0.8059
Two weeks abroad	1.0698	0.8103	1.1887	1.2015				
At least one sem. abroad					1.2891	0.8807	2.0037**	0.5769
Tertiary MA	1.3812**	1.6658**	1.2000*	1.3692**	1.3858**	1.6560**	1.2085*	1.3689**
Town 100+	1.2789**	1.4284**	1.5429**	0.7793	1.2682**	1.4181**	1.5289**	0.7744
Town < 100	1.1208	1.0996	1.3466**	0.8753	1.1164	1.0887	1.3536**	0.8704
Economics	1.0947	1.1252	1.2042	0.9361	1.0679	1.1028	1.1350	0.9567
Law	0.9560	1.0882	0.9888	0.7883	0.9388	1.0559	0.9510	0.8081
Teachers	1.2425	1.4434	1.3463	0.8943	1.2326	1.4278	1.2980	0.9232
Social Sciences	1.0456	0.7977	1.3394	0.9568	1.0337	0.7772	1.2926	1.0054
Engineering	1.4217**	1.3366	1.6914**	1.1003	1.4065**	1.3325	1.6093*	1.1441

	(1A)	(2A)	(3A)	(4A)	(1B)	(2B)	(3B)	(4B)
VARIABLES	E = 123	E = 1	E = 2	E = 3	E = 123	E = 1	E = 2	E = 3
Health	1.8717**	1.3675	2.2118**	1.8060	1.8382**	1.3528	2.0893**	1.8442*
Science	1.1083	1.0614	1.2094	1.0405	1.0920	1.0537	1.1570	1.0592
Foreign language	1.0888	1.4513**	0.9712	0.8890	1.0811	1.4390**	0.9613	0.8941
Practical experience	1.0593	0.9733	1.1357	1.0201	1.0614	0.9780	1.1343	1.0277
Driving licence	1.2182**	1.0765	1.2795**	1.2541*	1.2158**	1.0573	1.2730**	1.2803*
Computer skills	1.0288	1.0152	1.0738	0.9860	1.0194	0.9797	1.0616	1.0097
Contacts	1.3069**	1.2614*	1.3390**	1.2540	1.3149**	1.2678*	1.3431**	1.2771
Disability	0.6596	0.5094	0.9159	0.4873	0.6609	0.5061	0.9239	0.5010
1999	0.9369	0.8303	0.9405	1.7269	0.9336	0.8242	0.9328	1.7420
2000	0.8805	0.7713	0.8151	2.0410	0.8783	0.7627	0.8194	2.0180
2001	0.8210	0.6569	0.8167	1.8994	0.8074	0.6361	0.7873	1.9781
2002	0.9856	0.6962	0.9418	2.9980*	0.9832	0.6767	0.9487	3.0394*
2003	1.1074	0.7403	1.0597	3.5450*	1.1156	0.7422	1.0626	3.6040*
2004	0.9738	0.4814**	1.1825	3.2794*	0.9686	0.4749**	1.1732	3.3454*
2005	0.8542	0.3682**	1.0747	3.1383*	0.8548	0.3681**	1.0704	3.1773*
N	1773	1773	1773	1773	1768	1768	1768	1768

Abstract **Does students' international mobility increase their employability?**

During the last 20 years international mobility of Polish students grew significantly. The article addresses the issue of consequences of international mobility for graduates' employability. Theoretical literature suggests several channels through which international mobility may affect graduates' attractiveness in the labour market: by accumulation of additional human capital, by signalling high abilities of a job candidate, by increasing search intensity of jobseekers. In fact, simple comparison of employment rates and duration of a post-graduation job search suggest that mobility experience increases employability of higher education graduates. However the results of Cox proportional hazard model with a control for other graduates' characteristics reveals a different picture: mobility *per se* does not impact job search duration but is correlated with graduates' characteristics associated with higher abilities. It seems, therefore, that international mobility experience may serve as a screening device and be used by firms for the purpose of recruiting better candidates.

Key words: international mobility, employability, human capital theory, signalling theory, job search time

JEL Classification: I23, J21, J24, J61