

BIGSAS

**Bayreuth International Graduate School
of African Studies**



“Coming full circle”

**Return migration and job-hunting experiences
of Cameroonian and Ghanaian
graduates from Germany**

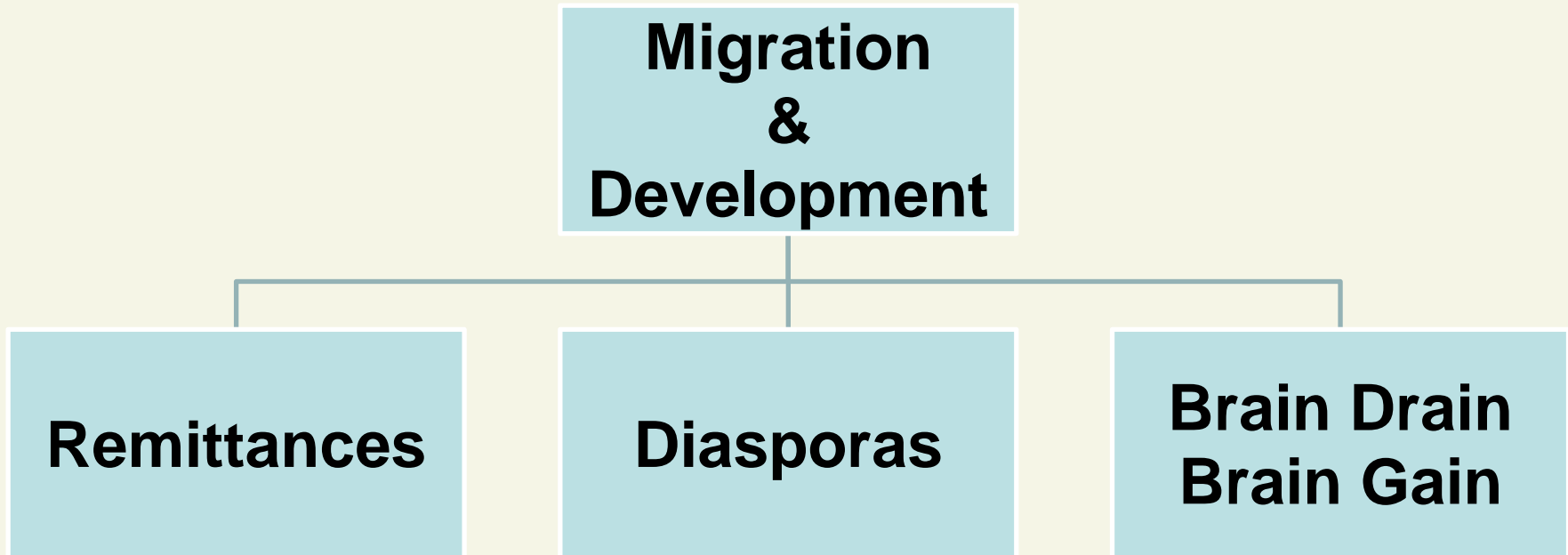
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Overview



1. Migration & development nexus
2. Research question
3. Explaining labour market entries
4. Qualitative research design
5. Labour market entry patterns
6. The comparison
7. Conclusions

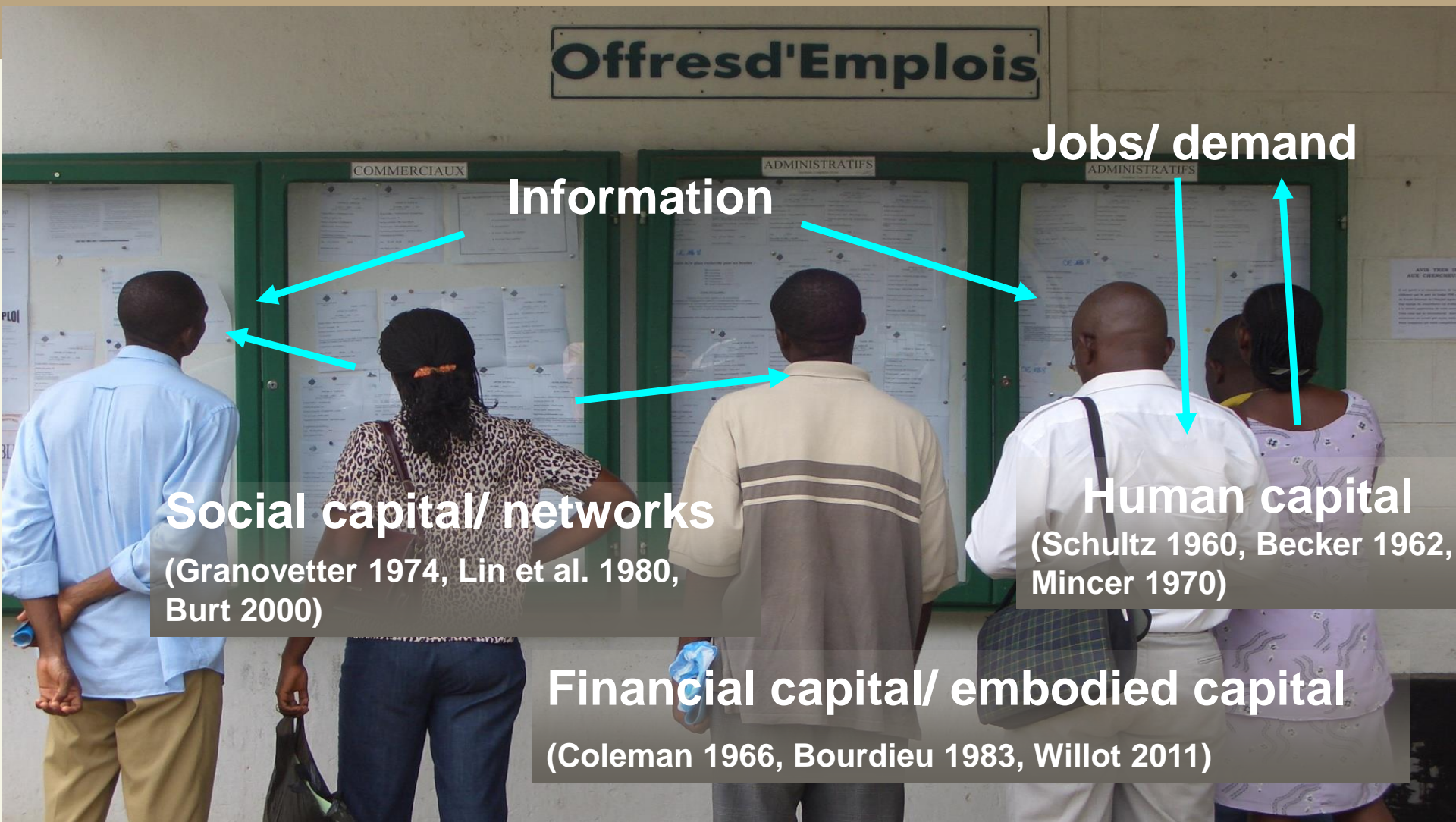


Research question



“How do highly skilled graduates activate their resources in the reintegration process in order to get jobs?”

Explaining labour market entries



Information

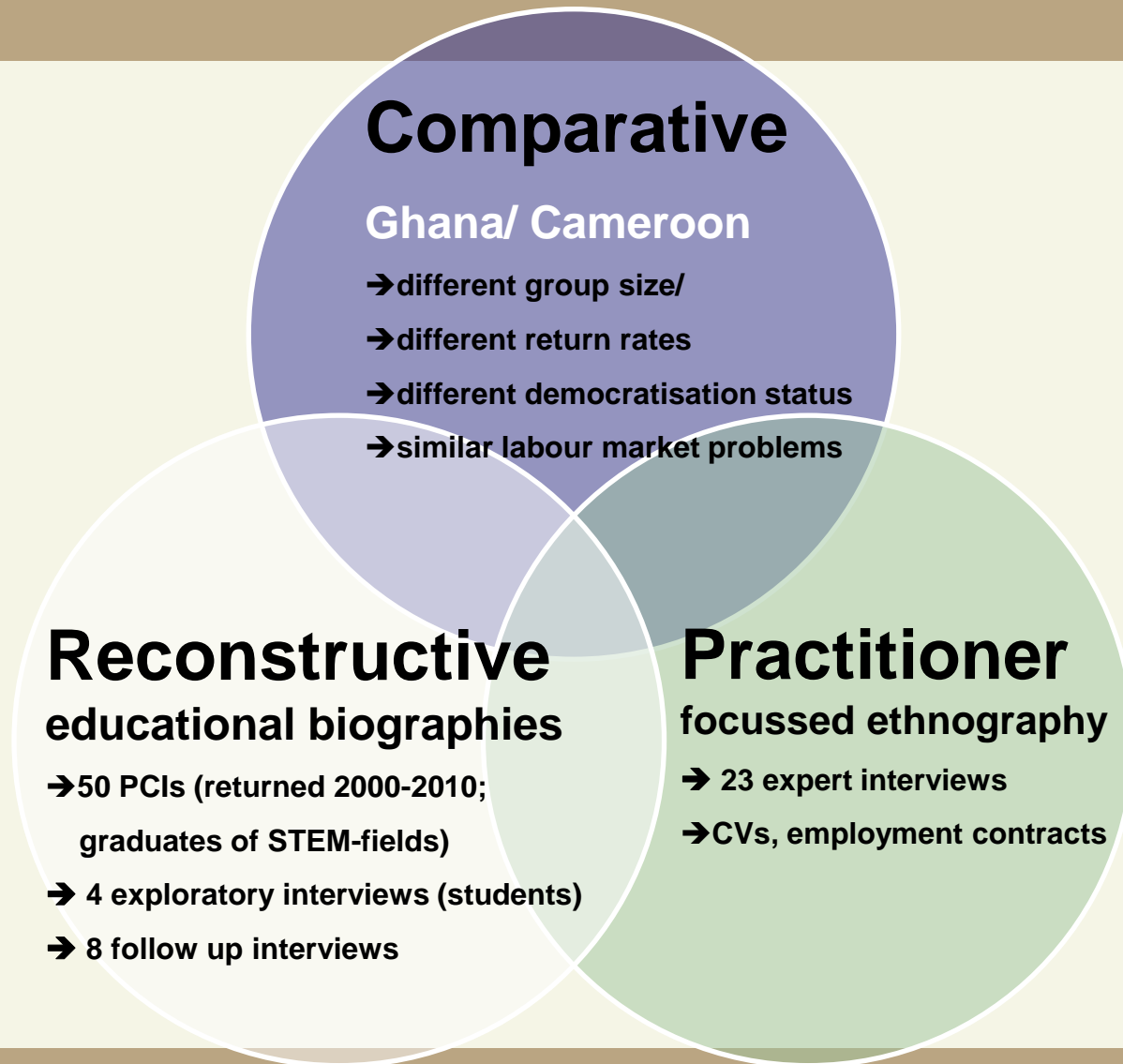
Jobs/ demand

Social capital/ networks
(Granovetter 1974, Lin et al. 1980,
Burt 2000)

Human capital
(Schultz 1960, Becker 1962,
Mincer 1970)

Financial capital/ embodied capital
(Coleman 1966, Bourdieu 1983, Willot 2011)

Qualitative grounded research



Patterns in Ghana and Cameroon



achieving
(skills/education)

arranging
(reintegration
subsidies)

**getting
sponsored**
(personal contacts)

**being
independent**
(financial capital/
embodied capital)

The comparison



Outcome	Ghana	Cameroon
Labour market entry	→ achieving/ arranging	→ being sponsored/ being independant
Resource	→ education/skills	→ personal contact
Return migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → demand for workforces → democratic consolidation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → demand for loyalty/ investors → “facade democracy”
Educational migration	→ “coming full circle”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → “circular migration” → Potential “brain drain” → Diaspora activities

Conclusions



Levels	Outcome
Theoretical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Intransparent labour markets prevent return migration;→ return migration of highly skilled graduates can be an indicator for development and increases it, (co-drivers) but cannot cause it.
Practical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Supporting transparent job placement practices in home countries;→ harmonising of policies in educational migration, reintegration AND integration (ministry level)→ HE focus on particular subjects (e.g. renewable energies)

Thank you! Good luck for the job-hunt!



Achievers



“I decided to go to this woman [director of a research institute] and I said I needed [employment]. She said ‘Oh you graduated, can you bring me a copy of your thesis work’ and I gave it to her and she said **‘Oh this is almost like a PhD thesis work’** so she also became happy with me and said ‘Ok you can bring the application!’”

(Ghana interview #04; 27.06.2008: 223-232).

Arrangers



“This project for settling developing country students who are coming home [REP] was like a spring board. (...) We were lucky because we had this allowance coming every month [salary top-up] for six month. It was perfect. We had this equipment [APA] that was coming, and even though some employers did want to have you, **it was an incentive for them** because we were coming with a [reintegration-] package”

(Ghana interview #26; 10.09.2009: 86-98).

Being sponsored



“I don't know how many applications but I know that I went to one that is dealing with waste recycling. They looked at my degree, which is here. They saw that I had done waste recycling technologies; very good! But then my French is not quite good. That is the problem that I have been having (...) So, he [recruiter] told me that here [workplace] it is bilingual; you can express yourself in any language you feel. So, we are ready to work with you”

(Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 487-497).

Becoming independant



“Le plus difficile a été les débuts. Mais ces débuts ont été soutenus parce que nous avons contacté beaucoup de prêts, de crédits auprès des institutions, auprès des banques surtout (...) soit vous n’avez pas de garantie solide ou tout simplement **vous n’avez pas assez de relations** (...). Donc on a essayé de réunir toutes les possibilités pour arriver à la réalisation du projet mais il faut le reconnaître, ça n’a pas été facile”

(Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 243-267).

Personal contacts



Types (ties):

- family, friends (strong ties)
- mentors, brokers (weak ties)

Function:

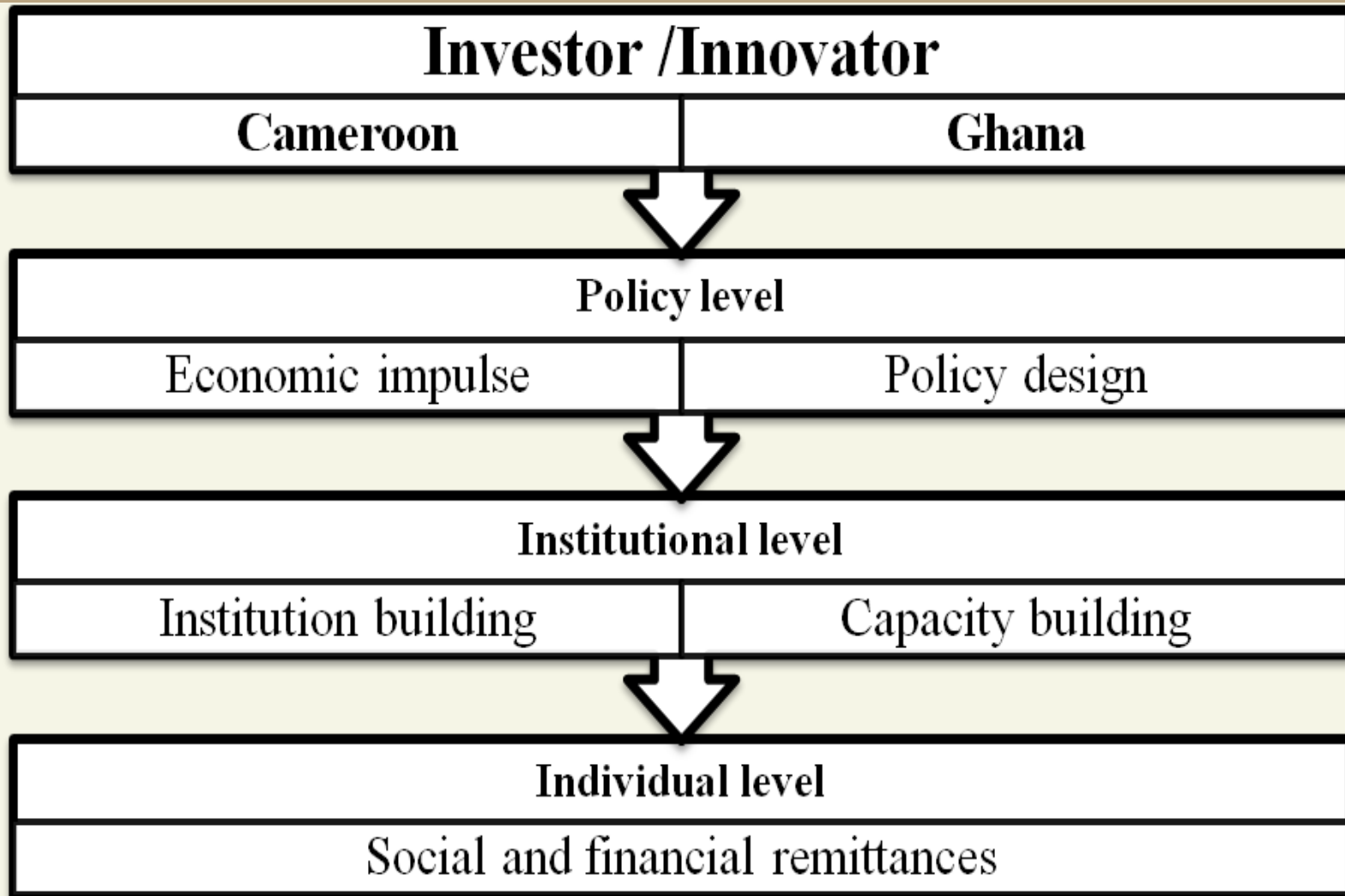
- identifying vacancy
- offering direct employment
- increasing reputation
- supporting business
- blocking

Female returning graduates



- 5 Cameroonians, 9 Ghanaians → 14 (28%)
- higher starting salaries (higher degrees)
- stable and secure careers (public sector)
- no difference according to countries but according to marriage status:
 - married women feel that they 'owe' their careers to husbands and fathers;
 - single women describe social difficulties

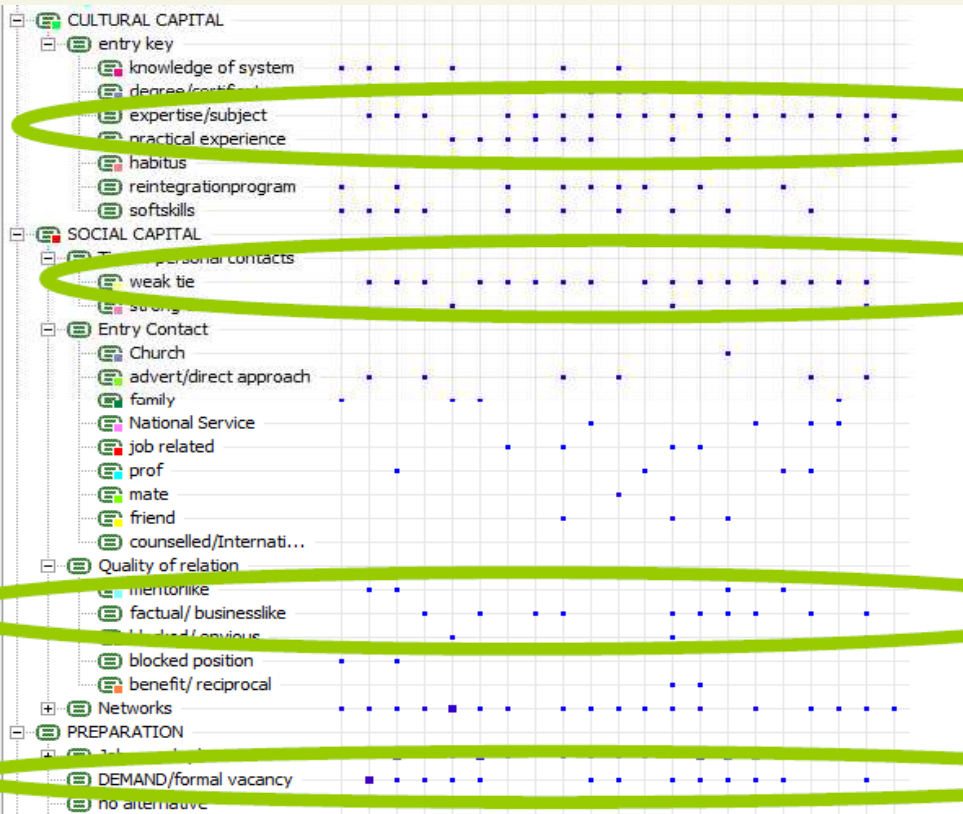
Impact on development



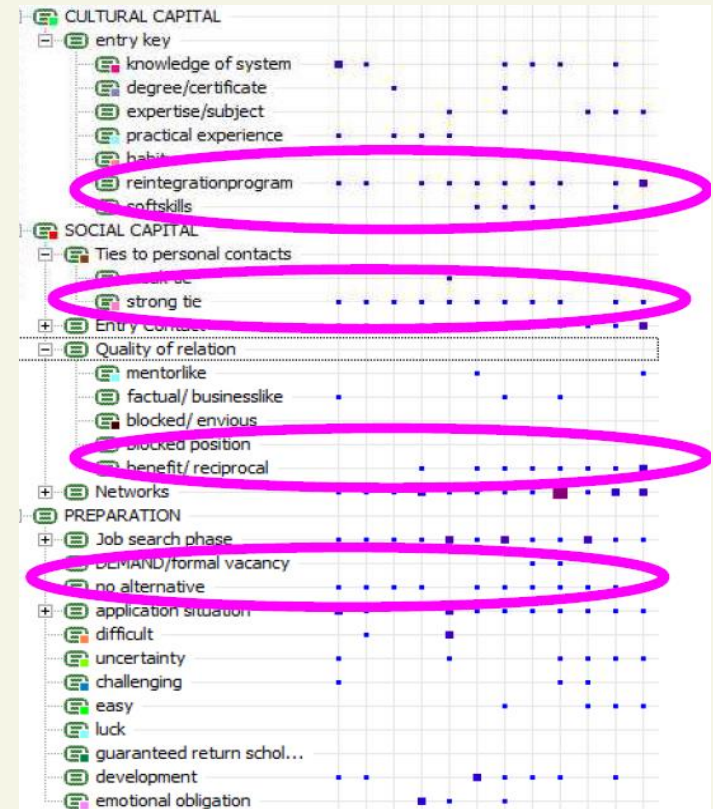
Max QDA analysis



achieving



arranging



Coding and analysis



Category	Dimension	Features
Resources	<i>Personal contact</i>	Family/friend/acquaintance, social status of family, networks
	<i>Education/qualification</i>	work experience, degree, special knowledge
	<i>Financial savings</i>	Work in Germany, access to financial sources (banks, private loans)
Activation	<i>Start before/after return</i>	Security, independence, uncertainty
	<i>Perception</i>	“hell”, “lucky”, “thanks to God”, “no problem”, “challenging”
Country context	<i>Job search duration</i>	0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-12 months, >12 months
	<i>Satisfaction</i>	income situation and application of knowledge/prospects

Source: Own research.