Is the lack of funding THE obstacle to mobility?
An empirical overview

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Outline

Aims of the presentation

- Provide an overview of different obstacles to mobility by drawing on selected empirical studies
- Carve out the relative importance of (expected) financial costs → hierarchy of obstacles
- Set the scene for our discussions throughout the seminar

Focus of the presentation

- Students, not institutional or country level
- Credit mobility (mostly enrolment periods abroad) instead of degree mobility
Hierarchy of obstacles
Hierarchy of obstacles

**Data source: EUROSTUDENT**

- EUROSTUDENT generates internationally comparable indicators using data from nationally representative student surveys
- Data from 25 EHEA countries
- Reference period: 2009-2010
- Focus on obstacles to a period of enrolment abroad
Hierarchy of obstacles

Difficulty in getting information

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider difficulty in getting information a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Insufficient foreign language skills

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider insufficient foreign language skills a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Expected problems with the recognition of credits

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider problems with the recognition of credits a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Expected delay in study progress

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider an expected delay in the study progress a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Separation from partner, child(ren), friends

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider a separation from the partner, child(ren) or friends a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Expected additional financial burden

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider an expected additional financial burden a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Hierarch of obstacles

Expected additional financial burden

- The paramount role of financial concerns becomes visible also in countries not covered in EUROSTUDENT data on mobility:
  - **United Kingdom:** Findlay et al. (2006)
  - **USA:** Presley et al. (2010)
  - **New Zealand:** Doyle et al. (2010)
Hierarchy of obstacles

Preliminary conclusion

- Many students across Europe perceive the additional financial burden of a stay abroad as THE obstacle to mobility

→ End of the story?

→ Not yet!
Differences between countries
Differences between countries

Expected additional financial burden

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider an expected additional financial burden a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad.

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Differences between countries

Expected additional financial burden

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider an expected additional financial burden a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Differences between countries

Separation from partner, child(ren), friends

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider a separation from the partner, child(ren) or friends a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Differences between groups of students
Differences between groups of students

Financial insecurities*

Share of students without enrolment abroad who consider financial insecurities a (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad

* Index built from the following items: expected additional financial burden, loss of opportunities to earn money, loss of social benefits, problems with accommodation in the host country

Source: Orr et al. (2011)
Descriptive vs. multivariate results
Descriptive vs. multivariate results

Perceived vs. factual importance

- Funding as obstacle in the perception of students

  vs.

- Funding concerns as variable predicting mobility (plans)

- Simultaneous control of other influencing factors → relative importance of funding concerns

→ Example: regression results of Lörz et al. (forthcoming)
## Logistic regression of the intention to study abroad (average marginal effects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>M 1</th>
<th>M 2</th>
<th>M 3</th>
<th>M 4</th>
<th>M 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social background</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>academic (vs. non-academic)</td>
<td>0.07 ***</td>
<td>0.04 **</td>
<td>0.03 *</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational biography</strong></td>
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<td>Type of school: general (vs. vocational)</td>
<td>0.05 *</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialisation: languages (vs. other major)</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longer stay abroad during school (vs. no stay)</td>
<td>0.15 ***</td>
<td>0.12 ***</td>
<td>0.09 ***</td>
<td>0.06 ***</td>
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<td><strong>Performance-related factors</strong></td>
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<td>Final school grade</td>
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<td>Probability of success</td>
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<td>Skills in foreign languages</td>
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<td><strong>Cost considerations</strong></td>
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<td>Financial strain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.03 ***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time loss</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-0.08 ***</td>
<td>-0.05 ***</td>
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<td>Family/partnership</td>
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<td>0.03 ***</td>
<td>-0.03 ***</td>
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<td><strong>Benefit considerations</strong></td>
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<td>Importance for career</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.09 ***</td>
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<td>Professional prestige</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
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<td>Personality development</td>
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<td>0.06 ***</td>
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<td><strong>Control variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex: male (vs. female)</td>
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<td>-0.03 **</td>
<td>-0.03 *</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
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<td><strong>D_total</strong></td>
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<td>Wald-Chi$^2$</td>
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<td>168</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>649</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lörz et al. (forthcoming)
Sequence of obstacles
Sequence of obstacles

Rubicon model of action phases (adaptation)

- Path to a stay abroad as goal achievement process that involves multiple thresholds students have to pass (Netz, 2013)

Source: Netz (2013)
Sequence of obstacles

Critical obstacles according to empirical studies (selection)

- **Decision threshold**
  - not regarding mobility as beneficial (career/personality development)
  - not having previous mobility experience (school exchange)
  - not having the necessary competencies and associated self-confidence
  - general fear of delaying studies and financial insecurities

**Sources:** Netz (2013), Lörz et al. (forthcoming)
Sequence of obstacles

Critical obstacles according to empirical studies (selection)

- Realisation threshold
  - strong social ties in place of living
  - informational deficits
  - expected problems with recognition
  - no access to mobility programmes
  - actual lack of funding

Sequence of obstacles

Sequence of obstacles

→ Obstacles become relevant at different stages during the process of becoming internationally mobile.

→ Students primarily consider practical matters of a stay abroad once they have decided to become mobile.

→ Students not regarding mobility as beneficial won’t care about funding...
Empirical vs. normative approach
**Normative approach**

Where can and where should policy makers and institutional managers in higher education remove obstacles to mobility?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary obstacles</th>
<th>Can?</th>
<th>Should?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not regarding mobility as beneficial</td>
<td>(yes)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reluctance to leave the social context</td>
<td>(yes)</td>
<td>(yes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(perceived) lack of funding for mobility</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary & Conclusion
Summary

Key empirical findings

- In many countries, the expected costs of a stay abroad are perceived as the most critical obstacle to mobility
- Perception of this obstacle depends on country and student group examined
- Relevance of financial concerns generally also backed by multivariate studies
- Funding = technicality of a stay abroad, which becomes more relevant in later stages of the path to mobility experience
Conclusion

After all...

- Is the lack of funding THE obstacle to mobility?
  → No. It is one obstacle among others, but a very crucial one.

- Is the lack of funding THE obstacle that policy makers should address?
  → I say yes. What do you say?
References


References


Thank you for your attention!

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