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JULIA BOGER

# THE JOB HUNT

RETURN MIGRATION AND LABOUR MARKET ENTRIES  
OF CAMEROONIAN AND GHANAIAN GRADUATES  
FROM GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

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*Dedicated to Anastasia, Mira and Elvira Holz*

## IMPRESSUM

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## List of Abbreviations

AAAAA	Arbeitskreis Afrikanisch-Asiatischer Akademikerinnen und Akademiker = Working group of African, Asian Academics
AvH	Alexander of Humboldt Association
APA	Arbeitsplatzausstattung = Workplace equipment subsidy
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
AZR	Ausländerzentralregister = Central Register of Foreigners
BA	German Federal Employment Agency
BIGSAS	Bayreuth International Graduate School African Studies
BMZ	German Economic Cooperation and Development
CDG	Carl Duisberg Society
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIM	Centre for International Migration and Development
CMS	Centre for Migration Studies, Ghana
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst = Church Development Service
FSO	German Federal Statistical Office
GARP	Government Assisted Repatriation Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GGAN	Ghanaian-German Alumni-Network
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit formerly GTZ German Society for International Cooperation
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
HIS-HF	Higher Education Information System
HOD	Head of Department
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
KBK	Koordinationsbüro Kamerun = Coordination Office
MDA	Ministry, governmental Department, Agency
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa
MIREM	Migration de Retour au Maghreb
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
NEF	Cameroonian National Employment Fund
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIS	Cameroonian National Institute for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARIC	Programme d'Appui au Retour des Immigrés Camerounais
PCI	Problem-Centred Interview



PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RE	Reintegration programme
REAG	Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany
REP	Returning Expert Programme
R&D	Research and Development
RueckHG	Rueckkehrhilfegesetz = German Assistance Act for Returning Foreigners
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
STUBE	Studienbegleitprogramm = Student Support Programme
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
TRANSREDE	Transnational Migration, Return and Development in West Africa
UIS	United Nation's Institute of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WUS	World University Service
ZAV	Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung = International Placement Service

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## 1. Introduction

The demand for highly skilled labour equipped for an increasing international labour market is constantly growing. This growing international demand for highly qualified staff leads to an increasing mobility of tertiary students which can be seen among students from all over the world (cf. Gülüz 2011, cf. Hazen and Alberts 2013). Currently, an estimated 4.2 million students pursue their tertiary education abroad (OECD 2013: 324).<sup>1</sup> The majority of them are students from the Global South, from developing and transition countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Almost 350,000 are students from the African continent (OECD 2013: 324). In particular, the group of African students is known to be the most mobile, compared to the total number of the African countries' university students (cf. Teichler and Yağcı 2009: 87, cf. World Bank 2010: 69, cf. Chien and Kot 2012: 2). Whereas some of these students from Sub-Saharan Africa enrol at universities in neighbouring countries, the majority (58%) of them seek tertiary education in Northern America and Western Europe (cf. World Bank 2010: 69, cf. UIS 2012: 137). Despite the fact that measures have recently been taken to strengthen the higher education systems within the African continent (cf. Adamu 2012, cf. Chien and Kot 2012: 3), most hope to find a higher quality of tertiary education in the Global North, which they assume will consequently provide them with better job opportunities.

One of the more frequented destination countries in Europe is Germany, because historically it is a front-runner in technological education and offers tuition-free programmes for foreign students. But can these students from African countries who have invested much time and money in their academic training in Germany later apply their specialist knowledge professionally and profitably for this purpose at all? Where do they move to after they complete their studies? How do they get jobs if they return? Are they able to apply what they have learned in Europe/Germany? This study aims to answer these questions and for this purpose concentrates on the example of Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates who studied in Germany. The study pursues two closely intertwined strands of research: one strand investigates the return migration transition in the light of development-related issues. The second strand investigates explicitly the graduates' transition from university to work, their labour market entries.

In Germany, since the Bologna Reforms in the 1990s, study programmes have often been offered in the English language with the intention of increasing the attractiveness for foreign students (Kuptsch 2006: 45). Increasing the attractiveness

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<sup>1</sup> Two major sources exist concerning statistical information about tertiary education. The first is

for international students had become extremely important in the course of growing competitiveness of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) and the German universities seemed to risk to be cut off from the global world and thus lacked international exchange (cf. Ghawami 2002: 27). Today, several programmes explicitly focus on the exchange between German and African scholars,<sup>2</sup> and currently about 20,000 students from the African continent are enrolled at German tertiary institutions according to statistics of the Higher Education Information System (HIS-HF).<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, despite the explicit goal of the German government to establish long term relationships with these foreign students who are regarded as a potential pool for highly skilled workforces and future partners for business collaboration, little is known about these international students and their professional whereabouts (cf. King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003: 230, cf. Bilecen 2009: 5, cf. Nohl et al. 2010: 4, cf. Wolfeil 2012: 23). Even less verified information is available about international students from Sub-Saharan Africa who pursued their education in Western Europe or Northern America and who have returned (cf. Blaud 2001: 12, cf. Martin 2007: 207, cf. Maringe and Carter 2007: 459, cf. Thomas 2008: 653, cf. Günther 2009: 14, cf. Barry 2011: 22).

The fact that the group of students from Sub-Saharan Africa in Western Europe and Northern America and their professional whereabouts remains understudied is surprising. Surprising, because as soon as they complete their studies they belong to the broad group of “highly skilled migrants”, and as such they are treated as agents of development processes (de Haas 2007: 38) within a general debate which is also known under the label of the “Migration Development Nexus” (Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002, Faist and Fauser 2011, Nieswand 2011, Nyberg-Sorensen 2012). This nexus, which will be described in more detail within this study, broadly discusses the question of to what extent South-North migration contributes to development processes in the countries of origin. The debate can be traced back to the 1950s, and research – and more recently policy studies – around this debate

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<sup>2</sup> Programmes that focus on the exchange between German and African scholars include the “Welcome Africa” initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the “Go Africa – Go Germany” programme initiated by former Federal President Dr. Horst Koehler, or the Bayreuth International Graduate School on African Studies (BIGSAS).

<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, the data concerning the students was retrieved through the portal of the Higher Educational Service HIS-HF, which works in cooperation with the DAAD at [www.wissenschaft-welttoffen.de](http://www.wissenschaft-welttoffen.de). For all population statistics I refer to data from the database DESTATIS of the German Federal Statistical Office (FSO). Because the data has been retrieved for various cohorts, I will name the sources throughout as FSO and HIS-HF. For all statistical data I refer exclusively to data for educational foreigners (Bildungsausländer) who achieved their higher education entrance requirements outside Germany in contrast to those who are of the particular nationality but schooled in Germany (Bildungsinländer). For more information about the definitions see the glossary of [www.wissenschaft-welttoffen.de](http://www.wissenschaft-welttoffen.de).

have experienced a revival boom (de Haas 2007: 8). The four main topics of the debate, which often are intertwined and overlapping, are ‘brain gain/brain drain’, the so-called ‘diaspora’<sup>4</sup>, ‘remittances’ and ‘return migration’ (Oucho 2008: 50). The latter, return migration, has been the subject of controversial debate. Whereas initially the return of migrants who went abroad was seen as a potential way to build the young nations (‘brain gain’), this positive notion was soon contested. It was contested, because the outgoing migrants from the Global South increasingly remained abroad due to economic decline and political instability in their home countries. This situation led to the discussion on whether educational migration really brings a gain, or whether in reality it creates the opposite, a ‘brain drain’. This term, pointing at the negative aspects of migration on development, has been discussed since the 1970s (cf. Gutmann 1981: 6, cf. Hillmann and Rudolph 1996: 2ff., cf. Jahr et al. 2001: 14., cf. Langthaler and Hornoff 2008). However, instead of investigating the situation in and for the source countries, research has predominantly concentrated on the immigration processes of foreigners into the societies of the European host countries and has developed theories of integration processes (cf. Esser 1982, cf. Heckmann 1992).

In the context of the contemporary paradigm, that of transnational studies, the link between migration and development has been discussed from a less economically-driven perspective. Today, traditional push and pull models and economic motivations are no longer regarded as the major force shaping migration and its outcome. In this paradigm, the representatives of transnational studies (cf. Glick Schiller et al. 1995) promote the idea that migration is a process which is embedded in social networks and which at the same time also creates social networks, the “transnational spaces” (cf. Pries 1996, cf. Faist 2000). In addition, migration and especially return migration is no longer regarded as necessarily having to be permanent in order to contribute to development. Instead, today the key phrase has become “circular migration” (Vadean and Piracha 2009, Skeldon 2010).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The term “diaspora” derives from “diaspeirein”, the Greek term for being scattered. Initially, the term was solely used in the context of exiled Jews living outside of Israel. Since the 1950s and 1960s there has been a trend to generally use this term to refer to communities living outside their native countries. In the context of Africans living overseas, the term was the subject of controversial discussion in the 1980s (cf. Mayrhofer 2003). Today, “diaspora” is used in this general manner for members of communities who originate from the Global South and live in Northern America and Western Europe. Social anthropologists, such as Krings, claim that the term is used too generally and overtly universally (Krings 2003: 151).

<sup>5</sup> The pattern of cyclic labour migration is not new (cf. Hahn 2004, 2007) but usually appears in the context of intraregional migration. Here it is used in the context of international migration patterns to explain return migration more flexibly.

With regard to migration and development, especially “brain circulation” (Patterson 2007, 2008, 2013) is promoted. This concept comprises the idea that educational migration returns come full circle in the sense that they not only contribute to an individual’s career but also have a positive impact on the source country’s development through knowledge transfers. This has been achieved in many Asian countries where graduates who have studied abroad have returned, invested in specific fields of their home countries’ economies and brought innovations leading to emerging markets (Iredale et al. 2003, Saxenian 2005, Zweig 2006, Pham 2010, Zweig and Han 2010). However, such a success in the context of return migration has not yet been observed in African countries. Instead, return migration to African countries is often said to be too low in volume to stimulate development processes. Moreover, especially highly skilled returning migrants could risk experiencing “brain waste” (Oyelere 2007, Oucho 2008: 62) because they are said to face difficulties in finding adequate employment.

An important question in this regard is whether the return of highly skilled migrants improves the situation in deprived regions in their home countries. This is often questioned because the general perception is that the highly skilled returnees work primarily in the already developed urban centres and have less impact in the deprived rural regions (cf. Skeldon 2005: 33). However, this dualistic perception of rural and urban “as mostly separate spheres existing somehow independently” has been criticised by, among others, Lohnert and Steinbrink (2005: 102). As an alternative, they argue it would be more fruitful applying a more integrated, translocal perspective, as offered by the livelihoods approaches (Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005: 96). In fact, the return migration of highly skilled migrants and the transfer of their knowledge into more rural regions can have an impact on infrastructural development, as for instance the study of Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß (2007) on the case of Polish university graduates who have returned from Germany to less urban regions in Poland suggests. Following this approach, this thesis also traces the geographical whereabouts and mobility patterns of the returning migrants in the context of their professional lives.

Before investigating this geographic aspect, one has to explore the general labour market situation for academics in Sub-Saharan Africa. After a first boom of employment in the public sector following the countries’ independence, graduate employment has become difficult to find in many African countries because the public services were downsized in the course of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the 1970s. From this measure, the countries’ formal labour markets, into which the majority of the graduates eventually intends to integrate, have barely recovered and thus decent work is scarce today. Therefore, university graduates of many African countries currently often work under precarious working conditions outside their field of studies and have to accept underpayment (Majanja 2004: 545, Moleke 2006: 40, Mediebou et al. 2010: 198). In addition, the graduates are said to lack employability because university does not prepare them enough for practical work, which comprises vocational training and computer

skills (cf. World Bank 2009: 44). Aggravating this situation, labour markets in African countries lack transparency. Job searchers as well as employers have little information about each other and employing organisations, especially if these are small organisations in the private sector, lack adequately trained human resource staff to carry out the recruitment process and finances to advertise. In consequence, recruitment through personal contacts and by referrals is much more convenient than formally recruiting and advertising in news papers, radio or the internet (cf. Egbert et al. 2009, Egbert et al. 2010: 12, 15, Ofori and Aryeetey 2011: 48). Therefore, for the job searchers, having the right connections to people who give such referrals and being a member of networks in which job relevant information is circulated are important factors for getting a job. This situation creates even more difficulties for those graduates who have been outside their country and who return from abroad. Having knowledge of these problems and promoting the idea that migration can be managed effectively in order to foster development processes, the German government runs several reintegration programmes that prepare and facilitate development-related reintegration of highly skilled migrants (cf. Hampel 2006).

Despite this additional reintegration support, identifying vacancies in the home countries remains difficult. According to empirically led studies and anecdotal reports, many of those graduates who study abroad fear lacking these contacts and hence are afraid of underpayment and lengthy labour market entries (cf. Fundanga 1989, cf. Osafo 1990: 78, cf. Blaud 2001: 193, cf. Günther 2009: 125, cf. Sieveking and Fauser 2009: 79-80, cf. Barry 2011: 97). However, despite these worries and difficulties, some graduates still return to their home countries, find employment, and start a career. How do they obtain their first employment? Is their qualification and their degree from abroad a factor that assists them in getting a job, and how are personal contacts involved in the job search? Do they make use of their networks, those established in Germany and those they build up at home? Finally, the question is: to what degree, if at all, can graduates apply what they have learned abroad and whether this knowledge transfer leads to the desired impulse for development.



This leads to the second analytical strand of the research: how do the graduates get a job? Indeed, this question has already created a whole research field of its own. Whereas representatives of the human capital theories, started by Mincer in the 1950ies (cf. Mincer 1970) and followed by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962, 1964) argue that qualifications and practical skills are the relevant variables that increase employability, in contrast, proponents of the social network approaches (Boissevain 1964, Granovetter 1973, Burt 1980) claim that it is the individual's "embeddedness" (Granovetter 1985) in a social network that enables people to be successful in life and/or their job search. These approaches claim that through their personal contacts in the network people obtain important information about vacancies or can get referrals. Works like that of Granovetter's "Getting a job" (1995, original in 1974), investigate how strong these relationships actually have to be to become helpful for an individual job seeker to obtain job relevant information. Granovetter's study has been followed by a huge wave of literature about the strength of these "ties" between people involved in the job search (Lin et al. 1981, Bian 1997). Thanks to the works of another important author in the field, Ronald Burt, also the relevance of the position within a given network has been investigated as well as the different structures of competing networks. How information is brokered between networks has been explored in depth (cf. Burt 1980, 1992, 1997, 2000). Due to this notion, that social relations can generate economic profit for the individual person, many studies about job search and labour market transitions, synonymously speak of "social capital" (cf. Jansen 1999: 22, Hinz and Abraham 2008: 51). By using this expression in a more colloquial sense, they refer to authors who coined this sociological term in the context of concepts of social cohesion and connectedness in today's pluralist societies (Coleman 1966, Bourdieu 1983, Bourdieu 1986, Putnam 1995).<sup>6</sup>

However, due to the fact that most, if not all, studies in the field of labour market studies employ a quantitative design (they use probability calculations to measure the position in a network), the complexity of the job search as a social interactive process is neglected and it remains open *how* the individual job searcher actually uses the personal contact as a resource. Therefore this thesis, in order to depict labour market entry in the context of return migration as a process, the concept of the sociologist Bourdieu, his "forms of capital" (1983), has been borrowed and slightly modified in order to describe the labour market transitions of returning migrants in African countries, with the example of the two selected countries Cameroon and Ghana.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The term social capital will be explored in more detail in chapter 3.2 of this study.

<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu's model concerning forms of capital was initially designed to describe and explain social mobility in French society. Due to this flexibility and process-orientation it has become a well-adopted model in the context of network oriented studies on transnational migration.

The decision to analyse the returns of educational migration for Sub-Saharan Africa by comparing the professional reintegration of Cameroonians with that of Ghanaians has three reasons: first, there is a general need for studies comparing sociological phenomenon between African countries (cf. Neubert 2005). How important this actually is, shows the study of Iredale et al. (2003), with the example of a comparative study on return migration to the Asia Pacific. They demonstrate, that whether educational migration is brain drain or brain gain has no single answer and that it needs to be analysed in the context of individuals and by country region (Iredale et al. 2003: 4). For return migration to Sub-Saharan Africa, few researchers have made an attempt to start comparative research (Black et al. 2003a, Cassarino 2008, Ammassari 2009). These studies are impressive examples whose findings are concordant with the assumption that despite country-specific differences, the country context, and political and economic stability, definitely reattract highly skilled elites (cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 184 ff., cf. Cassarino 2008: 23).

Secondly, because of this notion, that political and economic stability influences return migration, Cameroon and Ghana were selected as contrastive cases: Cameroon and Ghana both underwent similar economic developments after independence. Both countries faced economic crisis, at different times, and today their labour markets show high proportions of underemployment and a fast growing informal sector. These economic problems also affect the graduates' employment situation. The graduates' profiles often mismatch the local demand because educational institutions do not adequately prepare students for technical subjects. In consequence, structural unemployment is comparably high in both countries and the labour markets are undersupplied with graduates having technical skills (cf. Mediebou et al. 2010, cf. Ofori and Aryeetey 2011).

This lack of job prospects has led to great emigration flows of young people from both countries. In addition, Cameroon increasingly bears features of a "fragile state" (International Crisis Group 2010) whereas Ghana's democratisation process is developing comparatively better than that of Cameroon's (cf. Elischer 2009). Thirdly, apart from this contrasting political situation, the structure of educational migration from both countries to Germany differs in that during the last decade the numbers of Cameroonian students in Germany has rapidly increased and today they are among the largest groups of foreign students from the Global South. Their educational migration has been said to have developed in a "chain-migration" (Lämmermann 2006) and in consequence, incoming Cameroonian students are a very active group who tend to establish themselves for longer periods in Germany. By being embedded in the host country's social networks as well as in their Cameroonian social networks, this group represents what has been denoted as typically transnational.

In contrast, the Ghanaian students arrive individually. Also, they are much smaller in numbers and their network activities in Germany can barely be recognized these days. In addition, the Ghanaian students in Germany tend to return to Ghana, as has been observed not only for graduates, but for Ghanaians in general who live outside their home country (cf. Ammassari 2009: 93, cf. Quartey 2009: 66). Also, research has recently started on Ghanaian returnees and their possible contributions towards development processes in the Ghanaian economy (cf. Yendaw 2013).

The notion, that return migration to Ghana is increasing, matches anecdotal evidence deriving from my professional background. I work in a German governmental reintegration programme at World University Service (WUS)<sup>8</sup> and in the context of my work have conducted various working visits to both countries where I had the opportunity to meet graduates who had returned and already integrated into the labour markets. The insights gained during these visits show that the Cameroonians tend to see their labour market characterized by relationships, while the Ghanaians, despite the fact that they too refer to the relevance of personal contacts in the job search, seem to find employment based much more on qualification. However, whilst there have been recent attempts to analyse this labour market entry process for Ghanaian returnees (cf. Setrana and Tonah 2013), there is no information about the same process for Cameroonian returnees.

Methodologically, the research locates itself in an interpretative paradigm. The research design was strongly influenced by elements of the Grounded Theory of Glaser and Strauss (2012, original in 1967). In contrast to most migration studies (cf. Castles 2012: 9), this study has a qualitative framework, which has often been recommended for studies that aim at reconstructing multidimensional biographical processes, such as the double transition of return migration and labour market entry (cf. Breckner 2007, cf. Rosenthal 2008: 164, cf. Nohl et al. 2010: 13ff.). Data was produced by conducting Problem-Centred Interviews (PCIs) (Witzel 2000) and making unstructured observations at alumni meetings and seminars during multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus 1995) in Cameroon, Ghana and Germany. The cyclic approach, which was chosen, slightly resembles Knoblauch's "focussed ethnography" (2005). The data production occurred in the course of several short-term cyclical research phases in the period 2008-2011. During these visits in Cameroon and Ghana I conducted altogether 50 interviews with graduates, of whom all have returned, from the so-called STEM fields (science, technology, engineering,

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<sup>8</sup> World University Service (WUS) began as a student relief organisation in Vienna in the 1920s. Today, about 50 committees exist worldwide. The German committee, founded in 1950, concentrates on three core areas: foreign students in Germany, development oriented education and global education (cf. WUS 2000: 5-8). WUS is a partner in the German governmentally supported Returning Expert Programme (REP), since its beginning and was largely involved in designing the measures. The REP will be described in more detail in chapter 2.4.

mathematics). Four follow-up interviews per country with selected persons in each sector gave insights into long-term professional mobility. Earlier, in the exploratory phase, I had conducted several unstructured interviews with students from each country who were in their final year in Germany. I followed the professional whereabouts of four of these students after they graduated during the research phase. Additionally, I conducted 23 interviews with experts (cf. Bogner and Menz 2005, cf. Meuser and Nagel 2009) dealing with the two countries' economic situations, the labour market specifics, and the educational migration and recruitment practices.

Summing up, the contribution of this study to the scholarly debate is threefold. Firstly, by questioning which experiences Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates made in their job hunt upon their return I link up the two aforementioned broad research fields of migration and development with the field of social networks in the job search. By doing so, the study firmly locates itself in the interdisciplinary field of the Migration and Development Nexus. It investigates in how far educational migrants, who are often neglected in the discussion, can leverage their knowledge for development. Secondly, the study contributes to the research field investigating what it actually needs to get a job. For this purpose, a special focus is placed on the migrants' resources, qualifications and personal contacts, and to what extent they use these in their job search. Combining these fields of return migration/ development and labour market entry processes, and investigating both phases from the migrant's perspective makes the study unique. Previous studies concentrated only on the impact on development of returning migrants' performance in the home countries' economies in general, and only touched on the role of their personal contacts in the job search as a side effect of the research but they did not systematically investigate the outcome of using personal contacts in the job search after returning home. Furthermore, by following up the professional trajectories of educational migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries who studied in Germany, the work contributes to the narrow volume of literature on tracer studies of African students who graduated from German universities. However, it is important to note that, in contrast to these tracer studies which concentrate solely on scholarship holders, this study also includes the freemovers, which ensures a less biased selection of the researched group. Finally, this study contributes to policy-related research on return migration because it shows how differently returning graduates from one continent or the Sub-Saharan African region benefit from the same reintegration assistance.

The thesis consists of 10 chapters in all. After this first introductory chapter, chapters 2 and 3 locate the study in the main debate about migration and development and transitions from education to work. Chapter 4 provides the methodological framework. Chapters 5-9 present the findings collected in the field and chapter 10 presents the conclusion. In detail, the chapters are structured as follows:

Chapter 2 introduces the so-called Migration and Development Nexus comprising the four topics brain drain/brain gain, remittances, diaspora and of course return migration. In this context of return migration the chapter discusses the role of student migrants as possible development agents and presents an overview of existing empirical studies on return migration to Sub-Saharan Africa. This overview demonstrates that a gap exists in research on professional reintegration of educational return migrants to African countries. The chapter continues by presenting an overview on governmental reintegration schemes, in particular for the group of the highly skilled migrants in Germany. Finally, an overview on theories that explain return migration follows by pointing out that the migrants' resources have to be activated and as an important theory for the context of this study, a model on preparedness (Cassarino 2004) is explained in detail.

The third chapter is devoted to the question, what actually leads to getting a job? At first, theories on human capital are presented, which argue that it is 'what' a person knows which translate into professional success. An overview of the opposing research strands 'humancapital' versus 'social capital' approaches are then presented. Bourdieu's (1983) concept, which distinguishes different forms of capital, is outlined in this chapter and adapted to the topic of labour market as a helpful schematic approach that plays a leading role in this thesis. Finally, the chapter closes by reviewing existing literature about graduate employment and the transition process in Sub-Saharan African countries. This section reveals a structural mismatch between education and labour market and shows that further contemporary research is missing.

In chapter 4, the underlying research methodology, belonging to an interpretative paradigm, is outlined and the qualitative comparative design explained. After justifying the comparative approach, the chapter discusses how data was produced during the cyclical focused fieldwork, and explains how the Problem-Centred Interviews and expert interviews were conducted. Concerning ethical aspects, the chapter also portrays how I combined my roles as researcher and practitioner in the field of development cooperation and in how far this potentially biased the produced data. Concluding, the steps made to analyse and interpret the collected data are described. This interpretation provides the foundation for the typology of the graduates' diverging labour market entry patterns.

Chapter 5 goes into more detail to justify the selection of the two countries Cameroon and Ghana and provides the country contexts. This section shows that the most obvious difference between Cameroon and Ghana is that Ghana has recently become a successful role model for the whole of West Africa, whereas Cameroon has developed features of a fragile state. Then, it presents the broad differences between the larger and more visible group of Cameroonian students who come to Germany in a chain migration and the group of the Ghanaian educational migrants in Germany, who tend to arrive individually.

The chapter then offers broad estimations on the two groups' return rates in the last decade, clearly showing the trend that far more Ghanaians return directly, in contrast to their Cameroonian counterparts. The reasons might be their home countries' different labour markets, as suggested in the following sub-chapter by presenting the labour markets, job search and the alumni networks in the two countries. In this section, material deriving from the interviews is combined with observations from the field, enriched with available statistical material, and supplemented with existing literature on the topic.

In the following part of the study (chapters 6-9), the findings from the data analysis are presented. Chapter 6 presents the core finding of the labour market entry typology. Four different patterns of labour market entries were identified: 'achieving', 'arranging', 'being sponsored', and 'becoming independent'. The types are explained by providing ostensive evidence from selected interviews and interpreting the interviewees' statements. The four types show major differences concerning the way the graduates activate their personal resources, qualifications, personal contacts and financial savings in the job search. Interestingly, the country comparison shows that more Cameroonians use resource-intensive entry patterns. This difference is explained in the following chapter by the two groups' different use of social capital.

Therefore, chapter 7 explores the different categories of social contacts involved in the job search. In this regard, first the various categories which played leading roles in the interviews are introduced: 'friends', 'family', 'brokers' and 'mentors' and 'being blocked'. The reconstructed labour market entries again show a clear distinction: Cameroonians seem to more often use family and broker contacts in order to job-place them, whereas Ghanaians have a variety of different friend contacts who identify a vacancy for them. Both groups also showed different trends in their networking activities: the group of the Cameroonians actively built artificial self-organised alumni groups which had business-related purposes. Those in the Ghana group already had such natural social relationships and made use of these temporary coalitions during their job search. In consequence, their visible, formal alumni network activities came to a standstill.

Chapter 8 turns to the professional mobility of the interviewed graduates from the labour market perspective, the gender and the regional perspectives. By reconstructing the trajectories of the four followed-up interviews in each country, this section reveals that the interviewed Cameroonians in almost all employing industries face the risk of a 'career set-back', whereas the Ghanaian interviewees, in contrast, are able to use the same low-profile jobs as 'stepping-stones' because the Ghanaian labour market offers them a greater variety of subsequent job opportunities. 'Women's careers', the second part of this chapter, differed not so much between the countries, but more in the women's positions in their life circle. Younger, independent single women faced fewer problems in having a career than their counterparts with a family who had to cope with (their own) classical visions

of an ideal woman, who is firstly responsible for the household and the children, then has to take care of her career. At the same time, women from both countries reported that their educational achievements and their expertise (especially in engineering subjects) had been highly valued in the labour market. Hence, a “glass ceiling” a term coined in the 1970s (cf. Wirth 2001: 1), which metaphorically describes “the invisible barriers that women confront as they approach the top of the corporate hierarchy” (Glass Ceiling Commission 1995: 3), was only partially found. Finally, the chapter shows that ‘regional disparities’ occur in the professional trajectories of job starters in both countries. However, in Cameroon disparities concern the Anglophone/Francophone divide, whereas in Ghana it is the South-North split. In both cases, the graduates who have returned contribute to decentralisation processes only inasmuch as they do it in different ways: Anglophone Cameroonians move to their native region and build micro start-ups, whereas Ghanaians work temporarily in project sites in the northern deprived regions.

The following chapter, chapter 9, compares how Cameroonians and Ghanaians transfer their knowledge and to what extent this contributes to contemporary development processes. The findings suggest that Cameroonians more often act as investors and build the infrastructure in their country. In contrast, the interviewees in the Ghanaian group seemed to apply their knowledge – which, due to the selection criterion of the sample, was in the field of environment and resource management – in already existing institutions and faced less obstacles in entering these institutions. Therefore, the outcome of educational migration upon returning to the source country can, for the Ghanaian group, be regarded as comparably higher.

The findings, drawn together in chapter 10, indicate that primarily country contexts shape the reintegration pattern. This is concluded from the fact that the group of interviewed Cameroonians, who bear many features of the more advantaged transnational migrants (having lived a longer time abroad, speaking two languages fluently, having integrated into the host society), still face comparably high structural obstacles in the course of their return. They are thus forced to invest far more resources in their entry pattern. In contrast, the interviews with the Ghanaian group revealed that their labour market entry patterns were less resource intense. Their profiles matched the labour market demand, because the Ghanaian government had already invested in these fields of natural resource management and thus the need for well-qualified personnel to implement these measures existed. In conclusion, the labour market entry process for Cameroonians is comparably more risky and difficult than that of their Ghanaian counterparts.

On a more theoretical aspect, the findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the outcome of using personal contacts in the job search is far from being homogeneous. The finding that personal contacts and networks play an important role in the job search was predictable. What is surprising, and to my knowledge a new insight so far unaddressed in the literature, is how the job searchers combined this particular resource of personal contacts with their other resources, such as qualification

and money. Also, it is important to differentiate the function of the personal contacts. The interviewed Cameroonians tended to make use of family-related personal contacts who had to guarantee for their kin. At the same time they actively built external networks, their self-organised alumni groups in order to be less dependent on these family contacts. In contrast the Ghanaians were able to simply follow a tip of acquaintances or formerly work-related contacts which they had from before coming to Germany.

In conclusion, regarding suggestions for further research, the study proposes two further comparisons: either a comparison between returning graduates from an African to those to an Asian country, where the country contexts variable differs. The second, an in my opinion more fruitful approach, could be to compare returning migrants to that of non-migrants. A comparison of their labour market entries could reveal whether currently an increase of employability is achieved by obtaining tertiary education abroad.



## 2. Migration and development in Africa

In order to understand the experiences of today's graduates, returning with a degree from Europe to their African home countries, one has to view them in the light of the broader picture of international migration from and to the African continent. Migration, in a wider sense is, according to Lee's definition, "a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act" (1966: 49). Such a "spatial mobility", states Adepoju in his overview on African migrations, "has been a fundamental social and historical aspect in African life" (1995: 87). Already in pre-colonial times, individuals and groups were on the move, overcoming great spatial distances, aiming to achieve food security and escaping from conflicts. With the rise of colonialism, a new chapter of migration history on the African continent started: international trade relations and the transatlantic slave trade resulted in the deportation of millions of Africans overseas during four centuries (1600-1800). The following period of industrialisation in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by a growing demand for raw commodities from the colonies, was the beginning of today's labour migration patterns (cf. Amin 1995, cf. Adepoju 1995: 89-90). During this period capitalist production schemes were introduced, which included a shift from subsistence labour to the concept of hired wage labour and forced recruitment of workers from all over the countries on the worksites, for instance plantations, mines and railway lines (cf. Mandeng 1973, cf. Cooper 1996: 25ff.).

Indeed, bearing in mind this long history of migration on the African continent and observing people's short-term mobility today, for instance in trade relations, it has often been stressed that for most Africans mobility is rather the norm than an exception (cf. Bilger and Kraler 2005: 10, cf. Klute and Hahn 2007: 11). Currently, an estimated 2.5% of the total population in Sub-Saharan Africa are migrants, roughly 22 million people (World Bank 2011a: 33).<sup>9</sup> Most mobility takes place intra-continentially and intra-regionally. It concerns involuntary as well as voluntary border crossings between neighbouring states. Most of those migrants who leave their country or region voluntarily are simply searching for seasonal labour and thus only leave temporarily (cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 18). This form of migration

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<sup>9</sup> Figures about African migration statistics differ depending on the regional scope. The IOM's "World Migration Report" (2011: 62) states that "some 30 million Africans (about 3% of the population) have migrated internationally", referring to the World Bank's "Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011". The latter report presents figures for 2010, claiming that the stock of emigrants from Africa, more precisely Sub-Saharan Africa excluding the Maghreb, was 21.8 million or 2.5% of the population (World Bank 2011a: 33).

includes a repetitive, cyclical return to the home region (cf. Hahn 2004, 2007, Ungruhe 2011), which for some regions has already condensed into the local society creating a “culture of migration” (Klute and Hahn 2007: 13) and hence is not necessarily perceived as migration.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, international migration is of a smaller magnitude comprising not even one quarter of Sub-Saharan Africans moving to the higher-income countries (World Bank 2011a: 33). This South-North migration from Africa to Western Europe and Northern America, receives the greatest attention today and is the topic of this thesis. Two, quite opposing perspectives can be identified: firstly, the host countries tend to perceive this South-North immigration as a potential threat for their social welfare systems.

The media, which can be regarded as an instrument to shape public opinions as well as a mirror of social trends, tends to warn of the negative consequences deriving from this South-North migration (cf. Tsagué 2011a). Therefore, governments of the immigration countries increasingly tighten border controls to prepare against any possible impending mass exodus of undocumented refugees from the African continent (cf. Kohnert 2006: 6ff., cf. de Haas 2008b). This closed border policy for undocumented immigrants is in sharp contrast to the recent approaches of European governments to attract highly skilled migrants through the academic gate in order to pool foreign talents (Abella 2006: 22, cf. Kuptsch 2006). However, concerning the question of how far migration influences development processes, this emigration of the highly skilled is the critical form of migration for the source countries. From the perspective of the source countries, the second of the two perspectives mentioned above, the emigration of their highly skilled citizens has been perceived as a severe loss of qualified labour force in sensitive sectors (Nunn 2005, Adepaju 2008a: 31ff., Fadayomi 2010: 125ff.). One possibility of reversing these negative effects deriving from highly skilled South-North migration policy is that these individuals should be encouraged to return voluntarily to their home countries in Africa (cf. Oucho 2008: 58, cf. Abdellatif 2010: 110, cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 140). The outcome and impact of this voluntary return migration on poverty reduction in the source countries has been very controversial. The debate has undergone an evolution, which is embedded into a broader discussion, often labelled as the Migration Development Nexus.

This nexus and its topics brain drain/brain gain, diaspora, remittances and return migration are focussed in the first chapter (2.1). Sub-chapter 2.2 discusses who these highly skilled supposed agents of change actually are, identifies students as a sub-group and asks if they, as graduates, are likely to return in order to apply in

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<sup>10</sup> Another point why intercontinental mobility in Africa is not perceived as ‘migration’ is because of the fact that these borders are artificial frontiers, drawn up during the Berlin Conference (1884/1885) by their countries’ previous colonial powers, which separates naturally grown social and economic units (cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 18).

their home countries' context what they have learned abroad. This question then leads to the next section (2.3), which presents theoretic models that explain return migration from a theoretical perspective. The traditional push-pull model (Lee 1966) shows why the migrants decide to return. Next, a process-oriented approach focussing on the preparation phase (cf. Winkler 1987, cf. Ghosh 2000, cf. Cassarino 2004) describes how the migrants prepare their return. Finally, a mix of approaches is combined as an analytic tool to find out where precisely, meaning in which contexts, the returning migrants can actually transfer their enhanced knowledge (Iredale et al. 2003, Arthur 2008, Ammassari 2009). If and to what extent these theoretic models capture the reality of contemporary return migration, is shown in the discussion about the existing empirical studies of returning migrants to African countries in section 2.4. This sub-chapter then narrows the focus on studies on returning African graduates from Germany. Finally, the chapter closes in 2.5 by giving an overview of assisted voluntary return migration schemes as an instrument of governments to manage migration flows and to facilitate the return intentions. In Germany, these programmes put the focus on highly skilled migrants or graduates and encourage them to return professionally into fields of development cooperation.

## **2.1 The Migration Development Nexus**

The debate as to what extent international migration flows between the Global South and the rich industrialised countries in the north affects development as aforementioned has been labelled the Migration Development Nexus (cf. Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002, cf. Black and Sward 2008, cf. Faist and Fauser 2011, cf. Nieswand 2011). Since the 1950s this debate about South-North migration and its potential outcomes for poverty reduction and development processes has undergone several phases and has been evaluated with quite opposing outcomes, shifting from optimism to pessimism like a “pendulum” (de Haas 2008a: 1). Consistent, however, are the four, often closely intertwined, main topics of the Migration and Development Nexus. These four topics, which form a “quartet” as Oucho (2008: 50) ironically calls it, are the topic of brain drain/brain gain, the topic of diaspora, remittances and finally, what this study is all about, the topic of return migration (cf. Faist 2007: 7-8, cf.).

The beginning of the nexus can be traced back to the 1950s to 1960s. It started with discussing the topic of the so-called brain drain, which defined the loss of the developing countries' highly skilled elites. This loss had been caused by the large-scale emigration of scholars, scientists and generally skilled persons from the Global South to the industrialised northern countries. Initially, the first group of migrants from the newly independent countries in the Global South were educational migrants. Due to a lack of local tertiary institutions and in need of skilled workforces who could fill the gaps in the young nations' administrations caused by

the departing colonial officers, the governments sent their young elite abroad to study (Adepoju 2008a: 30). The first generations of these educational emigrants returned quite successfully, were absorbed into the public sector and established the countries' elite. Naturally, the source countries perceived these international migration flows, from which they benefited from the enhanced human capital of their highly skilled, as positive. Soon, this enthusiasm cooled and a phase of disillusionment followed, when the source countries' economies started to decline in the 1970s. Investment in the public sectors of the young nations led to an overly inflated public service administration, which in consequence had to be downsized by measures such as the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the Bretton Woods institutions (cf. Adepoju 2008c: 6). Additionally, political conflicts, a fast growing young population, and an increasing lack of income opportunities finally led to large-scale emigration flows from the developing countries (cf. Adepoju 2008c: 12). Since then, international South-North migration has been discussed as affecting development negatively, leading to a permanent loss of the source countries, a "brain drain" (cf. Hillmann and Rudolph 1996: 2, cf. Docquier et al. 2007).<sup>11</sup> The emigration of these highly skilled workforces was even increased by the active recruitment strategies of the European host countries. Therefore, especially the highly skilled workforces, such as medical doctors, nurses, researchers and scholars, went abroad, leaving huge gaps in these sensitive sectors which still exist today (Nyonator and Dovlo 2005, Manuh et al. 2005, cf. Nunn 2005).

Finally, the situation became so severe that the non-aligned states demanded protective counter-measures from the side of the receiving countries and claimed that these richer host countries were morally obliged to reimburse the development and transition countries for this significant loss – not only for their labour market but also for their welfare systems. In consequence, models were created, stipulating the introduction of a taxation scheme to be paid by the host countries as a form of compensation, the so-called Bhagwati-tax (Bhagwati and Rodriguez 1975). For African source countries today, being the region of the world with the comparably highest proportion of emigrating highly skilled workers (cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 115), this approach has been said to be perhaps more relevant than ever but difficult if not impossible to impose and enforce (Oucho 2008: 62, Ratha et al. 2011: 139).

In addition to the new streams of emigrants from the South to the richer countries in the north, those migrants who had already been abroad when the crisis in their African source countries started, increasingly tended to remain permanently but talked about returning in public. In this context, Anwar (1979) initially coined the

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<sup>11</sup> The origins of the term 'brain drain' are said to have been triggered in the mid-1960s by the Royal Society in the UK, when a large number of highly qualified personnel moved to the United States (cf. Hillmann and Rudolph 1996: 2).

term “myth of return” in his study on the Pakistani immigrant community in Great Britain, explaining the fact that many of these migrants are known to maintain their wish to return but actually postpone it from year to year (cf. Wolbert 1995: 26, Nebel 1998: 242, King 2000: 12, 28, Nieswand 2005: 50, Arthur 2008: 150).

These immigrants and their ethnic origins, the so-called ‘diaspora’, are actually the second topic of the Migration and Development quartet. The citizens of countries in the Global South living in the diaspora in the Global North became the subject of research starting in the 1980s. The first studies intended to explain the immigration process from the perspective of the receiving country and hence focussed on the aspect of the migrants’ integration. For instance, the German researchers Esser (1982) followed by Heckmann (1992, 2003) stressed the point that ethnic networks of the immigrants play a major role in their integration. Very broadly speaking, the assumption was that the stronger the degree of their integration, the looser their ties to their ethnic networks become. Finally, by entirely giving up their ethnic communities, the immigrants would be “assimilated” (Esser 1982: 282ff.) into the host country’s society. Heckmann instead promotes an acculturation process (cf. 2003: 73ff.). In slight contrast to Esser he attributes integrating factors to ethnic communities if they do not lead to segmentation and segregation within the ethnic community (cf. Glatzer 2004: 14-15). Both concepts have been contested by transnational research and criticised as being overly exclusive and one-sided (cf. Faist 2000: 208).

Indeed, researchers such as Glick Schiller et al. (1995) pointed out the fact that in the course of globalisation, migrants maintain multiple networks, are interconnected in the home as well as the host countries societies at the same time and that these border crossing networks build a space of their own, the “transnational social spaces” (Pries 1996). Faist (1999, 2000) brings the discourse to an even higher level and calls for policy to implement dual “transnational” citizenship to pay respect to the reality of these migrants’ mobile lives and to facilitate their mobility. Against the background of this transnational paradigm, governments and policy stakeholders started to become interested in the particular impact of this specific group of transnational migrants, especially the various associations that they form abroad (cf. Faist 2008). In Germany, a number of commissioned policy-oriented studies have been conducted on diaspora associations of Sub-Sahara Africans to examine their potential for official development cooperation (cf. Schmelz 2007, 2009, Sieveking et al. 2008, cf. Vollmer and Warnecke 2011, cf. Haase and Mueller 2012). They conclude that many of such self-organised groups of African migrants aim at contributing to the development in their various home countries.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Vollmer and Warnecke (2011: 53) cite a study conducted in 2007 for the state North Rhine-Westphalia, which counted 240 organisations of African migrants.

The motivation for the migrants to work voluntarily without receiving any payment undoubtedly comes from being driven by the wish to ‘give something back to those at home’ (Haase and Mueller 2012: 136). Unfortunately, these self-organised groups often cannot completely realise their potential, due to lack of a stable infrastructure, which is often not included in external project assistance (Haase and Mueller 2012: 134-144, Sieveking et al. 2008: 50, Vollmer and Warnecke 2011: 62). More ambivalent is the role of the diaspora as political lobby groups, taking the opportunity to influence conflicts in their home countries and regions of origin. These migrants engaging politically in the diaspora even sometimes seem to have the potential to become “agents of peace and war” (Warnecke et al. 2007) in their home countries. They openly discuss sensitive issues or enforce their political views by intervening through media or by financing rebel or vigilante groups. Indeed, it seems as if in today’s global world and in the context of the Migration Development Nexus, the migrants’ whereabouts have become irrelevant and from abroad they can invest in various fields – politics, trade, technology, and they also transfer financial capital: the remittances (cf. Adepoju 2008c: 7ff., cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 150).<sup>13</sup>

These remittances, the third topic of the Migration and Development Nexus, are the migrants’ private financial transfers to their families in the home countries. These private monetary transfers have gained increasing attention since the turn of the millennium. A study of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted in 2001 was a milestone in the debate. The study presented data about private money transfers from migrants to their home countries. The magnitude of these transfers and its rapid increase lead to the assumption that these remittances had become a constant source of income which in some cases exceeded the total official flows of the Official Development Aid (ODA) and the countries’ Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) (Sander 2003, Ratha 2005: 157, cf. Quartey and Blankson 2004: 5). Soon the topic had reached an exclusive position in the Migration Development Nexus, being discussed primarily by economists and policy stakeholders as evidence of the positive outcome of international migration flows. Especially for the African continent the volume of these remittances is, according to World Bank economists like Plaza and Ratha (2011: 7), the most “tangible” development aid and the “least controversial link between migration and development”. Indeed, some empirical studies have found that these economic contributions can significantly improve the livelihoods of families and private household welfares in various African countries with special regards to housing, primary education and healthcare (cf. Sander 2003,

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<sup>13</sup> This notion is quite optimistic. Especially the last point, the idea that the highly skilled support their home countries financially, has been contested by several studies that claim that this is the group least likely to send money back home for various reasons (cf. Faini 2007, cf. Niimi et al. 2008).

cf. Quartey and Blankson 2004, cf. Quartey 2006, cf. Quartey 2011, cf. Hertlein and Vadean 2006: 6). These increasing remittances have even influenced the home countries' labour markets: new micro financial institutions have opened up in the financial sector in many African countries leading to job creation (cf. Evina 2009: 24, cf. Quartey 2011: 134). However, other, more critical, studies argue that this money, which has been acquired through extreme hardship by the migrants who often work in menial jobs abroad (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005, Adepoju 2008b: 39), has an inequality-reinforcing impact in the source countries of the migrants: those families having a migrant abroad and receiving remittances already belong to an elite. The additional income of remittances improves their status whereas others, not being able to send a family member abroad, remain poor (cf. Anyanwu 2011). Moreover, the money is used for daily needs, consumer goods, and at least up to 10% for donations to funerals and churches (cf. Adepoju 2008b: 36, cf. Mazzucato et al. 2008: 116). This latter, more moderate, notion about the outcome of remittances suggests that these financial contributions are a useful but no more than a complementary source of income for the private households. Those who promote this perspective argue that this private money only fills the gap of the non-existent welfare systems on behalf of the source countries governments (cf. Kapur 2003: 14ff.) and cannot sustainably tackle the root of underdevelopment and poverty. In addition, obstacles such as bureaucratic hurdles, high fees (cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 73ff.) and the fact that policy stakeholders increasingly seek to exploit these private money flows as part of the ODA has led to critical debates on the topic of remittances (cf. Adepoju 2008b: 37).

Somehow connected to the topic, in a broader sense and less economically oriented, is the research on "social remittances" (Levitt 1998). It is based on the observation that migrants not only remit money but also transfer new practices, and identities according to the values and social norms to which they have been exposed abroad. Levitt was one of the first to do research on this, and further studies referring to her work confirm that today's transnational migrants disseminate these social remittances through modern communication media (Glick Schiller et al. 2004: 8, cf. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 8). An alternative way to transfer financial capital and knowledge other than through remittances and virtual communication channels is through people, in the case where they physically return.

Return migration, the fourth topic in the Migration Development Nexus presented in the context of this study, has been discussed from different perspectives and under distinct theoretical paradigms throughout the evolution of the whole discourse (cf. Cassarino 2004: 254 ff.). Research on this topic has concentrated on distinguishing between several types of return migration, such as involuntary return, voluntary return and the return on a holiday visit (cf. Asiedu 2005). Most recently, in light of the contemporary transnational paradigm, it has been questioned whether return migration necessarily has to be permanent in order to stimulate progress in the source countries and instead indicates that today's transnational

migrants rather migrate circularly<sup>14</sup>, commuting between several locations they perceive as their home at the same time (cf. Olivier 2013).

However, despite all enthusiasm, it must be clearly stated that this group of transnational migrants, who can afford and are legally in a position to commute frequently between their multiple homes, are only a small and privileged group (cf. Lowell and Findlay 2002, cf. Vertovec 2007, cf. Hazen and Alberts 2013). The majority of migrants who return are financially and legally far more restricted. In addition it has been found that most who return intend to settle permanently, starting a family and building a future, including an economic foundation in the home country (cf. Anarfi and Jagare 2005: 5ff.). This form of return migration, permanent return migration for the purpose of settling, is the focus of this study. However, whether this return migration really is sustainable, in the sense that it contributes to development in the home countries, is – again – a controversial point. Very generally speaking, there seems to be a gulf between aspiration and reality: whereas positivists claim that return migrants have the potential to become “agents of change and innovation” (de Haas 2007: 38), critical voices often raise concerns about whether these returning migrants can actually achieve what has been expected of them (cf. King 2000: 23). This controversy has to do with the fact that not all migrants are equal drivers of development, as is now discussed in detail.

## **2.2 Returning migrants: drivers of development?**

This section reviews the part of the Migration Development Nexus literature that deals explicitly with the returning migrants’ impact on development processes. Are all returning migrants originating from the Global South equally able to contribute to their home countries’ development? What actually is perceived as development and who is supposed to tackle this development? This section thus briefly discusses the term development and then highlights early attempts to categorise returning migrants. It continues by touching on geographical and gender aspects and then concludes that the group of highly skilled migrants, which includes students, currently seems to be predestined to foster development processes by stimulating knowledge transfers. Furthermore, the chapter elucidates the fact that the debate about highly skilled returning migrants is discussed from three different perspectives. Mostly, the studies take the perspective of the host and the source countries and only vaguely touch on the perspective of the graduates themselves.

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<sup>14</sup> This circular migration is not to be mistaken for the aforementioned cyclic migration caused by intra-regional and intercontinental seasonal labour migration as, for instance, occurs in some West African societies (cf. Hahn 2004, 2010).



## Development in the context of mobility

Interestingly, the notion of development very often is taken as ‘given’ in the context of the Migration and Development Nexus. As for instance Bakewell (2007) strongly criticises, attempts within this specific field to problematise, or even define, the term ‘development’ in the context of migration issues are rare. Yet, the agents in the field of the Migration and Development Nexus, policy stakeholders, practitioners and researchers as well as the migrants themselves continuously refer to the term development by unanimously assigning it to economical, educational or lately even ecological progress. Therefore, I briefly highlight from where this concept comes and how it seems to relate to international migration and today’s mobility. Initially, the concept of development arose in the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the time of capitalism and industrialisation in Europe and England. The term mainly expressed economical and technological progress which were achieved by rapid changes of production schemes (cf. Kößler 1998). Clearly, the understanding of what development actually is, has been, and still is, is strongly shaped from a Eurocentric and merely from a capitalistic perspective. This viewpoint, that development is connected with resources, such as capital, education and technology increased with the advent of modernisation theories in the 1950s and 1960s. Accordingly, it was thought to be a promising concept to invest in specific less developed countries’ resources, which were subsumed under the term of the ‘Third World’ externally, to stimulate development processes (e.g. Rostow 1971; Inkeles and Smith 1974).

As a reaction on this perspective, the representatives of the dependency theories (e.g. Galtung 1971, Amin 1974) challenged this idea completely in the 1980s. They thought of development and underdevelopment as caused by power plays, capitalism and the exploitation of resources. In their perspective, the world was divided into a periphery-centre model and they assumed that the world’s inequalities were the result of dependencies between these. However, both theoretical approaches had one important weakness in common: they assumed that there is one ‘right’ path towards development, meaning to a better future, and they thus were not able to explain differences within the group of the less developed countries, for instance the rise of the Asian countries (cf. Neubert and Daniel 2012: 2). One decade later, development as a concept was questioned completely. Representatives of the post-development debate, as for instance Escobar (1992), critically questioned these Eurocentric approaches and claimed that the term as well as the concept as such contains hierarchies and inequality in itself. They strongly suggest developing pluralistic and more locally adapted flexible alternative models to that of the current concept of development.

Nevertheless, as had been said, these critically debates about development and its meaning are rare within the Migration and Development Nexus (Bakewell 2007) also because it is led by practitioners and consultants who are supposed to find practical answers to the question of how they can achieve benefits from migration processes best. Again, this often implies a typical modernist “paternalistic” per-

spective on development (Bakewell 2007: 32) that includes the idea that development can and should be stimulated by external forces. These external forces can be either money flows, technical support from more industrialised countries, or by transferring knowledge through experts from the more formally educated Global North. Usually there is an underlying consensus that these experts originate from the Global North. That is, because it often is assumed that migration only takes place from less developed countries, born out of a necessity. People are said to migrate because of a natural catastrophe, famine, economic crisis or due to wars and armed conflicts. The main danger of this perspective is to perceive migration as an indicator for underdevelopment and, in so doing, stigmatize migrants per se as vulnerable and victims who have to be assisted from agents outside, mainly from donor organizations in the Global North, in order to improve their lives (cf. Bakewell 2007).

Only in a few cases is this perspective challenged by studies about return migration of highly skilled migrants and their potential impact upon development processes in their source countries (cf. Gmelch 1987, Iredale et al. 2003). However, to generalise the current dominant opposite view, to perceive migrants - especially returning migrants - as “a silver bullet development ‘fix’” (de Haas 2012: 10) is also overly optimistic. More adequate would be to identify what in particular can be achieved and not achieved by migrants in a certain regional context during a specific period of time in terms of improvements in their source countries’ societies. To explore this, a differentiation between the various kinds of migrants and their resources is helpful.

### **Categories of returning migrants**

In order to understand what kind of development could be fostered through return migration, one has to first differentiate between various groups of returning migrants according to their potential resources. At the beginning of the debate, in the 1970s, most of the typologies on returning migrants differentiated between economically inactive pensioners retirement and those being economically active. The latter type of economically active returnees, which are of interest for this study, are further divided into “innovative” and “conservative” returnees (Bovenkerk 1974: 33ff., Cerase 1974: 258ff., King 1978: 178, 2000: 9ff., Gmelch 1980: 150ff., 1987).

One of the first studies using this terminology in the context of return migration and development was Cerase’s (1974) empirical research on Italian labour migrants returning to their rural home regions. Cerase defines innovative returning migrants as “carrier of social change” (1974: 258). The contrasting type are conservative migrants, by which Cerase means those migrants who only go abroad intending to accumulate financial savings. These conservative returnees invest these savings upon return without having the intention of fostering change proc-

esses, and by doing so they maintain the existing structures (cf. Cerase 1974: 261). In his empirical led study, Cerase observes that especially innovation-oriented returning migrants bear the risk of becoming disillusioned: where they lack sufficient financial savings they have too little influence and are easily blocked by local clientelism to really bring about improving change (1974: 259). Therefore, he concludes, return migration often turns out to be a failure and “only if the returnee’s actions affect the economic structure and the power relations of the community we can say that his return has been innovative” (Cerase 1974: 261).

King’s conclusion about return migration sounds similarly pessimistic when he asserts that “migrants who are potentially most valuable for the home area’s development - those with special industrial and leadership skills - are the least likely to return, for the better educated, more highly skilled adapt better to the emigrant society” (1978: 179). Moreover, he questions whether those who finally return have any sustainable impact on their home countries’ development. He claims they simply “aim at increased social status and social reintegration supported by their savings and working on their own account” and hence they invest into “many independent but marginal enterprises (small farms, shops, service concerns) which are doomed to fade away eventually” (King 1978: 179).

The first approach to contest this economically driven perspective on the outcome of return migration that equates innovation with financial investment is provided by Gmelch (1980, 1987). In his works on return migration to Barbados he points out the possibility that highly skilled returning migrants could become ‘agents of change’ (cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 7). It is one of the first works explicitly referring to the role of educational migrants. Whereas in his first paper he only criticises the fact that the role of the “diffusion of ideas or techniques from migrants to the larger community” (Gmelch 1980: 153) has been neglected so far, he provides empirical evidence in his subsequent paper (Gmelch 1987). In this work, he compares the success of labour migrants to that of returned students in an urban labour market setting. Especially the educational migrants, argues Gmelch, have been able to translate their educational degrees achieved overseas into professional success and have made respectable careers in white-collar jobs where they have transferred new ideas (1987: 138). In contrast, the financial contributions made by the less skilled labour migrants have only activated temporary consumption behaviour and stimulated the construction industry due to the returning labour migrants’ house building activities (Gmelch 1987: 137). The latter finding leads to the next section which examines in which regional contexts the return migrants actually contribute to development processes.

## **Spatial dimension of return migration**

The mobility of return migrants and their professional reintegration also concerns a spatial dimension after returning to their source country. As Skeldon correctly notes:

“In both large and small labour markets in the developing world the skilled are likely to come from urban areas rather than from the poor rural sector where they may be most needed. An internal brain drain exists in most developing countries that is often not considered together with the international movement of the skilled” (2005: 33).

This internal brain drain in the source countries has been touched on already earlier. As early researchers like King (1978: 157) claimed, little is known about the returning migrants’ precise geographical destinations even though, in the context of development and migration, this is especially important to investigate in order to find out if return migration overcomes regional disparities. Lohnert and Steinbrink, among others, criticise the fact that for a long time a merely dualistic perspective between rural and urban development was maintained which treated “the rural and the urban as mostly separate spheres existing somehow independently” (2005: 102). Especially in the context of international return migration, this dichotomised thinking between rural and urban settings has a long history. For instance, Cerase (1974) discusses the return to rural home settings of Italian farmers who had worked abroad in urban centres. Similarly, the comparative study of Lee (1974) on internal migration in the United States indicates that especially people who originate from farms finally return and settle in their rural hometowns.

However, with a growing globalisation researchers increasingly anticipate that especially highly skilled migrants “settle instead in urban areas where employment opportunities are greater and the attractions of city life, to which they had become accustomed, are present” (Gmelch 1980: 139). Since then, researchers have more often taken on the urban perspective. This primarily concerns the housing and livelihood dimension. Most studies come to the conclusion that returning migrants settle in cities because of convenience. By doing so, they are said to speed up urbanisation processes and increase regional disparities between highly developed urban centres and a neglected rural periphery (cf. Smith and Mazzucato 2003, cf. Agyei-Mensah and Owusu 2009: 510, cf. Martin 2005: 247, cf. Kandt 2011: 364).

What is missing in all studies is the question of how far migrants and highly skilled educational return migrants continue to be spatially mobile due to their professional situation upon their return. What has also been neglected is that at least some of those who return might also start moving to regions that are more peripheral. As Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß claim, the geographical dimension of return migration is more complex and thus “cannot be narrowed down to the national capital and few other dynamic cities” (2007: 18). Instead, research should also consider regional disparities of the labour markets. This would, argue the authors,

enhance research on return migration and broaden the scope of how knowledge-based development is achieved (Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß 2007: 23).

## **Gender aspects**

In general, migration flows of women were disregarded in research for a long time. Most studies perceived women's migration simply as family reunification in which women only played a role as accompanying spouses or daughters (cf. Pedraza 1991: 306, cf. Kofman 1999: 272, cf. Heinze 2000: 21, cf. Christou 2003: 1, cf. Docquier et al. 2009: 297). Alternatively, research tended to reflect the situation of female migrants in the context of conflict situations. Hence, women were described as vulnerable and victims of sexual abuse and their physical and moral integrity was questioned.<sup>15</sup> Even today, studies on women who migrate voluntarily and are economically autonomous and productive are very rare. What is more, the majority of these studies concentrate on the immigration process of female migrants into the host country's labour market (cf. Pedraza 1991, cf. Hillmann 1996, cf. Kofman 1999, cf. Granato 2004, cf. Iredale 2005). Very often women are regarded as a disadvantaged immigrant group, structurally excluded from economic activities and lacking access to employment in their host countries' formal labour markets (cf. Iredale 2005: 156). Thus, their professional trajectories are often precarious. They are known to carry out tedious and low paid work mostly in the domestic industry. Such is the unanimous opinion of authors (cf. Pedraza 1991: 315, cf. Hillmann 1996: 193, cf. Kofman 1999: 278, cf. Granato 2004: 46).

Research in the context of the international migration of women often refers to studies which highlight that women who go abroad are reluctant to return. They are likely to remain in their host countries because they fear losing the social freedom and autonomy they gain in their host countries and thus are reluctant to return (Pedraza 1991: 310, Apitzsch 1995: 110-111, Curran and Saguy 2001: 67; Manuh 2003: 155).<sup>16</sup> This fear somehow is justified if one reads the study of Gmelch and

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<sup>15</sup> Anarfi (1993), for instance, points at the significant increase in the spreading of the HIV/AIDS disease through migration processes, especially caused by prostitution. Kastner (2007) describes the difficulties in the lives of single Nigerian mothers in her research on undocumented migration from Nigeria to Europe and how they use their motherhood to reach a legalised residence status: "My baby is my paper!". Alpes (2008) also highlights the dangers and difficulties of female migrations in the context of their sexuality and criticises the negative stigmatising of female migrants from West African countries who are involved in human trafficking.

<sup>16</sup> For the African context, Manuh (2003: 155) highlights that this women's fear of having to readjust to patriarchal social structures strongly concerns polygyny. Whereas men would reassert their dominance by maintaining further relationships with other women upon return, women were worried that they will be exposed to such practices again. An example is the case of "Aida" in Günther's study on students from West Guinea in Germany. Aida is afraid to return because she enjoyed her liberal life in Germany and fears being married upon her return (2009: 112).

Gmelch (1995), which is a three-country survey on female migrants who returned to their home countries Barbados, Ireland and Newfoundland. The authors state that those women who went abroad as labour migrants and finally returned, show a greater dissatisfaction because back home they only have limited employment opportunities. Thus, they are often forced into early retirement and these previously very successful businesswomen suddenly have to readopt to limiting traditional roles upon their return. In consequence, they become bored, isolated and feel “trapped in their homes” (Gmelch and Gmelch 1995: 472). Christou (2003), who writes in an article based on empirical data about Greek women who returned from the United States, also describes these women as somehow caught between traditional ideal images and their own migration experiences. What is remarkable is that these women describe themselves as “good mothers, good wives, (...) and obedient daughters” (Christou 2003: 4) and that they tend to describe themselves as torn between traditional female roles as mothers and wives and the wish for individual self-realisation and having a career. This impression has been confirmed by studies investigating the socio-economic situation of female return migrants to Sub-Saharan Africa, too (cf. Martin 2005: 288). These migrant women have this balancing process in common with most highly educated women (cf. Wurster 1996, cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 183).

Even though a number of studies explicitly examines the topic of return migration from a gender perspective (Gmelch and Gmelch 1995, Heinze 2000, Christou 2003, Martin 2005), they barely touch on the professional dimension of female migrants upon their return. An exception is the qualitative gender study of Sri Tharan (2009) on the return of Filipino women migrant workers. Sri Tharan describes how these women went abroad to work as nurses or as domestics and finds that the returned women attained a high social status in their communities thanks to their migration experience by being the main breadwinners and sending remittances to their families (Sri Tharan 2009: 219). Sri Tharan also finds that this empowerment is limited and it primarily highlights the impact of the monetary remittances: instead, the professional careers of these women remain on a lower status. The work they had to carry out in the host countries was unskilled, menial and domestic. Back in the Philippines, their professional reintegration was often unsuccessful too, because of “age, the deskilling that has taken place and the lack of job opportunities and the patronage system in the Philippine political life distorting the merit system in the civil service” (Sri Tharan 2009: 165). It is important to keep in mind that this study focuses on labour migrants who return at retirement age. This is different from the case of highly skilled educational migrants, as the next section reveals. These educational migrants are likely to return more immediately after their studies.

## **Economic development versus knowledge transfers**

As is somewhat evident in the previous sections, the notion of development against the background of most studies on return migration, often still anchors in an evolutionary paradigm. These studies perceive development and poverty reduction as depending on industrialisation and economic growth, and, accordingly, return migrants achieving an impact on development by economic productive investment, as “agents of economic growth” (de Haas 2008a: 24, Awumbila 2008: 56). This notion of migrants being economical developers has shifted slightly, but not entirely, since the 1980s. Since then, against the background of increasingly knowledge-based economies, researchers and policy makers see development achieved by knowledge transfers. Researchers with this notion of development in mind point out that especially highly-skilled migrants have this kind of development-related knowledge, which they could transfer upon return (Hillmann and Rudolph 1996: 1, Meyer and Brown 1999, OECD 2002, Solimano and Avanzini 2010: 2).

Actually, the term ‘highly skilled’ comprises a number of persons in different positions, as the following definition shows:

“(...) men and women with a broad range of educational and occupational backgrounds; university students, nurses, information-technology (IT) specialists, researchers, business executives and managers, and intra-company transferees (...)” (OECD 2002: 2).

Despite the variety of groups referred to as ‘highly skilled’, there is a unanimous consensus that students and postgraduate students are an important sub-group (cf. Hillmann and Rudolph 1996: 3, cf. Meyer and Brown 1999: 5, cf. Vertovec 2002: 2, cf. Iredale 2001: 10, cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 6, cf. Bilecen 2009: 7, cf. Istaiteyeh 2011: 13, cf. Wolfeil 2012: 66). The pool of these educational migrants, potential development agents, grows steadily as statistics about international educational migration show: in 2008 more than 2.9 million students pursued their tertiary education outside their country of origin (UIS 2010: 181). The amount increased over two years by about 20%: in 2010 about 3.5 million students went abroad. About 60% of them were students from countries of the Global South, of whom the majority enrolled at tertiary institutions in Northern America and Western Europe (UIS 2012: 130).

Today’s view on this group, the group of the educational migrants, is strongly supported by the transnationalisation debate and led by the idea that scholars and academics build networks through which they pass on their knowledge to new technologies and become a “scientific diaspora” (Meyer and Brown 1999, OECD 2002: 6). Bilecen notes in a reviewing paper on student migrants that these educational migrants

“conciliate transnational social spaces across boundaries and form social networks in order to maintain social, familial, economic, religious, and political relations with contexts of origin. Analyzing the mobility of international doctoral students by a transnational lens remarks the idea that they are in fact living in oscillating worlds at the crossroads of the economic, political, social, personal and academic contexts of different nation-states” (Bilecen 2009: 10).

Similarly, Bauschke-Urban (2010), who conducted an empirical qualitative case study on a global virtual network of women scientists in Germany, stresses the importance of the academics’ transnational biographies (2010: 270). The study supports the claim that has been made by previous studies, that highly skilled migrants are extremely mobile (cf. King and Ruiz-Gelices 2003: 246, cf. Bauschke-Urban 2010: 258, Wolfeil 2012: 81-82). Because of this high mobility, argues Vertovec, the movement of students should “be seen as an integral part of transnational migration systems, not least because the networks they forge often lay the tracks of future skilled labour circulation” (2002: 13).

However, one has to put this positive rhetoric of highly skilled migrants remaining in their host countries into perspective: the debate is led from the side of the host countries in Europe, whose economies actually would benefit from the knowledge transfers of these highly skilled migrants. Especially the northern European countries are compelled to recruit young talents and highly qualified migrants, in view of the forthcoming demographic change in their home countries’ economies and the projected skills shortages in the labour market. In some countries these students from developing and transition countries are even regarded as paying customers (cf. Overwien 2009: 113). Hence, the host countries in the Global North are “competing for global talent” (Kuptsch and Pang 2006). Internationalisation measures, such as the Bologna reforms in 1998/1999, are to be seen in this light, too. The Bologna framework has been implemented to harmonise the administrative and regulative framework of tertiary education throughout Europe, which in consequence should guarantee a higher degree of students’ mobility. In this context Germany started offering English master degree programmes and postgraduate courses especially targeting development issues in order to raise the attractiveness of German universities for students from Anglophone developing countries (Kuptsch 2006: 45, DAAD 2013).<sup>17</sup>

Very different is the way the source countries’ governments receive their highly skilled upon return. For instance, the governments of many Asian countries like

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<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, no complete list exists to date about these development-related programmes in Germany. The overview, provided by DAAD (<http://www.daad.de/development>) only mentions those programmes which are currently financed by DAAD, excluding for instance the well-attended programme on Environmental and Resource Management at the BTU-Cottbus).



China, India and Taiwan actively encourage graduates to return and offer job placement as well as financial investment opportunities. In consequence, the return of their students has led to a number of verified large-scale success stories in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ITC) (cf. Saxenian 2005, cf. Zweig 2006). African governments, in contrast, only slowly start implementing policies to attract their highly skilled to return and facilitate their investments as entrepreneurs, and seem to have become only aware of the financial potential deriving from the remittances of their nationals living in the diaspora (Adepoju 2008b: 35ff., cf. Pac 2012). In the light of the brain drain debate, which was discussed in the previous chapter, this lack of interest on the part of most African governments in their highly skilled is surprising. However, Patterson makes an interesting claim in this regard by emphasising that African nations could become tomorrow's world leaders in the field of ecology through the 'brain circulation' and return migration of graduates in the subjects of renewable energies and alike (2007, 2008, 2013). As has been mentioned (cf. chapter 2.1), this particular kind of knowledge which integrates social, economic and ecological aspects also refers to another perception on development: that of "sustainable development" (cf. Kößler 1998: 176ff.). This paradigm surfaced in the late 1980s and emphasises a holistic development, including a safe and intact environment. Today, the concept of a "green economy" (UNEP 2011) is promoted, which comprises economic growth and includes the opportunity to create decent workplaces in these emerging highly knowledge-based industries (UNEP 2008, ITUC 2012). This notion on development is especially important for many African countries because their economies are based on exporting raw commodities and natural resources. The exploitation of these raw commodities creates pollution, soil erosion and causes long-term harm to the local natural environment and the population in these areas. Thus, resource-rich countries like Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa have mainstreamed the agenda of "green economy" into their poverty reduction policies (cf. Farouk 2012).

Finally, the debate on highly skilled migration and on the impact on the development of the migrants' source countries has to be seen from the perspective of the educational migrants, students and graduates themselves. Do they intend to return and do they perceive themselves as 'change agents'? Most of the students from developing countries who enrol in European universities simply aim to improve their employability by achieving a tertiary degree in a particular subject and obtaining a high quality education (Sykes and Chaoimh 2012: 36). Where do they plan to apply what they learn abroad and how will it be of benefit for their home country?

In general, those students from developing countries who receive scholarships, which in Germany is a minority of about 20-25% (Hampel 2006: 8, Isserstedt and Kandulla 2010: 24), are most likely to return because they are obliged to do so as a part of most scholarship regulations (cf. Glaser and Habers 1974: 237). The rest of the graduates, the so-called 'freemovers', can theoretically choose.

In fact, depending on the particular host country, the student's visa automatically expires on the day of their graduation and hence they have to make a choice before completing their studies (Sykes and Chaoimh 2012: 17). Their decision making process over the pending question 'should I stay or should I go?' is led by a broad mixture of factors (cf. Achinger 1993: 131, cf. Nebel 1998, cf. Schmelz 2004: 123, cf. ESG 2006, cf. Günther 2009: 88, Wolfeil 2012: 211, cf. Ayazi 2013). Emotionally, these students from developing countries often express their wish to return to see their families and friends (cf. Glaser and Habers 1974: 239, cf. Nebel 1998: 457, cf. Barry 2011: 124-128, cf. Wolfeil 2012: 97, 213). However, the students also base their decisions on their economic situation and weigh up their prospects in the host as well as in the home country (cf. Glaser and Habers 1974: 239, Günther 2009: 87, 91, Barry 2011: 119-124). Sometimes the limitations they face during the decision making process are in sharp contrast to the aforementioned notion that the group of the highly skilled, who are often overly generalised as 'transnational' migrants, are entirely unrestricted in mobility.

The reality is that many graduates from developing countries face several restrictions. In the worst cases they cannot return due to political conflicts and war in their home countries and are suddenly trapped in their host countries. Aggravating this situation is the fact that professional integration into the host countries' labour markets is not always easy. A large-scale survey in five European countries conducted by the German Council of Integration and Migration Advisors reveals that two thirds of international students in Europe would like to work for a couple of years after graduation in order to achieve international work experience. In fact, only a third of these students actually remain in their host country after completing their studies. The majority of two thirds continues to migrate to another country or return home because their visa expires and they do not have sufficient information about requirements they have to fulfil in order to change their status from student to worker (Sykes and Chaoimh 2012: 4, 51).

In addition, contradicting the fact that European governments have discovered foreign students to be a potential labour force reserve, students still face problems obtaining decent work in their field of studies (OECD 2002: 5, Kuptsch 2006: 48-50). Especially highly skilled Africans are often said to have difficulties in finding decent work in their European host countries due to structural racism, which about 35% of foreign students from the Global South experienced as students (cf. Jäger 2002: 103) or because of the language barrier. Hence, in the case where these highly skilled, who have been sought after by European universities and the governments, obtain only menial work below their qualification, they finally face the dangers of a potential "brain waste" (Nebel 1998: 236, 524, Baraulina et al. 2008: 30, cf. Elwert and Elwert 2011, cf. Ratha et al. 2011: 124). In consequence, they face difficulties in accumulating sufficient financial savings and acquiring international work experience. Whether and how these highly skilled African graduates finally make up their mind to return is often neglected in empirical research on return migration, as will be shown in the next section.

### 2.3 Empirical studies on return

In general, studies on return migration have caught up and the subject is no longer underrepresented in migration studies, as criticised by previous authors (cf. Gmelch 1980: 135, King 2000: 7). Since the turn of the millennium, driven by the re-established interest in the link between migration and development, a number of studies have emerged. This increase can also be seen in Carling et al.'s "Systematic bibliography on return migration", amounting to over 1,100 works on return migration (2011: 2). Nevertheless, research on return to African countries remains a small field: only about 160 titles are about return migration to Sub-Saharan African countries (Carling et al. 2011: 258-265).<sup>18</sup> These existing studies can be divided into three different groups. A number of works, which are not taken into account in the following paragraphs, deal with involuntary return, such as the repatriation and deportation of refugees.<sup>19</sup> Another group, led by geographers and sociologists, deals with returning migrants as entrepreneurs in the context of development and a third group, development-oriented social anthropologists and sociologists, investigates return migration of graduates.

Examples of studies among the first group, which focus on the role of African migrants returning as entrepreneurs, are the two large-scale and mixed-method surveys of the TRANSREDE projects and the MIREM. The TRANSREDE (Transnational Migration, Return and Development in West Africa)<sup>20</sup> research project was carried out during the period 2001-2003. The survey investigates the economic situation of 304 less skilled and elite Ghanaians compared to their 300 Ivorian counterparts. The dominant notion is that the entrepreneurs, who have been able to accumulate savings which they invest upon return to set up micro and small businesses, are the drivers of change (cf. Ammassari 2003, 2005, Black et al. 2003a: 11, 2003b, Tiemoko 2003a, 2004, 2005, Black and Castaldo 2009). The ripple effects of these entrepreneurial investments are job creation and infrastructural development. If the papers refer to knowledge transfers, they remain more general (Black et al. 2003b: 10) and only a few works precisely detail what actu-

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<sup>18</sup> This bibliography of Carling et al. (2011) only provides an orientation. It lacks grey literature and the bibliography counts some titles, the comparative works that deal with two countries, twice (e.g. works on Ivory Coast and Ghana).

<sup>19</sup> An example of a study in this category on involuntary return is Mensah's (2012) master thesis about Ghanaian labour migrants being forced to leave their former host country, Libya, due to the NATO's intervention in 2011. Mensah investigates the local whereabouts of some of these migrants who have been returned by the assistance of IOM reintegration schemes (2012: 86).

<sup>20</sup> The TRANSREDE Research Project was a collaborative project between the Sussex Centre for Migration Research (SCMR) at the University of Sussex, the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and the Institute for Social, Statistical and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana.

ally has been transferred (cf. Ammassari 2009: 263 ff.). Finally, the authors of the study make an overly generalising claim that “education abroad was not a significant factor in influencing whether returnees got good jobs back home” (Black et al. 2003a: 16). Unfortunately, the main paper of Black et al. comprising the findings of the study fails to explain why education has not resulted in better career opportunities.

A similar approach to compare the economic achievements, mainly the income and investments, of voluntary and involuntary return migrants is found in the study “Migration de Retour au Maghreb, MIREM” (2005-2008). It is a large-scale comparative survey on 992 return migrants to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Cassarino 2008). The proportion of employees (about 28%) is almost equal to that of the entrepreneurs (almost 29%). Nevertheless, the study clearly promotes the importance of the entrepreneurial returnee who sets up businesses and creates jobs as an investor (Cassarino 2008: 22-23). Again, the returning migrants’ contributions to development are only measured by their economic status as investors, and development is understood merely as economic growth (Cassarino 2008: 24). A slightly different comparative perspective is presented in the paper of Thomas (2008) for the country case of Uganda. He compares the professional performance of migrants who returned to Uganda from another country with the performance of non-migrants and immigrants of other nationalities. Thomas’ study, for which he uses data already aggregated from an official Ugandan population census, including 9,232 returning migrants, shows that the returning migrants with university degrees were most likely to secure work (2008: 668). How the returning migrants secured their jobs and how far they actually contributed to development, remains open.

Another gap, regarding the question of how labour market entries have been managed, becomes evident regarding studies about African graduates who return from overseas. In Germany, the number of Africans graduating from higher educational institutes has more than doubled within the last decade (2000-2010). In total 18,619 students from African countries graduated during this period (HIS-HF). Concerning their lives in Germany, only a few studies exist (Haferkamp 1989, Achinger 1993, Nebel 1998, Schmelz 2004, Günther 2009). Haferkamp’s study deals primarily with Ghanaian educational migrants who came to Germany during the times of Ghana’s recession in the 1980s. She describes how torn the students feel between their wish to return and the challenges they foresee at home if they really did return. In contrast to this situation in West Germany, Achinger (1993) investigates the conditions of African students in the eastern part of Germany before and after the fall of the wall. Her mixed method survey shows that the students lack social integration, often face racist discrimination and that they perceive their return preparations as important (Achinger 1993: 20). The work of Schmelz (2004) presents unstructured narrations from 20 educational migrants from African and Asian countries living in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR).

More detailed is the in-depth analysis of Nebel (1998), who compares the impact of African academics on development in Germany to those in France. The study reveals that the migrants' contribution to their home countries development does not so much depend on the question of returning or remaining, but on the degree of their integration and participation in social life in the host and the home country. The better the integration, concludes Nebel's study, the higher the propensity to engage actively in development projects (Nebel 1998: 499). However, whether the contributions made in the emigration or the home country's context are more important for the development remains unclear (Nebel 1998: 502). Günther (2009) investigates the situation of West African students originating from Guinea from a biographical perspective in which she correlates the migration histories with her respondents' adolescence. Finally, what all these listed studies have more or less in common is that they criticise the fact that these students often face difficulties in Germany obtaining decent work after graduation (Haferkamp 1989: 16, Nebel 1998: 403, Schmelz 2004: 107, Günther 2009: 250, cf. Wolfeil on the case of Polish students 2012: 322).

Only few studies investigate the whereabouts of African graduates who complete their studies in European countries. Most of these studies are partially classical tracer studies, which not only comprise African students but students from developing countries in general, primarily scholarship holders. These tracer studies, carried out on behalf of the donor organisations, started in the 1970s with the emergence of the brain-drain debate. As the literature review of Bovenkerk (1974: 26-27) shows, these early studies are principally quantitative, large-scale surveys. Bovenkerk suggests they present "massive evidence on the enormous personal problems returning migrants encounter upon homecoming" (1974: 26). However, Bovenkerk vaguely touches on why personal problems arise after returning home: "because there was no work" (1974: 27). Another survey, which points in this direction, is that of Glaser and Habers (1974) including aggregated data about 6,000 students from developing countries enrolling in the three industrial countries, Canada, the U.S. and France. About 280 persons in the sample originated from African countries. An interesting finding of the survey is that those students with a clear focus on academic motivations only went abroad temporarily. Those who went because of academic benefits and also to escape economic decline and political restrictions in their home countries were less likely to return. Moreover, scholarships made the return more likely than being funded privately. Generally, strong pull factors were families and personal ties, whereas the labour market situation created the greatest obstacles for a permanent return: finding good enough jobs and relationships with superiors (Glaser and Habers 1974: 240). Karger's study (1973) presents a similar finding. It focuses on the situation of African students returning from Germany. Karger uses secondary data provided by a survey of the scholarship organisation of the Carl Duisberg Society (CDG) on 571 graduates from 19 different African countries (1973: 175).

In his summary of the results Karger clearly states that finding employment that matches the profile of the returning graduate is the most difficult part of reintegration. One quarter of the interviewees had experienced search unemployment upon their return (Karger 1973: 176). Therefore, the paper strongly promotes implementing reintegration instruments, especially to install job placement assistance and to support the self-help approaches of local alumni groups (Karger 1973: 186).

Winkler's study (1987) has a qualitative design. This study has already been touched on briefly in the previous section (2.3) in the context of the theoretic explanations for return migration. Winkler conducted the study with a mixed country and regional sample of graduates who had returned from Germany to Asia, Africa and Latin America (n=300). About 19% (n= 53) originated from 18 different African countries, the majority from Nigeria and Ghana. His raw data comprises a corpus of about 985 letters, postcards and notes (Winkler 1987: 203). This biographical documentary method<sup>21</sup> resembles the early works of Polish researchers examining migration processes, although he does not directly refer to these approaches. Through these documents he reconstructs the distinct phases of reintegration and provides first glimpses into the experiences of the returning graduates during their job search: colleagues search for jobs for the returning graduates and bureaucracy prolongs the labour market entry. The longer this process lasts, the more challenging the time is perceived, and in their written testimonies the returning graduates express their anger and frustration about this fact (Winkler 1987: 215-216).

However, it is unclear if today's students who return go through the same process, because only a few contemporary studies exist.<sup>22</sup> Among these is a tracer study on students graduating from development-related programmes in Austria (Zauner et al. 1996) also evaluates a postgraduate programme in the tourism industry for Ugandan students. It reveals an interesting detail: although the surveyed students (n=23) already had employment prior to their study leave of two years and thus thought they had a guaranteed job upon return, they faced serious problems concerning their re-employment. Especially the public services had problems paying these highly qualified employees and – the survey was conducted in the 1990s – the public sector employment had just been drastically downsized (Zauner et al. 1996: 54). A more recent study is the tracer study of Schraven et al. (2011) on doctorate graduates from the school of the “Bonn Interdisciplinary Graduate

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<sup>21</sup> For more information about the biographic method cf. chapter 4.2.

<sup>22</sup> Currently, a DAAD study at TU-Dortmund is underway (Bauschke-Urban et al. 2012). It is a longitudinal analysis and will focus on biographies of students from the Global South. The results will be extremely interesting, because it includes details about the job finding process in the home countries, too. Nevertheless, it is clear that, again, only the privileged group of the scholarship holders is being investigated.

School for Development Research“ (BiGS-DR) at the Centre for Development Research (ZEF). The study surveyed the whereabouts of 60 graduates of the ZEF from 16 different African countries (Schraven et al. 2011: 298). The survey stated quite positively that 80% had obtained a workplace upon their return and that the number increased for those who had secured work in international organisations (Schraven et al. 2011: 303). Similarly, a tracer study was conducted on the whereabouts of 3,499 graduates from the University of Oldenburg belonging to the cohorts 1998, 2004 and 2011. One quarter of the graduates who returned originated from Sub-Saharan Africa (Golba 2012, DAAD 2013: 19). The results are also very optimistic: about 83% of the returned graduates found employment upon their return (DAAD 2013: 34). However, because these tracer studies primarily surveyed scholarship holders (Schraven et al. 2011: 311, DAAD 2013: 18) they cannot represent the group of African students in Germany, because in this group, as has already been stated earlier, only 8-9% hold a scholarship (Isserstedt and Link 2008: 19, Isserstedt and Kandulla 2010: 25). Having a scholarship not only makes these students financially privileged over those who have to work alongside their studies and who hence have less opportunities to save money and study quickly, but moreover, due to scholarship regulations, these students coming on scholarship are a particular selection. They are those students, postgraduate students, who already have employment in their home countries and are only on ‘study leave’ and hence face no problematic labour market entry transition (Schraven et al. 2011: 302). Hence, these studies clearly are biased, because they present a group that is likely to return.

Further sources of tracing foreign students who have graduated in Germany are provided by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in cooperation with the Institute for Higher Education (HIS-HF) in the annually published series “Facts and Figures on the International Nature of Studies and Research in Germany”.<sup>23</sup> These annual large-scale surveys primarily use standardised methods and they are not able to capture the trajectories of student migrants at large, to outline their professional and personal biographies in a holistic view.

A number of qualitative studies provide such a more holistic and actor-centred perspective, which interestingly have a regional focus on returning Ghanaian graduates (Martin 2005, Bochmann et al. 2008, Bochmann and Daroussis 2011, Olivier 2011). These studies share a commonality in that they concentrate on the social aspects in the reintegration process and identify the transition phase as emotionally stressful – also because the graduates had to find jobs. Three works on Ghanaian returning graduates are mentioned in this regard: one of the leading

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<sup>23</sup> For more information about the HIS-HF and DAAD data see <http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/publikation>.

works is the qualitative study of Martin (2005), who developed a generation typology by embedding the biographies of Ghanaian graduates who returned from their studies in Germany into the socio-economic and historic country context. Although this generation model was developed for the case of returning Ghanaians it may also be applicable for graduates returning to other countries, depending on their countries' economic situation.<sup>24</sup> Her typology is broadly divided into three generations: firstly the post-independence generation of educational migrants during the late 1960s to 1970s who were keen to return after graduation because of the various open positions in the public sector (Martin 2005: 154). Despite their often very long sojourn of 10-18 years abroad (Martin 2005: 147), they returned to "build the country" (Martin 2005: 153). The subsequent two generations (1970-1980, 1980-1990) increasingly faced problems in finding jobs in the saturated labour markets, due to the economic decline and the downsizing of the public services. These last two generations of returning migrants had to be far more flexible than the previous generation in order to make their living in the private sector. Therefore, many who returned at that time started their own businesses (Martin 2005: 223 ff.).<sup>25</sup> In general, Martin identifies the time at return as socio-economically and emotionally most challenging (2005: 295).<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, the field studies of Bochmann et al. (2008) and Olivier (2011) identify the initial phase of return as time of crisis or at least as difficult because of socio-economic difficulties and the migrant's worries about their professional future: will they get a job? In this context, the authors of these studies point out the role that governmental reintegration assistance and officially organised social networks have as support during this phase (cf. Bochmann et al. 2008: 34ff, cf. Olivier 2011: 333). These reintegration assistance schemes are the topic of the next section.

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<sup>24</sup> For the case of Iranian returning educational migrants, Ayazi (2013) applies a similar generation model.

<sup>25</sup> Black et al. (2003a: 7-8) also refer to the fact that the "younger" generation of returnees face more problems, than the "older". Their categorisation of "old" and "young" is somehow misleading, because it could be read as if the pure age is meant and not the time of return, which would be more precisely distinguished into 'recently' or 'long ago'.

<sup>26</sup> Concerning the notion of return migration being a transition process that might include phases of crisis, Martin (2005) also notes that migration can be examined from a more psychological perspective, as for instance Schütz did in his tale of the homecomer or as the works on "status passages" by social anthropologists Turner, van Gennep suggest (2005: 24).



## 2.4 Managing return migration

Since the 1970s European governments have started to manage migration by offering reintegration assistance for those immigrants who intend to return voluntarily.<sup>27</sup> Broadly, three different kinds of reintegration schemes can be distinguished: first, humanitarian reintegration support for refugees. Currently, European and Northern American governments increasingly adopt this first type of reintegration schemes as a countermeasure against undocumented immigration and to improve immigration regulations and border controls. These Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) schemes offer financial incentives of various amounts with the goal of encouraging the return of undocumented immigrants, rejected asylum seekers, immigrants who are about to overstay their visa, and refugees to leave for their home country. Black et al. (2011: 2) note that at least 128 different of these “pay-to-go” schemes exist worldwide. They have become increasingly popular because they are more cost effective and the return is more durable and less inhumane than through forced deportation (cf. Ghosh 2000: 209, cf. Black et al. 2004: 2, cf. IOM 2004: 7, cf. Kreienbrink 2007: 69, cf. EMN 2007: 4, cf. Black et al. 2011: 3).<sup>28</sup>

Among the second group are programmes providing return assistance for labour migrants. This category of programmes, reintegration schemes supporting the return of labour migrants, started in the 1980s. After World War II many European countries attracted labour migrants from a number of southern European and North African countries to fill their large labour gaps in the manufacturing industry.<sup>29</sup> However, the idea that these workers would come, work and leave after some years again, did not work out. The contrary was the case, and instead of returning the guest workers settled and invited their families to join them in Europe (Dustmann 1996: 216-217, Currell 2006: 19-20). This increase of less highly skilled labour immigrants and their joining families who often originated from the more remote rural areas in their home countries started to cause problems when the economic boom in Europe was replaced by the global recession in 1973, induced by the world oil crisis. Due to this crisis and the fact that, by then, European labour mar-

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<sup>27</sup> Cassarino notes correctly that “decided or chosen return should not be confused with ‘voluntary’ return (...) In contrast with voluntary return, chosen return is mainly based on the migrants’ own decision to return to their country of origin, on a temporary or permanent basis, without the assistance of a public body” (2008: 12).

<sup>28</sup> Only recently, the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union re-approved a resolution (resolution 1742) on voluntary return programmes promoting it as an effective, humane and cost-effective mechanism for returning irregular migrants (Cassarino 2010: 43).

<sup>29</sup> This notion, that European countries attracted foreign workers because of labour shortages in the German economy, has been contested by Knortz (2011), who claims that guest worker recruitment in Germany was based on foreign policy considerations. It is an interesting perspective in the light of today’s debate on foreign labour recruitment.

kets were saturated, the guest workers, once highly sought-after, were suddenly perceived as a burden for the host countries' social welfare systems because they received unemployment benefit (cf. Constant and Massey 2002). In consequence, the governments of France, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium introduced measures that offered financial incentives (Plewa 2012: 181-182) for those labour migrants who were unemployed and who were willing to return with their families.<sup>30</sup> Although the outcome and effectiveness of these reintegration schemes was very controversial and hence the programmes ran for only a few years, currently, these financial reintegration schemes are enjoying a revival in the light of the current economic crisis in Europe. Since 2008 the Czech Republic and Spain have re-launched these financial return incentive measures. However, the numbers of participants are low. The problem is, once the immigrants participate in these programmes they agree not to enter the EU again for a couple of years. This obligation might be the point why many immigrants are reluctant to participate (Abend 2011, Kuptsch 2012: 40-41, Plewa 2012).

Programmes in the third category are tailored for highly skilled migrants, to tap their supposed potential for development in their home countries. The two most prominent multilateral programmes in this context are the "Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals" (TOKTEN) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the programme that targets "Migration for Development in Africa" (MIDA) of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). The origins of both programmes can be traced back to the 1970s. Today, these programmes follow the transnational approach that the return must not necessarily be permanent. Clients of these programmes have the opportunity to work in their home countries during short-term visits of three weeks up to a maximum of three months for the purpose of project based assignments (Plaza and Ratha 2011: 30).<sup>31</sup>

In Germany, all three categories of reintegration schemes exist. They developed in parallel and their instruments sometimes overlap. Three ministries, the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the German Federal Ministry of Labour and

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<sup>30</sup> For a comparative overview on the history of these return programmes for labour migrants in Europe read Plewa (2012). About 10,000 German marks were paid to returning labour migrants in Germany and 10,000 French francs in France. Belgium and the Netherlands had more modest financial incentives. The Netherlands offered unemployment benefits for those who returned and Belgium paid only the return ticket and additional pocket money (Plewa 2012: 183).

<sup>31</sup> The TOKTEN, launched in the 1970s by the UNDP, aims at building up capacities in institutions in selected partnering countries which are, according to their website, currently nine partnering countries worldwide, including the three African countries Mali, Rwanda and Sudan. A maximum of two short-term visits of between three weeks and three months per consultant is possible. Similarly, the IOM programme MIDA (IOM 2009) promotes short-term project related return visits of African migrants living in the diaspora for their home countries development in about 16 Sub-Saharan cooperating countries (Héraud 2010: 4).

Social Affairs (BMAS) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) are involved in the reintegration schemes. Humanitarian programmes, aiming to return former refugees, rejected asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants are carried out by NGOs, welfare organisations, the Federal States and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the German Federal Government of the Interior (Schmidt-Fink 2009: 7). The latter organisation, IOM, runs two larger humanitarian programmes, which can be traced back to 1979: the “Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany (REAG)” and the “Government Assisted Repatriation Programme (GARP)” offer financial incentives and allowances for travel costs. The clients of these reintegration schemes are refugees from crisis areas, for instance from Kosovo, Serbia and Iraq (BAMF 2011: 159, cf. Kreienbrink 2007: 203-204). These are “large-scale” programmes, focussing on returning larger groups together (Schmidt-Fink 2009: 4).<sup>32</sup>

Reintegration schemes tailored for labour migrants and those aiming to support the development-oriented return of highly skilled migrants are closely intertwined in Germany. An important milestone in the building of their common grounds was the “German Assistance Act for Returning” (Rueckkehrhilfegesetz (RueckHG)) in 1983. The law primarily aimed at simply returning unemployed labour migrants and hence creating a relief for the German labour market. Those who applied in the context of this law’s reintegration scheme until 1984 received a one-time payment of about 10,000 German marks (Schmidt-Fink 2007: 258). During this year, about 550,000 people, including 210,000 Turks, the largest group of labour immigrants, returned (Schmidt-Fink 2007: 244).<sup>33</sup>

Despite the fact that this direct financial reintegration support was provided for only about a year, and policies from this point on slowly started to emphasise integration measures, the law also triggered a new wave of reintegration activities

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<sup>32</sup> Although REAG/GARP has assisted the returns of over 500,000 voluntary migrants (BAMF 2011: 158), the numbers of forcibly deported migrants remains far higher, as Kreienbrink (2007: 38) argues. He contrasts the figures of 121,424 persons who returned voluntarily through REAG/GARP with the number of 472,021 persons who were deported during the same period 2000-2005.

<sup>33</sup> Just recently, the policy-led reintegration of Turkish guest workers during the time of Chancellor Kohl was criticized in the media: “Kohl obviously wanted to get rid of every second Turk in Germany” (Hecking 2013). The sudden criticalness of the debate is surprising but is held from today’s point of view against the background of an increasing lack of qualified staff. In addition, the discussants neglect the fact that other European countries used the same reintegration schemes as incentives for their guest workers to return, which makes it not less questionable, but rather shows that it was an official and quite open strategy at that time.

(Schmidt-Fink 2007: 261).<sup>34</sup> One of the most important aspects was that this law also required that the immigrants received information (RueckHG § 7) – about integration opportunities as well as about their home countries' labour markets where they were interested in returning.

Because of their expertise in job placement, the job-relevant information was provided by the international branch, the Zentrale Fach- und Auslandsvermittlung (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), who acted on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). Under the umbrella of these labour market institutions a unique network of information centres developed in Germany, which were tailored mainly for labour migrants (Schmidt-Fink 2007: 261). However, students and highly skilled migrants from development and transition countries were finally integrated into the concept as potential clients.

This inclusion was achieved thanks to the interventions of church-based student relief associations and nongovernmental support groups, such as the World University Service (WUS) Germany and student's self-organised groups, such as the Arbeitskreis Afrikanisch-Asiatischer Akademikerinnen und Akademiker (AAAAA). Since the 1970s these organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had considerably supported the implementation of extra-curricular reintegration activities for students from developing and transition countries. Educational migration, from the understanding of these groups, had to be seen from the perspective of the source countries and hence they strongly promoted return migration as a reverse strategy against the brain drain. This included not only reintegration measures such as the 'pay-to-go-schemes', which only included financing a return ticket, but also they stressed the need for measures to encourage students from the Global South to become more active in the field of development cooperation in their home countries.

Finally, as a result of these lobbying activities, the German government officially mainstreamed reintegration assistance as an instrument of development aid into the educational programmes for foreign students (cf. Wichelmann 1972: 9, cf. Karger 1973: 172, cf. Malik 1974). The central aspect of these reintegration measures was to improve the professional reintegration of highly skilled migrants and to prepare them to become development agents in their home countries. The aforementioned information measures of the BMAS carried out by ZAV for the group of the returning labour migrants were regarded as an excellent point of cooperation (Pollmann

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<sup>34</sup> During this new wave of reintegration activities, a number of commissioned studies were carried out investigating the willingness of immigrants from particular African nationalities living in Germany to return. For instance for Mozambicans (Schönmeier 1991), Ghanaians (Rocklsoh-Papendieck 1990, König 1991) and a survey mentioned by Hannken (2004: 349) about the willingness of Eritrean refugees to return and their potential for return migration.

2010: 100-101). Since then, particular measures were tailored on behalf of the BMZ: seminars and information events as well as exclusive individual counselling, again provided by the ZAV in close partnership with the NGOs, and students' support groups. First-hand information about living conditions, and the situation on the labour market was disseminated during reintegration seminars, and a job placement assistance scheme was started for these highly skilled migrants (cf. Wichelmann 1972: 6, cf. Pakleppa 1974: 29, cf. Hug 1978, cf. Gutmann 1983: 5).<sup>35</sup> The participants in these programmes from then on were a broad range of highly skilled immigrants. They comprised graduates who had come to Germany as free-movers without scholarships<sup>36</sup> and special reintegration schemes were also tailored for the group of refugees who had escaped from fascist dictatorships in Chile and Eritrea and who finally were able to return by the end of the 1980s (cf. Graichen-Drueck 2010).<sup>37</sup>

These were the roots for today's two major reintegration programmes in Germany, the "Returning Experts Programme" (REP) and the "Reintegration programme" (RE), which are important in the context of this study. Both programmes are funded by BMZ and focus on those students who do not receive a scholarship (Laaser 2007: 362). The four instruments they share are first, providing information about the labour market; second job placement; third, financial/ material assistance upon return; and fourth, networking activities and follow-up activities in the home countries. The Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) today manages the REP, which World University Service Germany had essentially participated in developing. CIM is a joint operation of the ZAV and the former German Technical Association for Development Cooperation (GTZ), since 2012, Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The programme offers individual counselling, free assistance with the job search and a financial package including allowances and – if the return migrant secures a workplace upon return in one of the core development sectors – a top-up to the local salary for a period of up to two years.<sup>38</sup> In addition to this financial assistance the REP includes material support through workplace equipment (Arbeitsplatzausstattung, APA)

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<sup>35</sup> WUS prepared and published the draft outlines concerning reintegration measures for foreign students already in 1981 (WUS 1981).

<sup>36</sup> Whereas scholarship holders of their home countries governments and those of the German donor organisations, such as the CDG or the DAAD, are completely sponsored, the free movers, which make up about 80% of all foreign students in Germany (Hampel 2006: 8), receive no lobby support.

<sup>37</sup> Educational policies in Germany allowed refugees to enrol only until 1981 (cf. Ghawami 2002: 26).

<sup>38</sup> For more information see the website of CIM [www.returning-experts.de](http://www.returning-experts.de).

worth up to EUR 10,000, which is provided by WUS Germany. In 2009 about 324 returned highly skilled migrants were supported within the REP (CIM 2009: 8).

As a part of the package, information about the labour market situation is disseminated at an early stage of the migration in weekend seminars. During these seminars the students get first-hand information about the contemporary situation in their home countries, particularly about the labour markets. Local counsellors, who are returned graduates themselves, inform students still in Germany about recruitment strategies and introduce them to the various projects of the German development cooperation in their home countries. Similarly, but more exclusively tailored for a smaller group of participants and with a stronger focus on employment in charitable organisations, is the “Reintegration Programme” (RE), run by the relief organisation Brot fuer die Welt (formerly by the protestant development agency, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, EED). It offers intensive preparation seminars to about 10-15 participants annually (Schmidt-Fink 2006: 277), counselling and job placement for highly skilled graduates into partner organisations in their home countries (Sevegnani and Schuh 2010: 8). Those students and graduates whose profiles match the requirements of one of the partnering organisations are eligible to apply for the programme. However, interested candidates are also invited to search for a potential employer who shall send the demand with the particular profile of the candidate to the donor organisation (EED 2010). Both programmes, the REP and the RE, play an important role in the labour market integration of the interviewees in this study.

Moreover, specially tailored measures for students were developed such as the STUBE programme (Studienbegleitprogramme). This programme, which today exists in 11 federal states is an extra-curricular offer to foreign students in particular from Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is particularly aimed at students without a scholarship and is a development-oriented programme. This means it aims to sensitize and motivate students towards an evolving political and social commitment during study and thereafter in their home country (cf. Füllkrug-Weitzel 2002). The students are invited to create South-South relationships during the STUBE seminars and they can also contribute in a special scheme preparing their return, the so called BPSA (Berufsorientierte Praktika und Studienaufenthalte im Ausland). This scheme includes a grant for a study-related research or internship trip to their home country for up to about 10 students per year, per regional STUBE. That these additional extra-curricular activities are highly important, if students who originate from the Global South study in the Global North want to be prepared to return, is also shown in an example from the US. Irungu (2010: 45) cites from a recent study which revealed that even though education abroad is better than in most of the students’ home countries, concerning the equipment and level of education, these students do not necessarily feel prepared for the particular working reality in their home countries and thus, instead of returning home, rather plan to stay abroad. Similar trends have been observed in Germany, too (cf. Hampel 2006).

Finally, to complete the picture of the development-oriented reintegration schemes, local alumni networks must be mentioned as important partners for the network and follow-up activities which are supported in the home countries. Some of these networks have been organised and funded by former scholarship donor organisations, CDG, the DAAD, the Alexander of Humboldt Association (AvH), as well as smaller donor organisations. Aiming to include also those students who had not been funded externally, the larger group of the freemovers, student support groups promoted the support of networks which had been established by the migrants themselves and not necessarily by donor organisations, and to make these migrants' self-organised associations strategic partners in the reintegration process (AAAAA 1993: 20-21). This was a claim made by previous commissioned studies due to the fact that returning migrants addressed their problems in the matching process (cf. Karger 1973: 186). For this purpose, such self-organised alumni groups have been systematically supported by ZAV and WUS. The idea behind this initiative was that such self-organised groups could work as a structure for self-help activities, provide a means to channel job-relevant information and act as bridgeheads for economic and development partnerships (cf. Hampel 2006: 13-14, cf. Pollmann 2010: 101).

Since the 1990s a number of such alumni networks has emerged. In African countries, at least three groups of former students of German universities have organised themselves: the Ghanaian German Alumni Network (aka Rueckkehrerbuero) in Ghana since 1994 (Boger 2010), the Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany (AEEG) in Ethiopia since 1994 (Berhe 2010) and recently the umbrella organisation of Cameroonian-German Alumni groups in Cameroon, since 2007 (Egbe 2010).<sup>39</sup> Concluding, the reintegration schemes provide financial support as well as supporting network building. These are said to be the most powerful resources in the reintegration process, as the following section about theoretical models on return migration reveals.

## **2.5 Theoretical models explaining return migration**

Contemporary research dealing with voluntary return migration very often claims that the sustainability of the return migration depends on the migrant's resources, finances, personal contacts and knowledge which they have accumulated during their sojourn abroad (cf. Åkesson 2011, de Haas 2011: 18, cf. Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013: 19). This sub-chapter presents a selection of three concepts which take this resource-oriented perspective and which are relevant for the em-

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<sup>39</sup> The two organisations in Ghana and Cameroon will play a crucial role in the context of this study and hence are described in detail in chapter 5.3.

pirical analysis of the thesis. These concepts have, of course, to be applied to the previously described group of highly skilled voluntarily returning migrants.

External economic resources are the focus of the classic push-pull model, which bases on Lee's works, revising Ravenstein's "law of migration" (cf. Lee 1966: 54). This model dominated migration theories until the 1960s (cf. King 2012: 13). Under the neoclassic economics paradigm, migration was conceived as an individual profit-maximising decision and hence these push-pull factors primarily concerned "differentials in wages and employment conditions between countries, and on migration costs" (Massey et al. 1993: 433). Given the fact that labour markets and income opportunities are more promising in the host countries in the Global North, the migrants' return under this perspective has been perceived as a sign of miscalculation, of failure. From this perspective, migrants who returned were simply perceived as having failed their goal of obtaining well-paid employment and therefore were not able to accumulate sufficient financial resources.

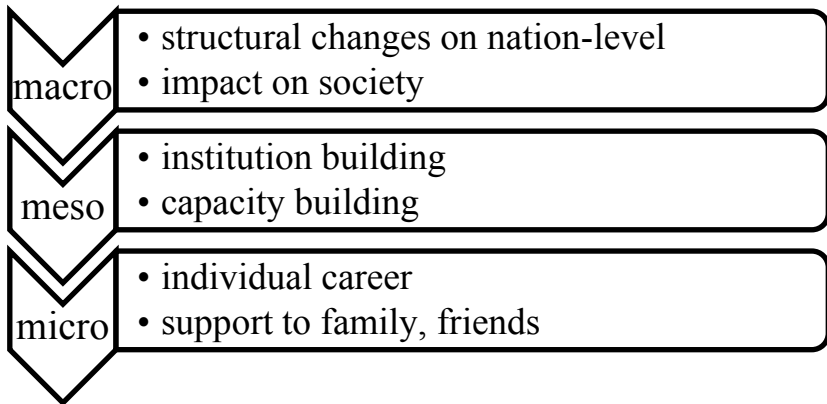
Under the subsequent paradigm of the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM), which has arisen since the 1980s, migration has been perceived as a temporary project which definitely includes the return as soon as the particular migration goal, enough financial savings or obtaining a degree, has been achieved. In this notion, return migration is a sign of having been successful in the migration project. The time when this paradigm dominated was also the time when increasing attention was paid to the fact that migration decisions are not made entirely individually, but that the migrant's social environment, family and the household influences mobility (cf. Constant and Massey 2002, Cassarino 2004: 257, cf. King 2012: 23). Indeed, social networks and personal contacts are resources that can have an almost magnetic force that leads to a "chain-migration" (Heckmann 1992: 66, 98ff., cf. Haug 2000: 4) in both directions: for emigration as well as for return migration. Spearheads, those who start the emigration project, disseminate valuable first-hand information about the new environment, about wage prospects and vacancies. Similarly, parents and families in general as well as friends provide shelter and important information about the home country's situation in the case of the migrants returning (cf. Grieco 1987, cf. Haug 2000).

The idea of networks being a factor in the context of migration has so far been investigated by the societies of the host countries. As has already been touched on in the migration and development chapter (2.1), these studies emphasise the idea that the stronger the social integration into the host countries' society is, leading to the final stage of an ethnic and language "assimilation" (cf. Esser 1982), the more they relinquish their former, more home country-oriented social networks. Bearing in mind the aforementioned argument that social networks are influential push-pull factors, this automatically led hastily to the assumption that the stronger 'assimilated' highly skilled migrants are, the less likely they are to return. Here, the transnational approaches have a great value because they started to strongly question this linear, push-pull model and paid respect to the fact that migrants are members



in the host countries' social networks as well as in the home countries'. Their simultaneous membership does not necessarily hamper return migration but can become a general resource (cf. de Haas 2008a: 12ff, 39, King 2012: 25).

Finally, knowledge has been said to be an important resource in return migration processes. In this context, theoretic models have focussed on how the migrant's knowledge, achieved abroad, is utilised in the home countries (Gmelch 1980: 156, 1987: 138, Schaland 2008: 8, Wolfeil 2012: 119). As several studies indicate, returning migrants transfer their knowledge on various levels (Gmelch 1987: 135, Iredale et al. 2003, Arthur 2008, Ammassari 2009). The following scheme (figure 1) which is divided into the micro, meso, and the macro level has been developed based on these studies' observations.



*Sources:* Own compilation, based on findings of Gmelch 1987, Iredale et al. 2003, Arthur 2008 and Ammassari 2009.

Figure 1: Scheme of knowledge transfer levels.

On the micro level, the returning migrants impart their knowledge in the context of their direct personal environment. They disseminate knowledge to friends and family and build their individual career with the degree and the skills they have obtained abroad. According to Iredale et al., these “possible micro-level benefits are, for example, improvements in individual or family income, the acquisition of capital to invest, the development of skills through training or work experience and an improvement in family security and social status” (Iredale et al. 2003: 4). Arthur confirms this finding by stating, concerning the case of Ghanaian return mi-

grants from the United States, that “return migrants are making significant contributions to their various households” (2008: 154).<sup>40</sup>

The knowledge transfer on the meso level is practiced in the context of institutions and communities, by capacity building. To reach this impact level the individual migrant must be in a position to transfer the knowledge either as an employee at the workplace (Ammassari 2009: 256) or – if the institution is not in place – returning migrants first have to build the institution. The knowledge transfer that takes place in this context can evoke innovation. Having an impact on this level means, for instance, introducing new technologies and innovative methods that make workflows easier and more modern, e.g. by introducing telecommunication and computerised tools or any new methods that can make work faster and more efficient (Ammassari 2009: 266). Often, the migrants’ contributions to their workplaces on this level are intangible (Ammassari 2009: 309), for example because they now transfer to their workplace those different working attitudes that they have adopted abroad. This context, state Iredale et al. (2003: 4) as well as Ammassari (2009: 309), often remains understudied.

According to empirically-led research, only a minority of the returning migrants is able to transfer their knowledge on the third, macro-level context. Knowledge transfers taking place on this abstract level influence the society and nation at large. They are often not identifiable because they are less direct and not immediate argue Iredale et al. (2003: 5). To achieve this level of knowledge transfer returning migrants have to be in “key-positions of responsibility and authority” (Ammassari 2009: 292) where they can use their skills to actively influence policy making. In fact, reaching this high level as an individual and having an impact is most difficult, claims Gmelch (1987: 136).<sup>41</sup> In addition, migrants have reported in empirical studies that they had been hampered in their attempt to bring innovation and that most resistance had been met in the public sector (Ammassari 2009: 267). In this regard, Iredale et al. conclude that returning migrants “cannot necessarily be

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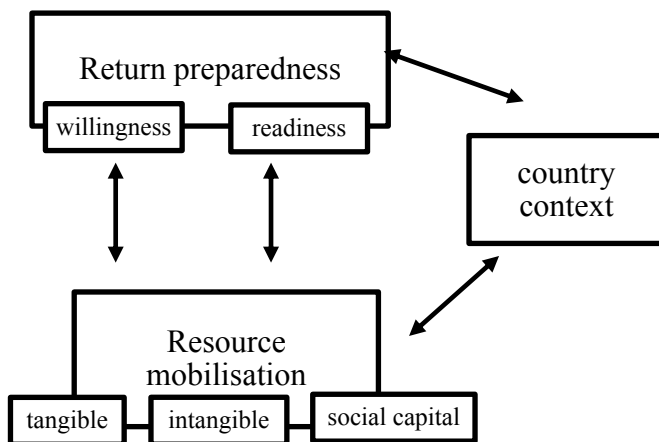
<sup>40</sup> This micro-level context in which the returning migrants contribute to development must not be undervalued. The fact that the returning migrants can support their extended families by their own strength is important because the expectations of the families put a lot of pressure on them. Many empirical studies cite returning migrants who fear the pressure from their families, which makes them reluctant to return (cf. Ammassari 2009: 257-260).

<sup>41</sup> Gmelch (1987: 136) makes the interesting point that even though migrants may not be in a position of authority, they can have an impact on the meso or even the macro level to bring about change. This is the case, not if they are in a place as an individual return migrant but as part of a group of other returned migrants in the same workplace. He explains this with the example of nurses in a hospital in Barbados, who had worked overseas and thus brought back similar work standards in health care. They, as a group, made an appeal to the hospital’s directors to change certain standards. Their appeal was granted, which would have been most certainly different if only a single nurse had acted alone.

the ‘drivers’” but ‘navigators’ in a system that has already begun to address its basic economic, social and political problems” (2003: 189, cf. Awumbila 2008: 58).

Whereas the above mentioned theoretical concepts mostly single out one resource as the relevant factor for the return migration, a more holistic approach to explain return migration is by perceiving it as a process which requires investigating the migrant’s behaviour and how they activate all available resources. This resource activation process, as for instance Winkler suggests in his linear phase model in which he distinguishes seven phases (1987: 214-221), begins with the return preparation and ends with being permanently or temporarily settled in the home country. Several authors have highlighted the particular phase of preparation as crucial for the outcome of the return and the impact the migrants have on development (Gmelch 1980, 1987, Cassarino 2004). Preparing the return migration includes organisational tasks, such as organising the move, packing up possessions and finding ways how to ship the belongings home, deregistration at the authorities, and simply buying the airplane ticket.

Apart from these practical aspects, return preparations also include emotional and social aspects: the migrants have to be prepared for the ‘realities’ at home, for the lifestyle and the fact that they, as well as their home country, will have changed over time (cf. Gmelch 1980: 143). The better, meaning more intense, the preparation of the return migration is, the more likely is the reintegration process to succeed. Expressed differently, if the return migration has not been well prepared, the migrants can easily get frustrated and in consequence are likely to re-emigrate (Gmelch 1980: 146). To explain the preparation phase, Cassarino (2004) established a concept, which can be located in between transnationalism and social network theory (Curre 2006: 15). The concept (figure 2) includes three variables: return preparedness, resource mobilisation, and country context. He describes the first variable of ‘preparedness’ as the migrant’s condition evoked by their ‘will’ to return, and their actual ‘readiness’. The return readiness is achieved by the second variable, the migrant’s active “resource mobilisation” (Cassarino 2004: 271). The migrant’s resources, argues Cassarino, are of tangible and intangible nature. The first, tangible resources, he concretises as “financial capital”. The intangible resources in his definition are, for instance, “contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances” (Cassarino 2004: 271). Strangely, Cassarino distinguishes the latter resource, which already comprises personal contacts and alike, from “social capital”, the “resources that the migrants had brought with them prior to leaving their origin [sic] country” (Cassarino 2004: 271). Moreover, Cassarino identifies ‘skills’ as an intangible resource and completely leaves out ‘human capital’ or educational achievements, for instance a degree obtained abroad.



Source: Adapted from Cassarino (2004: 271).

Figure 2: Cassarino's scheme of return preparedness.

However, despite the said ambiguities in his definitions of variables, the model has the advantage that it correlates micro-level aspects (individual motivations and resources) with both country contexts (host and home country). In addition, the model pays attention to personal contacts and social networks as a resource in the process of return migration. A very important variable in Cassarino's model that he did not visualise in the scheme is the time factor. This variable is of great significance in his following argumentation but is often left out when his model is being explained by other researchers: Cassarino assumes that the longer the migrants prepare their return in advance, the more time they have to activate their resources and the more successful the return is. Hence, the longer the preparation process, the more likely is it that the return migrants will be in a position to contribute to their home countries' development (Cassarino 2004: 273).

Altogether, his model comprehensively explains the process of return preparation and indirectly discusses the alleged contradiction, why so many migrants declare their 'wish' to return but in reality continue to remain in their host country ("myth of return" cf. chapter 2.1). An explanation of this contradiction could be, according to Cassarino's model, that these migrants are not enough prepared and lack resources, of tangible and intangible nature as well as social capital, to get ready for their return.

Cassarino's resource-oriented model was also adopted in a recent study on return migration to Russia, Turkey and Georgia (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013). This study elaborates the model insofar as it distinguishes between where the resources were accumulated and also between the stages during which the single resources play a driving role in the reintegration process (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013: 55-56). The authors claim that economic resources, accumulated in Germany, are important mainly in the first orientation phase after returning. This financial security during the first phase of reintegration alleviated the returnees' burden and gave them time to re-adjust. However, these savings were not a permanent income source and definitely could not guarantee social inclusion. Therefore, professional success for the returnees largely depended on how they were able to use their formal qualifications and skills obtained abroad, as well as the support of local family and friendship networks. The latter are embedded in the source country's context. Over time, conclude the authors however, the acquisition of new resources and the development of new, local area networks play an increasingly important role (Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013: 55).

For this study I also borrow elements of Cassarino's model because of its analytic strength, and use it as a concept, especially the part of the model that abstracts the idea that the migrants activate their personal resources in the context of their return migration (cf. chapter 6). Concluding, theoretical models seem to explain migration processes most comprehensively if they reflect the subjective perspective of the migration. These subjective aspects usually point at the migrant's available resources such as financial savings, personal contacts and knowledge. That these resources do not only play a role in migration, but also in the job-finding process, is shown in the next chapter.

### 3. Getting a job: *what* or *who* you know?

In general, students invest their time and energy at university because they hope to get better jobs in return, with higher pay and more job security. Those who pursue their education abroad make the effort to leave home because they seek to benefit from better study conditions than they can get in their home countries. Studying abroad may also be an ideal opportunity to be exposed to an international environment and to gain extra-curricular experience, which today are highly valued assets in the curriculum vitae. Thus, educational migration seems to be reasonable because it is said to increase one's employability and it supposedly provides competitive advantages over those who have not studied abroad. In fact, students from the African continent are said to have the highest mobility rate among international tertiary students (Chien and Kot 2012, Campus France 2013).

Roughly estimated, 260,000 students from Sub-Saharan Africa are currently enrolled in foreign universities, most of them in Western Europe and Northern America (UIS 2012: 130). As has been argued in the previous chapters, their physical return brings the most tangible benefits for their home countries development if they find economic income sources. Especially in today's African labour markets formal sector employment is scarce and new jobs are created only slowly and if at all, they are mostly in the informal sector. The question is, whether graduates really find such a well-paid source of income and whether their qualification is transferable to the local context. Indeed, these are worries that African students abroad have expressed, as the previous chapter showed.

This leads to the question of how tertiary graduates secure a job these days. Job attainment processes have to do with identifying vacancies. Classic formal methods are to search in newspapers or through public employment services (cf. Osberg 1993). But small companies often cannot afford to publish vacancies or lack qualified personnel that are able to conduct lengthy recruitment procedures and hence use referrals from their workers (cf. Granovetter 1995: 12, cf. Torrington et al. 2008: 149, cf. Klinger and Rebien 2009: 7, cf. Schmich 2011: 38-40). Similarly, bigger companies apply the same strategy, using referrals from employees and colleagues when it concerns positions requiring trustworthiness and leadership skills (cf. Montgomery 1991, cf. Klinger and Rebien 2009: 8, cf. Dietz et al. 2011: 8). It shows, information about vacancies is often circulated in informal, personal channels.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For 2011, the Research Institute of the German Federal Employment Agency announced that 57% of successfully filled vacancies had been recruited through their own employees (Brenzel et al. 2012: 5).

Hence, it can be deduced that personal contacts and belonging to such groups possibly brings advantages for the job search. If, as just described, labour markets lack transparency and vacancies are not openly published, they are also labelled as “hidden” or “gray” labour market (cf. Mathison and Finney 2010: 4, cf. Schmich 2011: 44 ff). In fact, these hidden labour markets are growing – not only in African economies. In order to identify jobs and to secure them successfully, a huge amount of self-help literature advises improving personal networking. In addition, modern tools, for instance the Internet, provide new paths to find jobs through virtual work-related social network sites such as LinkedIn, Xing and Facebook (Ellison et al. 2007). In parallel, alma maters and study programmes encourage students to become members of alumni organisations such as “Old Boy/ Old Girl” associations (cf. Simon and Warner 1992, cf. Mayer and Puller 2008). Furthermore, modern service clubs as well as traditional fraternities are celebrating their revival as a boost to the career and as crucial for establishing profitable business relationships (Zimmer 2002: 4, Biedermann 2004: 329, Gradinger 2005: 1).

In this chapter, the question of how to get a job is discussed and an overview of the scholarly debate is given. Economists during the 1960s promoted the notion that it is ‘what you know’ that determines occupational success and the more time and money a person invested in education, the higher the long-term economic success would be. These “human capital” approaches of Mincer (1970, first articles in 1958), Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962, 1964) will be the topic of sub-chapter 3.1. Their economist perspective that regards education as the major resource of job seekers for getting a job were soon contested because it excludes social factors and neglects the fact that ‘who you know’ has an impact on the outcome of the job search, too. This is a topic discussed in sub-chapter 3.2. Economically-oriented sociologists had championed the social network approaches since the mid 1970s. Their studies concentrated on the aspect that being “embedded” into social networks creates economic benefits (cf. Granovetter 1973, Burt 1976). These studies began to predict which “ties” of a person’s ego-centred network are the most beneficial to getting a well-paid job (cf. cf. Lin et al. 1981, Granovetter 1995, original in 1974, cf. Bian 1997). Although these approaches have the underlying notion that relationships within social networks can be translated into economic profit and hence they generate capital, only few authors applied the particular term of “social capital” (cf. Lin 1999a). This term, social capital, actually surfaced in parallel. It had been used by Bourdieu (1983) amongst others (Coleman 1966, Putnam 1995, Narayan 1999, 2000, Woolcock and Narayan 2000, Dasgupta 2002, Fukuyama 2001) to describe the benefits deriving from social relationships on the level of state and society (cf. Lin 1999a: 30).

Bourdieu’s model “forms of capital” (1983) is presented as an alternative in this context. Initially it had been designed to explain social class distinctions and to reveal what resources members of classes use to sustain or improve their social status.

Due to Bourdieu's model's analytical strength to visualise how a person uses resources during transition processes, his concept has been widely adopted by researchers on migration and labour market entry. Bourdieu's concept thus will also play a major role in the analysis of data in this thesis. However, social networks do not only create benefits and social capital. They can also have a "downside" (Portes and Landolt 1996). The dark side of networks, mafia-like structures, clientelism and patronage, has often been ascribed to African societies (Bayart 1993, 1999). This perception has been strongly contested (Fine 2002, 2003, Meagher 2005, Lohnert 2007). After this research review, sub-chapter 3.3 examines graduate employment in Sub-Saharan Africa and presents a selection of tracer studies. They indicate that transitions of university graduates have become protracted since the 1980s, but that graduates still find employment. However, these studies remain unclear about how the process of labour market entry functions and what resources job searchers have to activate.

### **3.1 'What you know' – human capital**

Being successful in the job search seems to be a question of having the right resources. Qualification is one of these resources. It has to match the labour market demand. The labour market is the specific field in which the particular goods, workforce and employment are exchanged between the agents. The agents in this field, employers and job searchers, negotiate the conditions for the exchange of these goods. The outcome of this negotiation is reflected in work tasks and duties, wages, working hours and allowances that are legally binding conditions, determined in a contract (Hinz and Abraham 2008: 19-20). Traditionally, the neoclassical economists assumed that perfect labour markets are competitive and self-regulating. Firstly, competition exists within the two different groups of agents, employers and job searchers. Whereas the employers, who have a particular demand, compete amongst each other for the most efficient and productive employee, the job searchers, who are the suppliers of workforce, compete with each other to land the best – meaning well-paid and prestigious – job (cf. Hinz and Abraham 2008: 20). Secondly, labour markets are said to be self-regulated by an 'invisible hand' (cf. Hinz and Abraham 2008: 23) which balances supply and demand. However, this neoclassic perspective presumes job searchers as well as employers have full access to information about all agents in the market and that all agents in the market decide based on rational choice (Hinz and Abraham 2008: 20).

The contrary is the case in reality: labour markets are imperfect and both agents have incomplete information about each other. In consequence, job searcher and employer first have to find each other in the labour market according to the worker's specific profile in relation to the employer's proposed wages. On the side of the job searchers, searching for the right 'match' this search leads to unemployment. This so-called frictional unemployment is regarded as normal. It is usually



short-term and affects mostly new entrants into the market, like graduates (Hinz and Abraham 2008: 25, Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2008: 202). If the search takes too long and mismatches are too frequent it is a sign of structural unemployment. A reason for such structural unemployment can be a general mismatch between demand and supply: because the job searcher's occupational profile is not in demand or because they have the wrong qualification degree (cf. Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2008: 204).

A job searcher's ability to perform labour productively and hence his or her employability depends on the stock of skills, educational degree, and expertise, in brief on a person's 'human capital'. In order to reduce the job search duration and hence to reduce the costs arising from this search, job searchers tend to increase their employability and their competitiveness in the job market according to neo-classical models in which men are regarded as 'homo economicus'. They invest in their human capital to increase the benefits from this resource. The idea of human capital being a flexible resource was promoted by labour economists Jacob Mincer (1970), Theodore W. Schultz (1961) and Gary S. Becker (1962, 1964). They developed estimation models and calculated how much time, money and effort people must invest in education to gain a certain wage outcome. The concept rejects the notion that all players in the market are generally equal but allows for considering different educational backgrounds (cf. Granato 2003: 27, cf. Hinz and Abraham 2008: 33).

The pioneering work of Mincer in the late 1950s was about income distributions in the United States. Mincer developed an equation to calculate earnings in relation to prior educational investment. One of his most important findings suggests that "disadvantages of an impoverished early human capital stock cumulate over the life-time" (Mincer 1996: 23). In other words, the earlier people invest in their education and the younger they are, the higher the estimated outcomes are in return.

Whereas Mincer's research concentrates on formal school education, the subsequent works of Schultz have a broader understanding of the term human capital. In his paper on "investment in human capital" (1961) Schultz argues human capital not only increases the individual's productivity but in consequence improves the national economy, too. He thus not only calls for better and more intense school education at an early stage of people's lives but also for the nation to invest in these institutions (Schultz 1961: 9). He claims that nations achieve national growth only if they are sufficiently supplied with skilled workers (Schultz 1961: 15-16).

Finally, the most celebrated work on human capital is that of Gary Becker, in his well-recognised work called "human capital" (1962, 1964). Like Mincer, he asserts that the earlier and the more money a person invests in primary school education the more money the person can expect in the long run to be paid in salaries and income prospects. However, Becker elaborates the term human capital and goes beyond formal school education. Similar to Schultz he also integrates further forms

of education, like on-the-job training (1964: 30 ff.). He divides the forms of training into “general training”, meaning acquiring general work experience on the job, and “specific training”, which is provided on a very specific topic related only to a particular employer, (for instance a certain workflow used only by a particular firm). His works also tackle the question of who is supposed to pay for the individual’s investment in human capital. Thanks to his differentiated concept of human capital distinguishing between “general” and “specific” training, he argues that specific training, since it primarily brings benefits for the company, has to be paid by the employer, and general training by the individual. He argues for such a share cost model, because general training allows the individual to leave any particular employer with the skills gained, in contrast to specific training, which does not enhance chances on the labour market. Hence, in his cost share model Becker opposes Schultz, who generally advocates the government bearing the cost of investment in human capital (cf. Granato 2003: 28).

Although the works of none of the three discussed representatives of human capital approaches explicitly refers to the role of university education for the increase of human capital, it seems likely that the income opportunities increase from having a tertiary degree. They are expected to outweigh the financial losses that result from the student’s long period without stable income. However, in recent years there have been very controversial discussions in many countries about whether the acquired knowledge at universities actually matches the demand of the labour market or whether the increasing numbers of tertiary degree holders create an over-supply resulting in a devaluation and ‘proletarianisation’ of the degree (cf. Teichler 2007: 12, cf. Bierschenk and Wieschialek 2002: 8).

Another critically reflected aspect in this regard is that human capital approaches build on the notion that educational systems and labour markets function meritocratically: in such a meritocratic system, educational achievements are rewarded and pay off. Officially, institutions might formally be based on such meritocratic regulations, but underneath this official surface access to education is often regulated by criteria other than diligence and hard work, for instance by social background and socioeconomic status (Coleman 1966). In fact, having a connection in the system and being discretely sponsored can definitely be an advantage, too. Willot (2011) describes such a situation in the case of Nigerian students and how they gain access to university. Officially, the process is regulated by selection exams. Those students who easily pass the exam and who achieve the required score or even higher have an easy access. Their entry is a formality, whereas entry is impossible for less bright and less diligent students who do not reach the score. The group in between, those who only achieve a little less than needed, might reach their goal eventually by activating additional resources. For example, they take advantage of being related to an uncle who coincidentally is the institute’s dean and who can put in a word for the student (Willot 2011: 100).

This observation, that access to education as a resource never functions entirely objectively but also depends on personal connections, leads to the topic of the next sub-chapter that discusses the impact of social networks and personal contacts in the labour market and ‘who you have to know’ for getting a job.

### **3.2 ‘Who you know’ – social capital**

The fact that getting a job is also a social process leads to the discussion of the concepts of ‘social capital’ and ‘social networks’. Both concepts have to do with the notion that being embedded in social networks and that investing in particular relationships can create positive economic returns is the premise behind the concept of social capital (Lin 1999a: 30). Different authors with slightly varying ideas have used this central concept in distinct contexts. The first context, in which social capital is now discussed, has its focus on the outcome of social capital on the group level, in which social capital is perceived as a collective asset, enhancing group members' opportunities in society. This perspective is only briefly outlined in order to introduce the specific model of Bourdieu (1983), because it will be used as a tool to analyse empirical data in this thesis. The second context, in which social relations and their economic returns play a role, places the focus on individuals and investigates how they use social networks as a resource to find a job. These approaches, though their studies often present the result that social networks can create economic returns (social capital), do not always explicitly use the term of social capital and hence do not necessarily discuss the concept as such. Thirdly, the question is raised as to whether the concept of social capital is positive throughout and a critical review presents theoretical approaches that highlight the less constructive side, the ‘downside’ of social capital.

#### **Theories of social capital on the level of groups**

In contrast to the aforementioned notion on human capital, social capital is not inherent in the person who can accumulate knowledge, skills and educational degrees. Social capital emerges from relationships between individuals or groups (cf. Lin 1999a: 31). Initially, sociologists and political scientists started the discussion about social capital as an “organizing concept to understand the mechanisms that affect life chances of individuals and the well-being of communities” (Lin 2000: 785). Hence, it is a broad concept and does not merely concentrate on labour market performance. Nevertheless, for the purpose of presenting the complete discourse on the subject these theories are now briefly outlined in an excursus.

The origins of social capital theories can be primarily traced back to North American sociologists (Coleman 1966, Putnam 1995, Woolcock 1998, Woolcock and Narayan 2000, Narayan 1999, 2000, Dasgupta 2002, Fukuyama 2001). As one of the starting points, literature often refers to Coleman and his first report on “Equal-

ity of Educational Opportunity Survey, EEOS” (1966), also often named after him as the first ‘Coleman report’. The report, commissioned by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, assessed the availability of equal education opportunities to children of different race, colour, religion, and national origin. It often serves as an example for using quantitative social surveys as an instrument of national policy making. Coleman’s study is often regarded as pioneer research on social capital because he pointed out the correlation between education, acquiring human capital and being embedded in a social environment at the same time. He locates himself in the tradition of rational choice. Hence, social capital is a tool, a “particular kind of resource available to an actor” (Coleman 1988: S98). It is available in three forms: “obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms” (Coleman 1988: S118). In his concrete empirical studies he measures the outcome of social capital in the context of education. The results are that social resources have the ability to reduce the probability of dropping out of high school too early and hence have a positive impact on society at large. From this perspective, social capital seems to be the major instrument for creating human capital. However, Coleman argues that because social capital is for the public good, the individual benefits are marginal in comparison to the efforts that are made to invest in this social capital. According to Coleman this, in conclusion to the rational choice approaches, leads to underinvestment in social capital on a private level. In consequence, the state has to intervene and take over the responsibilities to support education-related activities.

Even more critical is the famous works of Putnam (1995) “Bowling alone”.<sup>43</sup> In the example of the United States’ civil society, he diagnoses a general decline in social capital. Indicators for his observation are low turn-out in elections, fewer active members in voluntary and charity associations as well as families and neighbourhoods losing their stability (cf. Siisiäinen 2000: 19). Putnam blames social transformation processes for this general erosion of social capital in society: the movement of women into the labour force, a general tendency of privatisation, which is enforced through technical innovations such as the television (Putnam 1995: 73). Coming from this understanding that some parts of society lack social capital due to structural constraints and that this can have serious negative consequences on a national level, a research field began that views social capital as a potential engine or hindrance for development processes.

In this regard, the contributions of vulnerability approaches of development geographers since the end of the 1980s should be mentioned. Their contribution is that

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<sup>43</sup> Putnam’s book title corresponds with his observation that “more Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so” (1995: 69). Hence, people increasingly ‘bowl alone’ than being in a group. Putnam takes this finding as an indicator for the increasing decline of social capital in U.S. society.

poverty and underdevelopment are no longer understood as a merely economic situation. By emphasising the wealth of people deriving from their (informal) social relations, it soon becomes evident that vulnerable groups have several very efficient coping strategies that had long been underestimated (cf. Lohnert 2007, cf. Steinbrink 2009: 123ff.). Based on this understanding, the terminology of research on social capital has been made operational for policy discourses. Publications for the World Bank, like for instance those of Woolcock (1998), Woolcock and Narayan (2000) and Narayan (1999, 2000), fall into this category. They introduce a more practicable interpretation of social capital terminology. By ‘bonding’ individuals of the same social and economic status, synergies are created through trust. This encourages self-help approaches that increase people’s ability to ‘get by’ together. Through ‘bridging’ members of different groups an advantage is created by opening up new potential resources to ‘get ahead’. In addition, poorer and less-advantaged people and groups are supposed to be ‘linked’ to higher-level institutions of authority (cf. Stone 2003: 13). Fukuyama furthermore elaborates the idea that social capital emerges from the particular “radius of trust” (2001: 8) between networks. Applying this idea of social capital in the context of a free market liberal democracy, social capital can decrease costs arising from formality:

“The economic function of social capital is to reduce the transaction costs associated with formal co-ordination mechanisms like contracts, hierarchies, bureaucratic rules, and the like” (Fukuyama 2001: 10).

Fukuyama’s, as well as Woolcock’s and Narayan’s works mainstream the concept of ‘social capital’ as an operationalising tool into policy, aiming to find ways to overcome underdevelopment. Social capital, in this perspective, has become an instrument. Today, the term has become essential to recent development discourse. The question now is no longer what social capital really is and where it comes from, but how can a country’s stock of social capital be increased (Fukuyama 2001: 17). Practitioners’ publications such as that of the World Bank (2001: 128ff.) move for the leverage of existing social networks and the active support of new ones. The aim is to provide external support from NGOs or charity organisations in order to actively create (artificial) social institutions and social capital (World Bank 2001: 129). This, however, supposedly empowers previously disadvantaged groups in less developed regions of the world and can “increase their voice and economic opportunities” (World Bank 2001: 129). The key words of these approaches are “capacity building” and “community building” to actively strengthen particular relationships (cf. Stone 2003: 14), which indicates that the outcome of group interactions can be optimised and improved by external, allegedly trust building interventions. Dasgupta (2002) has made efforts to dampen this overly enthusiastic notion of social capital as being an easily allocated good. He claims, in contrast to the developmentalists’ works, that neither markets nor networks are impersonal places of “anonymous” exchanges, but that “names” matter (Dasgupta 2002: 26).

The underlying notion of this particular perspective is that inequalities exist in society – the core aspect of Bourdieu’s concept on social capital, now described more in-depth. His concept, however, differs in some important respects from the aforementioned North American perception on social capital as being inherent in social networks. In Bourdieu’s concept on distinct “forms of capital” (1983), he embeds social capital as one resource in addition to individual economic, cultural and symbolic capital, to explain class distinctions and how they are maintained.<sup>44</sup> His concept bases on the notion that the individual’s position in society is determined by access to and utilisation of various resources which can be converted into capital. Capitalisation takes place, for instance, if a person from an inferior social status group receives a good education and in consequence is able to obtain a well-paid job and prestige. As mentioned before, Bourdieu integrates four forms of capital into his concept: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. The first, economic capital, consists of money, property and material goods. Second, cultural capital is more complex and takes more time to be accumulated as a resource. Bourdieu differentiates between three states of cultural capital: first, the embodied, second, the objectified and third, the institutionalised state of cultural capital. The first state, embodied capital, refers to the sum of cultural attitudes which a person consciously or mainly unconsciously acquires over time. It is expressed in the term of the “habitus” (Bourdieu 1983: 187) as an integral part of a person’s physical appearance or attitude. Because it is interchangeably connected with its bearer (e.g. a certain regional dialect or class-related behaviour), embodied cultural capital is not easily converted or inherited quickly. However, if for instance a family inherits embodied cultural capital, accumulated capital gains are achieved. To accumulate embodied cultural capital takes time and exposure to the particular culture, for instance during a person’s social upbringing (Bourdieu 1983: 187). In contrast to this state, the objectified state of cultural capital is physically transferable through media such as art objects and antiques or machines in general (Bourdieu 1983: 189).

Ultimately, in its institutionalised state cultural capital somehow resembles the previously discussed human capital: it is the educational degree itself, which is awarded through a certificate by a particular educational institution (Bourdieu 1983: 190).<sup>45</sup> The third form of capital, social capital, consists of the sum of all social relationships and the individual’s embedment in its social environment

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<sup>44</sup> Initially, his first article, which introduced different forms of capital, was published in 1980. It only received little attention because it had been written in French (see Portes 1998: 3).

<sup>45</sup> Institutionalised cultural capital has to be differentiated from the concept of human capital because these concepts only take account only of “monetary investments and profits, or those directly convertible into money” (Bourdieu 1986: 48). Bourdieu also subsumes the costs of schooling and the time devoted to study.

(Bourdieu 1983: 191ff.). Fourth, and finally, symbolic capital is the most complex of all forms of capital. The term describes an intangible and not officially defined value. It can be prestige, deriving from the accumulation of other forms of capital, but it always depends on “intersubjective reflection” (cf. Siisiäinen 2000: 13) and can be recognised only in a respective environment where its value has been agreed upon. It is an invisible, immeasurable form of capital, which “exists only in the ‘eyes of the others’” (Siisiäinen 2000: 13).<sup>46</sup>

Bourdieu’s concept shows how people accumulate all forms of capital over time and, more importantly, how they can convert them. If they enrol in a reputable university (institutionalised cultural capital) they need economic resources to pay the tuition fees. In return, having a higher degree allows them to get better-paid jobs. Social capital, deriving from groups and social networks, requires maintaining social relationships. This costs time, energy and money, which they have to spend on social events (birthday parties, funerals, weddings, baptisms). However, having the right friends and belonging to ‘the right’ groups also provides status, which is symbolic capital. Symbolic capital converts into economic capital because it makes an individual appear more credible (Bourdieu 1983: 195 ff.).

Its flexibility explains why Bourdieu’s model has become increasingly popular and is being applied by authors working in fields in which transitions are a core topic - the transnational migration studies (cf. Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, Portes 1998, Portes and Landolt 2000: 531, cf. Zwingenberger 2004, cf. Martin 2005, cf. Prothmann 2009: 21ff., cf. Nohl et al. 2010: 12, cf. Olivier 2011, cf. Wolfeil 2012: 115ff). Finally, because Bourdieu’s concept on forms of capital has the strength and flexibility to explain the interplay of qualification, a person’s social status and biographical changes in life, it will also be adopted in this study. In chapter 6 it serves as a conceptual framework to illustrate the interplay of a person’s resource activation during the two transition processes of migration and labour market entry (cf. Wolfeil 2012: 116-117).

## **Social networks and the job search**

More focussed on the level of the individual are research studies on social networks as a resource. A large number of these studies investigate social networks as a particular resource in the job search. In these studies the impact of personal relationships, which are embedded into social networks, is examined as a potential

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<sup>46</sup> As an example, in their paper on “the production of belief” Bourdieu and Nice (1980) describe the process of how artists convince their clients of the material worth of their products by creating symbolic capital.

source of job-relevant information, as having influence by ‘putting a word in’ for the job searcher or as a provider of credentials (Lin 1999a: 31).

In the beginning the social network studies, however, did not explicitly touch on the question of the role of social networks as a resource in the job search. The roots of these social network approaches can be traced back to the early social network theories, as developed by British Social Anthropology.<sup>47</sup> Their aim was the general understanding of social interconnectedness.

Put simply: social network “asks questions about who is linked to whom, the nature of that linkage, and how the nature of the linkage affects behaviour”. This definition has been given by Boissevain (1979: 393), in the leading works in this field. An example is his social anthropological work on “Friends of Friends” (1974). It became famous because it offered “new conceptual and analytic tools to anthropologists” (van Ginkel and Stengs 2006: 15). The strength and universality of his study lies in the quality of his in-depth description and interpretation of social action. Initially coming from a structural-functionalist perspective, Boissevain goes beyond investigating static models and prefers to describe situations of social change and competition. He suggests a framework for analysing social behaviour and provides

“insights into the social processes in which we all participate. Coalitions, groups, classes and institutions are composed of people who, in different ways, are bound to each other. Together they form the constantly shifting network of social relations that we call society” (van Ginkel and Stengs 2006: 233).

Boissevain’s descriptions and his terminology are of interest also for this thesis. He refers to “brokers” who trade information as goods (Boissevain 1974: 147ff.) and “cliques” (1974: 174 ff.). These cliques are temporary coalitions of persons who share a common context (Boissevain uses the example of military service) but they are loosely tied and can fall apart after a while, if the context no longer exists. These terms are of special interest, because they explain networking activities of returning Ghanaian and Cameroonian graduates as will be shown in the empirical analysis (cf. chapter 7).

Research that particularly focuses on the aspect that social networks are channels for job relevant information can be traced back to Granovetter’s classic empirical

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<sup>47</sup> Gluckmann’s Manchester School emerging since the 1950s, for instance, developed an alternative network approach that was less structural-functionalist and that concentrated on ego-centred networks. Pioneering researchers among this group, like Barnes and Mitchell, carried out empirical biographical research on social relationships of workers in the Sub-Saharan African region of the Copperbelt (cf. Schweizer 1996: 15ff., cf. Hollstein 2006: 13ff., cf. Jansen 1999: 36ff., cf. Kapferer 2006: 144ff., cf. Steinbrink 2009: 123ff.).



works “Getting a job” (1995 original in 1974). As an economic sociologist he follows the underlying notion that being “embedded” into social networks can generate economic outcomes (Granovetter 1985). In his aforementioned study about getting a job he investigates a very specific ego-centred network of male workers in technical and managerial jobs. One finding is that these workers gained economic benefits through their personal contacts because they forwarded them information about vacant positions.

In accordance with Granovetter’s finding subsequent studies agree that personal contacts are an important channel through which university graduates find their first significant jobs (Beer et al. 2002: 32, Haug and Kropp 2002: 14-15, Franzen and Hangartner 2005, Klinger and Rebien 2009: 4) or through which jobless persons escape unemployment faster than others (Brandt 2006). However, the findings broadly vary concerning the question of whether using personal contacts in the job search also has a causal effect on the quality of the obtained work. Granovetter suggests that positions which have been found through social contacts are usually better paid jobs (1995: 16, cf. Montgomery 1991).

Other studies contest this finding and instead present empirical evidence that using informal channels in the job search does not automatically lead to greater income or better outcome in the labour market (Lin et al. 1981, de Graaf and Flap 1988, Lin 1999b, Mouw 2003, Krug and Rebien 2012). Furthermore, studies discuss very controversially which features of a contact create advantages for a job searcher. Three general research opinions exist: that the relationship between the job searcher and the intermediary contact is relevant, that the position of the job searcher in a given network or between networks is relevant, or that the function of an intermediary contact and thus the type of network is relevant.

Initially, the particular relationship, the ‘ties’, between job searcher and personal contact have been identified as a relevant variable for predicting the quality of the obtained job. Studies following this opinion build on Granovetter’s finding, that especially the “weak tie” (1995: 44-45) relationships to former working colleagues, acquaintances and to old schoolmates, in general to people whom one seldom meets, have a positive impact on the obtained jobs. Instead, contacts based on emotions and frequent intervals of contact, the “strong ties” (1995: 44-45), can provide quick help in case of emergency, but employment secured through this channel is less lucrative.

In opposition to the latter finding, Grieco (1987) demonstrates how strong ties between family members pay off in the context of migration, or concerning a specific industry, that makes employers likely to employ through referrals of their workers and thus the workers are “keeping it in the family”. Similarly opposing Granovetter’s notion on the strength of weak ties is Bian’s work (1997). Bian identifies strong ties as most fruitful in Chinese career paths. The keyword is *guanxi* (Chinese term for relationship according to Bian 1997: 369), which are very close,

very intimate relationships in China that base on mutual trust and thus fall under the category of strong ties.

Secondly, researchers calculate the job searcher's position within and between networks. In this regard, Ronald Burt and his works on "structural holes" (1992) have modified Granovetter's finding on the "strength of weak ties" (1973). Instead of taking Granovetter's perspective and arguing that the relationships between individuals are of benefit, he introduces the new perspective "that the networks themselves are a form of social capital" (Burt 1992: 60). Burt, as one of the few network researchers, explicitly uses the concept of social capital and thus refers to the works of Coleman, Putnam and Bourdieu but on a methodological level makes use of mathematical equations similar to Granovetter and other researchers investigating the ties between agents in a network. In contrast, Burt asserts that it is rather a person's ability to make use of these networks which brings benefits instead of concentrating on the single relationships between people in a given network. In the example of business relations, Burt considers the networking abilities of the social actors, who he labels as "players" (1992: 61), who "broker" information between networks, and hence have control over resources (2000: 253).

One of Burt's most important findings is that social capital emerges not from weak ties per se, but rather if a contact provides access to a new network as a new source to information. In this account Burt introduces the terminology of 'redundant' and 'non-redundant' ties somehow complementary to Granovetter's 'strong' and 'weak' ties. The separation between non-redundant contacts are what he continues to call "structural holes" (Burt 1992: 65). These structural holes exist between two networks which are not (yet) connected. A person who is able to bridge many of these structural holes, in conclusion, has a high networking ability. In return, the person gains access to new and exclusive information. However, due to energy and time restrictions it is almost impossible for any person to network with all persons in all networks at the same time and to maintain these social contacts continuously. Nevertheless, some people – extremely successful managers and entrepreneurs for instance – seem to be able to organise their large amount of contacts very easily without having time and energy limitations. How is this possible?

Burt concludes that these successful players focus on maintaining non-redundant ties instead of only focussing on the quality of the relationship between contacts. This finding, however, allows understanding why in some cases and particular contexts strong tie relationships are even more effective than relationships that are categorised as weak ties: this is when a person maintains a relationship with only one person in a given network and accesses relevant information through such a non-redundant relationship. The persons of interest for a networker are "primary contacts" (Burt 1992: 69). They are those persons in a network who are most interconnected with people of their own network and hence can work as "ports of access to clusters of people beyond" (Burt 1992: 69).

In other words, the costs and energies arising from maintaining social relationships are reduced and the chances for benefiting from social contacts increased. Hence, an active networker will be likely to seek to establish more non-redundant ties in the network and thus to increase the size of the network without losing energy.

This strategic networking, as has been mentioned already, is an ability of successful entrepreneurial managers, those who have “a taste for entrepreneurial behaviour” (Burt 1992: 80). The more of these entrepreneurial managers are in a certain setting, the more likely competition starts. The most successful player is the one who is able to negotiate and control power best and to play the other players off against each other. This player is also labelled the “laughing third” or “*tertius gaudens*” (Burt 1992: 76ff.).

Burt’s study, similar to Granovetter’s pioneer work, stimulated further intensive research on an individual’s position in a given network. Soon, the research on how to calculate a person’s position in a network created highly sophisticated methods, such as name and position generators (Schweizer 1996: 245, Lin 1999b: 476, van der Gaag et al. 2004). Burt’s model is complex but highly applicable at the same time, as Schweizer (1996: 128) underlines. He finds that Burt’s concept, even though it has been developed on the example of entrepreneurial managers in a business context, can be applied to investigate social networks of other content too. Schweizer tests this assumption further in his own comparative study and shows that Burt’s concept can be adopted for investigating social networks in another cultural context. In his case, these examples were studies on kinship relationships in Indonesia and social relations of immigrants in Northern America (1996: 227ff., 252ff.). Some of Burt’s terminology thus is used in the context of this study, to identify benefits deriving from the job search networks of the returning graduates (cf. chapter 7).

Thirdly, studies pinpoint that the function or status of an intermediary contact and thus the particular network type has to be investigated to calculate the impact of networks in the job search (Lin 2000, Weiss and Klein 2011). Their studies pay respect to the fact that not all networks per se generate ‘social capital’ because not all networks are resource-rich networks (cf. Lin 2000: 791ff.). This differentiating perspective is also noteworthy because it allows for more precision in research. Granovetter, for instance, categorises both family members and friends as close personal contacts, as strong ties. As subsequent researchers find, there is an important difference - friends can be chosen whereas family networks are always attributed (cf. Weiss and Klein 2011: 233). This simple but crucial aspect should be kept in mind for the section in this work when the categories of personal contacts in the job search of graduates are presented (cf. chapter 7). The finding that social status rather than the ties is a relevant indicator of social networks that allow estimation of the effect on labour market outcome also explains those studies that demonstrate that family members are sometimes extremely successful personal contacts in the job search. This is the case if these family members are of higher social status

(Wegener 1989, Haug and Kropp 2002, Cappellari and Tatsiramos 2011, Weiss and Klein 2011). Whereas it has been pointed out that these family networks cannot be chosen, memberships of most other networks are based on individual decisions. What makes people choose to be a member of a particular group, association, or loose network? In this regard, the term of homophily, also labelled as the “like-me” principle, must be briefly mentioned (Lin et al. 1981: 396, Lin 1999b: 469, Beer et al. 2002: 7, Mouw 2003: 872).<sup>48</sup>

The idea of homophily explains from which motivation people form groups. It expresses the notion that people tend to group up with those with whom they share significant features, such as being of the same sex, ethnic group or social status. In the case of privileged groups, this creates advantages. The contrary is the case if the group bears features of general disadvantages in society, such as belonging to a discriminated ethnic minority. Seidel et al’s (2000) study suggests that ethnic affiliation plays a negative role and produces inequity in negotiated salary due to racial discrimination (cf. Poros 2001, cf. Sanders 2002). Another network type which bears potential problems due to the principle of homophily are women networks, because they tend to be too closed and thus are multipliers of the disadvantages that women face in society (cf. Beer et al. 2002: 20ff.). In this regard, a number of critical studies find women less represented in strategic career-related networks (Fielden and Davidson 1997) because they prefer to network with women who are in the same disadvantaged position and instead have to join clubs dominated by successful male members (Beggs and Hurlbert 1997). Women, find Hanson and Pratt (1991), are even spatially segregated and more often limited to social contacts with relatives and members of their household, which in consequence prevents them from establishing more yielding weak-tie contacts (cf. Lin 2000: 787-788).<sup>49</sup> Women as well as marginalised groups could, argue representatives of these approaches, overcome their structural drawbacks deriving from disadvantaged networks if they activate contacts of higher status beyond their usual scope (Lin 1999b: 485).

There are only a few studies which investigate social networks as a resource in the job search in anything other than the Western European or North American context. An example is Wahba and Zenou’s paper on social networks in Egypt. Their finding that the “probability to find a job through friends and relatives decreases with local unemployment rate” (2004: 23) seems to be applicable universally. A

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<sup>48</sup> McPherson et al. (2001) offer a brief overview about the contemporary concept of homophily and its early roots in philosophy of the ancient Greeks, Aristotle and Plato.

<sup>49</sup> These findings are somehow surprising because many mentoring programmes that promote women in business and education are closed purposely and address women exclusively. The findings mentioned above indicate instead that a more efficient approach is to develop mixed-gender networks.

recent study of Yogo (2011) about labour market outcome and social networks in Cameroon presents a mixed finding. In general, job searchers profit from information circulating in informal channels. They can even expect monetary returns, but at the same time these jobs often lack security and “job seekers prefer to get a job even though this job is a low quality one than stay unemployed” (Yogo 2011: 16).<sup>50</sup> At this point it is noteworthy that I suggest that most studies – in the context of job search research – deal with the category ‘friends’ in over generalisations as a Eurocentric umbrella term. In reality, this category is not as homogenous and cannot be equated to the Euro-American concept for all cultures. Recent social-anthropological studies on the concept of friendship in different non-European and non-American cultures suggest that having ‘friends’ is more complex and has many facets depending on the particular cultural background (Grätz et al. 2003, Meier 2004, Pelican 2003, Brandt and Heuser 2011, Heuser 2012). Even though it is not possible to pay respect to ethnically defined friendship-concepts, this thesis at least proposes that the role of friends differs in the context of the graduates’ job searches.

Further criticism of these discussed social network approaches concerns the fact that the methods of choice are quantitative mathematical factor analysis and estimation models. Mathematical equations measure ties, positions and density of networks in order to predict the impact on the job search.<sup>51</sup> These methods were soon said to be overly specialised (Boissevain 1979: 394, answered by Barnes and Harary 1983: 235). In addition, they were criticised for being too static and that they observed a process like the labour market entry only at one point in time rather than investigating development and change (Granovetter 1983: 229).

### **The downside of social capital**

Whereas being embedded in social networks has been primarily investigated from a positive perspective in which it creates economic benefits and capitalises, there is also another, less positive and darker side to it, which is not always a blessing. This is the “downside of social capital” (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, Portes and Landolt 1996). It becomes apparent in networks which aim at obedience and reciprocity as well as extreme closure of the networks. They are often called “rope teams” (Emrich et al. 1996).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> This particular situation of graduates will be touched on again in the chapter after next, about transitions of Sub-Saharan African university graduates (cf. chapter. 3.3).

<sup>51</sup> Very impressive examples of this sophisticated method of measuring networks are, for instance, the name interpretation calculations of Marsden (1990, 1993).

<sup>52</sup> The original work of Emrich et al. (1996) is named after the German colloquial term ‘Seilschaften’.

At the same time that the members of such a rope team are backed up by each other, they also have to be obedient to their leader and the group. This might cause problems in the case where the fabric that glues the members of the network together are amoral activities. What this could actually mean for a single person is expressed in an anecdote of Boissevain, about a Sicilian professor who makes use of his mafia-like contacts to facilitate his son's university access: "They will help you when you need it, but..., when they turn to you for help, you give it or...", and he made the chopping notion that means the application of violence" (1974: 1-3).

Despite the fact that negative effects of social capital can be found in any society at any time (cf. Emrich et al. 1996: 153-154), one must take into account that what actually is regarded as negative also depends on the particular historical, cultural and political contexts of the social interactions. What might be regarded as positive and desirable from one cultural background, and thus in one country, might be seen as wrong and to be avoided in another. This becomes clearer by investigating the downsides of social capital in the context of social structures in post-colonial African societies. A work often cited and referred to in this context is Bayart's "State in Africa" (1993, French original in 1989). By giving isolated examples from different Sub-Saharan African states, preferably Cameroon, he argues that due to a limited social stratification most postcolonial African societies have become patrimonial systems and the state is the major manufacturer of inequality. From Bayart's perspective, social structure in African states is organised like a pyramid. On top, an overly privileged minority of the 'big men' occupies the resources, which are for instance access to education and public sector employment as well as access to political power: "Holders of power use their monopoly of legitimate force to demand goods, cash and labour" (Bayart 1993: 76). By using the metaphor of 'politics of the belly', Bayart explains that personal enrichment is the main priority for people being in positions of power and explains that "positions of power give priority, even monopolistic access to resources of extraversion" (Bayart 1993: 74). Being a member of the elite regulates access to education, which also allows access to a desired job in the public service:

“(...) a job in the public service carries with it a salary. In a situation of massive underemployment a salary, even if it is modest, paid late and irregularly, is no trivial thing (...) But they also carry numerous perks such as accommodation, care bursaries for children, health care and overseas travel (...)” (Bayart 1993: 75).

In sum, belonging to this group of elite generates massive benefits and hence explains why those who are in these favourable positions aim to stabilise their positions. One way to maintain their power is to build patronage networks and to recruit followers, and at the same time to pre-empt other big men getting hold of the desired resources. The result is a socio-political structure in which networks “are founded upon inequality but are themselves producers of inequality” (Bayart 1993: 228). He asserts that ethnicity and family bonds are instruments, creating flexible

and not necessarily binding demarcation lines of these networks, the lines that define their closure and the factions (cf. Bayart 1993: 217).

It is important to note the flexibility which he ascribes to these networks, because the image has often been created in public that African patronage depends entirely on ethnic affiliation, which is only half true. However, this notion of social capital creating negative outcomes for society with the example of the African state has been strongly contested as being overly generalising (Fine 2002, 2003) and promoting a “‘criminalization’ perspective” (Meagher 2005: 223) on African societies. Hence, in coherence with Meagher’s argumentation, Lohnert assesses “social capitalist mainstream perspectives on networks – whatever school they might belong to – are essentially functionalism, underestimating historical and cultural influences” (2007: 14). This statement invites the deployment of a more empirical perspective in the next and final section of this chapter.

### **3.3 From university to work in Sub-Saharan Africa**

The question of what it takes university graduates in Sub-Saharan Africa to get a job these days has to be seen in the light of the contemporary local context. Information about labour market entries in African countries mainly stems from two sources: first, a considerable body of policy reports exists about school-to-work transitions, which in the context of this study will not be investigated further.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, far less information is available about university graduates in Sub-Saharan Africa. For the purpose of this thesis, only a couple of university tracer studies and reports dealing with graduate employment have been identified which are now discussed in detail.

Hinchliffe (1987: 56) presents unstructured general findings about graduate employment for the cases of 16 African countries during the late 1970s by referring to observer assessments and unpublished reports. Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) examine tertiary graduate employment in Ghana by comparing supply and demand. They analyse 38,916 vacancies, which were published during the period 1981-2000 and discuss aggregated data of students’ enrolment ratio sorted by study programmes. The team of Mugabushaka, Teichler and Schomburg, collected data

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<sup>53</sup> These policy-oriented studies which are funded by United Nations institutions like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Bank (WB) promote practical measures such as apprenticeships, vocational training, and on-the-job training to improve employability but also to strengthen the entrepreneurial skills of young school leavers (ILO 2004: 16, ILO 2012). Only one policy report “Accelerating catch-up” (World Bank 2009), has been identified dealing with the situation and employability of tertiary graduates. The report, however, has not produced new data but only refers to the few existing single studies which are interpreted in this thesis, too.

during the 1990s in 10 Anglophone Sub-Saharan countries and surveyed the transitions of more than 6,000 tertiary students (cf. Mugabushaka 2003, Mugabushaka et al. 2003, 2007). In addition, Mayanja (2004) presents a summary of a comparative study of Makerere University in Uganda including data of 427 tertiary level students. The findings of this study have also been discussed in the works of Mugabushaka et al. (2007: 21ff.). Moleke (2006) analyses the data of a follow-up postal survey including aggregated data of 2,672 university graduates in South Africa, covering their professional trajectories during the period 1990-1998. Mediebou et al. (2010) present data from a survey conducted during 2007-2008 on the professional whereabouts of 243 Cameroonian tertiary graduates from the University of Ngaoundéré.

Due to these studies' different methodological approaches and because the surveys were conducted during different periods, their findings are hardly comparable and hence remain isolated.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the studies invite the drawing of the following three suggestive conclusions about the labour market entries: first, the labour market for tertiary graduates in most Sub-Saharan African countries seems to have tightened after the first very enthusiastic years of post-independence. Initially, university graduates in most African countries were highly sought after because the young nations had to be built and the gaps emerging from the outgoing colonial officers and expatriates had to be filled with local personnel. Hence, university graduates had almost literally a guaranteed job in the public services until the 1980s (cf. Hinchliffe 1987: 63ff., cf. Mugashubaka 2003: 58).

However, in the course of the economic recessions which started in most countries from the 1980s, measures of the Structural Adjustment Programmes and liberalisation processes in particular downsized this public sector in order to economise the countries' administrations. At the same time, the private sector has not been able to catch up to create decent employment<sup>55</sup> and therefore the public service sector today remains the main employer absorbing university graduates. In parallel, access to tertiary education has expanded, new universities have been built and hence tertiary enrolment has increased leading to fierce competition between graduates (Hinchliffe 1987: 64, Bierschenk and Wieschiolek 2002: 8, Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002: 42, 53, Mugabushaka et al. 2003: 73, World Bank 2009: 47, 48,

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<sup>54</sup> Those tracer studies focussing on the whereabouts of Sub-Saharan African graduates who studied abroad (Karger 1973, Glaser and Habers 1974, Winkler 1987, Schraven et al. 2011, DAAD 203) that have already been mentioned (cf. chapter 2.2) do not provide detailed information about the transition process.

<sup>55</sup> Mayanja (2004: 549ff.) and the World Bank report (2009: 61) refer to examples in which the universities have been establishing collaborative links with private companies and actively support internship schemes to improve matching between tertiary education and private sector demand.



Mediebou 2010: 190).<sup>56</sup> Self-employment also seems no alternative, due to the young graduates lacking access to financial capital (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002: 37, Mayanja 2004: 454, cf. Fatoki 2010: 89). In consequence, as most studies indicate, job searching has lengthened and many tertiary graduates bridge their job search unemployment after completing their studies by temporarily working in precarious jobs in the informal sector, working outside their field of studies and receiving payment below their qualification (Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002: 39, Mayanja 2004: 454, Moleke 2006: 40, Mediebou et al. 2010: 198).

The second finding deriving from the existing studies concerns the matching between job searchers' qualifications and job requirements. This matching appears to have become less adequate in recent years because the quality of tertiary output is falling. The quality of university education has declined because of a lack of teaching personnel and, in addition, an absence of teaching equipment and materials make practice-oriented teaching nearly impossible (cf. Bierschenk and Wieschilek 2002: 10, Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002: 44, cf. Aryeetey et al. 2005: 123, Mugabushaka et al. 2007: 14, cf. World Bank 2009: 53).<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the impression emerges that a subject-specific oversupply of graduates in social science and humanities and an undersupply of engineering and science exists (Hinchliffe 1987: 67, Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong 2002: 31, Mayanja 2004: 547, Moleke 2006: 2, 40, cf. World Bank 2009: 48).

Both the general tightening of the formal labour market and the mismatch between education and required skills explain the third finding that the graduates' transitions into the labour market have extended and become more complex. What became quite clear in the studies is that frictional unemployment is the norm. An indicator is the duration of the job search.<sup>58</sup> Even though it is quite typical in general that academics have longer job search phases because they do not accept just any job but only those adequately matching their profile (cf. Kühne 2009: 120). However, in the Sub-Saharan context, the job search period can be very long depending on the particular economic context and the demand. According to Muga-

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<sup>56</sup> Mugabushaka et al. seem to be overly optimistic when they conclude that the situation has become 'normal' since the 1990s (2003: 74).

<sup>57</sup> The size of the mismatch and market imbalances is shown in an example given by Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002: 44) in the context of their analysis of vacancies in Ghana. They observed that some employers have to spend months finding the right employees. For instance, an NGO received 300 applications for their newspaper advertisement but the applicants who applied did not have the required skills. Eight of these 300 were picked for a training workshop and, finally, out of this group the best four were appointed (cf. World Bank 2009: 46).

<sup>58</sup> Job search duration is one of the major indicators reflecting the situation on the labour market for academics and how they are absorbed, or in other words, if their qualification matches the demand (cf. Kühne 2009: 119ff.).

bushaka (2003: 62), the duration of this frictional unemployment, the time from the point of completing studies until signing the first significant employment contract, has been said to have dropped in most Sub-Saharan Africa from an average of ten months to only six months, and only about five employers had to be contacted before getting a job (2003: 62).

In contrast to this finding, which indicates that frictional unemployment is similar in all countries, a country-specific evaluation of the studies shows that the extent of structural unemployment varies according to country context. Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong's study on the case of graduates in Ghana claims that at the time of the survey in the late 1990s graduate unemployment was below 1% and therefore "negligible" (2002: 37). Mediebou et al's study for the country case Cameroon claims that at the time of 2007-2008 at least 13.4% of university graduates of the sample faced structural unemployment (2010: 193). In accordance with Mediebou et al's predictions (2010: 193), the World Bank report expressed the notion that it seemed the higher the graduate's level of education, the higher the propensity of graduates to be affected by unemployment (cf. World Bank 2009: 45). In contrast, Mugabushaka et al's 10 country comparison claims that only 5% of the graduates were affected by structural unemployment (2003: 59). Despite the different extent to which graduates face frictional unemployment, all studies unanimously conclude that the job search requires more active job search behaviour from the graduates these days and thus most surveys point out that the graduates started job searching very early, during the course of their studies, before completing.

Interestingly, according to the surveys, due to the fact that jobs had become scarce and competition fierce, the strategy of choice was to directly approach potential employers whom they did not know before, (Mugabushaka 2003: 60, Mayanja 2004: 545, Moleke 2006: 18, Mediebou et al. 2010: 198). Social networks seemed to be less important for the outcome of the job search whereas the studies stressed more the aspect of inadequate professional profiles being a potential obstacle for a quick labour market entry, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, it also looks as if graduates' labour market entries in Francophone countries are more problematic and depend stronger on personal contacts than is the case for graduates in Anglophone African countries. However, the works about graduate employment in Francophone African countries which created this impression (Gérard 1997: 240, cf. World Bank 2009: 42, 45, Mediebou et al. 2010: 198) are too few and hence do not allow a more firm and general conclusion.

In summary, the tracer studies show the trend that transition processes for tertiary graduates in Sub-Saharan Africa have become protracted. Most of these studies were conducted in the 1990s. Hence, their results today might be outdated (cf. Mugabushaka et al. 2003: 74). In addition they apply quantitative design. Thus, they cannot describe the labour market entry as a process. It remains unclear how these university graduates actually landed a job. This actually is the aim of this study. The following chapter shows how this aim was realised methodologically.

## 4. Methodology

Because the main research question, how graduates actually enter their home countries' economies, refers to a process and life experiences they have undergone, a qualitative approach was chosen. For the purpose of presenting the perspective of the agents, 50 returned graduates from the two Sub-Saharan African countries Cameroon (22) and Ghana (28) were interviewed about their personal experiences. These open interviews included four exploratory interviews with students about their future plans, eight follow-up interviews with returned graduates, numerous informal talks and 23 expert interviews about how they assessed the professional opportunities of returning graduates in Cameroon and Ghana. These qualitative interviews were conducted during multi-sited fieldwork in the period 2008-2011.

As the previously presented literature reviews (cf. chapters 2 and 3) have demonstrated, so far only a few empirical works about the particular phase of labour market entry upon return migration exists. These studies are mainly quantitative research and commissioned tracer surveys, and remain unclear about how the process of labour market entry actually functions. In order to examine this particular process, theoretical models of Cassarino (2004) and Bourdieu (1983) have been discussed that have the strength to depict transitional processes from the perspective of the agents. In both models the analytic entities are a person's resources: financial savings, educational profile, skills and personal contacts.

Thus, in order to breathe life into these analytic concepts I needed empirical examples, the graduates' first-hand experiences. This would allow the reconstruction of the process with the example of specific individual cases (cf. Rosenthal 2008: 18). Such a reconstructive approach is embedded in an interpretative research paradigm. A general feature of this paradigm is that its representatives assert that people do not merely react to the world but that people create what is thought of as reality by being in constant interaction with other individuals. Social reality is investigated in such paradigm-oriented research works by deploying the principle of openness (cf. Rosenthal 2008: 14-15).

A classic way in which sociology achieves openness in the research process was presented by Glaser and Strauss' in their famous "Grounded Theory" (2012, original in 1967). The main principle of this widely applied approach is that it intends to discover "theory from data" (Glaser and Strauss 2012: 1) and thus has the notion that the collected empirical data should provide the 'grounds' for theoretical conclusions, not vice versa. The empirical data's content has to be examined from different perspectives and then correlated with the ongoing theory discourse (cf. Lamnek 1995: 119). As will be shown in this chapter, most of the particular instruments that I applied in the course of this thesis are anchored in this classic qualitative school of thought.

Apart from these scholarly-guided presumptions, my practical experience as an officer working in a German governmental reintegration programme strongly influenced the research design.<sup>59</sup> Observations which I had made earlier during working visits to the countries to which the graduates returned, provided first-hand, albeit only anecdotal, evidence. This anecdotal evidence indicated that returning graduates encountered extremely different experiences and had distinct approaches on how to get a job. This variety of experiences not only concerned the level of the individual, but more interestingly the anecdotes about the labour market entries of the graduates differed according to country.

In other words, the experiences of the returning migrants were similar depending on the particular country to which they returned. I had particular insights into the experiences of graduates returning to Cameroon and Ghana. In their personal stories Cameroonians described their labour market entry as characterized by relationships, while the stories of their Ghanaian counterparts, despite them also stressing the importance of their personal contacts, pointed out that it had been their particular qualification, which allowed them to get their jobs. In addition, I knew from the working context that Cameroonians maintained large and active social networks in Germany as well as in their home country, whereas their Ghanaian educational migrant counterparts in Germany met only sporadically or occasionally. Hence, I became interested in finding an answer to the question of why the labour market entries and social networks of graduates from these two countries were so different. I therefore conceptualised a comparative case study for which I selected the two countries Cameroon and Ghana.

Such a comparative design, claims Castles (2012: 22), “can increase awareness of general trends” and highlight the “human agency” of the migrants. That such empirically based comparative studies in migration studies/return migration studies are important is shown in the large-scale study of Iredale et al. (2003). They investigated the return migration in Asia Pacific and outlined general dimensions which affected and shaped the migrants’ return. Comparatively designed case studies, like theirs, can show that despite a similarity in the causes of migration, each group develops its own specific process. Concerning the topic of this research, this means highlighting the specific processes of how to obtain employment or how to start a business. The obtained information about specific and general aspects in the labour market entry then can lead to the development of a typology. Developing typolo-

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<sup>59</sup> Since 2004, I have been working at World University Service (WUS-Germany) as an officer for the workplace equipment subsidy (APA). It is a funding component in the context of the REP which has been described in chapter 2.4. As an officer at WUS for this part of the programme, I provide graduates from developing countries with information about this subsidy and process their applications for workplace equipment after they return and start working in their countries of origin.

gies is crucial, especially for empirical sociological studies about Sub-Saharan African countries, argues Neubert (2005: 431). He warns that currently too many isolated empirical studies produce an overly fragmented picture of social reality in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, he concludes that “we need differentiated statements on this or that ‘type’ of state, economy, society or political system. The only way to create and use such meaningful typologies is by way of empirical comparative studies” (Neubert 2005: 431). To accomplish this goal and to produce data that are more robust without disregarding social variety, Neubert (2005: 433) argues for comparing African countries selected, for instance, by their historic pasts or socio-political performance. That applies for the countries chosen in the context of this study.

Cameroon is a country with a multiple colonial past (Germany, France and Great Britain) compared to Ghana, a country having been under the colonial regime of the former British Empire. In addition, the two countries democratic systems have developed very differently in recent years, since the turn of the millennium. Whereas Cameroon increasingly bears the features of a “fragile state” (cf. International Crisis Group 2010a), Ghana has been celebrated as an almost consolidated democracy after having performed several election processes, perceived as more or less fair, and a peaceful handing over of political power in 2008/2009 (cf. Elischer 2009). These distinct political developments clearly have an impact on the economic climate in both countries and could affect the professional opportunities of returning educational migrants. Hence, contrasting the labour market entries of returning educational migrants between these two countries would reveal what exactly the dominant dimensions are that shape professional reintegration.

Another reason why particularly the two countries Ghana and Cameroon were selected for this comparison concerns the fact that in both cases information about this particular phase of return migration is lacking. This is also the case for Ghana, where research on migration from, in and to the country has a long tradition and a variety of studies exist on migration and development in Ghana (cf. Anarfi 1993, Peil 1995, Anarfi et al. 2003, Anarfi and Jagare 2005, Awumbila 2008, Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf 2008, Awumbila et al. 2008). Migration research is also institutionally embedded with the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), at the University of Ghana in Legon/ Accra. Larger research projects have been conducted on the topic of return migration, as for instance in the TRANSREDE project that has produced a large corpus of comparative literature contrasting the case of Ghana to that of the Ivory Coast (cf. Ammassari 2003, 2005, 2009, Black et al. 2003a, 2003b, Tiemoko 2003a, 2003b, Black and Castaldo 2009). Furthermore, single commissioned practitioner studies exist about return migration to Ghana (Berkhout et al. 2005, Taylor 2009). Moreover, Manuh’s (2005) editorial works “At home in the world?” includes many aspects about migration and development and return migration to Ghana (Anarfi et al. 2005, Tiemoko 2005).

One of the leading works about Ghanaians who return from Germany, is that of Martin (2005), followed by recent studies conducted about transnational networks of returning Ghanaians (Bochmann and Daroussis 2011, Olivier 2011). Furthermore, a growing number of Bachelor's and Master's studies contribute to the grey literature on the topic of return migration from Germany to Ghana (Bochmann et al. 2008, Kubitschek 2008, Vianden 2009, Heske 2012). Some of these studies at least touch the role of the graduate's personal contacts in the phase of their labour market entries but too briefly and more as a side effect of the research. Thus, in contrast to the rich literature, which is available for Ghana on the topic of return migration, the contrary is the case for Cameroon. For this country, the topic of out-migration of economic migrants, refugees and undocumented emigrants dominates the literature (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005, cf. Pelican 2008, 2013, cf. Pelican et al. 2008, cf. Alpes 2011, cf. Atekmangoh 2011). A number of papers and studies are about Cameroonians in Germany, their migration motives, their lives and their social networks and associations (cf. Lämmermann 2006, cf. Fleischer 2007, 2008, 2009, cf. Schmelz 2007, cf. Tsagué 2009, cf. Jamfa 2010, cf. Ekama 2011). Only few studies focus exclusively on return migration a gap which has been criticized already before (Tsagué 2011a: 72). Existing studies on return migration to Cameroon are mostly policy reports and anecdotal accounts (cf. BMZ 2005, cf. Nguedjeu 2006, cf. Foaleng 2006, cf. Ngbwa Mbala 2007, cf. Chappart 2007, cf. Schmelz 2010).

This chapter now explains the methodological framework of this comparative study. In section 4.1 the multi-sited fieldwork approach is justified and next I describe in more detail why a biographical approach was chosen (4.2). The research was, as previously mentioned, carried out as a practitioner, which created advantages as well requiring ethical considerations, discussed in section 4.3. In subchapter 4.4 I present the particular sources of evidence, the instruments to collect data. These were the Problem-Centred Interviews (PCIs), expert interviews and unstructured observations. In the following section (4.5), the purposive sampling process for obtaining interview partners is described and finally (4.6) I show that the data was evaluated in an inductively-oriented process that led to the desired typology.

#### **4.1 Multi-sited and focussed fieldwork**

The primary data for this study was conducted between 2008 and 2011 in three locations: Germany, Ghana and Cameroon. The research was multi-sited because it allowed for the interviewing of the educational migrants during different phases of their sojourn: as students in Germany and as graduates and employees or entrepreneurs in their home countries, Cameroon and Ghana. Meeting them at first in Germany and seeing them embedded in their temporary social environment as students made it easier to understand their return decisions. Interviewing them in their final

semesters and during occasions connected to the topic of return migration – for instance during reintegration seminars – made it likely that they had reflected on the question of whether they wanted to return and what their professional plans were. Moreover, multi-sited research has become a common practice in contemporary transnational research. It has become a way of reacting to the fact that today’s migrants are embedded in multiple locations and that they are interconnected in the aforementioned transnational social spaces (Boccagni 2012: 304). For instance, Falzon (2009: 5) claims that contemporary migration research per se requires supralocal frameworks. Earlier, Marcus (1995: 109) had already mentioned that this multi-sited research approach in the context of producing biographical life histories of migrants is highly convenient.

What is more, I wanted to “follow” (Boccagni 2012: 304) their further migration paths, as well as their transition from education to work that would supposedly occur after their graduation. Pursuing this objective I basically worked both diachronically (retrospective biographical interviews) as well as synchronously, by trying to accompany carefully selected respondents. My intention was to find out how they continued in their professional lives, what experiences they made concerning their job searches, and where they would start their professional lives. Hence, my field was more a “conceptual space” in the sense as Gallo (2009: 89) describes it, “whose meanings and confines are continuously negotiated”. These conceptual spaces comprise the aforementioned reintegration seminars in Germany which are carried out in the context of the reintegration programmes (cf. chapter 2.4), networking events and alumni meetings in both countries.<sup>60</sup> My observations concerned the aspects of interactions between the participants of these events, what topics they talked about and their comments about the general socio-political situation in their home countries.

However, these phases of observations during my focussed fieldwork were far from the method of a participatory observation, in the classic and strict sense of a “thick participation” as Spittler (2001) claims, or a “free participatory observation” as Girtler (2001) teaches. Instead, by arranging my field visits around the dates of these events, I applied a method that resembles to some extent what Knoblauch (2005) amongst others describes as a “focused ethnography”. This research approach is

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<sup>60</sup> A complete overview of the events which were visited in the context of the research is provided in Appendix B.3.

“(…) characterised by selected, specified, that is: focused aspects of a field: Thus rather than study, e.g. the police as a field, one may focus on the question as to how police officers do their rounds (walk their beats); instead of studying youth clubs one may focus on the question how the members of these clubs perform at a certain event; instead of studying the management of a company one would focus on the meetings of managers. The point is, in order to focus, one needs to have knowledge of the field of which it forms a part” (Knoblauch 2005: 9).

According to Knoblauch, sociologist researchers increasingly apply this form of ethnography because it allows the researcher to investigate a particular fragment within the broad social spheres that also can be an event or a certain situation. Thus, I applied a situation-oriented fieldwork, split into several consecutive and cyclical visits. In this regard, there are parallels to Knoblauch’s approach, but also a striking difference. Knoblauch focuses on key moments of interaction, and collects data during intense participant observation. I, however, also focussed on important interactions, but queried this information retrospectively through interviews<sup>61</sup> Knoblauch’s approach would also have been difficult to apply for the particular situation of the job-hunt because on the one hand, the job searches take place at very different times and it is quite unpredictable, whether and where a respondent is called for an interview.

On the other hand, a classic participant observation would hardly have been possible: willingness to take a researcher along for an interview would have been unlikely. There is too much at stake for the respondents than to risk failing for the sake of research purposes. Finally, it was not feasible to plan long-term stationary research due to the fact that I was still working at the same time and thus a limited amount of time for the research phases was available (cf. Schulze 2013).<sup>62</sup>

However, organising my multi-sited and focussed fieldwork in cyclical research phases helped me to become increasingly aware of the different country contexts and sensitised me to the importance of current political developments that define the labour market entries in both countries. Thus, my research design contained one of the main principles of the Grounded Theory: conceptualising research in a

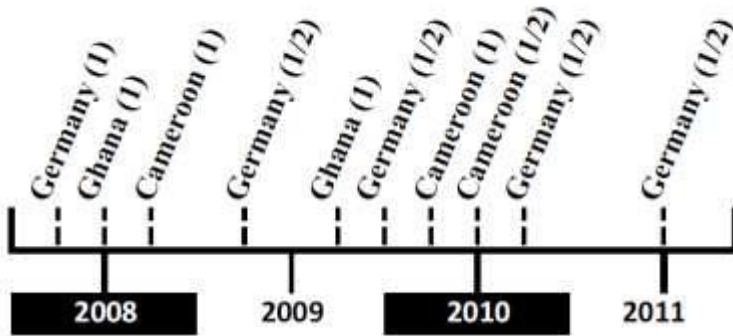
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<sup>61</sup> One possible method of collecting data during focussed ethnography is by taping events and situations on video (cf. Schnettler 2008). Filming would have been possible during the networking events, but it requires adequate experience and knowledge on the part researcher about the technical aspects, which for me was not the case.

<sup>62</sup> In larger projects that are externally funded, the problem of limited time resources can be overcome by having a research team in which the main researcher bears the responsibility for concept and analysis but data collection is carried out by local assistants as for instance shown by the complex multi-mixed study of Schulze (2013).



way that allows simultaneous data production and evaluation (cf. Lamnek 1995: 124). The timeline (figure 3) shows the particular field visits during 2008-2010: five events/seminars were visited in Germany, two visits were made to Ghana and I collected data during three visits in Cameroon. Altogether, I spent about seven and a half months in the field.



Source: Own research.

Figure 3: Research timeline 2008-2011.

In 2008, the explorative phase of my research started in Germany, at reintegration seminars, during which I interviewed a couple of students of both nationalities.<sup>63</sup> I interviewed them informally but recorded the interview, asking them about their career plans and if they already knew where they wanted to live. The responses already showed a trend: Ghanaians had already made serious plans to return within the next year as soon as they completed their programmes. The majority of the seminar participants mentioned that they saw considerable opportunities opening up at home. In contrast, Cameroonian students articulated the hope that they would first gain work experience in Germany and then, if they had planned carefully, could return, because they – like their Ghanaian fellows – deeply missed their home country. If they had access to decent labour at home, respondents from both groups told me, they would rather return today than tomorrow. However, that was the problem for the respondents from Cameroon it seemed. They were less positive about their prospects and saw “extremely very limited possibilities”, in addition to the fear that finding employment would become difficult without having contacts (field notes and seminar evaluation 02-04.05.2008). From these first explorative

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<sup>63</sup> From this group of students I selected two graduates from each country who I intended to accompany during the following years.

open interview experiences I developed the strategy for the interviews in Cameroon and Ghana, which I will discuss in detail in chapter 4.4.

Even more than the exploratory interviews, the first field visits to Ghana and Cameroon revealed how different the situation was for graduates in the two countries. The situation in Ghana had improved immensely since the last time I had been to the country, whereas I perceived the atmosphere in Cameroon as extremely tense. Ghana I had already known since 1995, having visited the country for years as a tourist and during a five-month stay, working as a trainee on an internship. Hence, I had a general knowledge of the infrastructure and already knew a few people. Cameroon I had already visited, too. I had been going to Cameroon since 2005 but only for annual short working visits lasting a few days, the time being spent primarily in the two larger cities, Douala and Yaoundé. However, despite my previous knowledge and the contacts I already had, the situation in both places surprised me.

In Ghana I was surprised by the strong individualisation processes taking place in society in general, and in Cameroon I was continuously impressed by the large numbers of Cameroonians joining networking events. Encounters with returned graduates in general took place in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Even though in both countries almost everyone mentioned that returning and finding work was difficult, in Ghana more people talked less pessimistically about the process of getting a job as a challenge, which needs time (sometimes also money to make the process faster) but is not impossible to achieve (field notes Ghana 03.07.2008). Ghanaian respondents did complain about the political system, which according to their view was not working well and that living costs, especially prices for fuel, were too high. At the same time I perceived my Ghanaian interview partners to be very optimistic about the country's economic future. This was primarily due to the discovery of the 'Jubilee Fields' - oil in commercial quantities. It was interesting that during the first research visit many of my respondents verbally expressed that an individualisation was taking place in Ghanaian society. Individualisation was expressed in two ways: as a relief, because as my interview partners said "the extended family system will kill us otherwise" or as a warning of increasing egoism, specifically a lack of sense of responsibility for the public good (field notes Ghana, 18.06.2008, 12.09.2009).

The positive side of the individualisation process was also evident in the fact that during the interviews, respondents consciously or unconsciously changed the current US presidential candidate's election slogan 'yes *we* can!' to "yes *I* can!" (cf. Ghana case #13). Many Ghanaians to whom I spoke during this time perceived Obama's candidacy as a symbol that they could achieve anything in this world if they only worked hard enough. Furthermore, the fact he had 'African origins' and had visited Ghana, as the first African country, made many Ghanaians increasingly feel like members of a globalised world (field notes Ghana, 25.08.2009).

The impression was reinforced by large investments that could be seen on Accra's streets. For instance, the new Shoprite Accra Mall, a large shopping mall under South African management, built after the raw model of North American shopping malls. Next to exclusive boutiques it has restaurants and an entertainment section. These consumer facilities serve the rising demand of a steadily growing middle-class. Some of my respondents, who belonged to this middle-class, wanted me to meet at this particular place. By this, I assume, they intended to demonstrate their own higher social status and that the status of their country had improved, too (field notes Ghana, 02.07.2008). Concerning the labour market entries, the interviews revealed that even though contacts were very instrumental in helping with the search, most Ghanaians relied instead on their qualification. 'Knowing someone' helped to identify a vacancy, but 'keeping the job' depended on performance, skills and perseverance in the job search (field notes Ghana 18.06.2008).

In Cameroon the atmosphere was completely different. The impression I gained from the country and people was less positive than that when I had been in the country during the last trip, in 2007. At that time, I recalled, I had the impression that people were in general quite economically active. Returned graduates as well as non-migrants had come to terms with the political situation in their country and instead of complaining, they were busy dealing with life as best as they could and continuously searched for economic niches in which they could invest. However, the economic and - more importantly - the political situation became tense. Earlier, in February 2008, the country had witnessed violently repressed demonstrations caused by an increase in fuel and wheat prices and the country leader's constitutional amendment that gave him the legal rights to presidency legislation until 2011 (cf. Mehler 2008: 51). In consequence, people seemed to have given up hope.<sup>64</sup>

Many Cameroonian citizens, I was told during informal talks, feared the violent repressions and the countrywide outburst of ethnic clashes if they revolted against their hopeless situation. People said that they were simply frustrated and apart from my interview partners who had already secured their entry-level employment, I witnessed how young Cameroonian academics struggled to find decent employment, an almost impossible task without having contact to responsible key persons

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<sup>64</sup> In fact, the situation reminded me very much of what I had read in Jahoda et al. (2009, original study in 1933) who had pointed out in their study on the unemployed of Marienthal, conducted during the 1930s in Austria, how whole families had been affected by long term unemployment. Those families in which at least a few members still had employment had hope despite their difficult economic situation and their offspring were making realistic plans for their future, whereas in those families where no one had work anymore seemed to have completely given up hope. The more such families existed, the more endemic depression became and finally, whole sections of the small town completely secluded themselves in privacy, and the inhabitants resilience faded away (2009: 54ff.).

who personally gave them a chance to work.<sup>65</sup> Opportunities to get decent employment had become so rare and competition so tight that, I was told, openings in the formal sector were not channelled anymore in such common personal networks. By then, job-relevant networks had become more exclusive. Membership in these special networks was only achieved by cooptation, not by applying for membership (field notes Cameroon, 10.10.2008). The Cameroonian media and gossip on Cameroon's streets, often labelled as the "radio trottoir" (cf. Nyamnjoh 2011: 11) revealed that recruitment took place in circles belonging to religious sects and free masonry, and it was asserted that being taken on in such circles implied occult and sexual practices (cf. Geschiere 2010). A general tension could be felt in the interviews, too. During many of my correspondents' narrations, frustration or in the worst cases fear, was evident. Even though everyone was very friendly and endeavoured to help me collect data for my PhD, I could feel their resignation that they could not oppose this system. Keywords during these interviews were 'mafia' and 'godfatherism', and the stories dealt with crime, violence and sexual harassment, witnessed not by my interview partners but friends of their friends (field report Cameroon 2008: 4, cf. memo informal talk 12.02.2009).

Back in Germany, I made preliminary evaluations of my two field visits, and went through the interviews, notes and memos that I had made during the interviews and events. I summarised this fieldwork in reports, which gave me the opportunity to reflect critically on my initial research question, and if the measures to answer it worked. For the second two field visits, Ghana in 2009 and Cameroon in 2010, I adjusted my interview questions accordingly and accomplished the sample with selected cases and supplementary expert interviews. Concerning the tension I had experienced during interviews in Cameroon, I also sought advice in a number of informal talks with other researchers, scholars in the field who worked on Cameroon and from Cameroonian students in Germany.

By the time of the second visits to both countries, the global financial crisis had spilled over to the African economies, too. I found that the general atmosphere in August 2009 in Ghana was mixed: on the one hand the government's peaceful handing over had created a positive environment of change that had attracted many of the new government's family members in the diaspora to return. On the other hand, because the country also faced economical problems due to the ongoing

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<sup>65</sup> The following description of a situation, which I witnessed first hand during my visit, serves as an example. A friend of a friend, who had graduated as an accountant half a year before, secured her first temporary employment only because she received a referral from a friend who accompanied me. Although he was not living permanently in Cameroon he was able to commend her to another friend, a Cameroonian who owed him a favour and who knew someone in the banking sector. Before this lucky coincidence, the lady had sent more than 20 applications without even receiving an answer from the companies (field notes 15.10.2008).

world financial crisis, private investments and employment in the public sector slowed down. In consequence, it had become increasingly difficult to find employment for those who were searching for entry-level employment in the public, but also in the private, sector. In contrast, those who had come a few years earlier to Ghana and had already consolidated their careers reported respectable progress in their professional trajectories. In Cameroon in May 2010 it appeared as if the situation had somehow stabilised. Nevertheless, the careers of the respondents whom I had met two years before had stagnated or progressed only slowly. Those who had returned recently were said to have been fed up with the constant repression that they had experienced during their time in Europe. Although they had made a conscious decision to return, they often had problems to adjust to the ‘reality’ in the country context: the poor working conditions, lack of equipment, that superiors in their eyes had unlimited power whereas they as employees had no security and finally, that payment was too low (Expert #14, 05.05.2010, memo).

## **4.2 It’s a part of life**

Both transitions, return migration as well as labour market entries, are special situations which are tied to people’s life stories. Therefore, the whole process of generating data in the course of this research concentrated on the graduates’ biographies. The early roots of biographical research in the context of migration are the Chicago School’s study of the “Polish Peasant in Europe and America” by Thomas and Znaniecki (1996, original 1918-1920). This pioneering and very detailed work, as Rosenthal (2008: 35, 162) describes it, concentrates on the biographies of Polish immigrants to the United States and their return migration. Their argumentation bases on the evaluation of already existing data stemming from biographical self-testimonies, like private letters. In order to reconstruct the migrants’ lives, the researchers complement this material with documentary information, such as newspaper articles. The approach has been further developed by authors such as Jan Szczepanski in what has been called since then the “biographical method” (cf. Bukowski 1974: 23, cf. Rosenthal 2008: 35, cf. Breckner 2007: 114, cf. Bauschke-Urban 2010: 128).

Another pioneering work, in which research on working biographies was conducted in a particular region, was mastered in the study “Morienthal. A sociography of an unemployed community” by Jahoda et al. (2009, original in 1933). In this study the researched population was the community of a particular village in Austria and thus the research field in this case was equivalent to a geographical and administrative space. Similar to the studies about the aforementioned Polish immigrants the researcher team around Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel collected documentary material, newspapers and diaries, but in addition they also produced biographical data. They conducted open in-depth interviews, observed in the field, participated actively at certain events and even asked the families in the village to

protocol their diet. This combination of different methods was a trendsetter for research at that time (cf. Rosenthal 2008: 104).

Also noteworthy with regard to biographical studies is Rosenthal's (2006) social work study about biographic narrative talks with young people becoming adults, which also touches on their transitions from education to work. Concerning this particular transition process, life-course studies have a long tradition of conducting biographical studies about people's labour market entries. An example is provided in the work of Evans and Heinz (1994, Evans 2003), who designed a comparative country study "Becoming Adults in England and Germany". They describe the process of young school leavers' transitions by developing labour market entry patterns based on qualitatively conducted empirical data, instead of using large-scale aggregated data, as is usually the case with tracer studies. The four patterns they identified were 'strategic', 'step-by-step', 'wait and see', and 'taking chances'. The school leaver's individual "transition behaviour" (Evans 2003: 115) reflects the "pattern of activity people adopt in attempting to realise their personal interests and occupational goals". Patterns like 'strategic' and 'taking chances' are very active labour market entries, whereas 'step-by-step' as well as 'wait and see' reflect more passive behaviours in the transition process (Evans 2003: 116). In their study they come to the conclusion that German youth is less active than their counterparts in Great Britain. They identify the specific educational system and labour market in both countries to be the varying factor.<sup>66</sup>

Witzel and Kühn (1999) also presented an interesting study on professional biographies and reconstructed career patterns, based on qualitative data. However, in contrast to Evans and Heinz, they did not focus primarily on the labour market entry. Instead, they captured in their diachronic typology important aspects: first, the individual's orientations, second, their action patterns and third, how these influenced their career steps and professional prospects in future (Witzel and Kühn 1999: 53). They focused on the career trajectories of German apprentices who worked as technicians, car mechanics, hairdressers, bankers, civil servants and retail merchants after having completed their training. They interviewed their respondents [n=91] in three intervals of about three years. Based on their empirical data, Witzel and Kühn finally reconstructed six different types of working biographies: 'senior workers', 'wage workers', 'careerists', 'optimisers', 'individualists'

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<sup>66</sup> The transitions of school leavers in Germany are according to the researchers protracted (Evans 2003: 120). The authors claim that this is because school leavers perceive their transition as externally structured, due to the dual system of apprenticeship over a period of three years, in which work-based training is accompanied by one or two days spent each week in a vocational school (Berufsschule). The British system, in contrast, is less institutionally structured (cf. Bynner 2010: 8) and hence the school leavers feel more responsible for their occupational careers immediately after they complete school.

and ‘independents’. In their conclusion the authors identify the respondent’s aim to seek independence as well as their status oriented ambitions (Witzel and Kühn 1999: 53) as structuring variables.

To take one recent work, in which the biographical approach was chosen in the context of migration processes, the qualitative study of Nohl et al. (2010) conducted multi-sited research in Canada, Germany and Turkey in which they examined professional trajectories of highly skilled migrants. The study so far has been unique because it applies Bourdieu’s concept of forms of capital as well as having a biographical concept. Hence, the works in this volume have a quite similar design to that of this work. However, in contrast to my study, their works deal with emigration and not with return migration and labour market entries of highly skilled migrants. Therefore, their studies reflect the migration process from the perspective of the host countries in the Global North instead of that in the source countries, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Concluding, the strength of the biographical approach lies in its flexibility. It allows detailed insights into the agents’ lives as well as revealing how they interpret it themselves. Furthermore, biographical research is able to capture changes in life, geographical as well as personal changes (cf. Martin 2005: 71, cf. Schittenhelm 2007, cf. Breckner 2007: 118, cf. Rosenthal 2008: 15, cf. Thomsen 2009: 16-17, cf. Nohl et al. 2010: 14-15, cf. Bauschke-Urban 2010: 125). Alternative methods, for instance the approach of an ego-centred network analysis, would have meant concentrating on only one resource of my respondents, their personal contacts and social networks. In addition, conducting such an ego-centred network study would have demanded a greater number of methodological pre-considerations and, despite all preparations, is a difficult task that easily leads to complications (cf. Schweizer 1996: 248).

### **4.3 Research as an embedded practitioner**

Generally, when it comes to research ethics, certainly the individual researchers must consider their responsibilities and potential bias in general. In this regard, Girtler (2009) provided a very simple and convenient guide with his “10 Commandments of Fieldwork”. Girtler gives examples, drawn from life, about the individual researcher’s best practices. His commandments are primarily led by universal common sense and good manners. More specifically, in the particular case of this research, ethical considerations had to be made because I was juggling different roles.

As has been mentioned already, besides being an officer at WUS in the REP I also conducted research. The field work had been partly carried out during work-related occasions and visits to Cameroon and Ghana. Without doubt, this double role created advantages as well as potential constraints for the research. In fact, the in-

sights I had gained through my practical work were the starting point for the research. Such research projects, driven by researchers with a professional background in the particular field of research, are often labelled as “practitioner research” (cf. McLeod 1999, cf. Pritchard 2002, cf. McGinn and Bosacki 2004, cf. Shaw 2005, cf. Coy 2006). This form of research is more common in the medical health field, social work, and in education and has to be seen as different from action research, which is more common in development cooperation.<sup>67</sup> These practitioner research projects are often driven by the hope of not only contributing to research but also of benefiting practical work, as McLeod explains from his perspective of a therapeutic counsellor: “Practitioner Research is about what you need to know to do the job better, or to be able to keep doing the job” (1999: 2). However, my attempt was not to evaluate my own work or improve the reintegration programmes but the desire to better understand the main principles of job entries in practice. By doing so I intended to contribute to an improved information flow for future generations of foreign students in Germany.

To accomplish this goal I had to understand on a theoretical level what my working colleagues, recruiters, and job counsellors in Cameroon and Ghana already did successfully in practice: they job placed our clients who returned and searched for employment at home. By doing this difficult job, the recruiters ‘applied’ what they knew about their home country’s labour markets, the recruitment processes and thus guided the clients through this challenging transitional phase. It is a major goal of practitioner research to strategically reveal such insiders’ knowledge and investigate it from a theoretical perspective:

“For example, tacit knowledge can be defined as knowledge or abilities that can be passed between experts but cannot be, or have not been, set out or passed on in formal statements, diagrams, verbal descriptions or instructions for actions. On this view good practitioner research will reveal tacit knowledge and ought to give attention to exploring different kinds of tacit knowledge” (Shaw 2005: 1242).

Thus, a crucial part of my practitioner’s research was about transforming tacit knowledge about the labour market entries of returned graduates into formalised knowledge. What was very helpful in the research was that I myself had access to sources of insiders’ knowledge (life course data of clients, personal contact with social actors and experts). Because of this, I already knew details about the profes-

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<sup>67</sup> Action research (cf. Neef et al. 2008) aims at a direct change in practice, whereas my project simply served to acquire knowledge, as is common for most research projects, without having immediate consequences for the practice. The difference also concerns the professional background and involvement of the researcher as a practitioner in the field in which he or she researches.



sional biographies of my interviewees prior to the interviews or could attain this additional information afterwards.

Coy (2006: 427) describes this kind of wider-knowledge from her own practitioner research experience as a social worker. As in her case, my experiences of working with my clients provided an important “backdrop” and I could thus “frame the interview transcripts with knowledge of (...) lives, relationships and thought processes that augmented the analyses”. This is, again in Coy’s words, “a privilege denied to researchers who meet the participants only in the context of an interview setting” (2006: 427). In this way, I captured not only the emic perspective of my respondents but could add information about their biographies that made the reconstruction process more detailed. This wider-knowledge, for instance by having access to most of the CVs, was helpful in structuring the individuals’ stories of their educational and professional lives in a chronological order; by having copies of the employment contracts at hand I knew details about their work description, their salaries and if an appointment was permanent or temporary. In a few cases the interviewees’ CVs, which I read after the interviews, did not correlate with their biographies presented in the narrations. This, however, may have to do with the fact that human memory is fragile and “people are inaccurate reporters of their own behaviour”, as Bernard (2011: 184) claims. Also, Rosenthal (2008: 93) refers to the situation where interviewees sometimes mention contradictory life course data and that their narrations do not always follow an objective time line. In such situations she recommends investigating why this is the case. This, however, was not always feasible in my study and I thus followed the CVs that had been submitted by my respondents themselves. In cases in which the verbal outline of the person’s life course was very different to the written version of the CV, I tried to integrate both versions into the biography. To provide an example: an interviewee (Cameroon case #08) described how he found work by referring to his current workplace as the first employment he took after returning. But according to the files and his official CV, this was his second employment and not his labour market entry. I realised this only after the interview, when going through the files again. Because of lack of access to further information about this inconsistency I treated his description as the ‘true’ version of his labour market entry. This situation of having two slightly opposing versions of the labour market entry occurred in two cases from Cameroon (#08, #19) and could be explained simply as an indicator that these employments were not as relevant to the interviewees in the sense that they only existed ‘on paper’. However, this was only speculation and I had no opportunity, due to time restrictions, to verify my assumption. Eventually, because I discovered these inconsistencies in only two of the interviewees’ biographies out of 50 (4%) of the overall sample, I suggested that it did not affect the final results of the analysis.

Being a practitioner in the reintegration programme also had the advantage that I often already knew my respondents personally. It allowed me to select my interview partners based on theoretical presumptions, which I will outline in more detail in the following chapter, 4.5, and not as is usually the case, through the so-called ‘snowball sampling’ (cf. Wengraf 2006: 102, Bernard 2011: 147ff).<sup>68</sup> Thus, knowing my respondents personally made me be independent from a single gatekeeper and I was able in most cases to contact my interview partners, returned graduates as well as the experts, directly (cf. Coy 2006: 424).

I generally contacted my potential interview partners before travelling to Cameroon and Ghana and first wrote an e-mail regarding my upcoming visit and my research aim and kindly asked if they would be interested in an interview concerning this. In the case of a reply I fixed an approximate week in which the appointment could take place. If I did not receive an e-mail response I contacted the person via phone again, asked if they had time and if positive, I arranged for an appointment date. In most cases in which interviews did not take place this was due to the tight time schedule of my respondents not fitting in with my limited time in the field: because they were not in town or were on working visits in neighbouring countries. Only in one case was I not granted an interview that was not openly addressed but demonstrated by not coming to the interview appointment and afterwards not answering my phone calls nor responding to another request via e-mail (field notes Ghana, 03.07.2008). I could only speculate about the reason for this rejection and thus will not elaborate on it further.

Concerning my double role in the field, there were incidents which made me assume that my respondents were very conscious of it and that they even used it strategically in situations when they introduced me to third parties.<sup>69</sup> To give an example, when I was once invited to an informal meeting, in which close friends of

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<sup>68</sup> Snowball sampling, simply put, is a recruitment method of chain-referrals for groups of people which are hard to approach because there are not many potential participants in the field or because the field as such is highly sensitive (cf. Bernard 2011: 147ff.). Snowball sampling is an appropriate method to acquire interview partners especially in the context of network-oriented migration research (cf. Fleischer 2009: 22, cf. Günther 2009: 101, cf. Ayazi 2013: 127). However, it often bears the risk that researchers strongly depend on the gatekeeper’s personal contacts and on chance, if the respondents, which have been pointed out by the referring person, really fit into the sample, which sometimes may not be the case (cf. Martin 2005: 35, 37).

<sup>69</sup> Generally, I communicated my dual roles very transparently from the beginning of my research by addressing them verbally and non-verbally as clearly as possible. My interlocutors were scientifically trained and hence they knew about being in the role of a researcher themselves, and were keen to actively support the project. I communicated my dual roles non-verbally by having different dress codes. As a researcher, I appeared casually dressed, whereas as an officer I wore suits and generally was more formal. For both roles I used two different business cards (Ghana field report 2008: 2).

my respondent gathered together in a pub after work, I was introduced as a friend, who was ‘a PhD student from Germany’. In contrast, when I was introduced to superiors in the workplaces my role as an officer from a German donor organisation was emphasised (field notes Ghana, 04.07.2008). Steinwachs had a very similar experience (2006: 29) in her project in the field of development cooperation, in which she was also working as a part time consultant: the outcome of the research highly depends on how the researched group perceives the role of the researcher. She describes her own role as a constant negotiation process that requires a high amount of flexibility from the researcher – as well as from the interview partners. These experiences concerning my double roles in the research process resemble what Neef et al. (2008) recount concerning their particular experiences from an action-research setting that caused conflicts:

“Juggling the roles of scientific coordinator, administrator and action researcher was not only difficult in terms of timing (when to assume a certain role), but also opened the gate for abuses of power (...)”  
(Neef et al. 2008: 91).

In my case, I also had to consider if and how such potential power abuses might occur. As an official worker in a support programme, I had to prevent interviewees feeling obliged to give me an interview simply driven by the fear that otherwise they would be excluded from support (cf. Pritchard 2002: 6). My professional position certainly helped to make the interview contacts because my respondents already knew me. The invitation of the interviews was generally received positively and I did not have the impression that my respondents felt that they had been ‘forced’, because I also made clear that the interviews were taking place in another context than that of the support scheme.

However, I also became aware that interviewees felt a certain moral obligation towards me as assistant in the programme, which in most cases had already provided them with their workplace equipment. Even more importantly, my interview partners themselves were academics, had conducted empirical led research and thus they felt obliged to provide information for me as a junior researcher, too. Their interest became evident in those cases in which my interview partners asked questions about the methodological framework of the study, the theoretical background and, in cases when they gave useful recommendations, on helpful literature in the field of migration research (cf. Ghana cases #04, #14, #21, #23, cf. Cameroon cases #05, #11, #12). In addition, to prevent potential power inequalities, I only interviewed persons who gave informed consent before the interview and who already had received complete funding, which I will explain in the following chapter about the sampling process (cf. chapter 4.5).

Last but not least, not only the individual social researcher has to take responsibility that research ethics are well-observed but also social scientists as a group must consider their actions in the field. This point addresses being aware of potential over-research in particular social communities as is the case for returned migrants

in Ghana. Evidence for this claim is that within the period 2000-2010, countless bachelor, master's and PhD researchers conducted interviews in separate research projects in Ghana with Ghanaian return migrants from Germany (Martin 2005, Sieveking and Fauser 2009, Bochmann et al. 2008, Kubitschek 2008, Vianden 2009, Heske 2012).<sup>70</sup> This number during a relatively short time has to be seen in correlation to the comparably small size of the population of returning graduates in Ghana (cf. chapter 5.2). They led to an influx of research projects. Different researchers interviewed the same people several times about the same general topic on return migration but with different research questions.

Such an influx of research interest influences the individual's presentation of their personal migration experience. It sometimes even provokes 'rehearsing' answers (cf. Coy 2006: 423), which does not necessarily mean that the information is poor or less relevant, but that the researcher has to be aware of the fact and has to include it in the interpretation of the data.<sup>71</sup> To prevent particular social groups from being excessively 'over researched' and not benefiting from this strong – often policy led – interest, I therefore advocate Girtler's seventh commandment to treat interviewees as partners in a responsible manner and not to view them as "mere producers of data" (2009: 4).

Furthermore, another ethical problem concerns a more organised researchers' co-operation. Sieveking (2011) diagnoses this need in her article on "methodological reflections on conducting research on migrants as development actors". She critically considers the consequences of policy-led research and that it can lead to frustrations on both sides if expectations and hopes connected with the research are not clearly articulated at the beginning.<sup>72</sup>

Hope, in various forms, was expressed by my interview partners as well. Some interlocutors expressed their hope that this study would bring improvements for

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<sup>70</sup> The research projects I refer to did not focus in particular on migrants' professional reintegration.

<sup>71</sup> Such a rehearsed interview happened in Ghana (cf. case #12). After an outstandingly eloquent interview about a woman's life in the context of her educational migration, I told my subject that I was impressed by her performance. She smiled and told me that when the previous junior researcher had interviewed her last year, she had not been satisfied with her answers during the interview. Therefore, she told me, she had prepared this time and had drafted her speech for our interview. She kindly asked me for the transcript of her interview, so that she would be well prepared for the next researcher and would just have to hand out this interview.

<sup>72</sup> Sieveking refers in her essay to the research conducted in the exploratory phase of the 'development through the diaspora' project of the North Rhine-Westphalian government with Ghanaian migrants in Germany. The problem was that the various research activities mandated by political ambitions raised high hopes among the members of the Ghanaian community in Germany – as well as on the Ghanaian side in Ghana – which in the end were not met (Sieveking 2011: 204).

future generations of returning graduates and could help those fresh returnees to find employment faster and to raise attention to this general problem. Others expressed more tangible hopes, for instance they expected increased funds for their personal benefit or that they could participate twice in the programme. Such expression of tangible expectations was the exception. Nevertheless, these expressed hopes showed, and here I absolutely agree with Sieveking, that it is strictly necessary to consider in advance if power asymmetries might occur in the field, what consequences these may have not only for the quality of the research, but primarily for those whose lives are investigated (cf. Sieveking 2011: 211).

#### 4.4 Sources of evidence

During fieldwork, three different sources of evidence were tapped: interviews, observations and existing statistics. Whereas for the first two sources raw data first had to be produced, the third source, statistics, was already available. To produce data during my focussed fieldwork I primarily used the method of qualitative and open interviews which I conducted with returned graduates, with students in Germany and with experts (table 1).<sup>73</sup> After analysing them, I complemented the findings with details derived from diary notes made during unstructured observations in the field. Complementarily, I enriched my findings with secondary data such as figures and statistics of the FSO, the HIS-HF and internal statistics of the REP.

Table 1: The data sources

<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Cameroon</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2008-2011</b>			
Exploratory interviews	2	2	<b>4</b>
Problem centred interviews	22	28	<b>50</b>
Follow-up interviews	4	4	<b>8</b>
Expert interviews	12	11	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>85</b>

*Source:* Own research.

The table shows that the core body of data stems from problem-centred interviews with key persons of this study: I interviewed 50 graduates who had already re-

<sup>73</sup> A complete list of all interview partners, individuals and experts, and the individuals' short biographies can be found in Appendix B.

turned to their home countries. The particular instrument for these interviews was the Problem-Centred Interview (PCI), as Witzel (2000) developed it. It allows approaching the topic under investigation very openly, and at the same time has a clear focus on a particular topic. Earlier, Witzel and Kühn (1999) applied the PCI successfully to investigate occupational biographies and Scheibelhofer (2008) used it as a tool in her research on migration processes. As she correctly notes, many elements of the PCI are borrowed from the narrative interview devised by Schütze (cf. Scheibelhofer 2008: 406). The narrative interview is a very appropriate instrument for researching topics related to biographical content. Narrative interviews have been used by researchers like Rosenthal (2008) and Rosenthal et al. (2006) as a technique for reconstructing the educational histories of disadvantaged youth, and by Martin (2005) in her study on returned Ghanaian migrants from Germany. However, the PCI is more flexible than the classic narrative interview and is less confusing and unpredictable than the narrative interview. In addition, the latter has special communication rules that do not allow the interviewer to intervene directly but only to signal the listener's support non-verbally (cf. Martin 2005: 34).

Methodically, the PCI is a more discursive dialogue than a survey or a strict narrative interview. It focuses on a topic chosen by the interviewer, who can intervene, but at the same time the PCI still provides much space for the interviewees to outline their emic perspective. The PCI thus achieves the main goal, as Scheibelhofer (2008: 411) states: "that is, to give voice to the persons who are studied". Roughly, the PCI can be divided into two phases<sup>74</sup>: a first open narrative part "with minimal interviewer structuring" followed by a second, "a semi-structured part of the interview that allows for a focus set by the researcher" (Scheibelhofer 2008: 404).

The opening question posed by the interviewer, who intends to stimulate a longer narration on the topic that the interviewees structure themselves, in the first part "functions like an empty page" (Witzel 2000: 5). In my research context this introductory question (see interview questionnaire in Appendix A) was about my interview partner's memories, from their early school days until today. The introductory question worked well in the case of my Ghanaian interview partners, who often mentioned that they liked the question and gave very open insights about their personal backgrounds (cf. Ghana cases #13, #20). In one case I had the chance to put the question and one and a half hours later my respondent had answered all other questions without me ever having to pose them. He had been eager to tell his story (Ghana memo case #4). In contrast, the question did not work well with the Cameroonian interview partners. Asking for their early memories about schooldays just prompted them to mention life course dates, as can be found in a

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<sup>74</sup> Strictly speaking, Witzel mentions three phases and does not count the introduction and the questionnaire as separate interview phases (2000: 5).

CV (field report Cameroon 2008: 3). Thus, for the second research phase I modified the question in so far as I explicitly emphasized why it was so important for me to get such personal information about their lives in Cameroon *before* their migration, even though I was conducting research on their return migration. This modified question worked far better (field report Cameroon 2010: 2).

By starting with such a broad scope and going back in time to where they started schooling, I invited the respondents to talk about their memories and at the same time these narrations gave me interesting insights into their diverse family backgrounds, which I needed to know for analysing their career trajectories against the backdrop of their social origin. In the second phase of the “general exploration” (Witzel 2000: 5) I asked the interviewees about their current job situation, their work tasks, their job satisfaction, future prospects and how they compared their own occupational situation to those graduates who had graduated in their home countries.

These “immanent questions”, as Scheibelhofer (2008: 408) calls them, citing Schutze’s outline on his concept of narrative interviews, emerged from the first narration or were prepared before the interviews about the themes I have just mentioned. These questions were also open and did not follow a strict order but I instead tried to create a friendly communication atmosphere by partly applying the diverse conversation techniques offered by the concept around the PCI aiming to generate comprehension (cf. Witzel 2000: 6). These techniques are: first, specific explorations, which are helpful to draw attention to a certain aspect that has been mentioned previously in the interview. Second, clarifying questions, these are crucial to avoid misunderstandings. The third technique is to suggest to the interviewee that his or her statements are illogical or contradictory (Witzel 2000: 6). Regarding the latter, I agree with Scheibelhofer (2008: 409) who finds this technique very ambivalent and fears that the interview atmosphere would be at stake if the interlocutor would feel uneasy by too direct confrontations with the interviewer.

In most cases, the interviewees indirectly indicated when they wanted to come to an end in the interview. They did this by drawing a rhetoric line through sentences like “we are done” (Ghana interview #06; 02.07.2008: 865) or “we are through?” (Ghana interview #23; 04.09.2009: 625) in their narration and then asking me if there was anything else I wanted to know. At this point of the interview I invited my respondents to add anything they found useful to mention. In this particular phase of the interview, interesting talks about the research started and very often my respondents made claims concerning the policy of the reintegration assistance schemes.

Before the session completely ended I briefly went through the questionnaire, collecting relevant statistical information (about age, dates of migrations and occupational background of parents) and asked for permission to use the interviews within the framework of my research. Immediately after the interviews I made memos in

which I outlined the main issues, noted my personal emotions, and any observations that had caught my attention spontaneously during the interviews. Such “spontaneous noteworthy remarks” (Witzel 2000: 4) concerned for instance off-topic conversations that were not recorded before or after the official part of the interviews: details like the interviewee’s car brand, specific rhetoric expressions and so on. Except for two interviews, all first interviews with individuals were recorded. In Ghana (case #3) one person did not wish to be recorded because he mentioned that he would feel uncomfortable with this. He had nothing good to say about Germany because from his perspective he had experienced latent racism during his four years. This he addressed openly but did not want it to be on record. In one case in Cameroon (case #17) the situation was inappropriate because a friend attended the meeting unexpectedly. In both cases, I made minutes afterwards. Some of the follow-up interviews in Cameroon were only minuted afterwards, because the situation was more relaxed without making notes during the interview (cf. field report Cameroon 2008: 2). These notes provided the basis for memos which gave the backdrop for a first interpretation of the interviews, as Witzel claims, because they also include “content-related criteria for the selection of additional cases” (2000: 4).

During my second research visits in Cameroon and Ghana I conducted follow-up interviews with four persons in both countries. My aim was to follow their trajectories as cases for the long-term course of returned graduates’ professional trajectories. In addition, as mentioned earlier, I accompanied two students from each country whom I had interviewed earlier during the explorative phase in Germany. We maintained contact via phone and e-mail at regular intervals and they kept me updated on major occupational changes.<sup>75</sup>

The language in which I conducted the interviews was primarily English, but especially in Cameroon the communication often slid into a language mix of German, French, and English (field report Cameroon 2008: 2).<sup>76</sup> The duration of the inter-

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<sup>75</sup> The two Ghanaian master students, (Mr. V. case #29; Ms. S. case #27), both returned after graduation and started their professional lives as employees. I had the opportunity to interview one of them after she returned. In contrast, the two Cameroonian students (Mr. T. case #22; Ms. S. case #21) remained in Germany after their master’s degrees and they are still pursuing their education to the higher level of a PhD degree.

<sup>76</sup> Since these languages are the official educational languages in both of the interviewees’ countries, it was entirely appropriate to conduct the interviews in these languages, especially to examine the professional context. Nevertheless, as a matter of courtesy, in Ghana I at least tried to introduce myself in Twi, which is the most widely spoken Akan language. My attempts were well received and often worked as an icebreaker (field notes 04.07.2008, 10.07.2008, field report Ghana 2009: 6). In Cameroon I realised that especially the francophone interview partners who had lived for a longer period in Germany were often happy to practice their German language



views ranged from about thirty minutes to roughly two hours, depending on the time schedules of my interview partners. They mostly were busy with their work duties, their family life and those living in the larger cities Accra, Douala and Yaoundé often had to spend much of their time in the daily traffic involuntarily. Therefore, I organised the meetings as conveniently as possible for my interview partners and asked them to propose the locations. In the majority of 32 cases they suggested conducting the interviews at their workplaces. Meetings at the workplaces allowed me to meet supervisors and colleagues of my interview partners and through this I gained better insights into the working life of my interview partners, their work tasks and the working atmospheres. This helped me in so far as I could better assess individual work satisfaction and the quality of the workplaces, for instance if a private company was running well, or in the case of the local NGOs, how they were equipped.

Even if I already had this kind of additional information through my working context, it was a difference to experience first-hand how poorly equipped a high-rank chemistry lab in a very reputable university can be. In the other cases I either met at a neutral place, for instance in the lobby of a hotel, a restaurant, a café, or in the homes of the interviewees. Specifically on the latter occasions, meeting the respondents in their homes, gave me additional background information about my respondents' families. Being invited for dinner and meeting the parents of some of my interview partners made me aware of their highly differentiated social and economic backgrounds. A smaller group among the interviewed returned migrants had already enjoyed a middle class status life prior to their migration to Germany because their parents had worked for the government and invested time and money in their children's education. This was mostly the case in Cameroon. However, especially in Ghana, many of my respondents were real social climbers who had made a huge social step from deprived rural regions and a remote educational background of their families. Through their degree abroad they had not only succeeded in studying abroad but in many cases they were the first ones in the family to achieve a higher educational degree at all. Against the background of these rather disadvantaged social origins, even an unspectacular professional career was a great achievement.

Complementarily, I conducted 23 expert interviews (Bogner and Menz 2005, Meuser and Nagel 2009, Glaeser and Laudel 2010) aiming for information that would present a broader perspective than the individual's personal experiences. As Grit and Laudel (2010: 12) state, expert interviews are an appropriate instrument to tap this special, broader knowledge. Following Meuser and Nagel's (2009: 470ff.) argument, one can distinguish in this regard between "context" and "tacit" knowl-

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skills and that this immediately evoked memories of the times in Germany to which they referred (field notes 04.10.2008).

edge (original: “Kontextwissen und Betriebswissen”). Contextual knowledge in this research concerned information about general economic development, the labour market situation and employment statistics (see questionnaire in Appendix A.2). According to Bogner and Menz (2005: 45) experts are often practitioners who have specific technical, practical and general insider’s knowledge about a particular topic that is related to their professional background. Such practitioner experts were the recruiters, expatriates in the development cooperation and economists in the two countries (see full list of expert interviews in Appendix B.3).

The idea of interviewing more experts came towards the end of the interview analysis. Although I interviewed a wide range of experts, I would have needed some corroboration of return migrant’s evaluations of their impact on development and on policy development. It could have been helpful to have interviews with heads of other migration organisations or immediate supervisors of some return migrants, particularly on recruitment and other labour market issues. However, since the PhD project had to be finalised, this idea could not be implemented but the main results of the work are not affected.

Further sources for data were observations made during meetings, seminars, and events. As mentioned earlier, I organised my research around dates of official meetings and events that occurred in the context of migration and job search activities. In Germany, I attended *diaspora events* and *reintegration seminars*. Twice I went to the sportive event of the Cameroonian associations within the framework of the Challenge Camerounais, attended one of the strategic political network attempts of the North Rhine Westphalia Partnership with the Ghanaian community and I was invited to a cultural festival (see list of events in Appendix B.4). These events were professionally organised and turned out as large gatherings that attracted hundreds of students and members of the diaspora communities. In contrast, in the case of the reintegration seminars, which are part of the reintegration scheme of the REP, I not only was a guest and a researcher but also a facilitator. On average about 25 to 30 students in their final semesters attended these seminars. They aimed to get information from the local job placement recruiters on the contemporary situation of their home country’s labour market. One of the main points in the discussions during these reintegration seminars was how to secure a stable and lucrative source of income upon return. Further events I attended had been organised by the aforementioned alumni network associations.

These *network meetings* as well as general assembly’s of their associations, were attended by, on average about 50 to 130 participants who came to discuss business-related topics, mainly concerning potential entrepreneurial activities. My observations during these events are relevant for the research, because they were the best occasions during which I had to the opportunity to witness first-hand active networking amongst the group members of students and returned graduates. Most of these events I attended, as I have already indicated, not only as a participant but also as a practitioner. The observations I made during these events were supple-

mentary data in my field diary. This field notebook is an important tool for research and, speaking in the words of de Sardan, “where participant observation is transformed into data to be treated at a later date” (1995: 8). The texts deriving from interviews and these notes were the basis for the data analysis described in the following section.<sup>77</sup>

#### **4.5 Analysing data and developing a typology**

The empirical data was evaluated in an inductive process. This means the various categories and dimensions, which finally led to the desired typology, base on the evaluation of the data and were determined in advance (cf. Kuckartz 2010: 60). The raw data which was used in this process comprised the interviews and observation protocols. I evaluated this material in four phases: firstly, the interviews were completely transcribed<sup>78</sup> and the protocols cited. Secondly, each person was treated as an entire case and the interview belonging to the particular case was coded. In a third step, the codes were contrasted against each other and the cases compared between the countries. This step led to the fourth and final phase: the development of the typology. Following the suggestions of Witzel (2000: 7ff.), who described the analysis process of the PCIs, the cases, the biographic profiles, and details about independent variables were all saved in a database. I then reconstructed the individual biographical life courses (Kühn and Witzel 2000: 25) by starting with my interviewees’ primary school education, following their time line as far as possible, including their contemporary professional lives which I could, in some cases, update via social network forums in the Internet (Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing).

Next, I summarised my respondents’ biographies before and after their educational migration to Germany. This first brief reconstruction of their life stories (in contrast to the life dates) included information about their families’ social status, the regional and societal setting in which my interview partners grew up and how they started their educational careers. This summary also touched on my interviewees’ motives why they decided to pursue their tertiary education in Germany. A second summary continued at the point when my participants started to prepare for their return. Here, I mentioned their motives for return, described the situation upon

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<sup>77</sup> Field reports and interview transcripts have been attached on a CD-ROM in this thesis (cf. Appendix D). The notes from the field, however, have been written into a private diary and thus only can be accessed on demand.

<sup>78</sup> The transcriptions were handed out to various research assistants. Hence, the transcription rules were not applied uniformly and consistently. In consequence, I had to edit the quotes which I used in this thesis more consistently and eventually present them plainly, without sophisticated transcription information.

return and how they started their job searches. Already here I referred to the emic perspective of my interview partners and included their expressions and references they made during the interviews. This summary also had an analytical level of interpretation regarding their employment entry. I suggested my perspective on the question of what had enabled them to finally secure their employment and offered arguments for my interpretation. Thus, these two biographical summaries in which I also refer to general 'global' background information, for instance about the countries' economic situation, are preliminary case descriptions. As such, they resemble the scheme of Rosenthal's global analysis (2008: 93ff.) that is the basis for further sampling and developing a typology.

The third step towards structuring the data in order to make the single stories of my interview partners comparable was the coding of the plain transcribed texts with the help of qualitative data software. For the coding process, which took several phases, I adopted the approach of Kuckartz (2010: 73ff.), who refers to the principle of openness, the cornerstone of the Grounded Theory coding. The coding phases in the present project were separated into a first-level open coding, axial coding, and finally a particular coding of selected sections in the interviews.

The first phase of open coding was explorative. By going through each interview and treating it as a unique entity I generated preliminary inductive categories as described by Kuckartz (2010: 60). This led to a number of more than 100 codes which included many sub-codes but I could not fill these codes with sections from each interview. The next step was the axial coding (Kuckartz 2010: 77). Whereas I had first analysed the interviews in the context of the complete individual biographies, I now primarily focused on the phases of their job entries after their return. I developed categories which were relevant for this phase and connected them with external categories from theory, especially concerning the aspects that had to do with the process of resource activation (Witzel 2000: 7).

Finally, I coded selectively. This step integrates all prior interpretative steps. It leads, according to Kuckartz (2010: 77), to a broader picture of different patterns, the typology. Developing typologies from primary qualitative data helps to explain complex empirical cases and generalises them theoretically. According to Kelle and Kluge (cf. 2010: 83) this idea of generalising reality by categorising cases into typical patterns goes back to Weber's concept of 'ideal types' in sociology. The process of developing such a typology, as Kelle and Kluge (2010: 85) note, always refers to certain groups of selected characteristics deriving from the empirical material itself. Therefore, researchers such as Kelle and Kluge (2010: 84) think of ideal types as inherent in social life. Everyday understanding and communication are, according to their view, impossible without constantly reducing complexity in life and condensing specific aspects in repeated patterns. By doing so, life seems to be more predictable.

Thus, the intention of the last analysing step was to develop a typology that would reveal the specific keys to employment for Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates upon their return, by drawing the conclusions from the reconstructed transitions of previous generations. For this reason I selected those cases that I noticed were similar and compared them to each other concerning the biographies and the codes. A the description in Appendix D.1 explains I visualised this process with the help of the MaxQDA Code Matrix Browser.

Finally, a pattern became evident for each case, as shown in the following scheme (cf. table 2). Each case contained all categories and dimensions, but the features varied. Depending on the graduates most dominant resource, the rest of the pattern was shaped. However, this must not lead to the conclusion that the labour market entry depends on one resource. The contrary is the case, the pattern depends on how the resources interact.

Table 2: Coded categories, dimensions and features

<b>Category</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Features</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<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)
<b>Activation</b>	<i>Start before/ after return</i>	Security, independence, uncertainty
	<i>Perception</i>	“hell”, “lucky”, “thanks to God”, “no problem”, “challenging”
<b>Country context</b>	<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.

A picture emerged in which each case could be allocated to a particular pattern, equivalent with the ‘type’. The patterns consisted of a combination of the resources which had been activated in the course of getting a job. Here I referred to the concepts outlined in chapters 2 and 3.

The resources which in different combination led to these patterns were first, the qualification (educational profile, practical skills and soft skills as well as the reintegration programme's incentives), second, the social contacts (category/function of contact and relationship between the job searcher and intermediary contact). The third resource concerned financial savings. Finally, patterns emerged from the way in which the respondents had activated their resources. In each of the four developed patterns (achieving, arranging, being sponsored, and becoming independent), a main resource was identified as being the responsible cause that had led to employment.

These patterns will be described in detail in chapter 6 by presenting their typical features through juxtaposing similar text segments from the coded texts and discussing these sections. The descriptions of the types or labour market entry patterns are thus a text montage of direct quotes from the interviewees that illustrate the most relevant features of the types. This collage technique bases on the idea of constructing an ideal type by composing it from several prototypical cases (cf. Kelle and Kluge 2010: 106). During the coding process it soon became obvious that many codes were overlapping and categories within the cases were not always coherent, because I worked with a "polythetic typology", as Kuckartz describes (2010: 105), in contrast to monothetic, meaning that each case had many but not all properties in common. It is difficult to strictly separate cases from each other and assign them to one type only, which in this thesis was a question of interpretation. However, developing a polythetic typology seemed to be more adequate from my point of view, because it is most flexible in illustrating such a dynamic process as resource activation during transitions: a person's labour market entry pattern could change during their biography.

#### **4.6 Sampling and profile of the interviewees**

The sampling for this research project – the selection who to choose for the interviews – was purposive. This means I had certain selection criteria and did not apply the aforementioned snowball sampling method, which often depends on chance. Because I had access to data about returned graduates through my work I was in a position to make a choice with whom to speak about their experiences concerning the labour market entry. Wengraf notes correctly that where a choice is there is also the question of selection criteria (2006: 95). My aim was to make a selection which would provide a homogenous group in order to reduce variation and to illustrate what is typical, 'normal' about the labour market entry of the returning graduates (cf. Wengraf 2006: 102). To get such an almost homogenous and thus comparable group, I chose the following filtering criteria: time of return, subject of study, participation in a reintegration programme, location of workplace and industry of employer.

First, I had to define the ‘whole population’ of the investigated group, the graduates who had returned from Germany (cf. Wengraf 2006: 96). The REP database provided orientation in achieving a clearer idea how large in numbers this ‘whole population’ was. The database comprises those migrants in Germany who register themselves because they intend to return to their home countries and seek information about reintegration assistance schemes (cf. chapter 2.4). After extensive investigations, the figures retrieved from the REP database were found to be the most appropriate available approximation concerning the numbers of returning graduates. In this database, also those graduates register who receive return incentives from other scholarship donors and reintegration programmes (DAAD, AvHS, EED) (Expert #6, 08.06.2013).<sup>79</sup>

The REP database, which has existed since 1993, thus offers a figure that comprises at least the minimum of people who have already left or intend to leave Germany directly to their home country. In fact, more people return but are not captured in this statistic for various reasons, because they do not know of the programme or because they do not intend to apply for reintegration support. At the time the research project started, in 2008, the query comprised 1,224 Cameroonians and 635 Ghanaians who had registered themselves as returnees. Clearly, taking this group as a ‘whole population’ would have been too vast to conduct qualitative PCIs with them. In addition, the group is not static, but steadily grows, because every year new graduates return after they complete their studies. Therefore, the first criterion chosen to narrow the group was the period of return. I filtered all graduates who had returned within the recent decade 2000-2010. Choosing this particular period makes sense as a selection criterion for two reasons.

First, since 2000 the English degree programmes had started at German universities. Second, as outlined in chapter 2.5, the situation of the previous generations of Ghanaians who had returned from Germany had already been investigated by Martin (2005) and thus it would be more interesting to compare the contemporary generation of graduates.<sup>80</sup> According to this query, during the period 2000-2010 only 288 Cameroonians but 323 Ghanaians had returned. These figures provided the base of the respective ‘whole populations’. From this group I further selected all individuals who had graduated from the most frequented fields, the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In the female sample I

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<sup>79</sup> Another alternative, tracing the returning migrants through their source country’s embassies in Germany, also failed. Even though the Cameroonian Embassy in Germany makes notes about visitors who request information about organisational questions regarding the return, these notes are incomplete (field notes 08.11.2007).

<sup>80</sup> The final sample contains four cases from Cameroon in which the graduates had returned a few years earlier than 2000 (cases #07, #09, #18, #24). They contrasted with the other cases of persons who had returned later and resembled the descriptions of Martin’s generational typology.

included a case of a Cameroonian woman (case #16) who had studied in the broad field of humanities, because it was difficult to obtain female interview partners in Cameroon who matched all the filtering criteria.

The next step was to sort out those persons who had not yet been funded by the particular subsidy component of workplace equipment. The remaining group was further filtered for those who had already successfully received their workplace equipment (APA). This particular selection criterion had advantages and disadvantages. The first was an ethical consideration. As mentioned in chapter 4.3, I wanted to avoid the situation where those persons who had not yet received workplace equipment or whose application procedure had not been completed would feel obliged to carry out the interview as a resource person because they felt otherwise they would not be granted the funding. I feared that selecting interview partners from this pool would create a biased sample of a minority who had been highly supported. However, an argument to legitimise this step was given by another researcher who evaluated the reintegration programme REP (cf. Schmelz 2012). In an earlier, more detailed internal version of the evaluation report Schmelz (2010) noted, that those individuals funded with APA were highly interesting as interview partners. She mentioned this in two contexts: first, because these return migrants often were already well-established and secondly, and most importantly for my research, these return migrants had a high level of reflecting verbally on their work contexts, due to the process they had been going through in the context of the APA application (informal talk, 16.11.2009).

However, being aware of the limitation to the APA-applicants in the sample I purposefully included one case for each country in which the interviewee did not participate in any of the German reintegration schemes (Cameroon case #20, Ghana case #11). In a final step, the returned graduates were selected according to region, where their workplaces were located and employees' industries. Concerning the first, the location, I wanted to avoid only interviewing those returned migrants in the capital and concerning the second, the employee's industry, by that time I assumed that this criterion would be the most structuring aspect (which was not the case). Nevertheless, I wanted to have an equal sample including almost the same number of people working in the education industry, private companies, NGOs and public services.

After these pre-selections, a group of about 30 persons in Cameroon and 40 in Ghana remained on the list of my potential interview partners. From this list I conducted 22 problem centred interviews with returned Cameroonian and 28 with returned Ghanaian graduates. Altogether, about a third of the samples were women. Correlating these figures with the figures given for the whole population, this represents a proportion of 7.6% (Cameroonians) and 8.7% (Ghanaians) who had returned within the period 2000-2010.



Actually, during the research project in the field I included four interviews with Cameroonians who returned before 2000 to get an idea of how their return differed: one person had returned in 1989, the start of the economic crisis. He left Cameroon again soon after. In contrast, those who had returned between 1997 and 1999 also had difficulties but coped. I realised the sample had reached its “saturation” point (cf. Rosenthal 2008: 87), reached when new phenomena can no longer be found. A more concrete indicator than my subjective feeling that I would not find anything new was that I was increasingly able to sort the biographies of my respondents into roughly sketched patterns and that I had at least two cases for each pattern. Despite the aim of working with a homogeneous sample, a couple of distinct independent variables became evident in the evaluation of the research data.

Some of these independent characteristics of the sample are now presented in the following table 3. They concern average age at emigration and at the return migration, the particular time spent abroad in Germany and finally, differences observed concerning their degrees which they obtained in Germany.

Table 3: Demographic profile of interviewees

Sample characteristics	Cameroon [n=22]	Ghana [n=28]
<i>Gender profile</i>		
Male/female	17/ 5	19/9
<i>Age profile</i>		
Emigration/return	24/30	28/31
<i>Years abroad</i>		
Average duration	8	3
<i>Degrees</i>		
Bachelor (BSc)	1	0
Master (MSc/MBA)	5	23
Diploma (Dipl.)	9	0
Doctorate (PhD)	7	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	22	28

Source: Own research.

The table shows that almost a third of the two samples were female: (23%) five women were interviewed on the side of the Cameroonians and nine (32%) Ghanaian women participated. To these women's careers, a separate chapter (8.2) is devoted. Moreover, the investigated groups have significantly different features concerning their age profile at the time of their emigration: the mean age of Cameroonians coming to Germany was 24 whereas for Ghanaians it was a few years older at 28. Due to the longer time Cameroonians stayed in Germany, they also returned older. The average age of the returning Cameroonians was 32, whereas Ghanaians returned approximately one year younger, at 31. The average time of residence in Germany for the interviewed Cameroonians was eight years and for the interviewed Ghanaians only three-and-a-half years. These differences, however, also have to do with their particular study profiles. This profile shows that the majority of the Cameroonian interviewees tended to come to Germany for a full time study programme: nine (41%) participants from the Cameroon group enrolled in a traditional diploma, five (23%) came exclusively for a master's programme and seven (32%) furthered their studies in Germany up to a doctoral degree. One (5%) of the Cameroonian graduates left Germany with a bachelor's degree only. He had not been able to finance the master's completely and when he had the opportunity to find entry-level employment in Cameroon he returned. In contrast, the majority of their Ghanaian counterparts (23/82%) participated exclusively in post-graduate master's programmes and only five (18%) came exclusively for a doctorate. The differences of the study profiles are coherent with the general profiles of the educational migrants from both countries, discussed in more depth in the following chapter which describes the country cases.

## 5. The country contexts: Cameroon and Ghana

In this chapter, the differences and commonalities between the selected countries Cameroon and Ghana are considered by examining their political framework, the profile of educational migrants and the labour market conditions. The two selected countries, Cameroon a Central African and Ghana a West African nation have many features in common: both bear a colonial heritage being multi-ethnic states; economically, both countries' populations have to combat severe problems deriving from underdevelopment. Today, Cameroon as well as Ghana (since 2011, see World Bank 2011b) are categorised as lower middle-income countries according to World Bank classification, using criteria such as gross national income (GNI) per capita. In comparison, human development, expressed in criteria like school enrolment, life expectancy and income situation of the population, which are grouped together under the Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP are comparably low in both countries, too: currently, Cameroon ranks at position 150 and Ghana at 135 from 187 countries (UNDP 2013: 143). In consequence of these problems especially the young population emigrates on a large scale. However, since 2000 a new trend has been seen which primarily concerns Ghana: Ghanaians living abroad in Europe and Northern America return in larger numbers (Quarthey 2009: 13, Hirsch 2012a, 2012b). A reason for this reverse migration trend of Ghanaians is probably the fact that Ghana has been more consistent in accelerating economic growth and political stability than Cameroon according to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI 2007: 5). During the past decade, Ghana turned into a political reformer and is praised as a role model for West Africa (cf. Elischer 2009), whereas Cameroon today shows the typical signs of a "fragile state" (International Crisis Group 2010a: 24). This chapter outlines the historic development leading to this situation and discusses how it affects the careers of educational migrants in Germany.

The chapter starts by comparing (5.1) the general political developments of Cameroon and Ghana since colonial times. A description of the two countries' migration patterns in sub-chapter 5.2, comprises a closer look at the difference between Cameroonian and Ghanaian students in Germany. This sub-chapter also deals with their networks: Cameroonian students have large and active networks whereas those of their Ghanaian counterparts are smaller and less developed. Furthermore, this sub-chapter presents findings from the interviews with the selected students in Germany and reconstructs the three possibilities which arise immediately after completing their studies: remaining, moving to another country or returning. This overview is followed by a discussion on the estimated return rates, which suggests that Cameroonian graduates return to a lesser degree whereas their Ghanaian counterparts return in larger numbers. The next section concentrates on the returning migrants' transition from education to work in their home countries.

For this reason, a brief outline of the recent development of their home countries' labour markets is given (ch. 5.3). Furthermore, findings from the observations made in the field, the analysed interviews with the students in Germany and the expert interviews provide insights into the particular working conditions the job starters can expect according to the particular employment sectors. Finally, the chapter closes by showing that in both countries personal connections play a great role in the job search, because both countries' labour markets lack transparency. Interestingly, despite this commonality, alumni networks in Cameroon have developed to a much stronger degree, whereas they have stagnated in Ghana, as will be shown in a concluding comparison.

## 5.1 Fragile state versus consolidated democracy

Cameroon and Ghana developed differently after independence. Currently Cameroon is regarded a "fragile state" (International Crisis Group 2010a: 24), whereas Ghana is celebrated as a "consolidated democracy" (Elischer 2009: 2). This might have to do with their different colonial regimes which allowed education to a different degree in the two countries. Cameroon has looked back on a multi-colonial heritage: first, (1884-1915) the Germans ruled the country but after being defeated in World War I had to hand over their territories to the United Nations. Then, Cameroon was divided into two and the mandatory powers France and Great Britain (1922) continued to rule. The French practiced the policy of "assimilation" (cf. Lee and Schultz 2012: 11), which means that the autochthon population in the colonies was officially treated as equal according to the principles of the French revolution - liberty, equality and fraternity - and was granted French citizenship and legal rights, and a small elite minority received education following the French model. In contrast, the British "indirect rule" (Lee and Schultz 2012: 11) allowed local traditional authorities to continue practising their official functions and focused much more on basic school education. Hence, the British encouraged school enrolment of large parts of the population in Protestant Missionary Schools (Tamanji 2011: 116ff.).<sup>81</sup> In the course of a very brutal and often neglected<sup>82</sup> fight for independence (1948-1971), Cameroon gained independence from France in 1960

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<sup>81</sup> Because the policy of indirect rule allowed the local infrastructure to develop more autonomously, it is often claimed that former British colonies tend to have developed more successfully after their independence. For the special case of Cameroon, it is difficult to find this advantage for the Anglophone region (cf. Lee and Schultz 2012: 13).

<sup>82</sup> Martineau (2012) compares the decolonisation process in the two former French colonies Algiers and Cameroon to the more peaceful independence process in Ghana. He also refers to the fact that the Cameroonian fight for independence is often neglected in public. For more information about the hidden fight for independence in Cameroon see Deltombe et al. (2011) and the documentary "Cameroun, Autopsie d'une indépendance" of Valerie Osouf (2007).

and Britain in 1961. However, the country's divide remained which means that today two-fifths of the country (Southwest and Northwest regions) have English administration and educational systems, and the remaining eight regions are French. Hence, despite an officially promoted bilingual system, French structures dominate, which has often created frustration among the Anglophone population (Fonyuy 2010: 35).<sup>83</sup>

In addition, politically France, however, has never lost its influence.<sup>84</sup> Even the first president of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo, who originated from the country's North, was believed to be a protégé of France (Martineau 2012: 42). He was succeeded in 1982 by his former Prime Minister, Paul Biya. Each administration was or is authoritarian in nature (Mehler 2008: 40). Although the country has officially adopted a multi-party democracy since 1990 (International Crisis Group 2010a: 12) authoritarian rule is the reality and Biya's presidency has now lasted over 25 years. Opposing parties have never really become a serious threat and hence Cameroon is often labelled a "façade democracy" (Mehler 2008: 46, International Crisis Group 2010a: i). Endemic corruption (Mehler 2008: 43) as well as weak political and civil society institutions systematically exclude the bulk of the country's population from the political nation building process.

In Cameroon, ethnic tensions are pinpointed as being another crucial factor destabilising the country's nation building process (cf. Tagou 2006: 71ff., cf. International Crisis Group 2010b: 5). The total population in Cameroon (estimated at 19.5 million in 2009) consists of over 200 different ethnic groups having distinct social systems and languages (Tagou 2006: 69). Among them, 7+1 so called "strategic conflict groups" (Tagou 2006: 69), are those ethnic groups which oppose existing power relations and have the power to challenge the political stability because of their size and/or their access to economic and/or political resources. These groups comprise the Bulu/Beti, the Fulbe and Kirdi, the Bassa, the Bamiléké, the Bamun and Sawa/Douala.

In addition, the Anglophone minority as a language group has become a conflict group, too (Tagou 2006: 90, International Crisis Group 2010a: 26). In order to prevent ethnic divides caused by multiple parties, the Cameroonian government enforced a policy of national unity with centralised structures (cf. Tagou 2006: 97-98). Rooted in the practices of the French colonial power and the course of neo-patrimonial forms of rulership in the subsequent post-colonial era, a very few ex-

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<sup>83</sup> Fonyuy (2010) points out in an article based on fieldwork in Cameroon that today, in the context of globalisation, English is regarded as more useful and therefore more and more Franco-phone parents prefer to send their children to boarding schools teaching in the English language.

<sup>84</sup> For more information concerning the influence and practices of the former colonial power France in Africa and its politics, labelled as the "Francafrique", see Schmid (2011).

clusive families, mostly originating from the president's home region, established and successfully maintained their power positions in the government over the decades (cf. Tagou 2006: 139, cf. International Crisis Group 2010a: 16). Only a very few successful businesspeople, the 'nouveau riches' – preferably Bamiléké entrepreneurs, have been able to access and accumulate respectable economic resources. Tagou states that a prerequisite for reaching this economic elite position is to obtain membership of the ruling party. Nevertheless, these Bamiléké entrepreneurs continue to be excluded from political power (2006: 183). In combination with economic stagnation and political manipulation, this fragility can easily become dangerous. Thus, the country resembles a "tinderbox waiting for a spark" (International Crisis Group 2010a: 24). In 2008, such a spark almost occurred, which easily could have led to a countrywide turmoil.<sup>85</sup> Since then, the situation has calmed but more because of the fact that large proportions of the local population are said to have given up hope of democratic change (Schmid 2012).

Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, had been the trade hub of the transatlantic slave trade. Officially, it became a British Crown Colony in 1874. It is noteworthy that the colonial regimes in both countries applied diverging doctrines, which highly influenced the administrative structures, including access to formal education. Ghana, in contrast to Cameroon, underwent a comparably early decolonisation process leading to independence under the charismatic leader Francis Nwia Kofi Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 (Martineau 2012: 43). Since then, Ghana's governments underwent a phase of several coup d'états in the years 1966, 1972, 1978 and 1979 accompanied by constant economic decline. Finally, in 1981 Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings gained power in a final coup d'état. In 1992 Rawlings introduced Ghana's democratic legislation and the fourth Republic of Ghana has practiced multi-party elections since then. Ghana's population of an estimated 24.6 million (GSS 2013: 51) is composed of some 100 different ethnic groups, with five dominant linguistic groups: Akan, Ewe, MoleDagbane, Guan and Ga-Adangbe (cf. Levinson 1998: 136). Thus, conflict potential exists due to ethnic pluralism too, which surfaces periodically, especially in the northern regions and during election campaigns (Lötzer and Mönikes 2009, BTI 2012: 9).

However, the "ethnic card has not been played as strongly as in other African countries" (BTI 2012: 21). After a series of peaceful and comparably fair election processes, which in consequence lead to a peaceful handing over of power (Lötzer

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<sup>85</sup> In February 2008, several events occurred simultaneously: taxi drivers were on strike in Douala, protesting against rising fuel and food prices, and President Biya changed the constitution allowing him another legislative period (cf. Mehler 2008: 51, cf. Elischer 2010). Protests continued to spread in Yaoundé and Bamenda but were brutally suppressed by Cameroonian police and hundreds of protesters were killed and arrested (cf. Musa 2008).

and Mönikes 2009)<sup>86</sup>, the country gained the reputation as having an almost consolidated democracy (Elischer 2009). Lentz and Budniok present in an essay about Ghana's 50<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary that the country's maxim of 'unity in diversity' is promoted, which according to their interpretation creates a common feeling of "Ghanaian-ness" (2007: 29). In addition, although Ghana's population continues to face economic challenges, the general acceptance of the democratic system and free-market economic principles have created a well-educated middle class which in 2008 already made up about 20% of the total population (AfDB 2011: 23).

The comparison so far suggests that Cameroon and Ghana share a common burden deriving from colonialism: they are poly-ethnic states and they underwent difficult political developments after independence. The greatest difference between the two countries seems to be their democratic profile, which tends to influence their economies and thus their labour market opportunities. This aspect will be discussed in sub-chapter 5.3 in more detail. Before this, the next sub-chapter, 5.2, deals with the two countries' migration profiles. It describes in particular the development of international migration between the two countries and Europe, and of course focuses on the group of educational migrants from both countries to Germany.

## 5.2 Migration profiles

At first sight, the migration profiles, meaning the migration volume and the migration types, seem to be similar for Cameroon and Ghana. Both countries are immigration as well as emigration countries. Most of the migrant populations moves intra-continental and mobility occurs as border crossings of refugees and temporary labour migrants from and to neighbouring countries, but also as temporary labour migration to more distant wealthier African countries like the former Libya (Evina 2009: 22, Quartey 2009: 56-57, World Bank 2011a: 85, Mensah 2012).<sup>87</sup> The figures about international migration volumes are very distinct and depend on the source and the underlying definition. Generalising, it is estimated that currently some 2.5 – 4 million Cameroonians from a total population of 19.5 live outside their country (Owono 2011; Sapouma 2011) and the very vague number of about 1.5 – 3 million Ghanaians of a then total population of 23.8 million were said to have settled outside their home country in 2009 (Quartey 2009: 13).

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<sup>86</sup> As the time of writing, Ghana's Supreme Court is about to rule on an opposition challenge to the result of the December 2012 presidential election. The outcome is said to have big implications for future economic investments, which could be affected by concern over macroeconomic instability (cf. Mpoke Bigg 2013).

<sup>87</sup> An estimated 2 million Cameroonians live in Nigeria alone (Tabi Akono 2009).

The volume of international migration flows to OECD countries in Europe and Northern America is for both countries far smaller (cf. Quartey 2009: 57, Evina 2009: 49). Nevertheless, this international overseas emigration is growing steadily and it receives increasing attention – but this attention usually concerns the group of the refugees and undocumented emigrants. At this point, it must be emphasised that these emigrants leaving for OECD countries are a very heterogeneous group. It comprises the four broad groups of refugees/asylum seekers, labour migrants, family reunifications, and educational migrants. These very different types of migrants have emerged in parallel since the independence of both countries. Depending on the overall economic situation in the corresponding country, particular types of emigrants have dominated the migration flows. Because the economies in Cameroon and Ghana have undergone similar developments but at different times, the same types of migrants can be seen from both countries, but they appear time-shifted.

The volume of the first two mentioned types, the refugees and labour emigrants, which are sometimes overlapping categories, started to grow in the course of the two countries' political instability, economic decline and in consequence mass-unemployment that led to a large-scale mass exodus. In Ghana this was the time of the 1970s (cf. Peil 1995: 348) and in Cameroon of the 1990s (cf. Tabi Akono 2009: 3). The emigrants during this time particularly looked to secure their economic security and political freedom. It was the time of those who intended to make a living by doing business abroad, the times of the so-called "Burgers" (cf. Jach 2005: 205f., cf. Martin 2005: 11ff., cf. Prothmann 2009: 52).<sup>88</sup> And it was the starting time of the so called "Mbenguiste" (Fleischer 2009: 13, Houmfa 2012)<sup>89</sup> and the time of those who 'hustle' abroad and who are more deceptively labelled as the "Bushfallers" (cf. Fleischer 2009: 13, cf. Pelican 2008, cf. Alpes 2011). People among these emigrants who settled abroad and made their family members follow them, the third type of emigrants, form the very heterogeneous so-called 'diaspora'.<sup>90</sup> Naturally, these diasporas grew and in the course of their increase gained some political power. Thus, both countries' governments started to – albeit slowly – address these groups living as the diaspora abroad. Concerning their diaspora politics, a different governmental rhetoric becomes evident: the Cameroonian government only recently started to tap their potential by establishing a diaspora dia-

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<sup>88</sup> The origins of the term "Burger" has been a topic of controversial discussion. One of the most plausible explanations (cf. Prothmann 2009: 53), suggests that the term is attributed to the name of the city of Hamburg and the resident Ghanaian community.

<sup>89</sup> The term 'mbenguiste' comes from the word 'Mbenguè', which according to Houmfa (2012) means 'France' in a local Cameroonian language.

<sup>90</sup> A critical note on the term 'diaspora' has already been provided in the introduction (cf. footnote).



logue, which targets the economic contributions of the Cameroonians living abroad, their remittances (cf. Mberu and Pongou 2012, cf. Pac 2012). In contrast, the Ghanaian governments have explicitly started to encourage their diaspora communities to return and to contribute to the country's economic development, since 2000 (cf. Manuh and Asante 2005, cf. Quartey 2009: 82, cf. Kleist 2011: 12).<sup>91</sup>

These different governmental rhetorics of 'diaspora dialogue' versus 'homecoming', in addition to the particular political and economic conditions in the particular countries, are only one possible factor influencing the return migration of diaspora groups. In general, most migration studies describe Cameroonians as ambivalent about their return: on the one hand they hope to return 'one day', in reality they often seem to remain in order to accumulate financial savings (cf. Fleischer 2009). In contrast, numbers of returning Ghanaians have been said to have climbed recently (Quartey 2009: 13).

Currently, in addition to these first generation emigrants, a small but highly influential group of second-generation emigrants started to re-emigrate to their parents' home country, Ghana. They are bi-lingual, often anchored in both cultural backgrounds and thus bear the label of being transnational, or more colloquially 'Afropolitans' as coined by Nigerian/Ghanaian writer Taiye Selasi (cf. Tutton 2012). Some of these emigrants from the diaspora who have returned today build a small but important part of Ghana's middle class and they "have been playing catalytic roles in certain key sectors, like information technology, banking, academia and social advocacy" (Luckham et al. 2005: 7).

Among the different types of emigrants, one group of emigrants has existed since independence and is increasing steadily, but interestingly has received little attention in research or from governments: it is the group of the educational migrants, the students (cf. Tsagué 2011a: 57). Compared to the total stock of emigration, educational migration flows are small in volume. In 2010 about 20,093 Cameroonians went abroad to study, which, compared to the total emigration stock in the same year (279,200), amounted to 7%; for Ghanaians, the proportion was even smaller: of the total emigration stock of 824,900, only 7,845 were students, only 1% (World Bank 2011a: 85, 123). The following chapter describes the features of the group of those educational migrants who in particular move to Germany in order to pursue their education.

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<sup>91</sup> Of course, the trend to call the diaspora to return depends on the political party in power and Ghana's economic situation. Whereas under the Kuffuor government return-oriented policies were established in the course of general economic prosperity, the government under the late Atta Mills was less enthusiastic to make their diasporas return, due to scarce employment opportunities in the country after the credit crunch in 2008 (cf. CNN 2009).

## Historical background of educational migration to Germany

Educational migration from Cameroon as well as from Ghana to Western Europe and Northern America started on a larger scale only after the countries gained independence.<sup>92</sup> Between educational migration from Cameroon to Germany and from Ghana to Germany there exists a crucial difference. It concerns their share of the total Cameroonian and Ghanaian population in Germany. Cameroonian immigrants in Germany are predominantly students and their immigration continues to be of a higher volume, which is often labelled as “new” migration (Baraulina et al. 2008: 15-16). In contrast, only a minority of the Ghanaian population in Germany is enrolled at university. In addition, Ghanaian immigration to Germany has stagnated over time and thus has become an “old” (Baraulina et al. 2008: 15-16) migration. This difference is now described in depth. In 2010, according to the database DESTATIS run by the German Federal Statistical Office (FSO) among the 14,876 Cameroonians living in Germany, more than a third (5,383) were students (HIS-HF). This educational migration from Cameroon to Europe started in the mid 1980s when in 1985/1986, as had been the case in Ghana, the Cameroonian government started sending annually about 80-100 students to the German Democratic Republic, GDR, on scholarships (cf. Schmelz 2004: 9, cf. Tsagué 2009:15, cf. Schmelz 2007: 7). Since independence, educational migration has been a reaction to scarce access to tertiary educational facilities. The first higher educational institute was the University of Yaoundé I (previously, University of Cameroon, renamed in 1962). It was founded in the Francophone region in the capital Yaoundé, in 1962 (ADEA 1999: 2). Officially, it was a bilingual institution. During the following decade further faculties were attached to the university. The overall design of the higher educational system followed a binary model. On the one hand, training in the additional university centres aimed at producing only a small selection of graduates ready for the public service sector (designed after the French model of the ‘grand écoles’). Obtaining a degree from such a centre previously meant for graduates that they could access a well-paid governmental job almost immediately after graduation. In contrast, those students who went to the less selective tertiary institution, built after the traditional university model, only received general or

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<sup>92</sup> The few earlier cases of educational migration from both territories to Germany have been often neglected, but they are very interesting. Martin (2005: 59), for instance, refers to the (involuntary) educational migrations of Anton Wilhelm Amo and Kwasi Boakye from the Gold Coast to the territory today known as Germany. Oguntoye (2004) also tracks impressive life histories of black Germans since the implementation of the protectorates in 1884. Notable personalities with Cameroonian roots in Germany were Martin Dibobe and Mandenga Diek. Dibobe worked in 1896 at Siemens in Berlin and was the first black train driver. Moreover, he constantly fought for equal rights for colonial citizens in Germany (Trueper 2006). In 1896 Diek, who was supposed to study medicine, decided instead to become a citizen in Hamburg and worked as a prominent merchant until the Nazi regime deprived him of his rights (Lenz 2013).

fundamental education and remained less employable (cf. ADEA 1999: 2, Ngwana 2001: 2). However, soon the traditional university institute was overcrowded, whereas the selective university centres remained largely underused because entrance was very limited (Ngwana 2001: 2). Finally, in 1993 five new universities were established: the University of Yaounde Two, University of Douala, University of Dschang, and the Anglophone University of Buea, and in the North, University of Ngaoundéré.<sup>93</sup> Despite these extended opportunities to study in Cameroon, the trend continued to study abroad. During the following years, Germany became one of the three top destination countries for Cameroonian students that further comprise France and to a smaller degree Northern America (cf. UIS 2012: 136, 137). In contrast, only a minority of Cameroonians in Germany bear the status of political refugees (Schmelz 2007: 8, Baraulina et al. 2008: 21).

The fact that the proportion of Cameroonian students moving to Germany to pursue their education is as high as the proportion of Cameroonian students moving to France, their former colonial power with whom they share their official language French, is surprising. To understand this, the general situation of the higher education system in Cameroon has to be briefly explained. Four possible reasons make Germany an attractive country for Cameroonian students, which has led to today's educational chain-migration: firstly in Germany, courses in almost all universities are tuition-free, which is in sharp contrast to the high fees one has to pay for enrolment at most universities in other European countries (Sieveking et al. 2008: 59; Kuptsch 2006: 38).<sup>94</sup> In addition, especially Francophone Cameroonians have little to no problems with the German language: Francophone secondary schools offer German or Spanish as a second foreign language (Echu 2004). However, a third, more subtle and historical reason could be that the parents of these Cameroonian students maintain a kind of "nostalgia" for Germany (cf. Nyada 2012: 31).<sup>95</sup> By doing so, they probably unconsciously compare Germany, the first colonial power,

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<sup>93</sup> Especially the launch of the Anglophone university gave Anglophone students the chance to read their subjects in their first foreign language, English, for the first time (Ngwana 2001: 5). Nevertheless, so far the only Anglophone institution has been unable to fully use its capacities, due to a lack of infrastructure, equipment and staff. Hence, "the English speaking population is gradually still being forced to register in the French language dominated universities" (Ngwana 2001: 6).

<sup>94</sup> Sykes and Chaoimh (2012: 10) present in an commissioned work on behalf of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration an overview which reveals that student fees for foreign students in Germany (about EUR 1,000) are far lower than in France (about EUR 16,000) at the grandes écoles; or in Great Britain (about EUR 18,000).

<sup>95</sup> In fact, many German researchers have been surprised that Cameroonians look on Germany, the first colonial power, in a comparably positive light despite the severe crimes committed among civil society (cf. Schmidt-Soltau 2003: 5, cf. Lämmermann 2006: 21, cf. Fleischer 2007: 10).

with France, the succeeding mandatory power after the First World War. This alleged paradox of perceiving Germany today as a top migration country instead as a former colonial suppressor can be also read as a sign of opposition, that emerges from the strong resentment against French (neo)colonialism (Nyada 2012: 33).<sup>96</sup> However, these three reasons – low tuition fees, host-language proficiency and parents’ nostalgia – have led to a situation in which more and more young Cameroonians study in Germany. These students continue to live in Germany and invite their younger siblings to join them to study there (cf. Lämmermann 2006: 26, cf. Tsafack 2008: 82). They thus serve as entry point for their younger siblings, which has become a multiplier effect for migration, the fourth reason for growing student emigration from Cameroon to Germany. This chain migration based on kinship relationships serves as one possible explanation why some of my interview partners in this study indicated that they had been somehow pushed by their families to study in Germany: “*Sometimes the parents decide and all my siblings were there [in Germany]*” (Cameroon interview #15; 12.05.2010: 167-170).<sup>97</sup>

The Ghanaian population in Germany is far more diverse than that of the Cameroonians and includes fewer students. In 2010, only a minority of 312, which is little more than about 1%, of the Ghanaian population (21,337) was enrolled at German universities (FSO, HIS-HF). Ghanaian immigration to Germany can be described in three phases (Tonah 2007: 9, Nieswand 2008: 33). In the first phase students came (1950-1980), then labour migrants and political refugees (1980-1993) and finally joining family members (since the 1990s). The first wave consisted primarily of elite members of private students in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and scholarship holders who went to the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Similar to the situation of educational emigrants in Cameroon, the reason for studying abroad was simply the lack of tertiary educational institutions in the country. The nation’s first university was the University College of Ghana in Accra, which was opened in 1948 and reached full university status in 1961 (Effah and Senadza 2008: 209). Soon, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi (1951) and the University of Cape Coast (UCC) (1962) followed. Since the 1980s, various polytechnics throughout

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<sup>96</sup> Interestingly, this kind of nostalgic affection for Germany appears also in the interviews with Ghanaians, whose parents originate from the Volta Region, a former German colony, before the French took over. Mrs. F. (Ghana case #08) explains that her father has a strong affection for Germany without ever having been there: “*Actually my father liked talking about Germany though he has never been to Germany. (...) because where we come from, the Volta Region, that part of Ghana, the Germans once colonized that place before. (...) So that part of Ghana, my own home, if you are punctual, if you are straight, if you are disciplined they always say ‘Ooh this person is a German!’*” (Ghana interview #08; 03.07.2008: 514-530).

<sup>97</sup> German original: “*Manchmal entscheiden noch die Eltern und all meine Geschwister waren dort [in Deutschland]*” (Cameroon interview #15; 12.05.2010: 167-170).

the country have been launched and since the 1990s private universities have boomed (Effah and Senadza 2008: 209). In 2006, Ghana's higher education sector comprised 6 public and 13 private universities as well as 10 public polytechnic schools (Effah and Senadza 2008: 210).

Initially, tertiary education in Ghana was tuition-free<sup>98</sup> and hence, enrolment increased rapidly, doubling within a period of only six-years (Effah and Senadza 2008: 211-213). The outcome was that Ghanaian public universities soon were congested, have lagged behind with funding and hence the quality of tertiary education has declined, which in particular concerns a lack of equipment and teaching staff (cf. Manuh et al. 2005). In consequence, many Ghanaians have had to move abroad to study but they preferably move to the English-speaking countries, Great Britain and Northern America. Only a small – but comparably stable – group of Ghanaians travels to Germany to further their education. Today, many of them enrol in development related programmes (cf. Boger 2013).

The numbers of Ghanaian students in Germany are negligible in comparison to the far larger numbers of Ghanaians who already have come to Germany. This is the group mostly consisting of refugees, asylum seekers and labour migrants coming from Ghana in the course of the country's dramatic economic decline in combination with the political tensions due to the various coup d'états starting in the 1970s. This was the second wave of Ghanaian immigrants to Germany. Those were long-term immigrants remaining over ten years and more (Haferkamp 1989: 16). However, the flows of incoming refugees and asylum seekers stopped in 1993, when Ghana was regarded as a safe country of origin by the German immigration administration (cf. Baraulina et al. 2008: 21, cf. Nieswand 2008: 32-33). In the following years, joining family members dominated the immigration of Ghanaians to Germany. In consequence, Ghanaians have become one of the largest immigrant groups in Germany from Sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Baraulina et al. 2008: 15). It seems likely that this large group of today's Ghanaians in Germany are those remaining immigrants who came in the second and the third waves – the refugees and joining family members. This claim is based on the fact that educational migrants of the 'first hour' usually returned after completing their studies because they were almost guaranteed a job offer in the public services (cf. Martin 2005: 154).

This also applies for today's Ghanaian students coming to Germany, in contrast to their Cameroonian counterparts, who more often remain in Germany after completing their studies. However, before coming to the aspect of return migration, the following sections devote themselves to facts and figures about Cameroonian and

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<sup>98</sup> Since 1988/1989 academic and residential facilities user fees have had to be paid by students, covering administrative expenses and accommodation (Effah and Senadza 2008: 2011).

Ghanaian students in Germany during the decade 2000-2010, about their fields of studies and about their networks in Germany.

### **Cameroonian and Ghanaian students in Germany: facts and figures**

As shown in the previous section, the share of students of the total Cameroonian and Ghanaian population in Germany differs in that the Cameroonian students make up a third of their population in Germany, whereas the Ghanaian students are only about 1% of the total Ghanaian community (cf. table 4). Concentrating on Cameroonian and Ghanaian students during the period 2000-2010, the differences concerning size and their study profile become even more apparent.

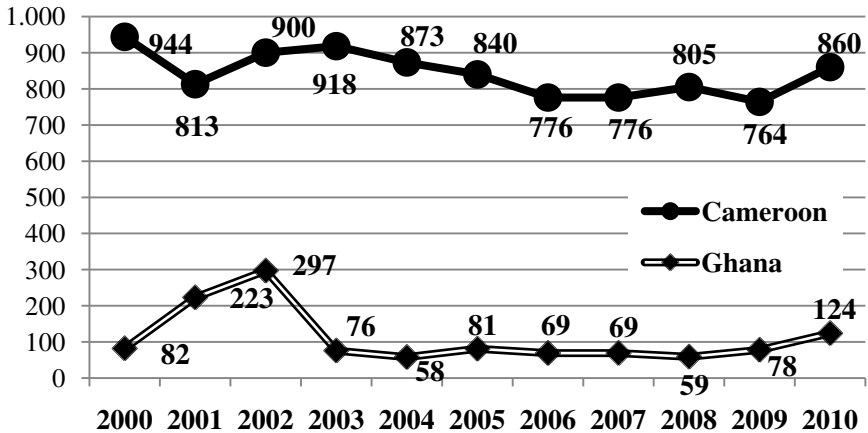
Table 4: Comparing Cameroonian and Ghanaian migrants in Germany

<b>Migration profile</b>	<b>Cameroonian</b>	<b>Ghanaian</b>
<i>Total population in Germany</i>		
In 2000	9,311	22,847
In 2010	14,876	21,337
<i>Student population in Germany</i>		
In 2000	3,446	287
In 2010	5,383	312

Source: FSO and HIS statistics for cohorts 2000-2010.

Until 2010, about 19 times more Cameroonians (5,383) studied in Germany than Ghanaians (280). During the decade 2000-2010, a total of about 9,269 Cameroonian first-year students enrolled at German universities in contrast to 1,216 Ghanaian first-year students (HIS-HF).

Interestingly, the numbers of Ghanaian incoming students remains comparably low, as the next line graph in figure 4 reveals.



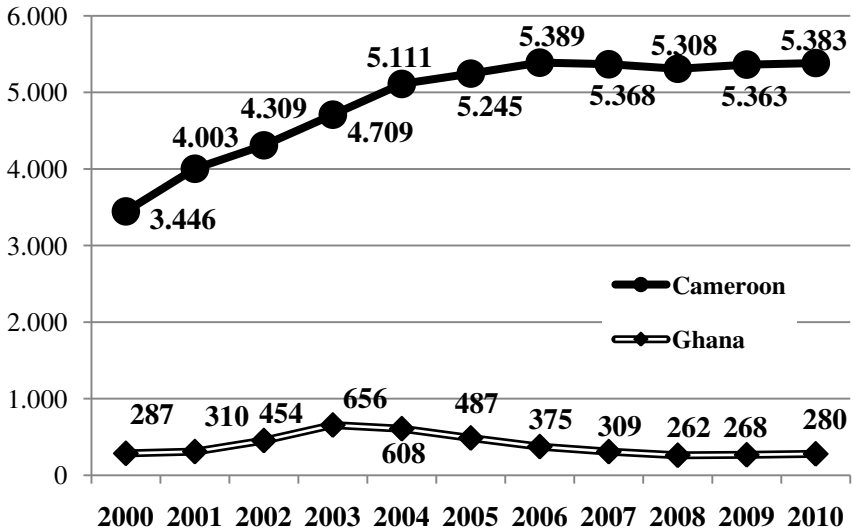
Source: Own compilation after HIS-HF statistics for cohorts 2000-2010.

Figure 4: Cameroonian and Ghanaian first-year students in Germany.

In 2000, the number of Cameroonian first-year students was near to a thousand. In contrast, only 82 Ghanaians started studying in Germany at that time. However, the number of Ghanaian scholars coming to Germany increased significantly, more than 3.5 times from 82 to almost 300 within only two years. In parallel, the numbers of Cameroonian first-year students grew slightly and remained stable from 2003. Regarding the Ghanaian first-year students, a similar trend is visible. Following the sudden decline after 2002, which was probably caused by the consular section of the German Embassy applying official visa regulations stricter (Klebs 2004, Nieswand 2011: 412)<sup>99</sup> the numbers of new students stabilised but always

<sup>99</sup> According to investigations of the journalist Klebs (2004) as well as the findings of the researcher Nieswand (2011: 412), the German Embassy has applied the visa regulations much more strictly since 2003/2004. Since then, many rejected applicants have claimed that one of the main obstacles for those who did not get a scholarship but were freemovers was to prove their liquidity for the period of their studies in Germany. To be eligible to apply for a visa they have to prove that they own a blocked account in Germany containing about EUR 8,000 at the time of visa application (German Embassy Accra 2012). This seems paradoxical: most persons apply for a student visa in Germany lack the financial resources and it is an administrative problem to open a bank account in Germany whilst still being in the home country (Event #05, field notes 07.06.2008). However, these assumptions are drawn from informal talks. In contrast, the officers of the German Embassy in Ghana claimed that the biggest reason to reject applications is that they are incoming at short notice (Expert interview #13, 23.09.09).

remained below 100. As the following line graph in figure 5 demonstrates, these first-year students increased the total numbers of students in Germany.



Source: Own compilation after HIS-HF statistics for cohorts 2000-2010.

Figure 5: Cameroonian and Ghanaian students in Germany.

The Cameroonian student population in Germany started in 2000 with about 3,446 enrolled students and peaked in 2006 and 2007 at almost 5,400. Since then the numbers have dropped slightly and remained stable. In 2010 some 5,383 Cameroonians were studying in Germany. In contrast, numbers of Ghanaian students doubled very quickly within two years from 287 in 2000 to 656 in 2003. After this peak, the numbers of Ghanaian students declined continuously each year and finally dropped again to 280 in 2010. A minimal growth has been observed since then (HIS-HF).

### Fields of studies

Regarding the topics of their studies it seems at first sight as if Cameroonian and Ghanaian students have similar preferences (cf. table 5). The majority of both groups enrol for studies in the field of the so-called STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). About 34.2% of the Cameroonians take engineering with a clear focus on electrical engineering. Almost 33.4% enrol for subjects like mathematics and science with the majority in the field of computer science. A large proportion of Ghanaian first-year students in Germany (37%) register for courses in engineering. They show a lesser preference for the broader field of mathematics and science (22.4%) but have a tendency (13.5%) to study in the field



of agriculture, forestry and nutrition sciences (also with a focus on tropical countries), in contrast to their Cameroonian counterparts (2.6%).

Table 5: Comparison of fields of studies in Germany

<b>Fields of studies</b>	<b>Cameroonians [N=9,407]</b>	<b>Ghanaians [N=1,212]</b>
Languages, cultural studies	8.7	4.5
Sports	0.4	1.2
Law, economics, social studies	15.8	17.4
Mathematics, sciences	33.4	22.6
Medicine (human/veterinary)	2.3	3.1
Agriculture, forestry	2.6	13.5
Engineering	34.2	37
Fine arts	0.1	0
Others	2.5	0.5

*Source:* Own research.

What these numbers do not show is that the broad field of engineering comprises the new international study programmes, the “green-degree programmes” (Mutz n.d.). There is evidence shown in recent studies that these new study courses (which often are classified under the broader field of engineering or forestry, depending on the particular study focus) could have become a pull factor for Ghanaian students (Bochmann et al. 2008: 58, Kubitschek 2008: 16, 47, Bochmann and Daroussis 2011: 94). These programmes stimulated a new, the fourth, very small and exclusive wave of Ghanaian students coming to Germany. I refer to them as the ‘green-degree’ master students who have a clear idea about what they want to study but who cannot afford the high tuition fees in the UK and the US (Kubitschek 2008: 7, 33). That these Ghanaian students carefully choose the programmes they enrol for is shown in the example of one of my interview partners, Mister J. (Ghana case #01), who recalls the decision process:

“It was in my final year at the university (...). A friend of mine told me, he introduced me to the DAAD website ‘Study in Germany’. They offer a master’s degree without any tuition fee. So I said ‘Oh that’s great. So let me have a look’. So I went to the website and then, after going through the courses I applied in two universities in Germany. One at Tuebingen, it was applied geo-science and then the one at Stuttgart. Actually, I was fortunate I got admission in both universities. So then, I had to decide, which one to attend. After that, I consulted some friends who were already there [in Germany, JB]. I had a friend in Freiburg. He was training environmental resources, Master of Business Administration in Environmental Resource Management (...) And there was another at Tuebingen. So after talking to them and taking their advice I decided to go for Water Resources Management at Stuttgart” (Ghana interview #01, 25.06.2008: 75-91).

The quote shows the criteria which the students use to choose their study programmes abroad. First, they make a cost-benefit calculation and tend to choose tuition-free programmes. Second, they specialise in particular topics, like environmental resource or water and waste water management. Cameroonians instead seem to come to Germany and prefer studying electrical engineering out of habit, because it has become almost a family tradition. This assumption is based on the observation that the interviewed Cameroonian students indicated that the dominant pull factor to come to Germany is the family network, and once a child embarks on one subject it will forward its knowledge to the younger sibling (see also Fleischer 2007). That the family influences the choice of study also became obvious during a regular counselling session (field notes 11.05.2010), during which young Cameroonians who intended to go abroad to study in Germany were advised by graduates who already had returned, which study programme would suit their careers best. These “Jour-fix meetings” (DAAD 2014)<sup>100</sup> are carried out in joint cooperation by the German Embassy, the Goethe Institute, DAAD and the KBK. The young candidates sometimes expressed quite frankly that their parents had told them to study what their elder siblings already had studied before. Another source of evidence that suggest this interpretation are the informal talks with Cameroonian students at one of the reintegration seminars. Some of them seemed surprisingly indifferent about how they could practically apply their particular knowledge achieved in their studies. One student mentioned that he had chosen his subject by “*pure chance*”. Another one even frankly revealed that he “*did not give a damn*” what he could use

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<sup>100</sup> German original: „Bildungsforum”

the subject he studied (business informatics) for but that he only cared about finding a well-paid job (field notes 03.05.2008).<sup>101</sup>

The impression that the Cameroonian students seemed less labour market and demand-oriented than their Ghanaian counterparts was probably coincidental in that case. Nevertheless, it indicates that Cameroonians and Ghanaians might apply a significantly different way of choosing their study subject. Presumably, their different way of choosing a study subject might also have to do with the different age profiles when they come to Germany. The average age of Cameroonians in Germany is around 28 years (cf. Schmelz 2007: 11) in contrast to the average age of their Ghanaian counterparts at 35 years (Schmelz 2009: 12). This diverging age structure can be also seen with the specific group of the students. Incoming Cameroonian students are generally very young, in their early twenties shortly after the Baccalaureate or the GCE graduation, when they start studying in Germany. Therefore, they need much more counselling, before deciding which study programme to choose.

Their Ghanaian counterparts have, instead, obtained their first degree in Ghana, passed their obligatory one year of national service during which they can acquire valuable work-related practical experience and afterwards sometimes worked. The Ghana National Service Scheme in Ghana (GNSS) has existed since 1973. It has the mandate of mobilising Ghanaians of 18 years and above, especially newly qualified university graduates. They work in rural schools, university departments and in government institutions of all kinds. The aim of the NSS is twofold: first, students are supposed to “exercise their civic responsibility towards the state through service” (GNSS 2011) and secondly, the students have the opportunity to gather valuable insights into the working world. Thus, the GNSS can influence the choice of postgraduate programmes because they have more information about Ghana’s labour market and its demand.<sup>102</sup> Consequently, Ghanaians who come to Germany are already in their mid-to-late twenties and thus more experienced than their younger Cameroonian fellow students.

### **Students’ spatial distribution in Germany**

Interestingly, the choice of study subjects reflects in the regional distribution. Because Cameroonians often study electrical engineering, they are highly represented in technical universities. In addition, due to the effects deriving from chain-

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<sup>101</sup> Own translations: “Die Wahl für Wirtschaftsinformatik war reiner Zufall”/ “Es ist mir (Schimpfwort) egal, was ich in fünf Jahren damit mache, Hauptsache Arbeit” (Event #03, field notes 03.05.2008).

<sup>102</sup> For more information see <http://www.nssghana.org/>.

migration, they cluster in regions with a higher Cameroonian population. As the map in figure 6 about the top five target universities shows below, Cameroonian first-year students are fairly evenly distributed with even the most popular destination, the Technical University of Kaiserslautern, being chosen by only 5.8%. This study destination is followed by the Technical University of Clausthal in second place, with 4.8% of enrolled Cameroonians; Technical University of Darmstadt ranked third, with 3.5% of Cameroonian students; Technical University of Berlin ranked fourth, with 3.2% of Cameroonian students; and finally, the Brandenburg Technical University of Cottbus (BTU-Cottbus) holds the fifth rank, hosting about 3.2% of Cameroonian students who studied in Germany during the period 2000-2010.

Instead, Ghanaians, who tend to study resource management and renewable energies, prefer a particular university in Germany: 9.2% of Ghanaian first-year students enrolled at the Brandenburg Technical University of Cottbus (BTU-Cottbus). This regional cluster of Ghanaian students in Brandenburg has to be seen in contrast to the regional distribution of the Ghanaian population in Germany in general. The largest groups of Ghanaians live in centres like Hamburg (Sieveking et al. 2008: 48, Prothmann 2009: 42)<sup>103</sup>, and the Ruhr Area (Schmelz 2009: 13, Prothmann 2009: 50), where they are several thousand (Hamburg in 2008 = 4,949; North Rhine Westphalia in 2008 = 5,051). Brandenburg, instead, had a Ghanaian population of 55 in 2008. This first place study destination is followed by the University of Stuttgart and University of Hohenheim which both host about 3.8% of the Ghanaian students in Germany. These two universities are followed by the University of Göttingen where about 3.6% enrolled and finally the Technical University of Kaiserslautern in fifth place, hosting about 3.2% of the total Ghanaian students during the decade 2000-2010. The regional cluster in Brandenburg serves as an argument supporting the previously mentioned assumption that Ghanaian students are very focussed in their choice of study subject. They seem not to start studying where a Ghanaian community lives but only where they find the most interesting study programme.

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<sup>103</sup> The editor's volume of McIntyre et al. (2004) provides more information about Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Hamburg and presents different articles about the various facets of their lives.

# GERMANY

Ranking of foreign first-year students 2000-2010 at universities in %

Cameroonians [N = 9,407]

Ghanaians [N = 1,212]

● 3 - 3.9

● 4 - 4.9

▲ > 5

★ > 9

100 km



Source: Own compilation data from HIS-HF/ DAAD, first-year students 2000-2010  
stepmap.de

Figure 6: Regional distribution of first-year students in Germany.

Concluding, the comparison shows three important features: Cameroonian students in Germany are the larger, younger and more evenly spatially distributed group in regions where many Cameroonians live in general. Ghanaian students are a smaller group but seem to concentrate on particular subjects and thus form clusters in regions with a small Ghanaian immigrant population. These differences in their profiles also affect their networking, as the next section reveals.

## Students' networks in Germany

Foreign students in Germany can join externally organised network activities and at the same time they set up autonomous migrant organisations. External network opportunities for instance are the STUBE programmes (Studienbegleitprogramm) and their frequent seminars and meetings (cf. chapter 2.4).

Cameroonians attend these seminars very often and sometimes are in the majority of seminar participants. Ghanaians are only seldom found amongst them (Event #02, field notes 29.03.2008, event #17, field notes 12.11.2010). Of course, the group of the Ghanaian students is quite small and most might not make use of German programmes because they often study in English. Nevertheless, the student organisations show an equally different pattern: Cameroonian students have developed a rich variety of numerous networks in Germany, whereas their Ghanaian counterparts seem to be less active in building such formally organised networks.

Among the Cameroonian autonomous migrant organisations, several types can be identified: informal student groups, ‘old boys/old girls’ networks, professional networks, national and ethnic defined groups.<sup>104</sup> Lämmermann notes in her qualitative study that almost every German university has its own Cameroonian student association (2006: 3). She describes with the example of Cameroonians in Freiburg how these student groups frequently organise information events concerning job opportunities for students as well as football tournaments (Lämmermann 2006: 56). Whereas these activities should ease the acculturation stress in Germany, national and ethnic groups maintain their national and ethnic identities (Jamfa 2010: 28 ff.). The latter comprises primarily community foundations or groups of ‘suppressed minorities’, the Bamiléké and Anglophones. The members of the ‘old boys/old girls’ associations are mainly from the Anglophone region and have finalised their studies in Germany. Often members of these associations have become successful businesspersons in Germany. In their associations they maintain the feeling of belonging to an educational and financial elite.<sup>105</sup>

The professional networks act on a national level. Members are students as well as professionals of a particular occupation (e.g. medical doctors, engineers). They have a long tradition in Germany and the reputation of working very efficiently (Schmelz 2007: 16). Examples are the CAMFOMEDICS network, founded by Cameroonian medical, pharmacy and dentistry students in 1994; or the association of Cameroonian engineers (Verein Kamerunischer Ingenieure und Informatiker,

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<sup>104</sup> Of importance, but not networks, are the numerous Cameroonian print and online magazines published in the German language: Africa Positive since 1998; Lo’Nam since 2005 and Africa and Science since 2006.

<sup>105</sup> One example is the worldwide “old boys/old girls” network of the St. Joseph College Sasse in Buea/South West Region Cameroon. In one of their U.S. branches (<http://www.sasfund.org/>) they highlight the fact that it is the oldest secondary and high school in the Anglophone region of Cameroon. It is often referred to as the "Harvard of Cameroon" because of its high tuition fees, which only the very privileged families can afford to pay. The German SOBA foundation (Sasse Old Boys Association) has been based in North Rhine Westphalia since 2000. The SOBA German foundation is receiving increasing attention from German political officials, for instance the SOBA representative was invited to join the German Federal President’s matinee in 2013 (for more information see <http://www.sobafoundation.org>).

VKII), founded a few years later in 2000 (Schmelz 2007: 15). Moreover, many Cameroonian scientists are dedicated to national integration and to Pan-African ideals (Nebel 1998: 314). Contemporary projects in Germany are namely the campaigns of *AfricAvenir International* since 2000; the *African Development Initiative (ADI)* since 2003 (Jamfa 2010: 23); or the science cooperation of the *African Network for Solar Energy, ANSOLE* since 2010 ([www.ansole.org](http://www.ansole.org)).

Noteworthy as well is the annual highlight of Cameroonian social life in Germany, the *Challenge Camerounais*. The event started as a soccer tournament between three football clubs from different towns. Since 1992 it has grown impressively. Today, about 16 football clubs compete against each other over the Whitsun weekend. Handball, basketball and table tennis have been added to the list of sporting activities, too. Responsibility for the event rotates and each year another of the 20 associations takes over organisation. Thousands of Cameroonians, mostly students, participate each year. They even travel from neighbouring countries, such as France, Switzerland and Austria to socialise and celebrate. However, the event has become more than merely a sports and cultural meeting. Since 2006 the *Challenge Camerounais* has organised a *Business and Social Forum (BSF)*. The forum is a platform for business-related exchange between Cameroonian and German enterprises, organisations and businesspersons. Speakers at the forum are the Cameroonian Ambassador and prominent key persons who fly in exclusively from Cameroon (Events #04, #19, field notes 10.05.2008, Ekama 2011: 22).<sup>106</sup>

Another more global Cameroonian initiative led by politically engaged Cameroonians is “*Draw a Vision of Cameroon*” (DAVOC). The forum has taken place in Geneva since 2008. It aims to improve the internationalisation of Cameroonian networks and to enhance policy dialogue between the Cameroonian civil society in Europe and the Cameroonian government. Issues like dual citizenship and economic development in Cameroon are discussed during the event (CASA-NET 2011). Moreover, Cameroonian students as well as non-students have established countless micro organisations on social and development projects. These aim to improve living conditions of members of the rural Cameroonian civil society, especially their health care situation and primary education of children. The list is long and remains incomplete.<sup>107</sup> However, the overview reveals that students and highly qualified Cameroonians in Germany dominate the networks which are rich in variety. With this variety comes a ‘side effect’, that is, fragmentation and competition. The different groups tend to be ‘closed’, speaking in the language of so-

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<sup>106</sup> In 2009 another formal association was founded, the “*Cameroonian Diaspora Network, Germany (CDN.G)*”. It was supposed to provide an umbrella for the Cameroonian associations in Germany. According to its homepage it currently comprises only three member associations ([www.cdn-g.org/](http://www.cdn-g.org/)).

<sup>107</sup> For more information about Cameroonian associations in Frankfurt see Jamfa (2010).

cial network theorists. Group affiliation follows educational status (student/refugee) ethnicity, regional origin and language background (Francophone/Anglophone) as well as social status (Lämmermann 2006: 79, Schmelz 2007: 17, Jamfa 2010: 27).

Concerning the closed nature of Cameroonian networks, Jamfa (2010: 30) critically claims that Cameroonians, instead of cooperating, compete and mistrust each other because they are from different regions in Cameroon and have different ethnic backgrounds (Jamfa 2010: 30: 32). This competition, in consequence, creates the impression for outsiders that Cameroonians are incapable of generating synergies. This has negative consequences for joint development projects in their home country. However, an aspect that seldom is touched on in this context is that migration could theoretically overcome this closedness. An example is Mr. P. (Cameroon case #10) who originates from a poorer family from the Anglophone section of the country. He had the experience in Germany, at first, that he was able to meet Cameroonians from all different regions of his country:

“In Germany I have met people from almost uh, almost all Cameroonian regions, all Cameroonians in the sense of native Cameroonian from north, south, east, west. I met them all in one residence in Karlsruhe and life was the same as at home” (Cameroon interview # 10, 08.10.2008: 59-70).<sup>108</sup>

What P. describes is the point that migration has the power to mix the regional composition of network structures. Hence, migration dilutes the individual's former regional background. The quote describes how the Cameroonian students group up. However, because of the large size of the Cameroonian students' networks in Germany, Cameroonians theoretically can still have a choice but it seems that they group up according to ethnic affiliations.<sup>109</sup> To verify this assumption and to find reasons for this a separate analysis would be needed, which is not the topic of this thesis.

However, another possible interpretation is that the Cameroonian students group up according to their social status, which often overlaps with ethnic affiliation. This has to do with the fact that particular ethnic groups in Cameroon are said to have certain privileged access to financial and economic resources, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This assumption is supported through a recent col-

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<sup>108</sup> German original: “In Deutschland habe ich ähh fast Leute aus, fast alle Kameruner getroffen, also alle Kameruner in dem Sinne gebürtig Kameruner aus Norden, Süden, Osten, Westen. Die hab ich alle, sagen wir in, in, einem Wohnheim in Karlsruhe getroffen und das Leben war genauso wie zu Hause” (Cameroon interview #10; 08.10.2008: 59-70).

<sup>109</sup> Lämmermann (2006: 62) claims the contrary: her respondents mentioned that they did not search for groups from their own ethnic background.



umn by the journalist and author Florence Tsagué (2013). She reflects on her observation that migration for some Cameroonians from the lower social classes could mean a new beginning in another context. For others, who previously had a higher, privileged social status it can mean a loss of status. Tsagué points out that in the new social hierarchy, the young students are no longer ‘son of the commissioner’ or ‘daughter of the prefect’. In Germany, they have the plain status of being students and thus cannot borrow from the ‘social capital’ of their families anymore. According to Tsagué, these higher-status persons still feel superior and do not like to be associated with persons of lower social status, the so-called ‘no-names’. Tsagué criticises such behaviour as destructive, making it difficult to work on projects of common interest. Tsagué’s column points out two important facts. First, she notes that people might lose their social status, in the case of a change in social setting. Social status and ethnic origins only can have value among people who recognize the symbolic capital deriving from names. In a German context, these references lose their power (cf. Lämmermann 2006: 64). Second, she indicates that Cameroonians abroad still seek to perpetuate social status in Germany and thus try to group up with people from the same background. This point is important to keep in mind when it comes to the question of who actually is of help in the job search upon return.

Ghanaian students, compared to their Cameroonian counterparts, currently seem to have little to no formally organised networks. This was different in the past, as the brief retrospective which now follows shows. Ghanaians of the previous phases received most public attention in the art and music scene during the 1980s, e.g. Ghanaians in Hamburg created the new music trend of the “Burgher-Highlife” (Sackey 1996: 449ff.); Ghanaians in bigger towns and cities started to organise Afro festivals and they established restaurants and Afro shops (cf. Prothmann 2009: 98). Moreover, they organised themselves in various church associations which still are intact, today (cf. Jach 2004, 2005, cf. Tonah 2007: 12, cf. Prothmann 2009: 79ff.). Typical students’ associations were for instance the Ghana Unions. The first of them, the Ghana Students’ Union in Berlin was founded in the 1960s. Although it was a students’ union they had open doors for all Ghanaians and took care of the newly-arriving Ghanaian refugees, who came during the exodus of the 1980s (cf. Rocksloh-Papendieck 1990: 26). Soon these Ghana unions emerged in every bigger town (cf. Tonah 2007: 12) and organised cultural events, celebrated traditional Ghanaian festivals or simply gathered and discussed general topics about life in Germany as well as in Ghana (cf. Rocksloh-Papendieck 1990: 26). In 2003, the Ghana unions finally merged under the umbrella of the UGAG (cf. Tonah 2007: 12, cf. Sieveking et al. 2008: 48, cf. Nieswand 2011: 416). Today, some Ghana unions still exist, but the organisers claim that they lack young members, especially students (cf. Appiah 2011). This is not only due to the small num-

ber of Ghanaian students but also because today's generation of students often refrains from socialising with Ghanaians or Africans who have settled in Germany as non-students.<sup>110</sup> The interviewees in this study confirmed this impression. One of them, Mrs. S. (Ghana case #27), explains why she did not like socialising with other Africans who were non-students:

“There were other nationalities. There were Nigerians but most of those people I pretty much did not associate with them because they were refugee, asylum-seeking people and most of them were not well behaved. They used to do all the shady things and all that so I did not want any problems with the law. So I kept them at a distance” (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 333-341).

S. does not want to be associated with other non-student Africans, because of their alleged involvement in “*shady things*”. This is also the reason why some Ghanaians do not even socialise with their German fellow students. Mr. N. (Ghana case #07) recalls his experience during his studies:

“I did not interact much with German society because I also took along my wife and it is very typical of Ghanaians, wherever we are, we tend to look for our own people because, we think, it helps us to stay away from trouble you know. (...) if you go somewhere and interact with [German, JB] people, chances are that, they may take you go out to drink, to party and discos and places like that; and sometimes things can go a little out of hand. Most of the times I stay with my own people. And what did we do? You know we are a boring bunch, we go to church [laughs]” (Ghana interview #07; 02.07.2008: 77-91).

Mr. N. mentions that because he had his wife with him, he did not interact with German society, which he finds “*very typical*” of Ghanaians. Other interviewees from the Ghana group to some extent have confirmed this. Those who came without a partner and did not have Ghanaian companions among the other students described that they felt alone (cf. Ghana cases #03, #11, #23). The feeling of alienation applies even more to the many Ghanaians who reported situations of racial discrimination in their everyday lives (cf. Kubitschek 2008: 54). Mrs. N. (Ghana case #23) describes how she felt, when she arrived at her university, which was at a location in the eastern part of Germany. She remembers that she was picked up from the train station by an official who drove her in a private car to campus:

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<sup>110</sup> Lämmermann (2006: 81) and Bochmann et al. (2008: 27) provide similar findings that student migrants are reluctant to network with non-students.

“Then we got to the university. You know (...) the main reception point. We got there, then I saw someone who seemed to be liked a Nazi and I was scared. Actually, I think he was one. Bald skin with the usual boots and then a dog. So he [official person] said ‘Don’t get down, sit in the car, I will lock it, and then I will go and get your documents for you’. I said ‘Ok’. So he went for it. And then that actually scared me right from the onset” (Ghana interview #23; 04.09.2009: 262-268).

Such fears of racism, which fortunately were said to be dispelled by most interviewees after some time, might be an important reason why Ghanaians who start studying in the eastern parts of Germany group up with other Ghanaian students. However, the study programmes are designed internationally, which also encourages the students to bond with students from other nations, something most participants of those programmes very much welcomed. Mrs. N. recalls this from her international programme:

“It was virtually an international class. People from China, from South America, Honduras, Brazil, others from Africa, Kenya. So it was quite interesting to meet all these people and share ideas, learn from each other. I would say it was good exposure” (Ghana interview #23; 04.09.2009: 305-309).

N. mentions that it was a “*good exposure*” to meet “*all these people*” – but her description seems to point less at a stable group foundation built on her choice and preference, and more or less at a temporary group coalition, mixed coincidentally by the programme.

In conclusion, the comparison suggests that Cameroonian students build very strong, lively and distinct formally organised networks besides their university activities and group up according to their personal preferences, whereas their Ghanaian counterparts today seem to have less formal networks but concentrate on the informal network opportunities offered by their particular study programme. This different socialising behaviour might also affect the student’s decision-making process concerning their whereabouts after they complete their studies. This is now discussed in depth.

### **Three options upon graduation**

After finishing their studies, graduates have to make plans concerning their professional whereabouts. This sub-chapter outlines the three short-term options they have to choose from immediately after completion: staying, moving to another country, or returning directly home. During the decade 2000-2010 a total of 4,335 Cameroonians finished their studies in Germany and 789 Ghanaians graduated (HIS-HF).

Whether foreign students attempt to prolong their stay in Germany upon graduation depends on how much they feel integrated and whether they see prospects for accessing employment (Sykes and Chaoimh 2012: 39). Concerning integration, Kuptsch (2006: 41) has already noted correctly, “study years are an important phase in life for building friendships and relations and for some people these are also the years for starting families of their own”. This applies very much to the young Cameroonians who over the years even perceive Germany as a second home, their “Adoptivheimat” (Tsagué 2011b: 42).<sup>111</sup> In addition, Cameroonians have excellent German language skills, which allows them to access employment in Germany relatively easy (Baraulina et al. 2008: 29). Schmelz (2007: 8) adds that being fluent in English as well as French gives Cameroonians a strategic advantage in the labour market to access jobs in international companies. Moreover, since 2005, immigration laws for foreign students who graduate in Germany have been reformed and liberalised. These are the main pull factors for Cameroonians remaining in Germany. For their Anglophone counterparts from Ghana, who have few German language skills because they have studied an English programme and only stayed a few years, there is only a small option to remain in Germany. They risk, like most immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, a “brain-waste”, criticise Elwert and Elwert (2011: 123), because if they remain they do not necessarily access decent and qualified work in their field of studies. My Ghanaian interviewees were very realistic about this fact:

“I saw that my training will not find me a place in Germany because I did water resources engineering. And there is no issue/ there are no problems with water in Germany. The systems are developed, (...) the sewage lines, the hydro and whatever are developed so, there is no way I was going to get [employment; JB] in Germany and looking at the language background (...). Some people decided to stay back in Germany and do the factory jobs (...) I don't need to go to school before I do those kind of jobs (...). So after all the years [in] school if (...) I will be doing this than it wasn't worth it” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 387-392).

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<sup>111</sup> This strong identification with Germany as a second home also reflects in the increasing rates of naturalisation and German-Cameroonian marriages, which sometimes are falsely interpreted as a means of simply achieving a regular resident status in Germany (Expert interview #15, 10.05.2010, memo). Fleischer (2009) asserts that due to the restrictive German laws Cameroonian immigrants – by which she not only refers to those who already immigrate undocumented, but also includes those immigrants who have a temporary resident's permit and thus also includes students – maintain their legal status through childbearing and marriages to German spouses. A Cameroonian activist in Germany, Ebuja, has critically contested one of her working papers as perpetuating racist stereotypes because she neglects the structural roots leading to an asymmetric power play between cultures (2012: 271-272).

The quote is from a 31-year-old hydro engineer who graduated after three years studies in an English language programme on water and wastewater and who thus only barely spoke German. This seems to be typical for today's Ghanaian student generation in Germany. However, the opposite appears to be the case with the Cameroonian graduates, as the following comparison of employment statistics from the German Federal Employment Agency (BA) shows. In 2000, about 22.2% (2,071) of the Cameroonian population (9,311) had a work permit in Germany. This proportion increased and stabilised. In 2010, about 4,614 Cameroonians had a labour permit, which was 31% of the total population (14,876). About 898 of them had a higher degree, which they most likely achieved in Germany.<sup>112</sup> The Ghanaian labour force in Germany in 2000 was about 34.1% (7,780) of the Ghanaian total population in Germany (22,847). This amount slightly decreased by almost one percent: in 2010, only 7,089 had a labour permit. That was about 33.2% of the total Ghanaian population (21,337). Only 127 of them had a higher degree. More important than simply the amount of the university graduates among the workforce is their segmentation. Many studies refer to the aspect that Ghanaian immigrants in Germany often work below their qualified level in the low-wage segment (cf. Haferkamp 1989: 16-17, cf. Schmelz 2009: 28). This is also seen in current data from the BA.

Comparing in which occupations<sup>113</sup> Cameroonian and Ghanaian migrants worked in Germany in 2008 it can be seen that Cameroonians were more strongly represented in the higher pay segment and less in the lower pay segment. To give some figures: only 6.5% of Cameroonians worked as room and domestic cleaners in contrast to 40.1% Ghanaians. A comparably high rate of 5.2% of Cameroonians were employed as engineers compared to only 0.2% of the Ghanaians; almost 6% of the Cameroonians worked as qualified office staff in comparison to 1.2% Ghanaians. The same goes for the highly skilled category of computer scientists: 5% of Cameroonians in contrast to 0.3% Ghanaians. Similarly, about 1.5% of Cameroo-

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<sup>112</sup> According to the BA statistic department (e-mail contact, 24.06.2013) employers provide information about the highest degree of their employees and it is not known in which country this degree has been obtained. However, it is most likely that those employees obtained their degree in Germany. Otherwise these employees are reunited family members (who are often less qualified or not eligible to work in Germany) or persons who have come as highly qualified workers in the context of green card or blue card immigration laws, which is not likely to be the case for those countries (Expert #06, e-mail contact 25.06.2013). It is interesting to note that although the total of Cameroonian graduates employed in Germany is increasing, the proportion in comparison to the number of annual graduates declined from 45% in 2000 to 21% in 2010. This could be an indicator that more graduates leave Germany upon their graduation.

<sup>113</sup> The occupations were selected according to the classification of the ISCO-88 (COM) major groups, which group the activities by levels of skills (Hartmann and Schütz 2002: 9).

nians were medical doctors in contrast to only 0.3% Ghanaians<sup>114</sup>; 2% of the Cameroonian workforce worked as university lecturers whereas only 0.1% of their Ghanaian counterparts were employed in the same category. Because the list of professions evaluated by the BA for 2008 comprises about 350 different occupations, which would be too long to present here, these figures can only serve as examples to show the general diverging trend that Cameroonians seem to have caught up in the high pay segment whereas the Ghanaians to a large extent are still employed in low pay segments of the German labour market.

The second option, starting a career in another country seems for both groups a conceivable opportunity. Conservative estimates suggest that about half, or even three-quarters, of the Cameroonian graduates in Germany continue to migrate (Schmelz 2010: 54). But where do they move to? France is said to have lost its attractiveness due to the increasingly restrictive immigration laws for foreigners (cf. Sykes and Chaoimh 2012: 21ff.). Instead, Canada and especially the Francophone province Québec offers liberal immigration policies. This may be the reason for the fact that a sort of chain migration of Cameroonians leaving for Canada has been observed (cf. Tsafack 2008: 83, cf. Schmelz 2010: 16). Very often, this second migration is a long-term sojourn. The Canadian labour market requires local work experience of at least one year or an educational degree achieved in a local university before obtaining formal employment (field notes 30.10.2010).<sup>115</sup> In contrast, Ghanaians who graduated in Germany have the opportunity to go to Great Britain, which is only a short flight away. There they have good networking possibilities because of their extended families living in Great Britain (Schmelz 2009: 21). A number of my respondents mentioned that they had made use of this opportunity (Ghana cases #13, #24, #27, #29). In Great Britain, they said they had easier access to work. However, very often it only was menial work and thus they felt overquali-

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<sup>114</sup> The observation that only a few Ghanaians work as medical doctors in Germany is surprising, because of the earlier generation of Ghanaian students who came to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s to study medicine many remained. They could be “found in almost every middle-sized German city today” (Tonah 2007: 3).

<sup>115</sup> Quebec offers big opportunities for well-educated immigrants who have French language competences and are willing to integrate. These requirements very much apply for Francophone Africans (Drescher 2008: 54). Thus, the immigration rates of the population from Sub-Saharan Africa in Canada in general have been increasing significantly since the mid 1990s (Lindsay 2007: 9) and especially the Cameroonian community in Quebec has been growing steeply: The number almost tripled from 481 Cameroonian immigrants in 2006 to 1,364 in 2010. In total 4,510 Cameroonians achieved permanent residency in Quebec during these four years (Turcotte 2011: 28). An example for successful integration of Cameroonian immigrants is Quebec’s current Minister of Culture and Communications, Maka Kotto (Nomba 2012).

fied.<sup>116</sup> One of them is Mr. S. (Ghana case #13) who obtained a master's degree in the field of Tropical Forestry and Management. After graduation he first went to Great Britain, visiting his extended family and working for a few months before receiving his official university certificate and before his visa expired. Although he found work in Great Britain, which had not been possible for him in Germany, he never thought of permanently settling in Great Britain. He explains why:

“I realised that I was not being placed in my area of qualification. I was not happy. In fact, I was working with a train company as a customer service officer (...) And I always ask myself why should I be a natural resource expert. I mean I have a major in Forest Economics. I am a socio economist in natural resource and I am working as a customer officer” (Ghana interview #13; 08.07.2008: 471-492).

After S. realised that he would not be able to apply what he studied in Germany, he finally returned to Ghana. Like Mr. S., many Ghanaian graduates first move to Great Britain to earn some money. However, it is an intermediary step, after which most return to Ghana.

Especially Cameroonian students in Germany are often cited as saying that their sojourn to Germany is only temporary (cf. Lämmermann 2006: 82, cf. Sieveking et al. 2008: 59, cf. Tsafack 2008: 81). Logically, taking the decision to return brings up the question as to whether the graduates will be able to access decent and well-paid employment in their home country. This leads to the third option upon graduation, that is returning home. It seems as if most students greatly desire to return home after graduation. Many students from Sub-Saharan Africa mention in various studies that they feel homesick, miss their home food, parents and social contacts in general. Students report that they dislike the cold weather, fear racism, and often see no chance of obtaining employment in their field of studies in Germany (cf. Azafack 2006: 12).

Others mention that they want to return because they believe that at home people need them more than in Europe (cf. Foaleng 2006: 74). At the same time, Cameroonians are said to often fear the general conditions in their country: low remuneration and lacking infrastructure as well as corruption (cf. Tsagué 2009: 21). According to small-scale surveys, they fear that the lack of income opportunities will turn out to be a major problem because they foresee that they have to support their families financially (cf. Tsafack 2008: 88). The conflict between wanting to return and fearing the conditions in their home countries gets even stronger, the

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<sup>116</sup> Findings drawn from a study on Ghanaian migrants in London reveal that almost half of the Ghanaians worked in the low-pay segment as office cleaners, as cleaners in public service (London Underground) and received poor remuneration, despite their higher educational backgrounds (Herbert et al. 2006: 7).

longer the students are abroad without occasionally visiting home, assumes Tsafack (2008). He indicates in his quantitative survey of 80 students from Sub-Saharan African countries who studied in Berlin that about 50% of students visit their home country only every three years. Only very few can afford to travel every year (Tsafack 2008: 80). At the same time, Tsafack notes, Cameroonians do not lose touch entirely but frequently (once a week) communicate via Internet and phone with their families (2008: 79). Nevertheless, it seems as if this communication cannot compensate for first-hand experience in the labour market. Tsafack concludes that Cameroonians, like most Sub-Saharan Africans, would be less reluctant to return if they were allowed to retain their legal status in Germany. It would be their backdoor if the reintegration process turned out to be too challenging (2008: 91). Therefore, Cameroonian graduates seem to apply a “dual strategy” (Schmelz 2010: 53, Schmelz 2012: 12): they prepare to move to another country and at the same time get ready to return. The current generation of Ghanaian students seems to have similar fears of returning. This assumption is based on the interview findings. Being asked to recall how they felt when they finished their studies, they clearly referred to their insecurity: “*it was really unpleasant, it was dicey*” (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 126); “*it was emotional, a lot of uncertainty, clouding*” (Ghana interview #26: 10.09.2009: 131). Almost everyone remembers a ‘worst-case scenario’ in which returned friends suffered long-term unemployment after returning:

“I have friends who came down [to Ghana, JB] who furthered abroad their education and they have been here over one-and-a-half years still without jobs. Yes! Still without jobs. All those stories. You hear these stories and (...) you will be thinking will I fall into the same category?” (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 121-125).

Like the quoted interviewee, almost all of the interviewees reported that they had heard of ‘failed’ migrants before they decided to return, which I take as a strong indicator that the graduates had planned their whereabouts very carefully. They seemed to have weighed their options very carefully. In fact, an aspect that probably influenced their decision-making process was the governmental reintegration schemes and their financial assistance. As outlined in chapter 2.4, these programmes facilitate professional reintegration and offer basic financial security – as soon as a job has been secured. The interviewees therefore perceived it as a support, because it “*cushions*” (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 134).

Concluding, the comparison shows that Cameroonians and Ghanaians would both like to return but have similar fears and feel insecure due to the difficulties they expect in their home countries. However, Cameroonians assume they will have better job opportunities if they remain in Germany or move to Canada/Quebec. Ghanaian graduates instead perceive their professional chances to be better at home. In both cases, reintegration programmes provide the feeling of security.



These differently perceived career opportunities also reflect in the estimated return rates, the topic of the following section.

### **Estimation of return rate**

Studies on return migration repeatedly underline the fact that comprehensible statistical data on return migration is difficult to obtain (cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 22, cf. OECD 2007: 107, cf. Baraulina et al. 2008: 31). The same difficulty of a lack of verified data applies to the mobility patterns of highly skilled academics (cf. Jahr et al. 2001: 77, cf. Wolfeil 2012: 82ff). Due to this fact, this chapter presents an estimated return rate for the Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates during the decade 2000-2010. I will estimate the rate of those who return directly (using data from the reintegration programmes), of those who remain in Germany (using data from the BA of the newly-registered employees with a higher degree) and I will present the estimation for those who move to a third country (the rest of the graduates, who are not among those who returned directly or remained).

One potential source for measuring immigration as well as emigration processes is the Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister, hereafter referred to as AZR). It provides the numbers of foreigners of a certain nationality leaving Germany. However, Baraulina et al. (2008: 31) note correctly that these statistics a) give no information about the destination country of the migrants leaving Germany and b) do not distinguish the type of migrants. Thus, it includes short time visitors and their family members as well as graduates or rejected and deported asylum seekers. In brief, the AZR statistics comprise all departing Cameroonians and Ghanaians and hence it is not possible to draw concrete conclusions about the exact number of returning graduates.

Another possible source is the home countries' immigration statistics. For Ghana, Quartey (2009) as well as Twum-Baah (2005: 60-61) used the immigration statistics and stated that an estimated 87.7% of emigrated Ghanaians returned during the period 2000-2007 and about 10% of the annual stock of emigrants return (Quartey 2009: 65-66). What remains unanswered here is a) from which country these Ghanaians returned, b) if they returned for the purpose of long-term reintegration or only temporary, for instance during the Christmas season and c) who actually returns, businesspersons, graduates or family members, which is very difficult to measure because these categories often overlap.

Another approach to estimate return rates of particular nationals is offered by Wolfeil (2012). In her study she adopts Jahr et al's approach applied in the CHEERS study from 2001 about mobility patterns of highly skilled profession-

als.<sup>117</sup> Wolfeil's study is about Polish graduates who studied in Germany and returned. She explains how she uses three major sources to estimate the return rates: a) immigration statistics, b) university tracer studies and c) surveys about foreign students' future migration plans (Wolfeil 2012: 82-83).<sup>118</sup> I followed her example and used the first two sources, immigration statistics and tracer studies.

Tracer studies, which have already been mentioned (see ch. 2.5) give return rates of about 70-85% (Schraven et al. 2011: 301, DAAD 2013: 33). The rest moves to another country overseas or goes to other African countries. However, as stated earlier, these tracer studies are not representative of the majority of African students in Germany because they predominantly trace scholarship holders who are extremely likely to return because they already have employment opportunities and families in their home countries (see ch. 2.5). However, what these tracer studies have in common is the finding that the majority of graduates returns. Is this the case with graduates from Cameroon and Ghana, too? Following Wolfeil's approach, I at first estimated how many graduates remain in Germany and start working.

For this purpose I used the statistics from the German Federal Employment Agency (BA). The first figure is the number of graduates who were employed in a given year. I took the figure of the year 2000 as a base and added the newcomers of the following years. This gave a total of 898 Cameroonian graduates and 127 Ghanaian graduates in Germany's labour market during the decade 2000-2010. Comparing these figures to the number of graduates in the given period (Cameroonian graduates 4,335, Ghanaian graduates 789) this gave a rate of about 21% Cameroonians and 16% Ghanaians who remained after their studies and started working. What happened to the rest of the Cameroonian (~80%) and Ghanaian (~86%) graduates? To estimate how many of them actually returned, I used the statistics of the REP. By providing the number of persons who returned and registered their return it at least offers a minimum of persons who leave directly for their home country. According to this query, during the period 2000-2010 only 288 Cameroonians but 323 Ghanaians returned. Regarding the numbers of graduates during the

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<sup>117</sup> The "Careers in Higher Education: A European Research Survey", in short CHEERS study of Jahr et al. (2001) also investigated the professional whereabouts of international students and their mobility. The authors came to the conclusion that isolated sources of data cannot provide sufficient information about the students' whereabouts. The authors suggest using combined statistical data to round out the picture (Jahr et al. 2001: 77).

<sup>118</sup> Wolfeil estimates that 10-30% of Polish graduates remain in Germany and that the rest returns (2012: 172-173). A problem with this estimation is a) that it implies that all graduates who remained in Germany started working and b) that it gives no valid information on the destination of those 70% leaving Germany. This is in contrast to the findings shown for the case of Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates. It neglects the facts that a) Cameroonians tend to continue their higher education and b) that a corresponding number of them migrate to another country, too.

same period, this gives an estimated minimum return rate of at least 6.6% Cameroonian graduates (4,335) and a minimum 41% Ghanaian graduates (789).<sup>119</sup> The rest, 73% of the Cameroonian and 43% of the Ghanaian graduates, allegedly leave Germany and move to another country. Below, in table 6, is an overview of the calculations.

Table 6: Estimated tracking rate of graduates 2000-2010

Nationals from	Remaining	Moving	Returning
<b>Ghana</b>	$127/789 * 100 =$ ~ <b>16.1%</b>	$789 - (127 + 323) = 339$ ~ <b>43%</b>	$323/789 * 100 =$ ~ <b>40.9%</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	$898/4,335 * 100 =$ ~ <b>20.7%</b>	$4,335 - (898 + 288) = 3,149$ ~ <b>72.6%</b>	$288/4,335 * 100 =$ ~ <b>6.6%</b>

Sources: Statistics from HIS-HF, BA, CIM for cohorts 2000-2010.

Of course, these attempts to estimate the rates of returning graduates have to be treated with extreme caution. The figures do not include persons who have become naturalised, nor do they include all graduates who have returned but only those who are registered in the database of the REP, and this overview cannot state with certainty whether the figures of the BA really do capture all new employees who studied in Germany. Despite these methodological shortcomings, the overview at least shows a general trend: more Ghanaians return than their Cameroonian counterparts. To what extent this has to do with better conditions in their home country's labour market, will be discussed in the following sub-chapter.

### 5.3 Labour markets and networks

The labour market entries of returning graduates always depend on the particular labour market situation they meet in their home countries. Hence, this sub-chapter provides an overview of the current situation since independence. In both countries, Cameroon and Ghana, the labour markets developed similarly but in staggered processes. As mentioned already, in the course of decolonisation qualified graduates were needed in the young nations because the colonial officers left the countries and the administrations of the young African nations were built. In con-

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<sup>119</sup> The return rates in reality might be higher because the given rates of the REP do not include a) unreported cases of graduates who did not return via the programme and b) those graduates who left Germany via another country and c) included approximate, negligible numbers of non-graduates.

sequence, employment opportunities in Cameroon and Ghana's public sectors expanded rapidly. During the 1960s and 1970s, numerous state enterprises emerged and the state became the largest, and by far the most attractive, employer in the formal sector (cf. Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 16, cf. Fosu and Aryeetey 2008: 57). However, soon the public sector became oversized and gross mismanagement in combination with further macro-economic problems led to a vast economic decline in both countries. In Cameroon, this economic downturn only started in the mid 1980s, after the country had enjoyed an enormous period of growth. Eventually, poor government and the sudden price erosion of commodities, primarily that of their prime export, crude oil, led to a harsh crisis. The Biya government tried to rescue the situation. State budgets were downsized drastically, and salaries and allowances of the numerous civil servants severely cut (cf. Konings 1996: 252). However, in 1988 Cameroon finally had to obtain the first loan of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the IMF. The loan was accompanied by conditions to stimulate economic reforms, the SAPs. The implementation of the SAPs resulted in considerable retrenchments: these included further pay cuts in the public sector, large-scale dismissals of tens of thousands of civil servants and a strict ban on new employment in the public sector (cf. Ndongko 1993: 126, cf. Konings 1996: 252-253, cf. Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 17). The aim of the SAPs was to stimulate important economic reforms, including trade liberalisation, privatisation and that of labour market flexibility generally. From the Western donors' perspective, it was a necessary step in order to "free state enterprises from 'politics', in particular from the government's neo-patrimonial logic" (Konings 2004: 17). The devaluation of the local currency, the Franc CFA, followed in 1994 (cf. Konings 1996: 254) and finally, a second loan and SAP II were introduced in 1997. However, instead of having a "liberating effect on civil society" and empowering "the people by creating opportunities for private initiative and entrepreneurship" (International Crisis group 2010a: 17) the economy did not recover well. The contrary happened.

On the one side, a growing informal survival economy emerged especially in the urban centres, and on the other side a small group of elite members in key positions misused their power and developed rigid patronage networks. A huge income gap opened up: whereas "many people's living standards have become precarious, others have continued to accumulate what appears to be fabulous wealth" (International Crisis group 2010a: 15). In Ghana, the same process had already occurred earlier. The economic decline started in the late 1970s after vast public sector growth (cf. Fosu and Aryeetey 2008: 59), which eventually ended as in Cameroon, by taking on a loan from the Bretton Woods Institutions. In return, Ghana also adopted an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Measures included strictly downsizing the public sector and banning new recruitment.

The further course of the development resembles that described in the case of Cameroon (cf. Aryeetey et al. 2005: 107, cf. Fosu and Aryeetey 2008: 59). The only difference, noteworthy in the context of this thesis, seems to be that in Ghana unemployment appeared at first to be reduced considerably (cf. Adepoyu 1993: 6). However, in both countries the measures of the SAPs resulted in considerable shifts in the labour market and unemployment rose, particularly among university graduates (cf. Adepoyu 1993: 6). As a countermeasure to this trend, from 2003, both countries' governments systematically mainstreamed decent employment creation and economic growth into their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP).<sup>120</sup> The hope was to generate decent employment through economic growth as the crucial missing link to reduce poverty (Ackah and Baah-Boateng 2012: 34). However, as the following comparison shows, economic growth does not necessarily translate into decent employment. Interestingly, in both countries agricultural production and industries are weak, whereas surprisingly the service sector dominates the national economies. Table 7 presents an overview of data which has been collected from several sources. I had to use different sources, because unfortunately, the country's own censuses, for Ghana the 'Population and Housing Census 2010' of the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS 2013) and for Cameroon the "Enquete sur l'emploi et le secteur informel au Cameroun" EESI 2 of the Cameroonian National Institute for Statistics (NIS 2011), did not include all data which were needed for this comparison. Therefore, data was retrieved from the World Bank's Series "At a glance" in combination with data available from the countries' own statistical services. The comparison reveals, for Ghana, economic growth is slightly on course again but Cameroon still lags behind. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rates in Ghana continually climbed from 7.1 % in 2002 (WBa 2014) to 8% in 2011 (GSS 2012: 3). In Cameroon, the GDP grew only slightly from 3.2% in 2002 to 4.1% in 2011 according to the World Bank's data (WB 2014b). In Ghana, the increasing economic growth rates are primarily due to the commercial exploitation of crude oil, which started in 2010. However, this economic growth did trickle down to the poorer populations' living conditions: in Ghana, inflation was at 22.8% in 2002 and decreased to 13% in 2011 (WB 2014a); in Cameroon it was only 3.2% in 2002 and slightly increased to 3.7% in 2011 (WB 2014b).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> The strategic policy papers formulating poverty reduction measures with regard to employment are in Cameroon, the 'Document de stratégie pour la croissance et l'emploi, DSCE' (cf. Government of Cameroon 2009), which was launched in 2008/2009 and in Ghana the GPRS (cf. Government of Ghana et al. 2004, cf. Heintz 2004), which have been in place since 2004.

<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, the income situation seems to contradict this: in 2008 the median wage in Cameroon was at FCFA 325,000 (equal to EUR 500), and in 2011 in Ghana about GHC 500-700 (equal to approximately EUR 350), which depends very much on the industries and the practical work experience of the employee (Expert interviews #03, 06.10.2008: 115; #21, field notes 21.06.2012).

Apart from the different development in these growth rates, the two countries have significantly similar labour market features, as the following overview reveals, too. In all cases, data should be interpreted with care because, as has been mentioned, it was not possible to gain insights into one exclusive database including all criteria and hence various sources had to be consulted.

Continuing, the table shows that in 2011 the most productive sector, at around 50% in both countries, was that of the services sector (48.4% in Cameroon and 49.1% in Ghana). Whereas in Ghana, according to the World Bank Series “At a glance” (WB 2014a), the agricultural sector (25.3%) and industries (25.1%) had a similar share of the GDP, in Cameroon the share diverged and the agricultural (19.7%) sector contributed less to the GDP than the industrial sector (31.9%), according to data retrieved from the database of Global Finance Magazine (GFM 2013)<sup>122</sup>. The services sector boomed in both countries, especially in recent years, due to investments in the mobile phone industry, transportation and in the banking industry, and it still continues to grow (NEF 2009: 5, expert interviews #12, 22.09.2009: 126-134, #17, 15.05.2010: 123-152, YEN and IYF 2009: 21).

However, when it comes to the question of employment, the comparison shows that in both countries only a small proportion of the workforce - 23% in Cameroon (NIS 2011: 47) and, at 21%, slightly less in Ghana (GSS 2013: 264) - finds work in the most productive services sector. Instead, the majority works in the less productive sector of agriculture: 53.3% in Cameroon (NIS 2011: 47) and 41.7% in Ghana (GSS 2013: 264). These employees usually work on family farmland without receiving a regular income. Only about 12.6% of the Cameroonian workforce (NIS 2011: 47) and 22.1% of the Ghanaian workforce (GSS 2014: 264) found employment in the industries and similarly about 11.1% of the Cameroonian workforce (NIS 2011: 47) and 15.2% of the Ghanaians (GSS 2013: 264) worked in the trade sector in 2011.

Interestingly, unemployment rates are rather low in both countries. Here, the table compares the most recent official data from Cameroon, in 2010 from the “Enquete sur l’emploi et le secteur informel au Cameroun” EESI 2 of the Cameroonian National Institute for Statistics (NIS 2011), and data from Ghana in 2010 from the Population and Housing Census, compiled in the National Analytic Report of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS 2013). According to these sources, unemployment was at 3.8% in Cameroon (NIS 2011: 63) and in Ghana at 5.3% (GSS 2013: 268) for the same year 2010.

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<sup>122</sup> <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/country-data/cameroon-gdp-country-report>

Table 7: Economy and labour market features. *Sources:* Own compilation. See footnotes.

<b>Features of economies</b>	<b>Cameroon</b>	<b>Ghana</b>
	<i>GDP %<sup>123</sup></i>	
2002	3.2	7.1
2009	4.1	8
	<i>Inflation %<sup>124</sup></i>	
2002	3.2	22.8
2011	3.7	13
	<i>GDP by sector (in 2011) %<sup>125</sup></i>	
Services	48.4	49.1
Agriculture	19.7	25.3
Industries	31.9	25.6
	<i>Workforce participation (in 2011) %<sup>126</sup></i>	
Services	23.0	21.0
Agriculture	53.3	41.7
Industries	12.6	22.1
Trade	11.1	15.2
	<i>Labour market participation %<sup>127</sup></i>	
Unemployment	3.8 [in 2010]	5.3 [in 2010]
Underemployment <sup>128</sup>	70.6 [in 2010]	51.9 [in 2006]
Graduate unemployment	12.5 [in 2010]	2.5 [in 2010]
Informal employment	90.5 [in 2010]	86.2 [in 2010]
Wage employment	20.3 [in 2010]	18.0 [in 2010]

<sup>123</sup> Data retrieved from World Bank 2014 and GSS (2012: 3).

<sup>124</sup> Data retrieved from World Bank 2014.

<sup>125</sup> Data retrieved from World Bank 2014 Ghana and Global Finance Magazine (GFM 2013).

<sup>126</sup> Data retrieved from NIS 2011 and GSS 2013.

<sup>127</sup> Data retrieved from GSS 2008, NIS 2011, GSS 2013.

<sup>128</sup> Comparable data was not available for Ghana, because the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6) did not differentiate between under- and unemployment (cf. GSS 2013: 247).

At first sight, this comparably low unemployment rates is surprising. An explanation could be the quite restricted definition of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of unemployment. It seems to be inadequate in reflecting the situation in both countries because it excludes those persons who are working in precarious, unsuitable jobs (expert interview #03; 06.10.2008: 232-238). The “unemployed” according to the definition of the resolution of the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ILO 1982) comprises:

“(…) all persons above a specific age who during the reference period were: (a) ‘without work’ (...); (b) ‘currently available for work’ (...); and (c) ‘seeking work’” (ILO 1982, §10).

In fact, almost all persons in most Sub-Saharan African countries who are of working age are economically active. However, this does not necessarily mean they earn enough to make a living and work in adequately paid productive jobs. In addition, the ILO definition of unemployment does not capture those workers who involuntarily worked less than they could have during a given time period and who thus would have been willing to take on additional work. This situation is reflected in the ILO definition of “underemployment” according to the resolution of the Sixteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ILO 1998):

“Underemployment reflects underutilization of the productive capacity of the employed population, including those which arise from a deficient national or local economic system. It relates to an alternative employment situation in which persons are willing and available to engage (...)” (ILO 1998 (4)).

In conclusion, instead of unemployment, underemployment is the problem of most countries in Sub-Saharan African labour markets (Expert interview #03, 06.10.2008: 232ff.).<sup>129</sup> Because the recent Ghanaian Census does not show data for the category of the underemployed, data for 2006 from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS 2008) was used. This source indicates that underemployment is even more problematic in Cameroon than in Ghana. In Cameroon 70.6% of the workforce was underemployed (NIS 2011: 81) in contrast to 51.9% in Ghana (GSS 2008: 39). The problem of underemployment also affects the rapidly growing numbers of higher educated workforces: the university graduates. They either have to enter the informal sector or have to wait for

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<sup>129</sup> The responsible person at the International office of the NEF notes that in most Sub-Saharan African countries the unemployment rates are equally low. However, due to the fact that the subjectively felt unemployment is far higher, some officials insisted, for instance as in Côte d’Ivoire, that higher rates be published (18%). This figure could not be compared to the official unemployment rate of Cameroon, because it also comprised underemployment (Expert interview #03, 06.10.2008: 322-344).



formal employment opportunities and bridge this time unemployed, in temporary jobs, or continue their educational trajectory. In Cameroon in 2010 the unemployment rate for tertiary graduates was 12.9% (NIS 2011: 68) and they “queue-up” for the scarce jobs in public service, which offer more security (Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 35). According to the GSS, numbers for Ghanaian unemployed tertiary graduates are quite low at about 2.5% (GSS 2013: 263), but since the credit crunch in 2008 graduate unemployment has been on the rise again, as indicated by headlines in the Ghanaian news (cf. Boateng 2013, cf. GBN 2013).

Despite these problems, Ghana’s economy has managed to slightly shift employment from agriculture towards the industry and services sectors, which has at least reduced vulnerable employment a little, according to Sparreboom and Baah-Boateng (2011: 157). In Cameroon, the informal sector reached a dramatic level of 90.5% in 2010 (NIS 2011: 75), compared to 86.2% who work in Ghana’s informal economy (GSS 2013: 268). Informal economies dominate both countries’ labour markets. This also explains why wage employment is very low in Cameroon at 20.3% (NIS 2011: 47). This rate is higher in urban areas (41.4%) than in rural areas (9.4%), and in the cities of Douala (42.5%) and Yaoundé (50.9%). In fact, nearly one in four persons is employed in wage employment (NIS 2011: 46-47). Surprisingly, this figure of wage employment was even lower in Ghana at 18% in 2010 (GSS 2013: 266). In both countries, the lack of formal job opportunities leads people to work either for themselves, or to start working in unstable conditions (for Cameroon see Merceron et al. 2007: 13).

Moreover, both countries’ suffer from labour market segmentation, perceived as ethnic division of labour. In the case of Cameroon, this segmentation concerns for instance the Beti, who are said to be favoured in the public services because they belong to the president’s ethnic group. Up to now, members from these ethnic groups are perceived as having better access to political administration (cf. Konings 1996: 254, cf. Tagou 2006: 72, cf. International Crisis group 2010a: 16).<sup>130</sup> In contrast the Bamiléké<sup>131</sup> dominate the private sector and are traditionally labelled as ‘dynamic entrepreneurs’ (Hirsch 1987: 31, Eckert 1999: 121, Tagou

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<sup>130</sup> The beginning of a systematic ethnic labour division was already started during German colonialism. Colonial administration introduced passports bearing ethnic origin (Tagou 2006: 90). In this context, it is noteworthy that until today in public sector employment contracts bear the employee’s parents birth names. This practice probably allows identification of the ethnic origins of the employee (own research).

<sup>131</sup> The groups which are labelled as ‘the Bamiléké’ did not initially exist as a unique coherent group. Their ethnic coherence was constructed artificially by German colonisers, who used this term referring to the population living in numerous scattered chefferies in the Cameroon Grassland, today’s Western region. However, today this term has become a self-ascription, too (cf. Hirsch 1987: 28-30, cf. Tagou 2006: 82).

2006: 88).<sup>132</sup> As a consequence of their extremely well-organised social systems and their economic wealth in combination with the fact that the Bamiléké are demographically the strongest group in Cameroon and migrate, other groups often perceive them as threat. Therefore, the government has often been accused of systematically excluding Bamiléké from political power in Cameroon (cf. Tagou 2006: 89). The Anglophone minority in general perceive themselves as politically suppressed and neglected (cf. Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997, cf. Tagou 2006: 78-80). Their economic disadvantages also reflect in access to employment in so far as the Anglophone region lacks an economic infrastructure and hence offers only few employment opportunities in the formal sector. This apparently has negative consequences for those Anglophones who have studied in Germany and who return, as the findings of this study concerning regional disparities (cf. chapter 8.3) indicate.

In Ghana, ethnic segmentation of the labour market is often discussed in the context of alleged Ashanti-Ewe rivalry as well as concerning the perception that people from the northern regions are said to have less access to public service positions in the government. Ashanti are often said to traditionally dominate the private sector and are commonly described as successful traders and strong in the private sector. The Ewe are traditionally fishermen from the Volta Region who had to migrate to the south due to the decline of their fishing grounds. Both ethnic groups' participation in the public sector strongly depends on the ruling president's ethnic background:

“For example, the Akan dominance of the political system has largely persisted from Nkrumah's time to the present, notwithstanding the perception that the Rawlings-PNDC regime had ushered in a new period of Ewe predominance, especially in politics and in the public sector. And even if the claims of an emergent Ewe dominance were valid for the 1980s and 1990s, the pattern appears to have been reversed with the coming into power of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, which is largely perceived as a pro-Akan government” (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi 2004: 4).

Furthermore, ethnic segmentation is reflected in the manufacturing sector in employees' wages, claim Barr and Oduro (2000). Their research reveals that the group who earns most are the Akan; Ewe earn less and the groups who earn the least are those ethnic minorities from the northern regions (Barr and Oduro 2000: 10). However, ethnic background in Ghana is most important regarding recruitment in a rural local setting but more in terms of recruiting family members (Expert interview #08, 29.08.2009: 77).

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<sup>132</sup> For more information about the alleged entrepreneurial features of the Bamiléké cf. Warnier (1993), Eckert (1999) and Tagou (2006: 87ff.).

Concluding, the comparison shows that labour markets in both countries are highly informal, decent work is scarce and ethnic/language affiliation as well as social status plays an important role in gaining access to the labour market. Hence, well-paid and decent work in the formal sector seems even more difficult to obtain in either country. Against this backdrop, the insecurity of Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates in Germany who have to make a decision about their occupational future (described in chapter 5.2) can be understood better. Those who take the challenge and find work in their home country can expect more or less better working conditions, depending on the particular employment category, as the next section shows.

### **Employment in the Service Sector**

I now describe more in depth the graduates' work in these different subsectors. The description is based on a mix of sources: first, observations from the field, second the insights I gained working as a practitioner and third, the findings from interviews with individuals and experts. To complete the picture I have also added corresponding findings from literature.

After completing their studies and returning home, out of the 50 Cameroonian and Ghanaian interviewed graduates 47 (that is 94%) started work as employees, principally in locally based structures. Only three of the sample (6%), of whom all are from Cameroon, were successful in setting up their businesses immediately following their return. The three cases who started as entrepreneurs upon their return were all Cameroonians (cases #02, #23, #24). This does not mean that Ghanaian interviewees had less potential to be entrepreneurs but only that they did not start their companies immediately after they returned but waited some years and then very successfully started micro and medium-sized enterprises. As table 8 shows, all of the graduates found employment in the service sector and work as engineers, managers/officers, researchers or lecturers. In the services, they found work in a broad range of local structures: in private construction firms for medical equipment, in governmental agencies responsible for the implementation of policy decisions, in small non governmental organisations (NGOs) which are devoted to the protection of environment and the support of the local communities or in governmental or private universities.

Depending on the particular subsector (public service or private service), the interviewees found different employment conditions: working in the public services meant having a secure but moderate income but lacked promotion prospects, the opposite was the case working in the private services sector, which is more lucrative but risky. Employers in the first category are the higher education institutions (HEI) or state-owned research and development institutions (R&D) and the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). In the private services graduates found work at International Enterprises (IE) or International NGOs (INGO), at Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Table 8: Employing industries of interviewees.

Employing industry	Cameroonians		Ghanaians	
	[n=22]		[n=28]	
<i>Public Services</i>				
HEI/ R&D	6	27%	3	29%
Re-employment	0		5	
MDA	2	9%	5	29%
Re-employment	0		3	
<i>Private Services</i>				
IE, INGO	1	5%	1	6.5%
Re-employment	0		1	
MSE	5	23%	8	29%
Re-employment	0		0	
NGO	8	36%	2	6.5%
Re-employment	0		0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Own research.

Work in these five industries offers various degrees of labour security and working conditions and also depends on the country context. Whereas the distribution of graduates in the HEIs and R&D is similar (in Cameroon 27%, in Ghana 29%) a large difference was identified in the public service sector. In Cameroon 9% of the sample entered the labour market through work in the public services compared to 29% in Ghana. This might also have to do with the fact that quite a number of Ghanaians did not really make a new start in this field. Nine graduates from the Ghana group, about a quarter (32%), had re-entered their former workplaces, or at least assumed that they could do so. Five of these nine graduates were re-employed in the HEIs and R&D and three were re-employed in the MDAs. Only one person who was re-employed worked for a German international NGO before leaving Germany (Ghana case #21). It seems at first slightly surprising that only Ghanaians had work experience before leaving for Germany and thus had the opportunity to be re-employed, in comparison to the Cameroonian interviewees.

However, this difference also has to do with the fact that Ghanaians are already older when coming to Germany and thus have more insights into the local labour market than their Cameroonian counterparts, who start studying abroad straight

after finishing school (the age structure of the two groups has already been discussed in chapter 5.2, when describing the two groups' different migration profiles). This fact of having the opportunity to become re-employed is also a factor that could explain why Ghanaians tend to be more positive concerning their return plans than their Cameroonian counterparts (see discussion in chapter 5.2 regarding the "three options upon graduation").

In both country cases the government is still the biggest provider of formal employment. Starting in the public services seems to have been perceived differently by the interviewed graduates from both countries. In Ghana, public services seem to be seen as comparably the greatest source of income security, according to the interviewees. Especially women mentioned that working in the public service was most attractive because of the formalised employment relationship. It is legally defined in a contract, which describes duties and rights of the two parties, employers and employees. The contract concisely states working hours and days of holidays and the annual salary. In Cameroon and Ghana's labour markets, working under a contract is rather an exception than the norm. Even more important is the fact that contracts in the public services are permanent, which ensures long-term income.

Whereas the public services offer a high degree of security, at first sight income opportunities seem to be less attractive. Those respondents who started in the public services earn a moderate income. This, however, is only a basic salary. Usually the employees in the public services receive additional monetary and non-monetary allowances, such as company car, company housing and health insurance, sometimes even more. Working for instance as a lecturer in the higher education and research institutes also opens up opportunities for additional income-generating activities like consultancy projects for international donors (cf. Neubert 2008: 100) or joint ventures in the private economy. Despite these positive aspects, the interviewees also reported about the negative sides of working in the public services. Often, the salaries are paid with delay. This for instance was the case in Ghana, after the change of Government in 2008/2009.

In addition, the promotion process lacks transparency. Officially, in both countries the seniority principle regulates promotion. In reality, it often turns out to be a matter of having a good relationship with the superior. The better the relationship, the more likely and sooner is the promotion and hence the upgrade of salary. In contrast, if the relationship is not existent, promotion is at risk and the career easily stagnates instead of improving. Several of the Ghanaians who worked in MDAs after they returned reported such interpersonal problems (cf. Ghana cases #8, #11, #25, #28). These problems very often occur in the context of innovation: the authorities working in both countries' public sectors are said to be rather traditional, not to say unprogressive.

In consequence, returning graduates who introduce new ideas and stimulate progress are often regarded as a threat and superiors “block” (Expert #02, 11.07.2008: 82) the returning graduates’ careers (for more details on “being blocked” see chapter 7.5). Another challenge is the lack of adequate working equipment and access to research literature.<sup>133</sup> This challenge concerns first and foremost those graduates working in higher education and the research institutes – six persons in Cameroon (i.e. 27%) and eight in Ghana (29%). These graduates’ biggest problem seemed to be simply the bureaucratic regulations, such as not exceeding a particular age, or getting on the payroll of the particular university in time. Graduates from both countries reported that they sometimes started working as lecturers without even being officially on the payroll (cf. Cameroon case #05/ Ghana case #23).

Eight Cameroonians (36%) started working in small local NGOs, in contrast to only two Ghanaians (i.e. 7%). It might be that this employing structure was more attractive for the Cameroonian group because employment entry in it has been described as faster and less bureaucratic. In both countries, NGOs spread during the liberalisation processes and today hundreds exist (cf. Kenmogne 2002, cf. Tanjong 2008, cf. Tanga and Fonchingong 2009). Often, the graduates who had obtained their degree abroad, reported being overqualified for the work in a local NGO. Nevertheless, they started working in an NGO because their profiles in natural resource management matched the NGOs work in the field of environmental protection and resource management and community building. Moreover, the entry through a NGO was fast and graduates could acquire relevant work experience within time. For the employers’ part, the demand for personnel is always high, especially in the fields in which the returning graduates are experts: infrastructural development, environmental protection, capacity building and empowering the local civil society (cf. Tanjong 2008: 169).

Almost equal is the distribution of the sample concerning labour market entries into the small and medium-sized enterprises, which five Cameroonians (23%) and eight Ghanaians (29%) of the sample entered. Especially the Ghanaian hydro engineers started in local private sector organisations. They benefited from the fact that Ghana’s government made micro enterprises and NGOs a strategic partner in improving the country’s water and sanitation supply (Yirenya-Tawiah and Tweneboah 2012). However, starting in such comparably small workplaces is only possible if the graduates have participated in one of the reintegration programmes. Through these measures, they can top up their salaries, which are very low and definitely below the expectations of graduates who have studied abroad. Even

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<sup>133</sup> Martin (2006:126-130) offers a detailed description of a Ghanaian lecturer who has returned in the 1990s and finds a workplace, and gives an example of a Ghanaian entrepreneur. In both cases the frame conditions were that the workplace was woefully under-equipped and the business environment far from stable (lack of electricity and lack of investment capital).

more importantly, graduates who start in a local NGO and participate in a reintegration programme can apply for workplace equipment (cf. chapter 2.4 about the reintegration schemes). This equipment is extremely lacking in local NGOs and small private enterprises (cf. Borrows 1992: 191, cf. Kenmogne 2002, cf. Tanjong 2008: 170, cf. Tanga and Fonchingong 2009: 93-9). An aspect which makes it even less attractive to work with a local NGO or a micro enterprise is the lack of security. Officially, the employment relationships in such small workplaces are based on a written contract, but in reality these contracts are poorly implemented. Where problems arose between employee and superior, it was often the case that the contract agreements were not respected. In consequence, the graduates left their workplace. Moreover, positions in local NGOs and micro enterprises offer little to no career opportunities, because in these industries only one person runs the business. Hence, the graduates are not able to reach a leading position if they are not the owners themselves (Expert interview #14, 04.05.2010). Due to all these problematic aspects, working in an NGO or a micro enterprise can only be an intermediary solution, a 'stepping stone' to achieving work experience and getting a better overview of the job market.

Only three (6%) of graduates in the overall sample landed a job in large multinational private companies or in a German development organisation. However, especially positions in international organisations are valued very high, because career prospects and salaries are far more attractive. In general, employment in larger companies in the private sector is often "beyond the reach" (Berkhout et al. 2005: 18) of returning graduates. This is also the case for those graduates returning from Germany. One reason for this could be that international companies in Cameroon are primarily under French management (e.g. ORANGE, Nestlé and the oil company TOTAL, to name but a few). It can be assumed that these French companies favour candidates that have been socialised in a French environment and who have adequate French language skills (Expert interview #03, 06.10.2008) - which many of the returning graduates from Germany supposedly have lost during their long years of studying and living in Germany. The same applies for Ghana, where most international companies are under British or U.S. American management and thus it is likely that they do not necessarily prefer candidates equipped with German language skills but rather recruit staff that has English language and work experience. Also accessing those few international organisations which are under German management is often only possible from the mother country of the company/organisation and because these organisations prefer to recruit own nationals in higher managerial positions. Another aspect concerning international companies is that jobs in these structures require having qualified work experience of at least two to three, sometimes up to five years (Bih 2008: 5). This is difficult for the graduates who return immediately after their graduation, as well as for those who stay in Germany and work but do so in low level positions, which they cannot declare as qualified work experience.

Therefore, local NGOs are more likely to offer employment, because they offer less favourable conditions and thus are not as attractive and so receive fewer applications from graduates. In addition, these comparably small local employers can recruit more flexibly than bigger international companies can. The one person (Ghana case #21) who had been able to access a junior position in a German development organisation already had personal contacts prior to his studies in Germany and applied while he was still in Germany. Eventually, his personal contacts enabled him to get the job. The same applies for the one case from Cameroon (#15) who also got a position in a German development cooperation based on contacts and, due to her work performance, was able to maintain this position. Connections, as the next and final sub-chapter now shows, are the most important resource for job searchers in both countries.

### **Recruitment and job search**

The matching process between employers and job searchers in Cameroon and Ghana is difficult, not only due to scarce employment in the formal sector but also because the labour markets lack transparency (Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 37). Job searchers as well as employers only have limited information about their supply and demand. To obtain more information, they can use informal and formal channels. The latter comprises job search assistance provided by public employment agencies, which in the case of Cameroon is the National Employment Fund (NEF). The NEF was founded in 1990 on behalf of the Ministry of Employment and Professional Training (MINEFOP) in order to fight rising unemployment in the context of the country's economic crisis (cf. Ndongko 1993: 126ff., cf. Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 26). Today, the NEF is present with at least one agency in all 10 of the regions. NEF provides regular job search assistance, application training, and runs various programmes to combat youth unemployment. These programmes aim to improve the young job searchers employability, to stimulate employment opportunities in the agricultural sector and to encourage and assist young school-leavers starting their own projects (field notes 08.10.2008).

In Ghana, there are two governmental institutions formally responsible for the matching process: the Public Service Commission for recruitment into the Public Services and the Labour Commission. Under the latter, 62 autonomous Employment Centres have been set up under the Ghana Labour Act of 2003 by the Ministry of Manpower and Development. These Employment Centres are tasked with registering, informing and matching employers and job searchers in order to improve the matching process (cf. Heintz 2004: 21, cf. Berkhout et al. 2005: 75, cf. Twerefou et al. 2007: 68). In addition to these formal institutions, in both countries a number of smaller private fee-charging employment agencies exist (Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 26). Their services concentrate on providing personnel for particular industries, and train the personnel for secretarial and accountancy services or as domestic workers (Tsikata 2011).



Usually, the returning graduates are too high profile for these small recruiting agencies. In contrast, their profile is not high enough to be potential clients of the few international recruitment agencies, like KPMG and Ernst & Young (field notes business trip 2004, Berkhout et al. 2005: 78). These private recruitment companies only recruit against a high fee and hence only have large international companies as their customers who need personnel with an international profile. Unfortunately, most returning graduates lack this crucial international work experience and hence do not fall into the target group of these companies. Another way to obtain information about labour supply and demand through formal means is to search online.

In Cameroon the National Employment Fund, NEF, runs an internet job site free of charge at [www.fnecm.org](http://www.fnecm.org);<sup>134</sup> Cameroon based private job search assistance is provided by companies such as ADRH APAVE or Groupe Cible.<sup>135</sup> None of the Cameroonian interviewees mentioned these internet services and only one person (case #01) mentioned that he had acquainted himself with the different companies in existence by reading through a professional telephone directory, the Douala Zoom. Instead, most of the interviewed Ghanaians mentioned that at first they started job searching through the Internet. They went to internet portals such as [www.jobsinghana.com](http://www.jobsinghana.com) and [www.ghanaweb.com](http://www.ghanaweb.com) or the company Ahenfie Job Link (<http://www.ahenfiejoblink.com/>). Only those who still were in Germany made use of the Internet, because in Ghana only a minority had stable internet access and surfing for jobs in internet cafés was time consuming and expensive in comparison to the results. None of the interviewees in either country mentioned that they had accessed openings through radio or television. Even though in Cameroon the daily newspaper Cameroon Tribune regularly advertises openings, none of the interviewed Cameroonians said that they had replied to such an advert. Instead, Ghanaians reported that they had applied for jobs advertised in the Daily Graphic (Berkhout et al. 2005: 77, Expert #02, presentation 2008: 5). Some of them (Ghana cases #10, #18) were successful and had been invited for an interview.

However, in both countries it is more likely that job searchers access relevant information through their personal contacts. This is because especially small firms and organisations prefer to recruit through personal contacts:

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<sup>134</sup> Interestingly, NEF's homepage links clients to further internet job sites, which are services offering job matching for the European labour market (for instance Rekrute (<http://www.rekrute.com/>), Kelkjob (<http://www.kelkjob.com/>), Emploi Service (<http://www.emploi-services.fr>) and Cadre Emploi (<http://www.cadremploi.fr/>)).

<sup>135</sup> See their homepages <http://www.adrh-apave.com/>, <http://www.groupe-cible.com>.

“Thus for a majority of the enterprises, hiring is done mostly by recourse to informal means or what they adjudge to suit the situation at that particular time. In other words many of the enterprises will usually head-hunt or advertise by word of mouth, both of which involve using informal networks. According to one enterprise, even though this does not always yield the best candidate, it is cuts down significantly on the cost of recruitment” (YEN and IYF 2009: 20).

Instead of publishing and starting costly hiring services, small companies prefer to circulate information in informal personal channels. Therefore, to access jobs in the hidden labour market job searchers need the right personal contacts who can either offer employment directly or who can give them a referral to another employer.

In contemporary Cameroon such referrals are said to have become the dominant recruitment factor. An official at the NEF in Cameroon estimated that only 10% of employers recruit their personnel based on merit. The rest apply the strategy of “cooptation” which implies that they select their candidates primarily by referrals from loyal friends. It is, “connaître les hommes” (expert interview #18, 18.05.2010: 106-108). This patron-client system in recruitment, also known as “tuyau”, “pistonnage” (Barry 2011: 97), “parrainage”, or the “Godfather Syndrome” (Bongben 2008) has increased recruitment according to the ethnic affiliation of the patron (expert interview #18; 18.05.2010: 120) and it encourages people to join closed groups, sects and service clubs (cf. Geschiere 2010: 126-127). How much the use of personal contacts in the job search has increased is shown in the study of Tchatoka and Yogo (2011). They claim that whereas in 2001 about 35% of Cameroonian job searchers made use of personal contact during their job search, in 2008 it had climbed to 60% (Tchatoka and Yogo 2011: 8). Similar figures are revealed in the recent survey of the Cameroonian National Institute of Statistics for 2010: the majority of job searchers obtain work through their family contacts (42.9%), or directly contact a potential employer (18.9%), and only a minority finds work through paper adverts, such as the Cameroon Tribune, radio and published adverts posted on the streets or the public employment agency, the NEF (NIS 2011: 70-71). The proportion of roughly 19% who contact potential employers directly is a dramatic decline. Ten years earlier, in 2001, about 53.5% of the young job searchers were able to contact potential employers directly (Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 37).

This decline of labour market entries through direct contact between job searcher and employer shows how opaque the labour market has become and how difficult it is to gain formal employment in Cameroon. How cumbersome the job search in Cameroon really is also reflected in a statistic about job search duration. In Cameroon in 2001 the average young unemployed person searched for between 6 and 12 months (Njike Njikam et al. 2005: 35). This job search duration has grown significantly: in 2010 it took job searchers more than three years (38.5 months) to access

employment in the formal sector (NIS 2011: 70). In fact, this term is interpreted as the time that the unemployed are without access to a 'real' job but might be working in an informal activity. Overall, the average duration of unemployment has increased by five months compared to 2005. The state, through its job placement agency NEF, is supposed to ensure that the transition into productive employment is faster so that the duration of unemployment does not lead to social tensions (NIS 2011: 70).

This also includes measures to facilitate the professional reintegration of graduates returning from abroad. For them, the NEF even launched a special programme in 1995. The Programme d'Appui au Retour des Immigrés Camerounais (PARIC) has the objective of assisting with employment entry upon return. Since 1998 the PARIC has worked in cooperation with the International Department of the German Job Placement Agency (ZAV) and World University Service (WUS), and tailored its measures (seminars, providing information and offering job placement) to that group of returning graduates from Germany (cf. Mbassi 1989, Ngbwa Mbala 2011: 20ff.). Paradoxically, with growing numbers of Cameroonian graduates in Germany, German officials of the REP continuously downsized the cooperation. Nevertheless, the PARIC still operates and today works in close partnership with French migration organisations (cf. expert interview #19; 19.05.2010).

The main tasks of the PARIC are preparing the returning graduates and identifying vacancies for them at potential employers. The preparation of the graduates includes lowering their income expectations. During a regular week about 10-15 interested clients contact the PARIC personally and additionally inquiries are made via phone and e-mail. It is noteworthy that a large number of these clients are from Belgium and France (cf. expert interview #14; 04.05.2010).<sup>136</sup> Very often, migrants who left the country at very young age have never experienced the local labour market at all and hence their ideas about income opportunities are very unrealistic. They are surprised by the low salaries and often re-migrate, frustrated because they had not been prepared for the reality of the pay situation. In addition, because they have lived for a longer period in Germany some are likely to have lost their knowledge of formal French and therefore their application forms often lack the required style and form (cf. expert interviews #04, #14). For this reason, the PARIC carefully counsels applicants and corrects their applications before handing out information about potential employers. The acquisition of information on vacancies is another and most difficult part of the PARIC counsellor's work (cf. expert interview #04, 11.10.2008: 73).

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<sup>136</sup> Since 2010, the reintegration counsellors, who used to work for the autonomous associations established by the return migrants, have been moved to the German development cooperation organisation, GIZ.

In Ghana, informal channels to obtain information about vacancies and referrals are also very common (cf. Ofori and Aryeetey 2011: 49). However, in the past decade of economic growth the labour market has not been as hidden as is the case in Cameroon. This assumption is drawn from the fact that Ghanaians, in contrast to Cameroonians, mentioned using formal information channels, such as applying to adverts in the Daily Graphic or searching online. Unfortunately, for Ghana no official data about the average job search duration was available. The only figures given were provided by a survey from Mugabushaka et al. (2007), which refers to data collected in 1996 (cf. Mugabushaka et al. 2007: 41). At that time, according to the survey, the job search duration was about 10.4 months for the case of Ghanaian university graduates (Omeje 2007: 86). What is noteworthy about Ghanaian graduates' transitions is the fact that thanks to the National Service Scheme which starts immediately after graduation from the first degree, the job search start is a bit more protracted than in other countries (cf. Omeje 2007: 83). However, today, job searching in Ghana appears to have become more laborious for graduates and the time needed to secure formal employment significantly increased (cf. Nixon Yeboah 2011, cf. GBN 2013).

Apart from the lack of transparency in the labour market, graduates returning from Germany have an additional problem in their job search: they are in competition with fellow students who have graduated in France, Belgium, Great Britain and Northern America. Migrants returning from these countries have stronger lobbying power because they return in greater volume, hence are more visible in general and benefit from a reduced need to re-adjust in terms of language and bureaucratic regulations, since the Francophone bureaucracies are very similar (cf. Sieveking et al. 2008: 72). According to experiences of counsellors at FNE (expert interview #14, 04.05.2010), Cameroonians who have studied and worked in France and Belgium return in greater numbers not only because they have to, but also because they feel not well integrated and hope for better career opportunities in Cameroon. In this context, Sieveking et al. (2008: 72) refer to an interesting observation that Cameroonians who live in Germany assume their counterparts returning from France have better opportunities because of their networks. Cameroonians and Ghanaians returning from Germany obtain strategic positions within their home countries political establishment less often, because in Cameroon, the French still rule. The same applies for Ghanaians, where British, or more recently Northern American, lobby networks dominate the labour market. Therefore, despite the fact that German tertiary education enjoys a high reputation, especially concerning technical knowledge (expert interviews #03; 06.10.2008: 473-476; #12. 22.09.2009: 83-93), returning graduates from Germany lack important lobby networks.

## Graduate's networks in the home countries

In order to strengthen these networks and to increase their reputation in their home countries, but also to maintain contact to their former host country Germany, Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates of German universities associate with various alumni networks and/or clubs, which are either self-organised or developed by former scholarship donor organisations.<sup>137</sup> Estimates suggest that 8,000 graduates who returned from Germany currently live in Cameroon, of which several hundred are active and effectively organised (Nkeng Peh 2013: 3). They are members of the current 13 alumni organisations listed in table 9, below.

Table 9: Alumni associations in Cameroon. *Sources*: seminar report Nkeng Peh (2013), KBK Newsletter (KBK 2013a), seminar report GIZ (2012), homepage KBK/ the associations (KBK 2013b), and e-mail contact KBK (06.06.2013).

No.	Title	Name	Target group	Place	Members	Exists
1	KBK <sup>138</sup>	Coordination office Cameroon	Umbrella organisation	Yaoundé/ regional	~620 + 7 associations	2007 today
2	CAA <sup>139</sup>	Club des Anciens d'Allemagne	Business persons	Douala	150	2001 today
3	ODCAM	Organisation pour le développement communautaire et l'assainissement du milieu	Environment/ agriculture	Maroua	50	2000 today
4	VDS	Verein Deutscher Sprache	Linguists	Yaoundé	84	2000 today

<sup>137</sup> Recently, the German government increased funds for alumni club activities in order to yield valuable contacts to potential partners in economy and development cooperation. One example is the site "Alumniportal Deutschland" ([www.alumniportal-deutschland.org](http://www.alumniportal-deutschland.org)), launched in 2008 by a consortium consisting of GIZ, the scholarship foundation AvH, CIM, DAAD and the Goethe-Institute. The platform is funded by the German BMZ. Much earlier, student support organisations like WUS promoted the idea that so called 'freemovers' are an important but often neglected group and thus that follow-up measures (Nachkontakt) should be coordinated between all scholarship-providing organisations (cf. Wichelmann 1972, cf. Hampel 2006).

<sup>138</sup> Homepage: [www.kbk-cameroon.net](http://www.kbk-cameroon.net).

<sup>139</sup> Homepages: [www.caa-cam.org](http://www.caa-cam.org), [www.facebook.com/pages/Club-des-Amis-dAllemagne-CAA-Douala-Cameroun](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Club-des-Amis-dAllemagne-CAA-Douala-Cameroun).

5	ACAB-GIZ (ACAB-DSE)	Association des Anciens Boursiers de la GIZ/ DSE	Alumni of DSE	Yaoundé	150	2001 today
6	ACK	Alumni Club Kamerun	Alumni of Freiburg	Yaoundé	35	2003 today
7	AGECARH	Association Germano—Camerounaise pour la recherche historique	Historians	Yaoundé	12	2003 today
8	DKS	Deutsch-Kamerunischer Freundschaftsverband	Linguists	Yaoundé	~100	2004 today
9	AVH <sup>140</sup>	Alexander von Humboldt Association Cameroon	Alumni of AVH	Yaoundé	35	2008 today
10	ABC-DAAD	Association des anciens boursiers camerounais de la DAAD	Alumni of DAAD	Dschang	~1,000 (passive)	2009 today
11	GIC-ALUMNI-EST	Groupe d'initiative Commune des Éducateurs Alumni de l' EST	Linguists	Bertoua	15	2010 today
12	AAAC	Amicale des anciens d'Allemagne dans la Région du centre	Tontine Club	Yaoundé	41	2010 today
13	FGC	Forum Germano Camerounais	Medical experts	Douala	15	2013 today

The overview shows that most associations were established at the turn of the millennium and that they are based in the two cities, Douala and Yaoundé. Mostly,

<sup>140</sup> The Alumni Club of the Humboldt Foundation fits as academic support for post-docs and professors in so far into this list, as these scholars also use their networks as information channels for job or project opportunities in academia, as the activities on their homepage shows: [www.avh-cameroon.org/avh/](http://www.avh-cameroon.org/avh/).

they are smaller networks, comprising under 50 members. Only few larger networks exist, with more than 100 members, which have a more stable financial funding. Most of the associations have a particular goal, ranging from regional development, (ODCAM) to economic partnership projects, (CAA) to a network which has been established only recently (FGC) and which promotes medical health care and pharmaceutical services.

Since 2007 an umbrella organisation, the Coordination office (Koordinationsbuero Kamerun, KBK) has been established by active returnees (cf. Egbe 2010).<sup>141</sup> The KBK is based in Yaoundé but works as a decentralised network and encourages the activities of returned graduates living in the regions far from the urban centres. It provides its members (currently about 620 persons and seven associations) a platform for their activities. The KBK organises on their behalf seminars with specific topics. One example was the ANSOLE DAYS, a two-day symposium about renewable energy and tackling the question of how to apply these techniques in an African context during which more than 200 persons from Cameroon as well as other African countries came, who had studied in Germany (cf. DAAD 2012: 2). In consequence, the activities of the various networks are more visible than before on the internet platform and hence have a greater public attention for potential German donor organisations, which obviously encourages more return migrants living in the periphery, outside the large cities of Yaoundé and Douala, to actively engage in decentralised development activities.

In Ghana, alumni organisations have a long tradition, too. They can be traced back to the mid 1990s. In the context of return migration from Germany, the Ghanaian German Alumni Network (GGAN) (aka Rueckkehrerbuero (RKB)) has received much attention as an important cornerstone for returning graduates from various generations (Berkhout et al. 2005: 95, Jach 2005: 289, Martin 2005: 238ff., Arthur 2008: 22, Olivier 2011: 332; Bochmann and Daroussis 2011: 96). The RKB was founded in 1994 in Kumasi and was formerly located on the campus of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). The founders of the Rueckkehrer Office, lecturers at KNUST, were all graduates from Germany who had returned in the mid 1990s. They worked voluntarily as advisors because they felt obliged to prepare future generations of returning Ghanaians. The office was set up with the organisational support of the foreign student association of the workgroup of Afro-Asian Academics in Göttingen (Arbeitskreis Afro-Asiatischer

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<sup>141</sup> An evaluation in 2005 on behalf of the BMZ encouraged the various organisations to build a strong umbrella network in order to strengthen their synergies (BMZ 2005: 56). This official recommendation then became the basis to formalise the engagement of already active and well-reputed Cameroonian returnees. They had repeatedly reported to members of WUS' German committee on the occasion of working visits that they wished to start such an umbrella network but simply lacked basic funding to build a stable infrastructure.

Akademikerinnen und Akademiker, AAAAA). The RKB soon became the main starting point for returning graduates. The elder generation of returned graduates offered first-hand information about employment opportunities and a counsellor, who worked for the association and was paid by the reintegration programme REP, acquired open positions from various employers for the freshly arriving return migrants. The RG also provided seminars and information material, such as a reintegration handbook, included contact addresses to official organisations in Ghana as well as contacts to returned graduates of former generations (AAAAA and RKB 1999, 2003).

The German BMZ sponsored the financial set up of the office. Finally, to receive more public attention by non-German speaking Ghanaians the RKB was renamed “Ghanaian-German Alumni Network (GGAN)” in 2008 (Boger 2010: 121-122).<sup>142</sup> In addition, the association broadened the focus of their annual and regional meetings in order to increase the returned graduates’ potential of contributing to development projects and to encourage the members of the associations to increase their networking activities. An important aim was also to emphasise the independence from German donor organisations, as the former president of the association made clear in his speech to the graduates: “*We must learn to work independently – then we can get support from outside. (...) When they come [German institutions], they don’t come with time – but we [the Verein] are here for good, so let us work together*” (WUS internal mission report Ghana 2007: 17).

Despite these efforts, the activities of the GGAN declined, as the overview in table 10 shows, and finally stagnated. In October 2010 the GGAN made its last official appearance in the local media in the context of a one-day seminar on agricultural development in Kumasi (Dogbevi 2010).

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<sup>142</sup> Since 2010 the initial concept that the counsellor works embedded within the migrant self-help organisation has changed. Today, the counsellor works independently as a single agent in the structure of the German International Development organisation (GIZ). Since then, no one has been in charge to do the administration and organisation of networking activities of the GGAN. They therefore have declined and currently are on hold. In consequence, the potential networking resources containing contacts to more than about 350 registered members are underutilized.



Table 10: Alumni associations in Ghana.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Exists</b>
1	GGAN <sup>143</sup>	Ghanaian German Alumni Network (until 2008 Rückkehrerverein)	Highly skilled returnees	Accra	> 400	1994-2011
2	GGEA <sup>144</sup>	Ghanaian German Economic Association	Business people	Accra	—	1994-1998
3	GHAGES	Ghana-German Society	Umbrella association of CDG, GGCS, GATG and AGETRAGG	—	—	—
4	CDG	Carl-Duisberg Society	Scholarship alumni	Accra	—	—
5	GGCS	German Ghanaian Cultural Society	Cultural exchange	Kumasi	—	—
6	GATGE	Ghana Association of Teachers of German	Linguists	Accra	—	—
7	AGETRAGG	Association of German Trained Ghanaian Graduates	Highly skilled returnees	—	~100	1989-1994

Sources: Own research and Martin 2005: 238-240.

What differs from the case of the alumni groups in Cameroon is the fact that the workplace of the official reintegration counsellor was shifted due to a change in policy structure of the REP. The counsellor, who had worked embedded in the alumni network structure since 2010, was employed by the German Organisation of Development Cooperation, GIZ (then known as GTZ). This step, however, finally weakened the position of the alumni network among the returning graduate

<sup>143</sup> Homepage: [www.ggan.org](http://www.ggan.org) (no longer in existence).

<sup>144</sup> Homepage: [www.ggea.net](http://www.ggea.net).

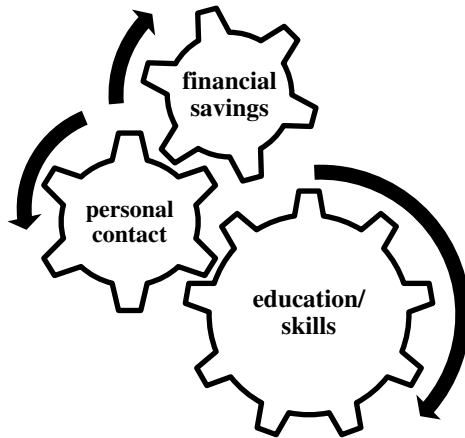
community even more. In consequence, the numbers of active voluntary participants declined over the years and finally, little more than 40 participants still attended the seminars and information events. During the meetings it became quite clear that the demand for networking activities did exist: people were happy to have met each other again after a while and to exchange their experiences. In one case, people at the same university who knew each other as colleagues did not even know that the others had studied in Germany (field notes 20.06.2008). However, after the official position of the Returning Expert's advisor had been shifted away from the GGAN, efforts of the active members to keep ownership of the alumni association in Ghanaian hands remained unsuccessful. The numbers of active participants declined and more and more members complained that they could no longer attend the meetings due to high time pressure from their jobs, excessive traffic and the high cost of fuel (field notes 29.06.2008).

Concluding, these self-organised alumni associations contribute to linking up the returnees with each other in the two countries and thus they form the basis for information flows between the returnees. Hence, these organisations are one important source for personal contacts, which play an important role in the job search after returning. However, as the next two chapters reveal by presenting the empirical findings, personal contacts are helpful in the job search only by combining them with further resources. This was the same for the interviewed graduates in both countries.

## 6. Patterns of labour market entry

This chapter and the following present the findings from the analysed problem-centred interviews with the 50 ‘returnee’ graduates and reconstructs their labour market entries. The analyses in both chapters deal with the graduates resources which they accumulated abroad and activate during their double transition processes of return migration and professional reintegration. The chapter refers to the concepts and models which were presented earlier and borrows from the respective terminology. The ability to activate these various resources ultimately defines the individual migrant’s preparation as outlined in Cassarino’s (2004) model of resource mobilisation (cf. chapter 2.3). Furthermore, the migrant’s ability to translate their resources into accessing jobs resembles Bourdieu’s (1986) concept for explaining a person’s status in society, by using different “forms of capital” (cf. chapter 3.2). In both models, a person’s resources are regarded as crucial to managing the complexity of transitions. Both models pinpoint as resources educational achievements, financial savings / access to monetary sources, and personal contacts.

In this chapter I will refer primarily to the interplay between these various resources and how different combinations of these resources lead to particular professional reintegration patterns. The analysis of the interviews shows that the outcome of return migration and professional reintegration differs considerably across the two countries, Cameroon and Ghana. There are marked cross-national differences in terms of the way in which the graduates activate their resources in order to secure their sources of income. The particular combination of these resources is important and shapes the pattern. This is because it is not one isolated resource which guarantees success upon return. Even the best and quickest education is of no use if graduates do not know where they can apply. They need information about vacancies – which is communicated through their personal contacts. In addition, they need financial savings to bridge the first time of job search unemployment at home. It can be seen that it is rather the combinations of resources which shape the returning migrants double transition as in a cogwheel, (see figure 7). Four different patterns reflect how returned graduates activate their resources. These patterns are labelled ‘achieving’, ‘arranging’, ‘being sponsored’, and ‘becoming independent’. In each pattern, the graduates prepare their return to different degrees and a particular resource is the driving resource in the process of getting a job.



Source: Own compilation

Figure 7: Scheme of resource activation

Table 11 below systemises the four patterns and indicates in which way the various resources were activated. Moreover, the dominant resources that shape the patterns have been highlighted. The table also shows how job search duration and job satisfaction correlate with the patterns. The latter, job satisfaction, is interpreted from the salary and the termination of the employment. This information stems from the interviews and the employment contracts.

Table 11: Patterns of labour market entries and activated resources.

<b>Resource/ Pattern<sup>145</sup></b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Finances</b>	<b>Search duration</b>	<b>Satisfac- tion</b>
<b>Achieving</b>	matching expertise	identifying vacancy	bridging job search duration	long (on average 7.4 months)	high + permanent
<b>Arranging</b>	regular + no work experience	offering employ- ment	incentive (reintegra- tion assis- tance)	short (on aver- age 3 months)	low + temporary
<b>Being sponsored</b>	overquali- fied/ mis- matching	increasing reputation (habitus/ assis- tance)	family reputa- tion/ in- centive reintegra- tion assis- tance	very short (on aver- age 2 months)	high + perma- nent/  low + temporary
<b>Becoming independ- ent</b>	entrepre- neur spirit + practical skill	reliable business networks	capital invest- ment	very long (on aver- age 2.3 years)	high risk, high satis- faction

Source: Own research.

Section 6.1 of this chapter discusses the first pattern, ‘achieving’ as a driving resource. Here, it is the graduate’s educational profile, their ‘matching expertise’, their degrees and their skills – in brief, their “institutional cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1986: 50) that helps them secure their first significant employment. The personal contact in this pattern takes over the task of identifying a vacancy. The graduate’s financial resources in this pattern are used to bridge the job search duration, which is very long in this pattern, about seven months.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, the

<sup>145</sup> The patterns highlighted in grey were found to be dominant in Ghana, whereas those highlighted in black appeared dominant in Cameroon.

<sup>146</sup> This finding is consistent with Setrana and Tonah’s analysis about returning graduates to Ghana. They claimed that those returnees who searched for wage-employment had the longest job search period and that they had to bridge this time with their personal funding or through their families’ sponsorship (2013: 1963ff)

outcome of this entry pattern seems to be quite satisfactory: most jobs secured through this pattern are permanent and well paid.

This is in contrast to the next pattern, described in chapter 6.2, 'arranging'. In this pattern, the graduates do not solely rely on their educational profile because they fear that their lack of work experience will extend their job search duration. Because of this fear, graduates among this type mostly prepare their professional reintegration before leaving Germany. They use their personal contacts as resources that translate into "social capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 51) if the person can offer direct employment. Most of the graduate's contacts, however, are not large employers but only run micro companies or local NGOs and thus they cannot offer adequate payment or a well-equipped infrastructure. Therefore, people falling under the 'arranging' pattern use reintegration assistance, especially the salary top-up as a financial resource to be able to take on these small jobs. In addition, they utilise the equipment component in the reintegration schemes as an incentive for employers who they do not know personally, but to whom they have been referred to through friends. The 'arranger's' job search duration is quite short: on average three months. In contrast to the achieving pattern, their job satisfaction is not as high: the jobs are temporary and are not well paid.

Those who have a mismatching educational profile or are even overqualified and thus realise that they are not well prepared prior to their return follow another pattern, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 6.3. They seek to gain reputation by 'being sponsored'. Again, the resource of the personal contact is relevant, but this time social capital does not emerge from the direct contact, rather it is lent. The graduates in this pattern borrow reputation, either from their families or from professional recruiters who put in a word for them, and use reintegration assistance as an incentive to increase the job searcher's attractiveness. As will be shown, some job searchers who fall under this pattern do not even have to use a personal contact directly. They impress potential employers by appearing in a certain way that demonstrates their social belonging. Their appearance builds trust in their loyalty and their productivity because it expresses that they are from established upper middle-class families. This is what Bourdieu refers to as "habitus" (1986: 56). In these cases the job searchers convey an aura of status, prestige and style – they bear what Bourdieu calls "symbolic capital" (1986: 56). Their job search is actually the fastest: the sponsored graduates looked for employment on average for two months. Their jobs cannot be assigned uniquely: most are quite rewarding but not all jobs turned out to be permanent.

In the fourth and final pattern, the topic of sub-chapter 6.4, the return migrants have to make the most extensive preparations. They 'become independent'. For this purpose they need to have good working experience, reliable personal contacts to business networks and sufficient financial savings that allow them to invest. They must also have 'knowledge of the system' in their home country, which in Bourdieu's concept equates to "embodied cultural capital" (1986: 48).

This embodied cultural capital has been diminished during the long time being abroad and thus has to be reactivated, which the returnees do by commuting between host and home country for at least one to two years. Thus, the reintegration phase in this pattern is the longest. It also seems that the outcome of this pattern's resource activation is most rewarding but most risky at the same time.

Finally, it should be noted that all graduates in both countries follow these patterns – but with different degrees of success. This is discussed in chapter 6.5. The comparison between Cameroon and Ghana suggests that more Ghanaians 'achieved' and 'arranged' their employment entry, whereas clearly the Cameroonian graduates were more often 'sponsored' and the overview also shows that only Cameroonian graduates were able to accumulate enough of all resources to 'become independent' entrepreneurs upon their professional return. The patterns are now discussed in detail.

## 6.1 Achieving

The first reintegration pattern encompasses those cases in which the graduates followed a 'traditional' achievement path: they went abroad to study and back home found work because of the professional profile they had acquired in Germany. Thus, the driving element among their activated resources was their professional profile. However, crucial here is that jobs first have to be identified and potential employers made aware of the achievement potential of the graduates who apply. The graduates do this in several ways. They apply unsolicited and take their chances of getting the opportunity for a job interview. They demonstrate when and however they can that they are capable of applying sophisticated techniques, have computer and software skills as well as working ethics. Sometimes they simply have the right degree which is in demand in the employing structure. In other words, in this pattern their educational migration and their academic qualifications translate into "institutionalised cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 50).

The case of Mr. O., (case #01) a Cameroonian mechanical engineer who demonstrates his practical skills to the potential employer, illustrates how lengthy the process of 'achieving' can be. O. studies mechanical engineering in a German polytechnic university. In his final year he rounds off his profile by completing two internships in German medium-sized companies. There he works on the production line, which helps him to see how he can apply what he has learned in theory, "*what you actually do in a workshop*" (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 69-70)<sup>147</sup>. After completing his studies and these internships but before he returns to Camer-

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<sup>147</sup> German original: "was man eigentlich in einer Werkstatt tut" (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 69-70).

oon, he visits Cameroon. During this intermediary visit he completes two additional internships, sponsored by the student support programme STUBE (cf. chapter 2.4). This first internship is organised by his uncle, who is a retired engineer and knows all the Cameroonian companies in Mr. O's working field. The internship lasts seven months, during which he does not receive any payment. He lives at his parents and has to rely on his few financial savings from Germany. After this first internship O. then adds another six months at another company which is specialised in chemical production for medical purposes. This time he already has enough practical skills to immediately be made responsible for opening a new production line for hospital beds and hospital equipment in general. When suddenly a large-scale contract comes in, O. has his chance to perform successfully:

“I had my chance when we got a big, big order. They had a lot of chairs and tables to produce. I had two months for the production. I said to myself, ok, it is good and the company eventually said that the probation time was successful and we could work together” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 154-159).<sup>148</sup>

O. performs well on this new production line, the company wins the follow-up order and O. eventually receives the offer of a permanent employment contract. Only then, when he is sure that he will be able to sustain his living in Cameroon through his work, does he return to Germany and prepare for his final return to Cameroon. Altogether, securing his first job takes him almost three years after his graduation, a long time to be without a stable financial income. Today, he still works in the medium-sized company that he started with and, after two years, received a modest promotion. In parallel to his main bread-winning job he works on establishing his own workshop.

Another way to demonstrate one's achievement potential is by presenting one's final thesis, especially if it deals with a topic related to the local context. A number of Ghanaian interviewees mentioned that they had applied this strategy when they started their job search. Among them is Mr. D. (Ghana case #04), who describes himself in a homepage profile as setting “*challenging goals for myself*” and doing “*whatever it takes to achieve them (...) My symbol is the colour of professionalism and achievement*” (workplace homepage, retrieved 09.01.2011). In Germany, he has studied international horticulture for about three years. Upon his return, he actively searches for employment. He sends a number of unsolicited applications, personally hands in his CV to research institutions, replies to newspaper adverts,

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<sup>148</sup> German original: “Ich hatte meine Chance als wir eine große, große Bestellung bekommen haben. Man musste sehr viele Liegen und Tische produzieren und zwei Monate hatte ich für die Produktion. Ich hab mir gesagt, o.k., es ist gut und die Firma hat gesagt, die Probephase war gut und wir können zusammenarbeiten” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 154-159).



and refreshes the contacts he has maintained with professionals in German institutions in order to find out if his profile is in demand. He attaches his thesis to the application documents. It is an empirical work in the field of agricultural exportation in Ghana and receives a lot of attention:

“So I initially wrote to Dr. L. before coming to Ghana, if there is any job offer around my field like agric economics I will be pleased if you consider me. Then L. said ‘Congratulations, you finished your work!’ and I sent a copy of my thesis work by mail to him and he is like: ‘There is this lady’. She was also working with the GTZ and she also requested a copy of my thesis and said ‘Oh, it’s a good work’” (Ghana interview #04; 27.06.2008: 196-202).

Mr. D. uses the copy of his thesis as a demonstration of his enhanced knowledge. The empirical work bases on data, mainly expert interviews, conducted during a research visit in Ghana.<sup>149</sup> In this context, D. has contacted a number of experts in agricultural research institutions and development organisations, like the aforementioned GIZ. Now that he has finished his studies and is searching for a job, he uses his thesis to gain entry to those institutions where he has previously conducted the interviews:

“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!’ . (...) I received a temporary appointment letter and she called me to come for it for three months to start working (...)” (Ghana interview #04; 27.06.2008: 223-232).

Whereas in both situations D’s thesis is highly rated (“*it’s a good work*”; “*this is almost like a PhD thesis*”), it is only at the second attempt that D. is able to translate his resource, his enhanced knowledge, into capital. The thesis not only yields him important contacts but more importantly it gets him to the crucial level of obtaining an invitation for a job interview. Six months after “*this woman*” gives him a chance and employs him temporarily, he is invited for an official interview, where the board of the research institute questions him on his skills. He persuades the board by appearing confident and competent: “*like I defended some of my issues with words*” (GH-#04: 255-256). He finally gets a permanent contract as a research staff member in the institute.

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<sup>149</sup> Mr. D. has also benefited from the student support scheme of STUBE and received a subsidy for his research visit in Ghana.

In another case, the story of Mr. M. (Ghana case #02), the thesis is particularly tailored for the institute in which M. wants to be re-employed, a governmental agency. He enrolls in Germany for a course in Environmental Resource Management and specialises in environmental taxation schemes. He chooses this niche because previously he has worked for the governmental agency “*and then when I had got the job for about three years I realised that Ghana, Ghana has nothing or did not have anything to do with environmental taxation so that is why I enrolled in Germany*” (Ghana interview #02; 17.09.2009: 244). The knowledge he accumulates in Germany turns out to become the right capital in the job search. Upon his return, he directly reports to his former employer and proudly presents his thesis:

“So he was the overall boss of the unit so I came to see him first [after the return]: ‘This is what I have been doing. This is my master’s thesis, these are the plans and all that I have so I really want to go back to [this agency] but particular to this unit’. And then he said: ‘Oh that is nice!’ So he said I should leave my thesis, my documents with him for about a day or two. And then he studied them and then he gave me a call and said ‘Wow, Mr. M you have so many brilliant ideas, we will need you in this department!’” (Ghana interview #02; 17.09.2009: 250-258).

What is important to note in this case is that M’s thesis brings him into the favourable position of being re-employed and being able to insist on being placed in a particular unit. He knows “*if they had reinstated me and had given me another job I would not have job satisfaction*” (GH-#02: 274). Nevertheless, it takes him a good six months to get back on the payroll of the agency. During this time he already has to work as a regular employee although he does not receive a salary yet. Thus, he has to bridge this time with the modest savings he was able to accumulate in Germany.

Similarly, Mr. R. from Ghana (case #16), who is a hydro engineer, achieves his first significant employment upon his return thanks to his particular knowledge in borehole drilling, which also is the subject of his thesis. Upon his return he writes applications, contacts friends and finally gets a tip to apply to a state agency where he eventually is invited for an interview. R. gets the chance because his profile matches the demand exactly:

“That is exactly what I did in my master’s level in Germany. I mean my research was on what the agency has been doing. The aspect is drilling. And I did a very good work. So I find I will be very useful for the agency because this is a field I love so much. So I am sure when the director saw my master’s thesis, the work I did I think that is what prompted him to call me quickly for the interview” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 394-400).

R. is correct in assuming that his profile exactly matches the demand of the agency. When he hands in a hard copy of his thesis during the interview it finally catches the full attention of his future employer:

“I took my research [thesis] along and gave it to the director and the rest of the interview he was concentrating on the report. He was flipping through it because I used software to do my analysis. That was so beautiful that in fact he spent the rest of the time flipping through it. He fell so in love with the whole work. (...) Just after the interview, the director, after flipping through a long time, he said after the interview, I should give him a copy of my project because I had a softcopy of my work in the report I should give him. (...) And so just after the interview the director told me ‘Look, come for your appointment letter the next day’ so I just walked out confident that I have been employed” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 418-437).

Finally, R’s experience in analysing data with special software results in him gaining his first employment after only three months.

Another way of ‘achieving’ employment is through the level of the degree itself. This was more often the case with the Cameroonian job searchers because they were the group who had most PhD degree holders. Dr. N. from Cameroon (case #07) is one of them. She has obtained a diploma in molecular physics in Germany and continued with a doctorate, knowing that the PhD degree makes professional integration easier and a bit faster, because PhD degree holders are highly sought-after in the tertiary education sector:

“When you do not have a PhD, you reintegration is not easy. You have to look for work even in private and it is not easy. I saw my husband search a job and it made him suffer. So it's not easy. When you cannot go into teaching because we found that we need teachers in Cameroon at present. (...) But for teaching, as I say, you can leave Germany and come to teach that day because we need teachers. However it should be that you have a doctorate. Do not stop at Diplom-Physiker [physician], Diplom-Mathematiker [mathematic]. Nein [No], it takes the thesis to go because without that they do not include you in the higher education. At the higher education, they only take people who have a doctorate or have you ever taught elsewhere with

your doctorate, yes, we take you. And there are no problems” (Cameroon interview # 07, 04.10.2008: 209-227).<sup>150</sup>

N. considers her own professional reintegration into the Cameroonian labour market easier because she is a PhD holder. While she is still in Germany, she asks her brother to submit her application to several state universities. She receives an invitation for an interview and attends this interview during a holiday visit to Cameroon. Only when she is assured of getting the position does she eventually return. This case shows that despite the high demand, which in the case of Dr. N. matches her professional profile, the return decision is characterised by great uncertainty. Nevertheless, a PhD degree seems to be a very strong resource offering most opportunities in the local labour market. Dr. L. (Cameroon case #05) supports this assumption:

“(…) most of the former German [trained] students, who had PhD’s, they had good chances to find a job. Because here in our country, the job market at the level of university, with university lecturers is easier. You may come and wait and be recruited because the recruitment is almost every two years. And within the two years, we teach as part time while waiting” (Cameroon interview #05; 02.10.2008: 185-190).

What Dr. L. stresses in this quote is that recruitment in higher education which belongs to the public services does not take place continuously but only, “*almost every two years*”. This is important to note and quite in contrast to the cases of those entering the private sector companies, who can recruit at any time in the year. Thus, graduates who intend to start as lecturers in higher education institutes have to be cautious. They need financial resources in order to bridge this waiting time because they have a lower income as part time lecturers, or do as Dr. L. suggests, “*come and wait and (...) teach as part time while waiting*”. Nevertheless, the PhD degree itself seems to be a sure way of gaining access to secure and permanent

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<sup>150</sup> French original: “Quand tu n’as pas le doctorat, t’intégrer n’est pas facile. Tu dois chercher le travail même en privé et ce n’est pas facile. Moi j’ai vu mon mari chercher le travail et on te malmène même. Donc ce n’est pas facile. Quand tu ne peux pas aller dans l’enseignement parce qu’on a trouvé qu’on a besoin d’enseignants au Cameroun jusqu’à présent. (...) Mais pour l’enseignement, comme je dis, tu peux quitter l’Allemagne et arriver ce jour là à enseigner parce qu’on a besoin d’enseignants. Cependant il faut que tu aies le doctorat. Il ne faut pas s’arrêter à Diplom-Physiker, Diplom-Mathematiker. Nein, il faut aller jusqu’à la thèse parce que sans ça on ne t’intègre pas dans l’enseignement supérieur. A l’enseignement supérieur, on ne prend que les gens qui ont le doctorat ou bien que tu as déjà enseigné ailleurs avec ton doctorat, oui, on te prends. Et il n’y a pas de problèmes” (Cameroon interview #07; 04.10.2008: 209-227).

employment in Cameroon, especially in the newer institutions in the Anglophone region, where lecturers with a higher qualification are still rare.<sup>151</sup>

Whereas these last cases were examples in which the job search seemed to run relatively smoothly if job searchers only had the right expertise or knew how to perform successfully, the next case, of Mrs. Q. from Ghana (case #28), is different. It shows that securing a workplace can be cumbersome and time consuming, despite having the right professional profile:

“I came back and looking for work was hell. (...) if it is your own individual effort to get you out, you come you have to start all over again looking for work. And I don’t now remember the number of letter I wrote. Application letters for employment. A lot. Most of them, they did not respond. I started going from office to office. (...) The letters didn’t work. The going round didn’t work. I went to my former workplace they said ‘No’, they can’t take me. They were tossing me so I left. So I had to start speaking to people; talking to people. And then this lady, who works with the Ghana Public Service. She knows some big people in the Ghana Public Service. So she directed me. I told her about my project, what I wrote on - health insurance. She said oh, health insurance is even a new thing they are doing in Ghana and Ghana Health Service is into it now. I know somebody who is spearheading health insurance in Ghana in the Ghana health service. So she directed me to that person. I went to the person. He took my thesis and read it. She said ok, now we cannot guarantee you work but temporary we can put you somewhere to work. So I was taken on temporarily. During that time, I was not given anything” (Ghana interview #28; 25.09.2009: 52-80).

The case of Q. clearly shows structural weaknesses in the labour market, which makes it difficult to match the right skills with the demand which is obviously there. Even though Q. has obtained very useful knowledge in Germany in a specific field, in this case “*health insurance*”, which at that time has just become a new project and thus highly demanded in Ghana, this resource only translates into capital through the interplay with her social resources. Without “*this lady who works with the Ghana Public Service*” and who “*knows some big people*” Q. would not have been able to meet the right responsible persons. Because the woman “*directed*” her, she meets “*that person*” who sees the value in her expertise, which she expresses through her thesis again. After a good 16 months, Q. is first employed on a temporary basis, and later on she is given a permanent position. Her case shows how the patterns of labour market entry actually function and how the individual

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<sup>151</sup> For more information read Schamp and Zajontz’ (2008) essay about the new universities in Anglophone Cameroon.

resources interact. Her professional profile could only capitalise because it was ‘pushed’ by the wheel of her personal contacts, which seem to play a multiple role. They can provide information on vacancies and give a reference in order to organise a job interview based on more or less open nepotism. This aspect, however, will be discussed in the next pattern.

Finally, the presented cases show that ‘achieving’ employment requires making use of one’s enhanced knowledge, which has to match the local demand. The examples also show that the longer the graduates invest in their education – by obtaining practical work experience or a PhD degree, the better their chances are of accessing the labour market based on the resource of their education.

This is also reflected in the duration of their stay abroad. On average, achievers spend almost five years in Germany. It is also interesting that those who achieve their first significant job seem to be relatively relaxed about their opportunities, evident from the time when they start their job search. Typically, those graduates who secure employment return first and then start their application phase. They actively search by writing many unsolicited applications. Often, a lucky coincidence, e.g. a friend whom they meet unexpectedly, connects them to a vacancy. Because this is often a question of timing, the process is protracted and job searchers have to be patient: on average, gaining first significant employment takes about seven months following return. During this time of search unemployment graduates need to have financial resources from which they can live. In return for the time spent investing in the professional profile and searching for a job, this first employment tends to pay off because it is often a permanent, decent position within the particular field of studies. In those cases where graduates start on a temporary basis, the contracts are more or less soon changed into permanent employment. However, the cases show that graduates can best translate their resources such as skills, expertise, and degree into capital with the help of a relevant social contact. The importance of this social contact becomes even more evident in the next pattern.

## 6.2 Arranging

The dominant resource for getting entry-level employment in this pattern is the job searcher’s ability to activate her or his personal contacts. Those who arrange their entry-level employment directly contact persons who they think could be in a position to offer employment. They actively “*create a link with people who are already in the system working*” (Ghana interview #05, 30.06.2008: 13) explains Mr. B. from Ghana. At the time he graduates from his three year master’s degree programme on Environmental and Resource Management (ERM) he knows that he has an advantage due to his degree, achieved abroad. Nevertheless, he also knows that having the right contact will reduce the time spent on the job search:

“(...) when you have an exposure outside, you have an advantage over those who are locally trained. Because of your exposure, people want to engage you. [But] from my own personal experience, getting the job is through contacts. You need to talk to somebody you know who is already working or maybe that one the person will make some arrangement. Somehow, it is easier to get a job, but you might not get the job you want (...) until you get connected to a job then you realise that this job is not well paid or is not the best. But the point is that, to start with your career you need to create a link with people who are already in the system working” (Ghana interview #05; 30.06.2008: 5-14).

Even though B. assumes that his master’s degree gives him “*an advantage over those who are locally trained*” in the competitive job search, where graduate unemployment is growing, he asserts, too, that “*getting the job is through contacts*”. As in the previous pattern, it becomes obvious how closely the resources ‘educational profile’ and ‘personal contact’ are intertwined. Without the other, neither can translate into capital. However, in contrast to the previous pattern, B. activates his personal contact as a resource prior to his educational resource. He decides to contact someone in Ghana who “*will make some arrangement*”. In B’s case this contact, a former lecturer, is in a position to recruit because he has become the Head of Department in a young polytechnic in the Upper-West Region. This region is very deprived and hence lacks people who want to make the sacrifice and go to the North as lecturers. In addition, because it is a polytechnic school and not a university, Mr. B’s master’s degree is sufficient. Because B., having a family and a newborn child at the time he completes university, “*wanted to get a job before I come*” he quickly accepts the offer. However, this arrangement, without personally knowing the place also bears a risk that “*you might not get the job you want*”. Nevertheless, also this employment, although less rewarding than he had hoped for, has a positive effect. He can acquire work experience as a lecturer, which in consequence will improve his professional profile:

“I didn’t know the condition and realised that things are not the best, but all the same, I am grateful that I have got the experience. What I have gone through and what I am doing, I am getting the experience gradually” (Ghana interview #05; 30.06.2008: 261-264).

Whereas in this case it is not yet obvious that the personal contact is the dominant variable of this pattern, it becomes more evident in the next case, which is also from Ghana. It is the case of Mrs. C. (Ghana case #17). She obtains her master’s in the subject of Forest Ecosystem Management in Germany within two years. Like B., she knows that the job search might take too long and that she has to “*write a lot of applications. You might put in about thirty applications and for about three months, you might even not hear from any of them. It is not easy*” (Ghana interview #17, 10.07.2008: 74-76). To find entry-level employment she is afraid of having to “*comb the country*” (GH-#17: 10). To save time and to start working immediately

after she returns, she contacts a former colleague whom she knows from her times during national service. Meanwhile, while she has been studying in Germany, her former colleague has set up his own non-governmental organisation in the field of ecotourism. Mrs. C. explains how it happened that she started working for this acquaintance:

“We kept in touch when I was in Germany. And then, he told me that he started something like conservation and tourism so like ecotourism. So he briefed me about it and then I realised that well, it made a lot of sense and it was also in line with what I am studying. Especially the environmental aspects. Forest conservation, forest protection (...) Then, I told him that ‘OK’, after school it is also gonna to be very difficult to even start up something in the public sector or even getting a job right away. So I could help him. (...) So when I came back and I put in a lot of applications, but he offered to employ me, just before I left Germany. So when I came I realised that we could put our heads together and do something (...) So for me, the challenges were not so much of impact, because I had this guy (...)” (Ghana interview #17; 10.07.2008: 21-59).

For her employment entry C. makes use of her contact to a former national service colleague who has built up his own NGO and thus she “*could help him*”. However, because it is a young NGO there is no secure budget of the projects and the salary at NGOs in general is lower than in the private sector. Hence, she admits “*the payment is not that good but at least it is better than staying in the house and going for interviews*” Ghana interview #17; 10.07.2008: 118-119). Mrs. C. was wise to start arranging her entry-level employment already before returning, because the job search can take a very long time, leading to frustration, as in the case of Mr. F. from Cameroon (case #06). He returns after 10 years studying electrical engineering in Germany. He is very happy to return to Cameroon but when he starts searching for employment he soon becomes disillusioned. Although he is able to get an interview, arranged through personal contacts, he does not get a job. The process of personally getting in touch with a responsible person is quite complicated, as his in-depth explanation reveals. He had met a friend during a seminar who provides him with insider’s knowledge about contacts on a managerial level in the mobile company he works for:

“So I managed to find my way in. I was very happy to meet one friend there [seminar] who also studied in Germany, working with [company]. So he gave me some tips (...) I just wanted to know if among the chief engineers there is any expatriate you know and he told me there is one guy from South Africa. He gave me the e-mail address although he had no right to do that and I just wrote to him [the guy from South Africa] and my CV, everything, everything. So the guy was like - he was like ‘call me one night’. What he wanted to know is how I got his e-mail address [laughs]. (...) I didn’t mention



any names you know. Ok he told me that he would try to arrange an interview for me, that was it. So I had an interview. But after the interview there was no talk. I don't think I did write to him I didn't write to him" (Cameroon interview #06; 03.10.2008: 103-119).

This example shows that not all personal contacts capitalise. F. manages to "*find his way in*" and to make contact with a chief engineer, an important social contact, but still he does not get beyond the interview stage. Finally, when he receives the information that he has not been selected he is "*shocked, they told me that finally they find someone who is more experienced, maybe they are right but to be honest with you I believe it's Mafia there, Mafia*" (C-#06: 88). Whereas the official argument is that he lacks work experience, he believes that it is patronage why he drops out and is not recruited. He is frustrated and decides, "*after that I said 'No! Schluss!' No more [grinning], no more job seeking you know*" (C-#06: 130). Instead of job seeking he arranges his employment entry through a friend who works in an NGO and gives him the tip to apply at this NGO, too:

"There was this girl Ms. A., she already was with [the NGO]. Yeah. I also knew the junior sister of this girl; she is a friend who is now in South Africa. She came to visit to Germany, you know. Then I came back, I came back, and so she introduced me to the director of [the NGO] to explain about the programme [reintegration programme] and he accepted to give me the place" (Cameroon interview #06; 03.10.2008: 60-72).

The crucial aspect Mr. F. mentions is that he had to "*explain about the programme*" by which he refers to the financial incentives deriving from the reintegration programme REP. The point is, working for local NGOs is financially not very rewarding. Other graduates who integrate into the NGO sector frankly describe it as "*woefully low [laughs], it is like 'chicken-feed*" (Cameroon interview #17; 21.05.2010: 42). At this point, the reintegration assistance schemes and their financial incentives come into play. Only in combination with the reintegration scheme as an additional resource does the personal contact lead to entry-level employment and thus translates into "social capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 51). The programme components, the salary top-up and the workplace equipment, both allow the individual returning graduate to overcome the low starting salaries in NGOs and the poorly equipped facilities. Moreover, the workplace equipment component works as an incentive for the employer: after two years of working with it, it becomes the property of the employer. Thus, the workplace equipment component within the Returning Expert Programme can turn out as a double win situation for the employers: they not only get the highly qualified workforce for which they only have to pay the local salary, but in addition they also have the chance to equip their offices more professionally.

The job seekers thus sometimes use this component as a tangible incentive to persuade the potential employer to offer them a job, as “*a key in the job search*” (Ghana interview #04; 27.06.2008: 211) or a “*springboard*”. This mentions the hydro engineer Mr. H. from Ghana (case #26). He also found a job through a friend who advised him to apply at a small company. The position was not a vacant post but had just been created in combination with the financial reintegration assistance. H. explains how his employer became amenable to the negotiation:

“(…) this project for settling developing country students who are coming home [REP] was like a spring board. I will like to put it that way. I would say most of us probably would not have come home, or would not have come home that early or probably would have come home and would have left the country again because after school it happens to people who went to other school where they didn't have this program. (...) We were lucky because we had this allowance coming every month [salary top-up] for six month. It was perfect. We had this equipment [workplace equipment] 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 package” (Ghana interview #26; 10.09.2009: 86-98).

As H. outlines, the governmental reintegration programme becomes an incentive for employers to hire particularly graduates who have studied in Germany and gives these graduates “*an edge over other students*” without such an opportunity. H. concludes that for both parties this tangible incentive “*was a very good arrangement*” (G-#26: 246).

Concluding, in the ‘arrangement’ pattern, as the presented cases shows, the job searchers’ connections are the driving resource. These personal contacts are preferably persons who are in a position to employ, because they themselves are employers or can recruit, or they know people who can employ. Graduates who arrange their employment entry typically start preparing their return prior to travelling back and strategically get in touch with their social contacts. The relationships with these contacts are often still intact as has been seen. This might be because those who arrange their labour market entry only spend a comparably short time abroad, four years on average and thus a little shorter than the group of the achievers. Graduates who arranged their entry-level employment said that they had been seeking security and hoped to save themselves monetary expense and frustration resulting from an overly long and unsuccessful job search. Thus, it is not surprising that job searchers of this type from both countries spend the shortest time seeking employment. They wait on average only three months after return until they can sign their contracts.

However, these entry-level jobs are usually based on temporary projects carried out by local NGOs or local micro companies. They are intermediary solutions only, because the payment is low and graduates have to find ways of acquiring addi-

tional income. This is the point where the reintegration assistance schemes come into play. They function as incentives that strengthen the graduates' negotiation position vis-à-vis potential employers and allows them to start their careers at a lower entry-level.<sup>152</sup> However, this reintegration assistance has a limited duration of a maximum of two years. After these two years the graduates have to find follow-up employment. Concluding, as has been mentioned, arrangements build on the resource of the personal contact to persons who are a position to directly employ – or if they know of employers who can create a position. If the job searchers do not have such personal contacts, they have to rely on being externally sponsored, albeit in a discreet manner.

### 6.3 Being sponsored

Graduates included in the pattern of 'being sponsored' share the commonality of activating the two resources personal contact and financial capital (which here has to be understood as less tangible economic capital) at once, which together turn out as symbolic capital. This "symbolic capital" is in Bourdieu's definition quite sophisticated "capital — in whatever form — insofar as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity" (Bourdieu 1986: 56). However, in this pattern symbolic capital derives in the present pattern from mutual cognition and recognition of particular personalities in society, with whom they interact or a "strategic partner" who takes them under their "wing" (Burt 2000: 402).<sup>153</sup>

In contrast to the previous pattern, where the job searchers had direct contact to persons who could employ them, here the matching process is guided by a special intermediary contact. This intermediary contact is principally an insider, who speaks for the job searcher, who is an outsider (cf. Burt 2000: 409). This insider ideally is connected to an international institution, which is a donor organisation, or

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<sup>152</sup> Schmelz notes in the internal version of the evaluation of the REP that the assistance has the power to function as a "job-creation scheme" (2010: 62). Thus, the reintegration assistance component works as a classical prerequisite of negotiations in general: the package is an attractive offer, which motivates the potential employer to join the negotiation on an equal footing (cf. Mühlen 2010: 40). Despite this aspect of the equipment subsidy being regarded as an incentive, it can also create envy amongst the employees (cf. Martin 2006: 127, cf. Schmelz 2012: 14). These cases appeared in this research, too but were an exception (cf. Ghana case #21).

<sup>153</sup> Burt explains the process of sponsoring in an anecdote: "The financier Baron de Rothschild is asked by an acquaintance for a loan, to which the great man is reputed to have replied: 'I won't give you the loan myself; but I will walk arm-in-arm with you across the floor of the Stock Exchange, and you soon shall have willing lenders to spare'" (2000: 399).

is in any powerful position in correlation to local institutions in the graduate's home country's context. This intermediary contact advances the graduate's reputation. Symbolic capital emerges from situations in which this intermediary person presents the graduate as outstanding and having impressive skills to a third party, who is the potential employer. Mr. C., a Cameroonian graduate (case #18), recalls how the responsible officer of his scholarship organisation sponsored him. He describes this particular officer as very pro-active. This results in unusual practices – the officer even organises personal encounters with C. in which he advises him about his career planning. The officer even goes as far as to become active in C's job search, as soon as he is about to complete his studies. C. remembers in the interview that as soon as he is about to finish his studies the officer calls him and actively creates a connection with a potential employing institution by writing a letter to the director of a Cameroonian state university:

“He told me that he is going to write to the Cameroon government. He is going to contact the Cameroon Ministry of Education (...) It's like a man-to-man talk but I don't know how exactly it worked. He said he was going to tell them that they need somebody like myself in the university to lecturer there and if they don't give me employment there, the government of Cameroon, then the German government won't give any scholarship to anybody because there is no point giving scholarship to people and the government cannot use them. So he wrote this letter (...) And he gave me a copy, you understand? They sponsored me a trip to Cameroon to come and see the people that he [officer] had kept contact with, you understand” (Cameroon interview #18; 24.05.2010: 232-245).

C. closes his exceptional story, which by the way was impossible verify because it had taken place too long ago and it was not possible to track down the involved personal contact, by explaining that when he eventually went to Cameroon and visited the responsible person at the university “*they gave me employment at once*” (C-#18: 280). Such a case involving the intervention of a German officer in a German scholarship programme seems quite unusual but it shows what is meant by ‘symbolic capital’. The university, the potential employer was not impressed in the first place by the competences of the applicant, but supposedly more because they felt obliged to the officer in the scholarship programme. When dealing with the sponsored person, Mr. C., they thought of the scholarship organisation which sponsored this particular graduate and future scholars from Cameroon. This, however,

turned into an institutional partnership, C. tells me during the interview.<sup>154</sup> Hence, the symbolic capital emerges from a direct intervention of a more influential contact. It is borrowed social capital lend from the spokesperson (cf. Burt 2000: 402).

Whereas in this example symbolic capital derives from a contact embedded in a German institution, the next case shows how symbolic capital arises from speaking the same language. Mr. W. from Ghana (case #09) studies automotive engineering in Germany. He is one of the few Ghanaians who enrol for a study programme run in the German language. When W. returns and starts the application campaign, at first he does not get any reply to his applications. Finally, he gets in touch with the local counsellor who is responsible for job placement in the reintegration programme. The intervention of the counsellor, who uses his personal contacts and his own reputation in combination with his German language skills are the key to W's first employment in an American multinational automotive corporation:

“When I came, it was, it was quite difficult getting a job but I tried quite in a number of places I applied to. I wasn't getting it. By then it was this guy, there was one guy called [reintegration counsellor] (...). I went to his office. He told me he knew of a certain lady who is a secretary in this company, and it looks like the company was looking for experienced people then. And so he would like me to go to you know to pass by, to see the Human Resource Manager to see if I could get something. So, I went there actually with [the reintegration counsellor]. I went there together with him and we had a talk with the Human Resource Manager and through that I met the workshop manager. He is a German actually. He had a short chat with me and he said, well he thinks I am a good quality and they were prepared to hire me. And that is how come I got in there” (Ghana interview #09; 04.07.2008: 178-196).

W. touches only slightly on the “*chat*” with the workshop manager, who is a German. However, this small sequence is actually the key to his employment entry. The conversation between the two takes place in fluent German. The fact that the workshop manager, who is not necessarily the person in charge of recruitment, approves the “*good quality*” of W. shows how important this short meeting is and the impression W. makes. The German language was the element that stimulated attention and interest from the side of the potential employer in the first place, and

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<sup>154</sup> Thomsen (2010: 268-270) identifies a similar situation in which immigrants had been able to translate their institutional contacts to migrant relief organisations into social capital in the job search. In her analysis she emphasises the institutional character of this labour market entry and it remains open whether particular persons working in these organisations were of help and what motivated them, apart from their common goal of working in a help-oriented institution.

it served to build trust. Trust is thus a crucial component of symbolic capital (cf. Siisiäinen 2000:1).

Another case that demonstrates how having the same international exposure creates trust resulting in employment is that of Mr. O. from Ghana (case #15). Mr. O., who grows up in better circumstances and visits highly reputed Ghanaian boarding schools starts studying Information and Communication Technology in Germany. After completing he even works in a highly recognized telecommunications company in Germany. There he accumulates a high degree of specific knowledge because he works with “*international gurus*” (Ghana interview #15; 08.07.2008: 247) in software programming. In spite of being almost completely settled in Germany, he finally decides to return together with his two children after seven years. This is, because he recognizes that his children have already become more German than Ghanaian and are about to lose their English skills and their Ghanaian identity. Upon his return he is surprised that, despite his excellent profile and his work experience, the job search turns out to be very difficult:

“I came back in 2005. That was September 2005. And frankly speaking I was thinking that ‘look at me, I studied in Germany, I have a master’s programme!’ There wasn’t so many jobs waiting for me, it wasn’t that easy. I encountered a lot of frustrations really. And at some point I decided that I would rather try and start something on my own. But of course, you also need capital to start something. It was really, frustrating. I was thinking that maybe I would work for some and get somewhere to be and try to study the system to get used to how things are. But I think I had been away from the country for a very long time and most of my colleagues and mates who were here had moved on. Really so it was like, I am now coming to start again. You know, it wasn’t very easy” (Ghana interview #15; 08.07.2008: 123-135).

Finally, Mr. O. starts in a micro enterprise in software development but not even one year later has to resume his search for employment because the company is bankrupt. That is the moment when O. is sponsored by the local reintegration counsellor. Through the counsellor O. gets an appointment at a high-profile governmental agency that works closely together with an organisation in the German development cooperation. O. is recruited and starts directly at the level of a deputy director. This is, as O’s boss remarks, because the agency is just about to computerise their whole administration and thus O. is the “*right man at the right time*” (Ghana memo #15; 08.07.2008). This boss also plays a crucial role in O’s employment entry. O. describes him as his “*twin*” because he, too, has studied abroad and thus they share this particular experience. During the interview, in which I have the opportunity to meet O’s boss in person, I observe that both of them emphasise their international exposure and professional work flows, which they both say they have experienced abroad. It was as if O’s boss had found an ally in O., who also had been exposed to another – in their perception more professional –

working environment (Ghana memo #15; 08.07.2008). What is also noteworthy in O's story is that despite his skills in addition to his working experience, he had not been able to secure a well-paid job in the beginning. Only when the counsellor identifies the open position in a more sophisticated working environment and refers him to a place where people appreciate the true value of his skills, because they seem to feel a sense of belonging and thus supposedly trust him, does his educational migration pay off.

A quite different situation in which graduates seek to be sponsored concerns the regional distribution of the Cameroonian labour market, which is divided into Anglophone/Francophone regions. This labour market divide makes it problematic for those Cameroonians who, due to their specific professional profile and the regional distribution of the labour market, have to search for work in a region other than their own. An example is the case of Mr. M., a Francophone Cameroonian (case #12). He has obtained a profile in environmental management and has specialised in sustainable tourism. The region he intends to work in is the Anglophone Southwest Region, a region known for its touristic attraction. M., despite his considerable expertise and well-rounded profile, only gets his job thanks to being sponsored by an intermediary contact - a German expat. This expat, who knows M. already, works for a German development cooperation organisation which has a cooperation project with a particular local NGO in the region. Thanks to this intersecting position, the German expat is able to put a word in and thus is able to recommend the Francophone applicant. Only thanks to this active intervention, does M. get the job. Nevertheless, throughout his two years in this organisation he does not feel comfortable and assumes that he is rejected because he is a Francophone. Mr. I. from Cameroon (case #11) fears the same experience of being rejected due to his different language background too. He is an Anglophone and wants to apply his knowledge of environmental resource management in an NGO. He soon realises that most NGOs are based mainly in the Francophone Central region and that means he would have to speak French:

“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. I told them that I spent all my years in the English sector and done in English and then I went out but the little French I know I could improve upon so they were not very interested (...) So, he [recruiter] told me that here it is bilingual; you can express yourself in any language you feel. So, we are ready to work with you. That is how I came to here” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 487-497).

I. only finds his entry-level employment through the recruiter, who allocates him to a particular NGO and assures him that “*here it is bilingual*”. The recruiter knows this because he has already worked with the particular NGO and the contact has been on a professional, institutional level. The symbolic capital in this case emerges from the recruiter, indirectly putting in a word for both parties: the employer who has to be convinced to take on an Anglophone employee and the job searcher, who has to be assured that at this place he can also speak and write in English.

Finally, the case of Mr. X. from Cameroon (case #20) illustrates how symbolic capital emerges very unconsciously, discreetly, probably from having the right ‘habitus’ - a term coined by Bourdieu (1986: 56) which now will be explained on this example. During X’s 11 years in Germany he obtains his diploma in Information Technologies and afterwards works for several years in an internationally recognized German software company. Upon his return, he starts searching for employment and applies to “*all the big companies (...) like Guinness, companies like Maersk Cameroon. I applied to Citigroup. I applied to a lot of big companies*” (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 245-248). At first, he does not even receive a reply to his applications nor is he invited for an interview. Finally, a “*lucky*”<sup>155</sup> coincidence connects him to an unadvertised, fresh vacancy:

“I was visiting eh, I was visiting a sister-in-law of mine at work and there was one guy from Nigeria who was there and he said ‘Eeh, we are looking for somebody to handle the IT development Cameroon!’ (...) so they were looking for somebody to introduce IT [to the country]. And just there I met the guy, we discussed and that’s how I got the job. I never really applied for the job that I got” (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 51-66).

This “*guy*” is the manager of a global international “*company*”. It is a company of auditors, a franchise of a UK-based global player and they have only recently started their new branch in Cameroon. Because they have just started structuring the branch, their demand for professional experts in the field of IT is high. They need experts not only to establish their IT administration from scratch but also to give in-house training and IT training to their clients. The key to the employment however, seems to be Mr. X’s practical working experience:

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<sup>155</sup> Many interviewees described the particular situation in which they met intermediary contacts as ‘lucky’ moments, as coincidences. Similarly, in her qualitative study about transitions from education to work Evans notes that during the interviews “success was often ascribed by young people to luck as well as their own personal characteristics” (2003: 122) which she interprets as a sign of individualisation processes progressing.



“The guy was telling her [sister in law] about wanting to hire a guy from an IT background and she was then talking to the guy about me when I just entered the room and she just said to the man ‘that’s the guy I am talking of’ that is how we sat down. She talks, talks, talked. Of course, working for SAP<sup>156</sup> in Germany gave me some points [laughs]. (...) They were very impressed so that’s how I got the job” (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 268-276).

Summing up, Mr. X. gets his first permanent contract only three months after he returns. Even though it is not an officially advertised opening and rather an informal occasion through which X. learns about the job, he finally achieves the contract due to his specific “*IT background*” and his practical work experience in a well-recognized German company that “*gave him some points*”. What X. does not tell in the interview – but what I interpreted thanks to the additional material which was available for the case – is the fact that he originates from an upper-class family. From his CV I learn that X. went to school in a highly reputed private boarding school, often referred to as the ‘Harvard of Cameroon’. This boarding school is affordable only to comparably rich households. Moreover, X. says in the interview that his parents supported him in the first years during his studies in Germany, because he was a free-mover. This is another, quite obvious indicator, that X. belongs to a well-off family. Moreover, X. has an impressive appearance and radiates experience and authority. He has the certain something that Bourdieu refers to as “*habitus*” (1986: 56). This habitus, however, might have unconsciously influenced the spontaneous encounter with “*the guy*” and caused this person to refer him to the director of the company.<sup>157</sup>

In conclusion, ‘being sponsored’ resembles the pattern of ‘arranging’ entry-level employment. The difference is that graduates rely not on their own personal contacts but on intermediary external contacts, and instead of using tangible incentives they derive reputation from the fact that they are sponsored. This reputation, the “*symbolic capital*” (Bourdieu 1986: 56), emerges either because they are commended by other persons who have a position of authority, or because they have very good manners and unconsciously show that they are from a better-off, well-reputed family. This latter aspect resembles what Bourdieu identifies as class specific habitus. Nevertheless, according to social status this group consists of persons

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<sup>156</sup> SAP is a global player software company under German management.

<sup>157</sup> This case demonstrates the difficulties deriving from working with polythetic typologies (cf. chapter 4.6) in which features of distinct types are comprised in one case – X’s case was first categorised as achiever, due to the fact that the driving resource in his story seemed to be his educational achievement and his work experience at the software company. However, the fact that he had such a different appearance than other cases of this type made me aware that his case might belong to the pattern in which symbolic capital plays the major role.

from upper-class elite levels as well as persons from poorer working class backgrounds. What is more significant is that graduates among this group stay the second longest time in Germany, on average about seven years, and thus often report having lost touch with the local setting and their former social contacts. In consequence, they often claim that their job search is very difficult. It seems to be only their personal impression, because in reality people in this pattern have the fastest entry rate of less than two months until they find employment. Interestingly, these jobs are often of a higher level, depending on the sponsor's scope of influence. In Cameroon, the trend seems to be that especially those graduates who are Anglophones and have problems in accessing the French labour market due to their lack of French language skills, are sponsored. In Ghana, the two persons who were sponsored lacked adequate social contacts to secure the right positions because they had been away for too long. This latter aspect, having been away for too long, also plays a crucial role in the next pattern 'becoming independent'.

#### **6.4 Becoming independent**

This last pattern, 'becoming independent', is the most complex of all four employment-entry patterns. It describes the professional reintegration of those graduates who become self-employed from scratch upon their return. They have to, as a matter of fact, activate all their available resources, financial savings, practical work experience and personal contacts at once. Previous empirical studies on entrepreneurial return migration have stressed that the returning migrants' propensity to set-up a business upon return depends on "the fact that they remained abroad longer and thus accumulated more financial, human and social capital" which they then combine in a "appropriate and strategic mix" (Ammassari 2005: 88). However, what is often mentioned but seldom elaborated in-depth is that something other than large quantities of capital accumulated abroad is just as necessary to be a successful entrepreneur after the return. That is, individuals who want to work independently upon return have to be very familiar with the local investment situation, they have to have 'knowledge of the system'.

This genuine knowledge of the system is what Bourdieu describes as "embodied cultural capital" (1986: 48). It is, according to his definition, "external wealth converted into an integral part of the person" and it cannot "be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights or even titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange" (Bourdieu 1986: 48). Putting his definition into the context of this study, embodied cultural capital is a tacit knowledge about unwritten rules of conduct and thus cannot be achieved consciously but only by being embedded into the social environment of the particular culture. Thus, in the case of the returning migrants who have lived a long time abroad and who therefore tend to be alienated from their home countries' context, this knowledge of the system has to

be re-activated. How this works and how the returning migrants' resources interact is now illustrated in the following cases, all from Cameroon.

Dr. H. from Cameroon (case #02) is 20 when he goes to Germany to study physics. His host country, the German Democratic Republic, is not his choice but the country has been elected through a Cameroonian governmental scholarship. His Cameroonian wife is with him and they remain in the eastern part of Germany after reunification. During their 14 years in Germany they also settle socially. Both feel at home, recalls Mrs. H.:

“So it was really good coaching and training was really good. And we made many friends over there. So it's a bit like a second family, a second home. So the problems of racism and all, I did not witness that” (Cameroon interview # 02/03, 02.10.2008: 87-92).<sup>158</sup>

Because they have two children and want to see them grow up in Cameroon, both decide to return to Cameroon eventually, as soon as Mr. H. finishes his doctorate. When he is about to finish he starts travelling frequently to Cameroon, investigating the situation of the higher education sector and searching for a way to reintegrate professionally:

“So now the studies ended, the doctoral thesis ended and the idea of returning came up. I made several trips to Cameroon where I submitted applications for vacancies in universities in Douala, Yaoundé, Buea. I tried to see different universities to see the situation at the university, the equipment we have [now], it comes from subsidies such as WUS and other [organisations]. Such small means there: how can we return to the university there with at least a little material and start working? So I must say, I've been a little disappointed because I had almost three files, sent to universities here and even to the ministry of higher education but it never worked out” (Cameroon interview #02/03, 02.10.2008: 187-198).<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> French original: “Donc c'était vraiment un bon encadrement et la formation était vraiment bonne. Et pour les relations humaines, on a beaucoup d'amis là-bas. On s'est lié beaucoup d'amitiés. Donc c'est un peu comme une seconde famille, une seconde patrie. Donc les problèmes de racisme et tout, je n'ai pas connu ça” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 87-92).

<sup>159</sup> French original: “Alors maintenant les études bouclées, la thèse de doctorat bouclée et l'idée de rentrer était là. J'ai fait plusieurs voyages au Cameroun où j'ai déposé les demandes de recrutement dans les universités à Douala, à Yaoundé, à Buea. J'ai essayé de voir dans différentes universités de voir comment à partir des relations à l'université, les relations qu'on a, à partir des actions d'aide au retour comme le WUS et autre, ces petits moyens là, comment est-ce qu'on peut rentrer à l'université là-bas avec au moins un peu de matériel et commencer à travailler ? Alors je dois dire que là, j'ai été un peu déçu parce que j'avais fait pratiquement trois dossiers, envoyés dans les universités ici et même au ministère de l'enseignement supérieur mais ça n'avait toujours pas abouti” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 187-198).

Soon he realises that his plan to start working in one of the existing tertiary education institutes is becoming problematic. Not only does he receive no reply to his applications but the issue is also that Cameroonian institutions simply lack the most basic equipment. He thus fears that the knowledge he has gained in Germany will not be applicable in the Cameroonian context and hence that his studies abroad have been a waste of time. Consequently, he develops a plan to start his own educational institute. To realise his project, he immediately seeks support among his different German networks, approaches former professors and institutes, and makes cold calls through which he starts collecting strategic contacts for gaining information and tangible support:

“(…) I went to a professor of a German university of applied sciences. I received support through him. I went to companies that produce educational material to see if they can help. And when we returned, there were some good contacts to start the project” (Cameroon interview #02/03, 02.10.2008: 218-223).<sup>160</sup>

Finally, after having activated these institutional “*good contacts to start the project*” Dr. H. returns to Cameroon together with his wife and their two children, after 14 years. They embark on the project of establishing a private institute in the field of applied sciences. Seven years later, in 2008, his institute is well recognized and about 600 students have already enrolled. Only recently the institute has become an official partner of a German tertiary institute in the field of applied sciences. However, to get to this particular point, Dr. H. admits, has not always been easy. He stresses that especially in the beginning his social network was most important from a financial point of view:

“Recently it started to pay off. The hardest part was at the beginning. But those early days we received support because we have contacted many persons who gave us loans, loans from institutions, especially from banks also from banks abroad because it all depends on the bank, for which you need someone to guarantee for you - so when you return you simply do not have enough relationships and there [in Germany] are still many people who guarantee. There were many people like that who came to our rescue. And we had a financial minimum that allowed us to launch the project (...) So, mostly, it is a loan that allowed us to launch the project. But of course we must also emphasize the return assistance. CIM ZAV, WUS. She [Mrs. H.] for

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<sup>160</sup> French original: “(…) aller vers un professeur en Allemagne des universités de sciences appliquées. Je montais le dossier grâce à son soutien. Aller vers les entreprises qui produisent du matériel didactique pour voir comment ça se passe. Et au moment où on rentrait, il y avait un départ de bons contacts pour démarrer ce projet” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 218-223).

example, has received equipment funded by WUS and we have a laptop. So this laboratory 40-50%, is the equipment of WUS, the physics laboratory. So we tried to get all the possibilities to realise the project but frankly, it was not easy” (Cameroon interview #02/03, 02.10.2008: 243-267).<sup>161</sup>

H. describes how his personal network in Germany – friends, partnering firms – translated into tangible benefits such as bonds and guarantees for the bank or even direct private loans or grants. Apart from reintegration programmes he also mentions companies which offered him the facility of paying in arrears, because at the beginning it was impossible to finance the project in one go. In fact, it is H’s ‘embodied cultural capital’ for the country context Germany, which enables him to activate these helpful lucrative contacts. Nevertheless, H. and his wife also stress the need to re-adjust to the home country’s context:

“But what should be noted is that there is a large difference in the mentality. And that’s what I would say is more important. You will see that those who spent a dozen years abroad to study and when they return, they have a different way of seeing things, to analyse things, to see them in relation to those who live here because they have become a mix of African culture, Camerounaise and a mixture of European culture because they have lived there long enough. So they have become hybrids (...) Whilst in Cameroon that social security is not there. Here you can work, you have a job but whenever you get sick you are not able to treat yourself. In other words, I would say that it’s nice to stay there because in all cases we chose to go. I can say that if we look at the social level, for the degree of security there, it is better

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<sup>161</sup> French original: “Actuellement il faut le reconnaître, ça commence à se décanter. 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 aussi auprès des particuliers parce que du départ on va vers la banque, soit vous n’avez pas de garantie solide ou tout simplement vous n’avez pas assez de relations et il y a toujours beaucoup de gens qui viennent. En principe il y a beaucoup de personnes comme ça qui sont venus à notre secours. Et on a eu un minimum financier qui nous a permis de lancer d’une part. (...) Donc, en majorité, c’est des prêts qui nous ont permis de lancer le projet. Mais bien sûr il faut souligner aussi l’aide au retour. CIM, ZAV, WUS. Elle [Mrs. H.] par exemple elle a reçu les équipements au WUS financés par le WUS et on a un laboratoire en haut. Donc ce laboratoire à 40, 50%, c’est l’équipement du WUS, le laboratoire de physique. 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).

to live there than live here” (Cameroon interview #02/03, 02.10.2008: 338-369).<sup>162</sup>

Concerning Cameroonians who have lived a longer period abroad, Mr. and Mrs. H. point out that returning to Cameroon also means being aware of having acquired a different “*mentality*” in Germany. These Cameroonians, they say, have an increased need for social security, such as guaranteed remuneration in the event of sickness that is impossible to guarantee in the Cameroonian context. However, even though they themselves lived abroad for 14 years, both have re-adjusted well, due not least to the fact that they commuted between Germany and Cameroon at the beginning of their return.

Actually, this seems to be the strategy of Mr. J. from Cameroon (case #24) to re-activate his business-related knowledge about his home country. Before this, he almost completely loses his starting capital at once. J. already is in his late twenties when he graduates with his first degree in Cameroon and starts working in the public sector. It is the time of the economic crisis in Cameroon. In the course of increasing dismissals in the public sector, J. finally decides to go abroad. He enrolls for civil engineering at a German university. He is certain he will return one day to Cameroon. Even though he integrates well in Germany, speaks fluent German, and marries a German woman, he continuously keeps in touch and observes his home country’s market situation: “*I kept in touch with Cameroon, through multiple trips to develop certain industries, because I still didn’t like working in the public service*” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 39-42)<sup>163</sup>. When he graduates, he returns but his business ventures are disastrous and he loses a fortune:

“[I made my] first experience in the import and export of used clothing with a capital of EUR 30,000. This resulted in a fiasco followed by a decrease in capital of EUR 15,000 and a considerable stock of

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<sup>162</sup> French original: “Mais ce qu’il faut remarquer c’est qu’il y a une grande différence au niveau de la mentalité. Et c’est ça qui est je dirais plus important. Vous allez constater que ceux qui ont passé une bonne dizaine d’années à l’extérieur pour étudier et quand ils rentrent, ils ont une autre façon de voir les choses, d’analyser les choses, de les voir par rapport à ceux qui sont sur place parce qu’il y en a eu, un mélange de la culture africaine, camerounaise et un mélange de la culture européenne pour avoir vécu là-bas assez longtemps. Donc c’est un peu sur le terrain des hybrides. Les gens qui ont en eux un mixage de cultures par rapport à ceux qui sont sur place. (...) Alors qu’au Cameroun cette sécurité sociale n’est pas là. Alors vous pouvez travailler, vous avez un emploi mais il peut arriver que vous tombez malade et que vous soyez incapables de vous soigner. Autrement dit, sans dire que c’est bien de rester là-bas puisque dans tous les cas nous avons choisi de rentrer. Je peux dire que si on regarde sur le plan social, ne serait-ce que cette sécurité là-bas, il est mieux de vivre là-bas que de vivre ici” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 338-369).

<sup>163</sup> French original: “je gardais le contact avec le Cameroun, à travers de multiples voyages en vue de développer certains secteurs d’activités, car travailler encore dans la fonction publique ne m’animaît plus” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 39-42).

unsalable products. [My] second experiment [was] in selling used tires after two years of stand by. This experience ended as the first and the loss increased to EUR 5,000 resulting in a net loss of EUR 25,000. After two failed experiments, I decided to return to Germany and while was there, I invested in other projects and informed myself about new technology in this case computers. [During] this training the idea came to me of creating an office for technological exchanges between Cameroon and Germany and to create a company. In the course of the business and despite the small capital at my disposal, I still managed to send to Cameroon computers and machines including a little sewing machine” (Cameroon case #24; email 11.10.2006: 44 -61).<sup>164</sup>

It shows that J. has two failed attempts at establishing a business. First, in the second-hand clothing business he is not aware of the local market demand and thus ends up with a considerable stock of badly-selling products. In the second attempt, which is in the field of selling used tyres, he relies on personal contacts which turn out to be untrustworthy and who cheat him concerning customs duties. After these two failed attempts he first re-emigrates to Germany. His initial financial capital of EUR 30,000 by then has declined to EUR 5,000. Back in Germany, he concentrates on used computers and sends a container to Cameroon which also contains a small sewing machine. This small machine finally leads to a start-up business in the apparel industry, an industry far from his own study background. This third attempt eventually leads to a sustainable middle-sized company, employing more than 100 qualified workers and even exporting their products to neighbouring African countries. What was different the third time Mr. J. tried to become self-employed? He had commuted frequently between Germany and Cameroon for at least two years to examine the market and to find trustworthy counterparts he could rely on this time. J’s wife also tells me during one of our encounters that J. had to re-adjust to the adequate ‘business-behaviour’ in the Cameroonian context. She recalls that J., after having lived many years abroad, in the beginning tended to be ill-tempered and less patient than would have been good for business purposes. In

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<sup>164</sup> French original: “Première expérience dans l’import-export de friperie avec un capital de EUR 30,000. Ceci se solde par un fiasco suivi d’une diminution de capital de EUR 15,000 et un stock considérable de produits invendables. Deuxième expérience dans la vente des pneus d’occasion après deux années de stand by. Cette expérience se solde comme la première et le capital est porté à EUR 5,000 d’où une perte sèche de EUR 25,000. Après ces deux expériences échouées, je décide de rentrer en Allemagne et pendant que j’y suis, je m’investis dans d’autres projets et me forme dans de nouvelles technologies en l’occurrence l’informatique. De cette formation m’est venu l’idée de créer un Bureau des échanges technologiques entre le Cameroun et l’Allemagne d’où la création d’[une entreprise]. A nouveau dans le sérail des affaires et malgré le petit capital que je dispose, je parviens néanmoins à envoyer au Cameroun des ordinateurs et des machines parmi lesquelles une petite brodeuse” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 44-61).

addition, she says he worked hard to re-activate his humour and confidence, even in times of great problems and despair (field notes 04.05.2010). Concerning J's social networks, one thing that is notable in his case is that he not only maintains personal contacts with companies and persons in Germany, where he has studied and from where his wife originates, but also broadens his business-related network to institutions in a third country, the United States. He got in touch with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a development organisation that supports African trade. One of their support schemes is to grant middle-sized companies duty-free access to the U.S. market and assist African entrepreneurs with improving their trade competitiveness through active networking. For this purpose, J. travelled not only to the U.S. to meet stakeholders and key persons, but also obtained funds for travelling to Ghana where he meets other entrepreneurs in his industry to learn how they solve particular, regional-specific problems concerning production schemes. One of these regional-specific problems in production is, according to J., working with low quality garments and having no access to technicians who can work with the computerised production line from Europe. Through collaborating with these organisations J. increases his business's reputation, broadens his network from bilateral to multilateral contacts and is often praised as a "best practice" example for successful entrepreneurial activities (see brochures of USAID 2009 and BMZ 2010: 25). J. uses this increase of symbolic capital to secure further funding for extending his production line. Of course, to be successful and to try a third time to start a business, one has to have particular entrepreneurial skills – a strong vision and perseverance:

"To sum up, I have to tell you that success does not merely come from success, but failures prepare better for success. Because success requires a good dose of perseverance, faith in what we do or decide to do, the vision of the big picture, controlling what we do and also being optimistic under all circumstances" (Cameroon case #24; email 11.10.2006: 102-108).<sup>165</sup>

J's statement presents the view that being an entrepreneur also means calculating risks and learning from mistakes.

Mr. U. seems to have a similar entrepreneurial personality that allows him to make decisions based on his hope of bringing change through his work, what he calls his "vision" (Cameroon case #23). He is 22 when he leaves Cameroon to study agricultural economics in Germany. Already during his studies he carries out an intern-

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<sup>165</sup> French original: "Pour me résumer, je dois vous avouer que la réussite ce n'est pas d'aller de succès en succès, mais c'est [de] se servir de ses échecs pour mieux préparer la réussite. Car une réussite passe par une bonne dose de persévérance, la foi en ce que nous entreprenons ou décidons de faire, la vision des choses en grand, la maîtrise de ce que nous faisons et aussi l'optimiste [sic !] dans toutes les circonstances" (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 102-108).



ship in Cameroon and starts his freelance activities in Germany. His particular field is palm oil production. Three years after his graduation he has a specific professional profile and takes the opportunity to begin his return to Cameroon. His German wife stays behind with the two children to wait until he has prepared for their arrival. During the following two years, U. commutes between Germany and Cameroon. However, this effort is worth it: when he starts investing his savings from Germany into the infrastructure of his own business, he is sure that he has enough experience and has planned well in order not to fail. He invests the capital he has accumulated during his time in Germany, roughly EUR 90,000. His project, an oil mill in the North-West Region of Cameroon, not only concerns the commercial production of palm oil but also intends to train the local farmers in how they can farm more efficiently and ecologically. Thus, his business finds a niche in the market. Finally, two years after he has left Germany for the first time, he settles completely because he is confident that his business will soon be operating in the black. He invests all his financial savings in the company's basic capital. However, he remarks during our meeting that getting access to subsequent credit would be quite difficult for him because the local banks do not accept his property, which is located in a remote rural region of Cameroon, as collateral.

In all the three cases, the most important aspect that allows the return migrants to become successful is that apart from having sufficient financial capital, they need the particular 'knowledge of the system' in their home country. This knowledge comprises aspects such as where to register the business and from where to acquire financial capital as well as the tacit knowledge of who to trust and choose as a reliable local counterpart. Those who have this particular knowledge about the system share the commonality of frequently travelling to Cameroon before they finally return. This is also a question of these migrants' financial and legal possibilities: only those migrants who can afford it are able to commute between Europe and their home countries and who either have a permanent residence status or have established such a reputation in the host country's society that they will be granted multiple visa entries. Whereas both factors were true in the three presented cases, the following example shows that not all who save enough money and return are successful entrepreneurs – because they lack the crucial knowledge of the system which are not able to re-activate before they eventually return. Ms. E. from Cameroon (case #15), for instance, has studied in the field of IT in Germany. Initially, by the time she completes her studies, she wants to stay for a while to gain practical work experience. She even has a qualified job offer in the field of IT. However, her immigration authorities reject her application to change her visa from student to worker. In consequence, her visa expires and she has to leave Germany within two weeks. Nevertheless, E. does not give up and is still very ambitious and self-confident. Back in Cameroon she starts a small computer business in which she sells computer equipment and offers in-house training for IT administrators in Cameroon. She invests her complete financial savings in the business structure, for the office rent and the equipment.

However, acquiring customers and getting them to pay their bills becomes tedious. In the end her micro company is continuously in the red and she has to give up. Eventually, she starts as a German-French translator for a German development cooperation project and continues to work for this international company. She admits that she never really had this knowledge about the professional reality in Cameroon, because she had already left the country at the age of 19. Instead she developed certain aspects of her personality in a foreign environment, in Germany. E. does not try to re-emigrate to Germany, like the previously presented graduates had done in order to accumulate new financial savings.

Similarly, Mrs. Q. from Cameroon (case #16) wants to start a business in the newspaper industry but fails – because she trusts the wrong people. She, like Ms. E., lacks the crucial “*knowledge of the country*” (Cameroon interview #16, 18.05.2010: 238) to set up the business sustainably. Finally, she loses all her investments because envious people block her project:

“When you're not here, there are so many realities you do not know. For example, I had a project, but the project did not pay off. That was a private matter, not that the project was not good. I wanted to publish a magazine. And at that time there were no women's magazine. And back then, or even now there is still a niche in the media landscape, there is still a niche (...) The project did not pay off, not because I did not make an evaluation. (...) It happened it was because of other things, jealousy (...). We had already spent a lot of money and worked very hard, but – forget it (...) I had money and a vision, but without knowledge of the country I had no chance, or my chances were few. You can make as many studies as you want, but if you do not live here and do not follow your own projects each day when you yourself are not there, you can have millions, it would all be lost” (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 224-242).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> German original: “Wenn du nicht hier bist, gibt's auch so viele Realitäten die du nicht kennst. Ich hatte z.B. ein Projekt, aber das ist nicht entstanden, das war jetzt private Angelegenheit, nicht dass das Projekt nicht gut war. Ich wollte eine Zeitschrift unbedingt herausbringen. Und damals gab es keine Frauenzeitschrift. Und damals, oder sogar jetzt gibt es noch einen Platz wo man/ wenn man jetzt die Presselandschaft guckt, gibt es noch einen Platz dafür. (...) das Projekt ist nicht entstanden, nicht wie gesagt, nicht weil ich kein Studie gemacht habe (...) es ist nicht entstanden aufgrund anderer Sachen, Eifersucht (...). Wir hatten schon sehr viel Geld ausgegeben und sehr viel gearbeitet, aber/ Schwamm drüber (...). Ich hätte Geld gehabt (...) aber ohne Landeskennnisse hatte ich keine Chance, oder meine Chancen waren gering. Du kannst so viele Studien machen wie du möchtest, aber wenn du nicht hier lebst und selber nicht deine Projekte verfolgst jeden Tag, wenn du selber nicht da bist, du kannst Millionen haben, die würden alle verloren gehen“ (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 224-242).

What is clear to Mrs. Q. is that having a successful start-up upon return is not only a matter of financial capital “*you could have millions, it would all be lost*”. Hence, the resource to activate for success is gaining a feeling for the “*realities*” in the home country context. This reality includes tacit knowledge of how to approach officials in administrative positions and how to cope with bureaucratic processes which are perceived to be slower than in Germany or less based on merit, and often corrupt and not transparent. Q. points out that she would only have obtained this tacit knowledge by living in her country. After 10 years in Germany, she says, she was “*German in her head*” (C-#16: 248) and she did not understand the “*mentality*” (C-#16: 250) of her fellow countrymen. In consequence, she does not foresee the problems and is not prepared when envious people block her vision of becoming a small entrepreneur, she states. When her project fails and she loses all her savings she decides to start as an employee. Today, she works as an officer in the finance industry and has a sound career. Nevertheless, like Mrs. E., she does not work in the field she studied in Germany.

As these cases from Cameroon clearly demonstrate, ‘becoming independent’ means activating all available resources at once and accumulating them in larger quantities over a longer period. Graduates in this pattern often perfectly fit the typical image of a transnational migrant, which has already been discussed: their German is fluent and they are embedded in the host country’s society, are married to a German spouse or maintain close friendships with Germans from their time in Germany, who they even refer to as a kind of family member. In addition, entrepreneurs continuously maintain their social contacts with people abroad, also after they have returned. This finding is not new and is congruent with previous studies on entrepreneurs. For the case of Ghanaian return migrants, according to Black et al. about 78% of entrepreneurs “kept personal contacts abroad since their return” (2003b: 17). What is remarkable and only becomes obvious through the biographic approach is that these contacts are preferably maintained with individuals in institutions that are eligible to cooperate in business matters.

The links to such institutional contacts exist thanks to the migrants’ strong integration in their host country, which they were able to establish because they lived a longer time in Germany. Graduates among this type stay the longest time abroad: on average 11 years. This is even longer than the average time abroad of Ghanaians in the survey of Black et al. who pointed out that the majority of entrepreneurs had stayed abroad under five to a maximum of nine years (2003b: 11). The fact that in all three presented cases of this study the entrepreneurs had worked in Germany before returning to their home country and had been able to save money supports what Black et al.’s study already indicates: that migrants who stay a longer period abroad use the time to accumulate their economic resources. What also becomes quite clear through the cases is not only the amount of financial savings invested in the businesses, but that these investments can easily be lost.

This means entrepreneurs sometimes have to invest several times until they reach their goals. Thus, they need further sources of financial credit in their home countries. The challenges of accessing local credit and setting up their business by obeying the local regulations sustainably are major problems for all entrepreneurs. Only those who have the crucial knowledge of their country's system, which means being prepared for this situation and to know how to overcome these obstacles, are successful. Again, this finding is similar to the results of Black et al's study on returned entrepreneurs in Ghana:

“Although a lack of starting capital was ranked most important by the largest number of respondents, at least half of those who had established a business ranked financial capital as the least important constraint. In contrast, restrictive government legislation and problems of marketing were seen as either the first or second most serious problem by a clear majority of respondents” (Black et al. 2003b: 18).

Black et al. already indicate that apart from money, tacit knowledge about legislation procedures is as crucial to successfully becoming self-employed. However, what has not been touched on in their studies as well as previous others is how the returning migrants acquire this specific knowledge about government legislation and problems of marketing.

A probable answer can be found in the analysis of this study. It is very likely that the graduates re-activated their knowledge because they commute between their home country and the host country. During frequent trips to their home country they at first have the opportunity to explore the market situation and investigate the feasibility of their projects. By being exposed to the professional reality in their home country they re-activate what Bourdieu terms “embodied cultural capital” (1986: 48). As a consequence of the fact that this form of capital takes time to accumulate (cf. Bourdieu 1986: 49) these migrants' transitions are the longest among the four patterns: it takes them between one and two years to finally settle. However, the results of those who know the system and have enough of their resources to recover after a first or maybe even a second failed attempt are impressive. Their entrepreneurial vision turns into a reality by utilising their personal perseverance to take advantage of local market demands. Interestingly, it is not necessarily their subject of specialisation which these entrepreneurs finally use to set up their businesses but more their entrepreneurial spirit in general.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Many studies indicate that a universal entrepreneurial spirit exists. For Cameroonian society these specific features were historically attributed to the group of the Grass fielders in Northwest Region and the West (Warnier 1993: 271, cf. Eckert 1999: 111). Witzel and Kühn (1999: 50), in their study of working biographies of German employees, also confirm that this desire for autonomy is typical and universal among entrepreneurs.

Considering the complexity of this pattern and the high amount of resources graduates must have, it is not surprising that only a minority, here three persons, is able to perform in this pattern successfully. However, it should be discussed why only Cameroonians become entrepreneurs from scratch, even though Ghanaians express their wish to become self-employed, too. Therefore, the final sub-chapter compares the unequal distribution of the patterns in both countries and offers explanations concerning these disparities.

## **6.5 Sponsored Cameroonians and achieving Ghanaians**

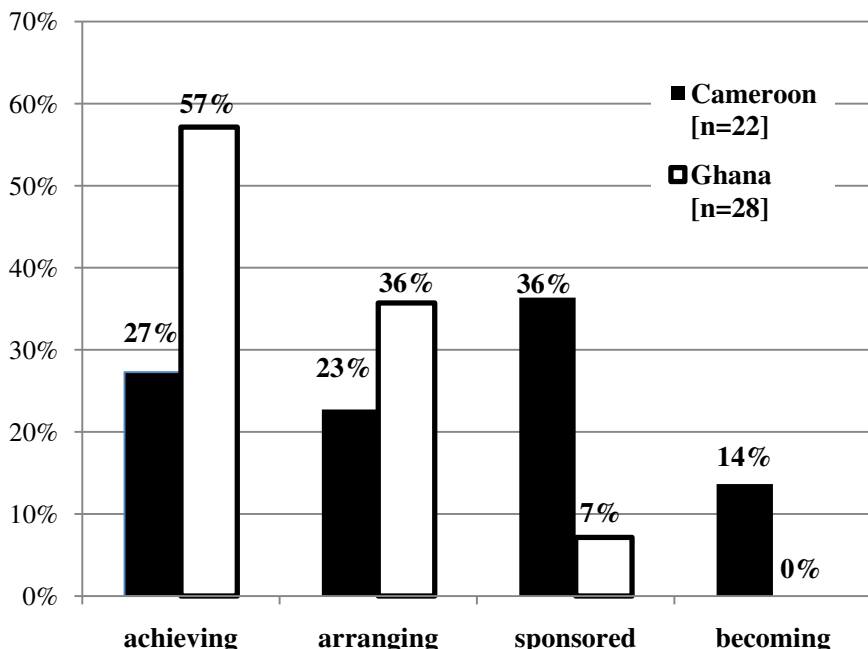
This sub-chapter now presents a first comparison regarding the developed four labour market entry patterns between the two countries. At first I briefly summarise the patterns and how they correlate with the theoretical assumptions about return migration (as presented in chapter 2.5). Then I discuss how I gained the impression that in Cameroonians the type of sponsored job starters dominated, whereas in Ghana the pattern of the achievers seemed to be more relevant.

The analysis detailed how return migrants actually activated their various resources in different ways, which led to employment or entrepreneurship. The four specific ways of resource activation were illustrated in the patterns ‘achieving’, ‘arranging’, ‘being sponsored’ and ‘becoming independent’. Always another resource appeared to be dominant in each of the patterns. In the pattern of the achievers the driving resource of the educational profile, translated into “institutionalised cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1986: 50). ‘Arrangers’ benefited from their ‘social capital’ and during the process of being sponsored by intermediary spokespersons something emerged what had been defined by Bourdieu as “symbolic capital” (1986: 56). Finally, those who ‘become independent’ require large quantities of all resources simultaneously: the returning graduates need the specific spirit of an entrepreneur, must have a sound educational profile and especially practical skills. Moreover, they need to have a high amount of financial savings and they need access to business related personal networks. The most crucial aspect was that they had to regain a broad knowledge of their home countries’ contemporary professional reality in order to make their resources work effectively. This tacit knowledge is equivalent to Bourdieu’s analytic variable of “embodied cultural capital” (1986: 48). Even though these single patterns have been discussed as if they are independent of each other, the case studies and biographies presented showed a mixture of the different patterns. The case studies presented for ‘arranging’ clearly showed some form of ‘achieving’ and ‘being sponsored’ included a mixture of ‘achieving and arranging’. The fact that the patterns sometimes seemed to overlap clearly has to do with the process of developing a typology, as was discussed in the methodology chapter 4.5 in which I mentioned that each case had as many but not all properties which defined a type in common. It was difficult to strictly separate cases from each other and assign them to one type only. This fact is important to keep in mind because it

also includes the finding that labour market entry patterns are flexible and might also change over time. They thus depend on a specific context. However, the single cases were assigned to a specific type as soon as the coding matrix included more than three dominant characteristics of a specific type. To ensure an objective categorisation I visualised this sorting process for each case with the analysing software of MaxQDA (cf. Appendix C.1).

Relating the findings about the interplay of the resources to previously introduced theoretical models on return migration, it shows that the assumption as for instance made by Cassarino (2004) in his model on return-relevant preparation can be partly confirmed. He predicts that the average time of 4 to 15 years (Cassarino 2004: 273) would be sufficient to accumulate enough resources. This applies to the group of the Cameroonian respondents, who had stayed longer in Germany (cf. sample information in chapter 4.5) and thus theoretically had more time to accumulate resources abroad. At least a few graduates from their group were able to become independent and to start a business upon return whereas the graduates among the Ghanaians started as regular employees. If the founding of a business is seen as defining success of return migration, Cassarino's model is likely to be correct. However, the picture changes and the return preparation model of Cassarino is no longer as conclusive if one takes into account the fact that Ghanaian graduates, who on average spend less time in Germany than their Cameroonian graduates, appear to be very successful in translating their educational achievements into an employee's career.

Even though the typology is based on a rather small sample, with cases [n=50] from Cameroon and Ghana, and thus the distribution of the pattern in both countries cannot be regarded as representative, a trend becomes evident if one compares the distribution of the pattern in both countries. The bar chart in figure 8 shows the different distribution of the patterns in both countries. Whereas the largest group, the achievers, clearly dominate in Ghana (57%), in Cameroon only about a quarter (27%) of the sample are among the achievers. In addition, about a third (36%) of Ghanaians arrange their employment entry, whereas less than a quarter (23%) of Cameroonians arrange their employment upon return. This is in stark contrast to the next pattern, of being sponsored: whereas only two persons (7%) among the Ghanaian sample had to be sponsored to enter the labour market, more than 36% of the Cameroonians were sponsored. Finally, no Ghanaian is among the group of the independent in contrast to three (14%) successful independently working Cameroonian graduates.



Source: Own research 2008-2010.

Figure 8: Comparing the labour market entry patterns

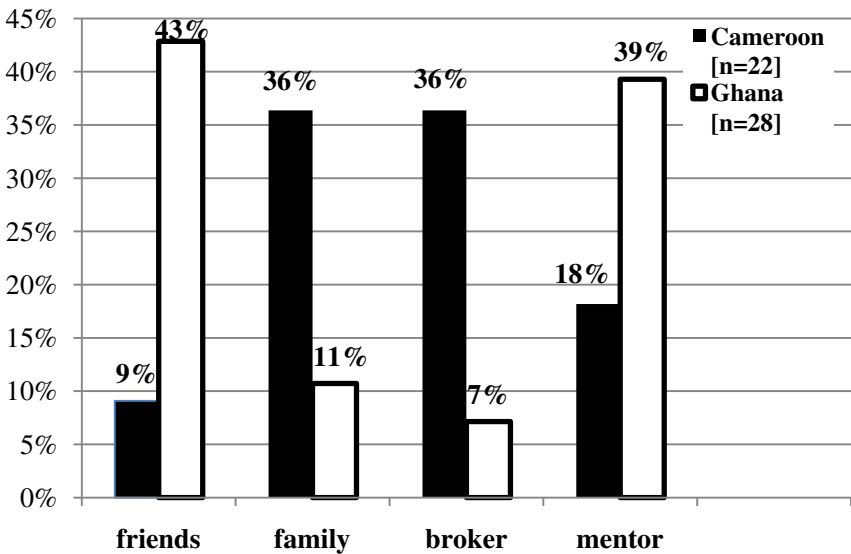
Does the finding that more Ghanaians achieve their employment contracts on merit and less through sponsorship, in contrast to their Cameroonian counterparts, suggest that Cameroonians are less qualified than Ghanaian graduates? The contrary is the case. The profile of the Cameroonian graduates who studied in Germany is even higher. Cameroonians often have additional qualified work experience from Germany, have a higher educational degree, up to PhD level and in addition, they also have better financial resources because they stay in Germany longer and can accumulate their savings during this period (cf. information about the graduate's opportunities chapter 5.2). This counters the preparation model of Cassarino (2004) in so far as it shows that not the time of the accumulation period and preparation phase is relevant but the resources, which only can be successfully translated into capital if they interlock like cog wheels. If one resource is missing, the labour market entry becomes difficult and the graduates need a compensating resource. This, in consequence, leads to the suggestion that more Cameroonians were sponsored because of this group's limited access to particular categories of personal contacts.

Within all patterns, personal contacts played a crucial role. The role has been determined by the pattern: achievers mostly needed a personal contact to open a door for them by giving a tip about an upcoming vacancy or by recognising their educational achievement. Those who arranged their entry-level employment needed a person who could formally act as an employer to comply with the criteria of the reintegration programme. Their position was often newly created and thus the pattern resembled a job creation measure. Those who were sponsored gained credit from a third person who – more or less discreetly – commended the fact that they had been educated abroad in Germany. Personal contacts which were relevant in the fourth and final pattern of becoming independent belonged to international business-related networks. These roles have become clear but it has not been touched on systematically, who actually fills these roles, meaning if all people in a person's network – family, friends, acquaintances, working colleagues and alike – can carry out these tasks. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter about who the graduates actually have to know to get a job.



## 7. “Who you have to know”

As the previous chapter revealed, each pattern of labour market entry included the resource of personal contacts. This importance of personal contacts in entering the labour market again indicates both countries’ lack of transparency in the labour markets. Despite this commonality, the degree to which the labour markets lack transparency seems to differ according to country. This assumption is made based on the fact that the graduates of both groups contacted different categories of persons in their job search. Cameroonians had to rely very much on relatives and kin, which is a general sign of very intransparent labour markets in which job relevant information is handled extremely exclusively, access being given only to close group members (here the family), whereas Ghanaians quite often approached their employers directly, as the bar chart in figure 9 below shows.



Source: Own research 2008-2010.

Figure 9: Comparison of personal contacts in the job search.

Even though the sample size of 50 is rather small and thus is only suggestive, it at least shows a trend: the group of the Cameroonian graduates in the sample [m=22] primarily accessed their first employment through the help of family and kinship contacts (36%) or by the same amount (36%) were job placed externally. Only in 9% of the cases did a friend assist with the job search and not even 20% of the Cameroonian respondents approached their employers directly. Interviewees in the

Ghana group [n=28], in contrast, got their jobs through their friends and colleagues (43%) or approached their employers directly (39%). Only 11% among the Ghanaians used family ties for entering the labour market and the minority of 7% asked for job placement. The picture shows the clear trend that the Cameroonian job searchers made use of what had been labelled by Granovetter as “strong ties” (1995: 53).<sup>168</sup> Ghanaians in general had a broader range of different “weak tie” (Granovetter 1995: 53) relationships which became helpful in their job search. More relevant than the ties between the agents is the question of what resources the particular personal contacts of the job searchers had. The difference in jobs the graduates finally obtained through these contacts depended not on the fabric of their relationship – whether they had very close relationships or not – but on the positions these particular contacts held in society and the economy.

Sorting the social contacts according to the employment entry situation was not always easy. Often more than one social contact was involved in the job search situation, and job searchers sometimes used parallel strategies. For instance, it was difficult to distinguish between social contacts who had previously been known in another context. This concerned for instance the friends and acquaintances who had initially met as national service colleagues but later became small-scale entrepreneurs themselves and thus served as employers in the process of arranging an entry-level job. Those contacts I assigned to the category ‘friends’ instead of ‘direct contact’.

In addition it was problematic to define which contact was the relevant person in the job search of someone who had sent his sister or brother to deliver his application personally to the desk of a recruiting officer or a Head of Department in a university. I assigned such situations, which appeared twice (once in Ghana, once in Cameroon), to the family contact. Without the in-depth description of the whole application process, such cases would have appeared as if the jobseekers had directly applied to their potential employers.

However, a general tendency has become clear and one must keep in mind when interpreting the graph that the cases, which have been sorted into various categories, might be not as homogenous as the graph suggests at first sight. Even though it is barely possible to present all social interactions during the job searches of my respondents, the following sub-chapters offer insights into the complex situations through which these contacts turn out to become the job searchers social capital. Five distinct categories of personal contacts which repeatedly appeared in various patterns are now described in-depth: friends, families, brokers, mentors and contacts who can block the labour market entry. Their functions change in correlation

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<sup>168</sup> Granovetter did not distinguish between family and friends but grouped both categories under the label of “strong ties” (1995: 53) (cf. chapter 3.2).

to the particular pattern in which they appear, as table 12 shows. Again, black highlighted patterns/contacts have been found to be dominant in the group of the Cameroonian interviewees and the grey highlighted ones are dominant among the Ghanaian group.

Table 12: Personal contacts of job searchers and their function.

<b>Pattern/ Contact<sup>169</sup></b>	<b>Achieving</b>	<b>Arranging</b>	<b>Being sponsored</b>	<b>Becoming independent</b>
<b>Friends</b>	identifying vacancy	identifying vacancy/ direct em- ployment	working in high places	blocking
<b>Family</b>	identifying vacancy	identifying vacancy/ direct em- ployment	providing higher status	none
<b>Broker</b>	overqualified/ mismatching	increasing reputation	identifying workplace/ persuading	none
<b>Direct employer</b>	mentoring/ blocking	mentoring/ blocking	none	none
<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>identifying vacancy</b>	<b>offering employment</b>	<b>increasing reputation</b>	<b>supporting business</b>

Source: Own research.

These distinct functions of the job searcher’s personal contacts is now discussed in-depth. The first section reconstructs the function of the job searcher’s ‘friends in the right places’ (7.1). These friends are usually persons with whom they have shared certain times in their past, not necessarily very close friends, but can also be temporary contacts or acquaintances. They can open a door to securing an interview appointment, leading to achievement. Friends can act as an entry port to appear officially as an employer in the case where the graduates arrange their return. They can function as sponsors if they themselves have a higher reputation and work in high-level places. However, friends can also disappoint, especially as has been seen in the cases presented already of those who became independent – and

<sup>169</sup> The contact categories highlighted in grey were found to be dominant in Ghana, whereas those highlighted in black appeared dominant in Cameroon.

had been cheated (cf. chapter 6.4). In sub-chapter 7.2, selected cases show how ‘family connections’, which are obliging strong-tie networks that a person cannot change or choose, provide a safety net for arrangements and – in cases where the graduate’s family have a higher social status – create prestige and the graduate’s symbolic capital. Reintegration counsellors and recruiters who ‘broker’ (7.3) information about vacancies as their job and who thus have a professional relationship with the job searchers compensate for the graduate’s lack of social capital. They sponsor them by setting their clients in the right perspective to attract potential employers. In the category of the ‘mentors’ (7.4) a relationship is described which applies in the situation in which the job searchers directly approached an employer. From some employers they received support in the job search and their careers. These were respectable persons who were completely convinced by their former students’ or employees’ educational achievements – and thus the mentors were sure of their loyalty, too. Very often, but not exclusively, these kinds of relationship in the job search were found between students and their former professors.

It follows the reconstruction of situations in which personal contacts to direct employers in exceptionally negative cases can turn out as an obstacle and ‘block’ (7.5) the returning graduate’s labour market entry. The final sub-chapter 7.6 draws attention to the graduates’ networks. It is demonstrated that a major difference exists between the networks of graduates in the two countries. The Cameroonian graduates group have built a broad variety of artificial alumni networks in order to communicate business-related information, whereas the Ghanaians can rely on naturally existing networks that already are set in place, their cliques from Germany.

## **7.1 Friends in the ‘right’ places**

This section deals with the category of those personal contacts which the respondents of this study talked about as ‘friends’ who had been very helpful in their job search. Friends appeared in the stories of the graduates in two situations: first as helpful door openers and secondly as potential entry ports where these friends could officially start working at. Apart from their common background that led them to being friends with one another, all persons in this category had one thing in common: they had access to the working world because they were in employment themselves. However, the most important resource these friends provided to the job searchers was information about upcoming vacancies.

Especially in Ghana, friends seem to be a very effective personal contact in the labour market because they reduce the job search duration for both: the job searchers by giving information about a job and the employers who recruit based on their employees’ referrals. In contrast, the situation seems to be different for the Cameroonian graduates who have returned. They mention that they have a limited number of friends because many of them have emigrated abroad, too. Aggravating this

situation, the interviews suggest that the Cameroonian labour market functions differently and labour market information is not communicated through friends.

The connotation of the term ‘friend’ in the context of the interviews is infused with a broad meaning. Usually the principle of “homophily” (Lin et al. 1981, Lin 2000) is regarded as a clear sign of the emotional closeness between persons and thus an indicator for the strength of their relationships, which would mean that friends are related through “strong ties” (cf. Granovetter 1995: 53). However, this is not confirmed by the data in this study. The analysis, especially from interviews in Ghana, challenges both of the following hypotheses, that the more attributes people have in common, the higher the durability of the friendship (cf. Heuser 2012: 54) and the closer the ties (cf. Lin et al. 1981). It rather seems that persons who are of help in the job search are temporary friends, and that the relationship can be strategically activated. This would also explain why many respondents who had help from their friends to access the labour market at the time of the interview were not necessarily in touch with these persons anymore. These friends in their stories were schoolmates and fellow students from university in their home as well as in their host country, friends from the neighbourhood they had grown up with or with whom they had shared sporting activities, friends from church as well as acquaintances known from national service (exclusively in Ghana).

In the group of the Ghanaian interviewees, about half of those who mentioned friends as helpful contacts said that they had known their friends from their national service times. Those contacts turned out to be very helpful (cf. Ghana cases #06, cf. #17) when the former national service colleagues had founded a small business and therefore were in a position to employ. Then, the entry-level employment was ‘arranged’. The former friends could serve as an entry port and provide the official basis to employ their friends formally. Of course, these were often only jobs in the lower segment because in reality these friends could barely pay the graduates who just had returned from Germany with a master’s degree. Only in combination with reintegration assistance did these friends become helpful ports of entry into the labour market. Mrs. K. (Ghana case #06), who had studied environmental engineering and who arranged her entry-level employment, explains her situation in this regard, when I ask her how she had found her job:

“I had a personal relationship with her [managing director] before going to school [university]. So even when I was in school - when I was in Germany she also came to Netherlands for some short period like one month. I even visited her at Netherlands. I went to spend a night or two with her in Netherlands. So I had this close relationship with her so it was based on dialogue, that [I said]: ‘Oh I am coming down, do you do you have a place for me in your company because I would like to come and work. So if you, if I can come and work with you?’ ‘Fine’, she said ‘no problem’. And at that time too she had won some contracts to supply drinking water to some communities. So she was like ‘Oh yes, you can come because I have even won some contracts

and you can come and like assist with the implementation'. I said 'Ok fine'. That was how come I got the job" (Ghana interview #06; 02.07.2008: 487-503).

Mrs. K. points out that she had a "*personal relationship*" with the boss of the NGO she had started working for. When I ask her from where she knows the woman, she only briefly mentions that the woman had been her boss during national service times, being a lecturer for whom Mrs. K. worked as an assistant. Over time, she says, they developed a friendship. From the perspective of Mrs. K., she at first stresses only the point that they had known each other. Therefore – and this clearly is an interpretation only – I sorted this category under the label of friends. What is more interesting is the fact that K. started working in a NGO which had not yet established a solid foundation but just "*won some contracts*". This indicates that the project funding was there but the salary for Mrs. K's work and the equipment still had to be provided through reintegration assistance. A clear case that falls under the pattern of arrangements. Others had received a tip from their former national service colleagues to reapply at the place where they formerly had been (Ghana case #13, #21, #24).

However, the other half of Ghanaians who found their first job through friends reported that they knew their friends from school or university in Ghana, as well as in Germany. They became friends based on a mixture of emotional intimacy and the exchange of emotional states as well as a great deal of utility (cf. Heuser 2012: 54). In this regard, Mr. Y. (Ghana case #14) remembers his old friends who went to the same university for the first degree. Some of these he calls his "*good friends*". He briefly outlines their impressive trajectories:

"Something about them? One of them is in the ministry of agric. He is still there now. We schooled together. We had our first degree here [in] this college. And he still remains a good friend. The other one of them is now in Sweden with his wife doing his PhD. We were also colleagues but he did animal science. That was a very, very good friend. We shared so many things, we even share some secrets [laughing]. I can tell you one for example: girlfriends! [laughing], getting drunk and misbehaved sharing some details. The third guy is in London now married to a Ghanaian. He is jobbing. He is working and tells me he really wants to go back to school. He has master's degree and he wants to go back to school. The one in Sweden and the one in London picked me from the airport. And than this other fourth one, he was a colleague in the same department, he is now the country director for [company name], the market leader importing from Holland. He is the country manager. These four were very instrumental when I arrived, two of these were able to give me some work. The one at MOFA [Ministry of Food and Agriculture] and the one at the firm. The other in Sweden (...) the other one in London he came down two months ago" (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 192-210).

The careers of Y's friends have developed impressively: one is working for the ministries, another one is in a high managerial position. Interestingly, Y. speaks frankly of his friends as being "*instrumental*" in his job search. Upon his return he says he contacted these friends strategically:

"A week after I arrived that was when I started going out to contact my old friends because I was thinking about job, job, job. So I started asking where is this person, where is this person. That was the way I went about my friends. They are old friends who have been in the system for long and they have good information. That is why I did a list of all my friends and out of these, two of them [they] were very helpful, yes. So and I got some jobs from them. That's what I did: contacting them on phone, three of them I went to their homes" (Ghana interview #14, 09.07.2008: 171-178).

When asked why he refers especially to these four particular friends, Y. mentions trust as the most important element:

"They are people I can rely on, I can trust them really. They are good because one other thing is that they give good advice. Yes. There are friends who want to benefit from you and they don't give any input, they just want to subtract things away from you. But these guys are not like that. I reason with them at the same level in terms of business, trust, how to make it in life, what to do and when we sit down to talk is very productive and they are very honest and disciplined. They don't have a wife and a girlfriend alongside. No they are not the type and at the time I came they were the ones I could immediately contact. I had lost some of the contacts of the others but for these ones I still had the contacts, they were the very ones I grouped to" (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 242-254).

Y. emphasises that he "*grouped*" with people who have the "*same level in terms of business, trust, how to make it in life*". By referring to such common ground as the main basis of their relationship, Y. supports the hypothesis that social networks work best for group members who have matching attributes. However, homophily alone does not make a relationship sustainable. What made the contacts between Y. and his friends last were that they "*shared details*" from a common past. Y. laughs loudly, remembering the "*secrets*" he shares with his friends from university. These intimate experiences, in addition to the more serious business-related values, are the basis for doing each other favours such as giving referrals and providing jobs. That friends in the job search can also be temporarily close is shown in the next case of Mr. H. (Ghana case #26). H. tells me that a friend whom he knew from Germany made the contact between him and a small company, which resulted in arranged entry-level employment without a formal recruitment procedure:

"How I got to [name of the workplace]? A friend of mine who was working in there introduced me (...) and then I contacted the director

and then I contacted them when I was still in Germany. (...) I briefed him [director] about my study area and blah, blah and there was no interview. At that time, he [director] had a project they wanted to undertake, so they asked me to come along and then be part of that project” (Ghana interview #26; 10.09.2009: 251-257).

Asking Mr. H. who this friend was who gave him the information about the job, he also recalls from which occasion he knows this friend:

“Oh, I got to know him in Germany when we were doing the master’s degree. But we got closer at I think two, three years. (...) I didn’t know him in Ghana before (...) He is a nice person, funny, you know always hanging around (...) We were students and we use to hang around in bars. We were about four Ghanaian students and I think he was the only one that had similar lifestyle like me. So we hang around at the bar sometimes” (Ghana interview #26; 10.09.2009: 325-339).

The basis of this friendship is clear: Mr. H. and his friend have shared good times together in Germany. Among the group of Ghanaians who are at H’s university at that time, he says he chose the person as a friend with a “*lifestyle*” close to his. He assumes that their mutual experiences are the core reason why H’s friend exclusively informs him about the job opportunity: “*Of course we were closer and we share more things than the rest of the people. And I think that time; I had finished my thesis so I was available. The others were still running*” (Ghana interview #26: 397-399). Nevertheless, the friendship seems to be only a temporary one. When asked what his friend from back in Germany is doing by now, H. does not know: “*We haven’t been in touch that much but I know he has a wife and he went to do this post graduate studies and he finished. I don’t know if he has got a job. Because we haven’t actually been in touch that much*” (Ghana interview #26: 351-354).

Similarly strategically, Ms. S. from Ghana (case #27) seems to use her friends in the job search. “*You need to know people in the right places*” (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 483-484) she tells me during our interview. Ms. S. had returned from Germany after completing her English master’s degree programme in the subject of International Resource Management. When we meet in Ghana it is early 2009 and at that time the first wave of the global economic crisis has reached a peak, which has hit Ghana. By then, not only the private sector lacks investors and thus employers are reluctant to recruit, but also recruitment in the public sector has come to a temporary slowdown due to the financial crisis. At this time I meet S. in Accra in her mother’s house, where she tells me that getting a job has become more difficult than she expected.



When we had met more than a year earlier<sup>170</sup>, S. were very optimistic about her professional future and had many plans about becoming self-employed upon her return: “*Oh - I am a dreamer - I dream BIG [laughs]. I will go back to Ghana. Basically I am giving myself the next five years and I should be starting something. I prefer to be an entrepreneur*” (Ghana interview #27; 07.06.2008: 140-141). Since her return she has become more focussed on waged employment. In consequence, she searches for vacancies. For this purpose, she uses many different information channels: the Internet, newspapers and her friends:

“There is a website, ‘www.jobsinghana.com’. It is one of the very good sites that is being managed in Ghana now. And it gives you information about all the current jobs, on all the area, education, health, and environment. It gives all new openings coming and one thing I have noticed is that the job openings have new jobs in ‘jobsinghana’ first before it even shows in the newspapers. So I usually go regularly. I have an internet connection, a modem at home so I get on line in the evenings, look for all the possible opening that look interesting to me, then I draft my application letter, sort out my CV and send it up to them. And then from the newspapers and then my friends, my working colleagues who I know are in the working field have given them copies of my CVs so if anything comes up, they can put it in for me” (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 425- 438).

S. already indicates that the problem with vacancies is that they might be not new anymore as they have been advertised and thus may already have been taken: “*One thing in Ghana, looking for job is that before they put their applications in the newspaper people have already told their friends*” (Ghana interview #27: 479-481). Knowing this, to identify vacancies that are more recent she says she actively searches via her friends and involves them in her job search as her informants. For this reason, she tells me that she socialises with a broad range of her peers in the evenings: “*I contact friends in the evening. Sometimes we meet after drinks or just have a chat*” (Ghana interview 27: 400-401). Such occasions, during which members of a network meet informally and job-relevant information is passed on more or less as a side issue, are the so-called “maintenance events” as coined by Granovetter (1995: 82). Such weekly after-work meetings in open-air pubs are quite common in Ghana and have become a major setting in which job-relevant

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<sup>170</sup> Ms. S. is one of the four persons I interviewed as a student in their final year in Germany and whose career I followed. When she returned to Ghana she gave me the opportunity to have a second interview with her, as a job searcher.

information is circulated.<sup>171</sup> On these occasions, she makes her job search strategically known to her friends:

“I am trying to re-establish all my networks. People I have known from primary school to wherever. For instance, the bank I went to, to have my interview to the very last stage. She [contact person] was my mate in primary school. My mate in primary school. She called me and I said, ‘What is up. Do you have any opening?’ She said ‘Ooh, they are going to do recruitment very soon!’ So I quickly sent her my CV and she pushed it through the system for me and I got called. It didn’t get me a job but at least, it gave me a chance to go through the interview” (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 485-492).

Ms. S. knows that before vacancies are officially advertised online or in newspapers, they are quickly channelled informally between the employees of the firm or organisation, who forward this information to their job-seeking friends and relatives. Therefore, in order to secure information about these ‘hidden’ vacancies (cf. chapter 3) as early as possible, she knows she has to re-establish relationships with people in all her “*networks*”, especially with those who are already in employment themselves. They are, so she hopes, in a position to make her aware of an opening and, more importantly, can push her application through. Here S. explains what it actually means then to have an application “*pushed through the system*”:

JB: “So how did she do it? I mean she went to the human resource person and then?”

Ms. S.: She is working in the company so she just gave it [application] to one of the colleagues and said ‘Ooh, this [is] a friend of mine, she has got master’s, I think she is worth [a look]’. So the person took my CV, looked through it and then said ‘Ok’ (...). Yes. I have the qualifications. My qualifications look interesting enough and then he added me to the list but if I had added it to the main bulk there will be like [makes a face to show how huge the pile of applications is]. And if you are not lucky they don’t get to you, that’s it, you are forgotten. Unfortunately, but that is what happens” (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 615-625).

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<sup>171</sup> Having attended such gatherings with one of my informant’s friends, it also became clear that these social gatherings are structured hierarchically: the one who is most successful in this group, the one who has the highest reputation and salary, also has obligations: they must pay the bills for the whole group. It was impressive to witness how much money on such frequent occasions was spent (on average GHC 70, which by then was equal to about EUR 50). The amount spent in one night just on drinking beer and having kebabs before lunch was more than the monthly wage of an average blue-collar worker in Ghana (field notes Ghana 12.09.2009).

Ms. S' explanation reveals that an application has to be handed in as early as possible and it has to catch the attention of officials, otherwise the application might easily be overlooked despite the qualifications of the applicant. Because of the large number of incoming applications the attention of the person in charge of recruiting decreases. A reference from an employee putting in a word for a friend by saying "*I think she is worth it*" automatically revives this attention and with it the hope that the lengthy recruiting process might come to an end by selecting the proposed candidate. This selection, however, is only possible if qualification and skills match the demand, too. Only then is an interview secured, the most crucial step towards getting a job<sup>172</sup>, continues Ms. S. in her story:

"The main thing is getting the chance to go for the interview. (...) Once you get to the interview, then you can prove yourself to the panel you are talking to. Because sometimes when somebody sees your CV, he is just kind of 'Ooh, I am going to put you somewhere' but when somebody is able to push it through for you and you get to the interview stage, then the people can see that this lady is very determined, very outspoken, very dynamic. Then you can impress them. That is the main thing. Getting to the interview stage, that is the main thing in Ghana, because several people are sending their application" (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 595-604).<sup>173</sup>

It shows that getting to the stage of an interview situation is the most crucial step before finding employment, and the most difficult, "*because several people are sending their application*". Here, personal contacts, who on the one hand are friends of the job searchers and on the other are employees, can become quite an effective way for employers to make a pre-selection of their candidates.

Interestingly, friends seemed to have a lesser impact among the Cameroonian respondents, for in only two cases they said that friends had become helpful in the job search. In both cases friends had identified a local NGO in which a position could be easily created. Mr. Y. (Cameroon case #17) found his job through his best friend, an "*ol kwata friend*"<sup>174</sup>, who told Y. about a particular NGO in their home region, the director of which he knew well. Y. eventually arranges his labour mar-

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<sup>172</sup> Ofori and Aryeetey confirm that getting to the interview stage is the most crucial step in Ghana for obtaining work (2011: 48).

<sup>173</sup> In this particular case, Ms. S. does not get the job although she performs very well. Afterwards she finds out that instead of her, a master's degree candidate, a national service personnel member of lower formal qualification has been given the job. This is, as she knows, a common strategy of employers to cut down labour costs, especially since the times of the economic crisis in 2008. Thus, after 12 months unsuccessful job searching, she starts working for her cousin, who has a small company in the mining business.

<sup>174</sup> Pidgin English for "friend from the neighbourhood".

ket entry in this NGO with the help of reintegration assistance. The second case (Cameroon case #06) is quite similar. Information from a former friend also leads to an arrangement in an NGO. Unlike the case of the Ghanaian interviewees, friends seemed to have less played a role in helping the graduates to identify a regular vacancy for them to apply officially. There are a number of factors that could serve as an explanation for this. First, officially advertised vacancies are very scarce in Cameroon. However, this argument does not hold true because as has been shown in chapter 5.3, the labour market situation in Ghana regarding the hidden labour market is similar to that in Cameroon. A second factor could be that those Cameroonians who lived for a longer period in Germany, simply lost track of their friends in Cameroon and at the same time a large number of people in their age group of the respondents emigrated abroad, too. Mr. X. indicates this (Cameroon case #20) during our interview. He blames large-scale emigration for not being in close touch with friends and acquaintances in Cameroon when he returns after 11 years:

“I can say at the moment one is very lucky to have many close friends in Cameroon because too many people of my generation (...). Ahm, 95% of the friends that I have, they are no more in this country, so now one has to make new friends and it is not always easy. Yeah, because most of my friends, they are not around except one or two. They mostly come back to Cameroon during the December period (...). We just pray that one day I see somebody but it's, it's not easy, it's not easy. The amount of the people leaving the country [and who] are not coming back. I don't know how Cameroon is going to survive exactly. We have a lot [more people who are] out of the country than in the country. (...) So, people are always trying to go out in search of better lives. But, you know, I can always say it always depends on circumstances. People who are deeply rooted in Cameroon like us, we have families here you know, families. There is no need for us sitting somewhere. I mean, even when you [go abroad] for education, you always come back because the private sector is, it's growing. I always say anywhere you have an opportunity, you should just consider it” (Cameroon interview #20, 28.05.2010: 107-127).

This quote drastically shows the consequences of the large-scale emigration during the last two decades. Mr. X. speaks of 95% of his friends who are not in the country anymore, but abroad. Unlike those who remain abroad, Mr. X. expresses his strong attachment to his country, being “*deeply rooted like us*”. His return, he claims indirectly, also depended “*on circumstances*” and these in turn base on having “*families*” in Cameroon. His statement points slightly to another factor that could serve as a possible interpretation of the finding that friends in the job search of Cameroonian graduates play a marginal role: because recruitment in Cameroon does not function as much through referrals of friends. This suggestive finding seems likely in light of the following cases. They show that Cameroonians who

have studied in Germany and returned tell stories of people they know from former times, even people who are in the labour market, but they do not seem to have kindled these relationships as strategically in the job search as the group of Ghanaian respondents described. That Cameroonians more likely lost track of their old friends from the early school times during their sojourn abroad is explained by Mr. K. from Cameroon (case #08) who was in Germany for 11 years:

“If one is in a big city and does not know people like that, it’s already a bit complicated, not just a bit, it’s getting complicated. (...) I mean, if you go somewhere for five years or more than five years living somewhere, then you do not have contact with so many people here. Like me, so at some point I realised I have maybe just my family that I still know, because they have always asked after me (...) And now I’m starting to meet other people again, he (...) when you come [back] here, it is different than during school when people had time and you easily got to know people. Most of the people that you knew from then, are busy (...). Yes, ohh, most are in their family and so on. (...) I have a colleague, a former fellow student I have studied with, who has also studied geography. He started working a month ago for the community, for the city here. Yes, we meet from time to time on weekends to drink beer [laughs loudly]” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 152-170).<sup>175</sup>

K. notes that it is very difficult to return after five or more years and apart from family members, he lacks social contact with friends. He starts re-establishing his relationships only with one of his former friends. This “*former fellow student*” today works for the community. Interestingly this friend does not seem to have been able to identify a vacancy for him. Also in a few other cases K. knows what his friends do for a living. Their careers seem to be respectable: one is a lawyer and another one “*has to do with business*”. All these persons could have become an interesting source for K. in his job search, as in the case of most of the Ghanaian

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<sup>175</sup> German original: “Wenn man in eine große Stadt keine Leute kennt und so was, wird’s schon `n bisschen kompliziert, nicht nur ein bisschen, es wird schon kompliziert. (...) Ich meine, wenn man irgendwo fünf Jahre oder mehr als fünf Jahre irgendwo lebt, dann hat man nicht so viele Kontakt mit Leuten hier. Wie ich, also, irgendwann hab ich gemerkt, ich hab nur vielleicht meine Familie, die ich noch kenne, weil sie haben immer nach mir gefragt (...) Und jetzt fange ich an, andre Leute wieder hier zu treffen, he (...) wenn man hier [zurück] kommt, ist [es] nicht mehr wie in der Studienzeit wo man so viel Zeit gehabt hat und so viele Leute kennenlernt. Die meiste Leute, die man von früher kannte, sind beschäftigt (...). Ja, ohh, die meisten sind in ihre Familie und so. Aber ich treffe [sie] schon. Ich hab einen Kollegen, ein ehemaliger Kommilitone, also mit dem ich studiert habe, der hat auch Geowissenschaften studiert. Der arbeitet hier also hat vor einem Monat angefangen bei der Community, also bei der Stadt, [zu arbeiten] hier und ja, wir treffen noch ab und zu am Wochenende, um Bier zu trinken [lautes Lachen]” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 152-170).

respondents. However, the relationship seems not to be re-activated because he says he has lost sight of them whilst being abroad in Germany. Dr. L. (Cameroon case #05) also mentions that after being 10 years in Russia and Germany it is difficult to keep track of friends, “*I was out for very long. So I have only one or two friends with whom I grew up*” (Cameroon interview #05; 03.10.2008: 350). Nevertheless, these friends are successfully embedded in the Cameroonian labour market, as he continues to tell me: “*They are working. They are successfully working. So one is a civil engineer. So he is involved in this road construction. Yes you have another one, who is a lecturer too. (...) So I can see them regularly*” (C-#05: 357-360). It is noteworthy at this point that despite having friends in the labour market, L. did not make use of them in his own labour market entry – he contacted the dean of the department directly but he was not a friend of his. Similarly, Mr. D. from Cameroon (case #14), who was abroad for 10 years, also has friends from the early days, but when I ask him if he knew helpful strategic contacts concerning the job hunt he says:

“To tell the truth I would say no. High school, yes. Few but very good friends. There is a journalist, who took communication studies. He works in an advertising agency in Douala. There is another girl in Italy who is a bit like that, ‘without papers’, who fights out there. There's another one that studied medicine and who is now in Mali. These are the three good friends from high school with who I am in contact. Others, we meet from time to time like that, walking in the street in Douala. I saw one with whom I had no contact. He was in the same class and we were not good friends. He is a magistrate in Nkongsamba [city in south-west of Douala]. He has become [magistrate] as soon as he finished the university, the same year like us, he left school at the judiciary. His dad was a minister here, so it is normal” (Cameroon interview #14, 11.05.2010: 361-373).<sup>176</sup>

Mr. D., like K., mentions only few friendly and close contacts from his secondary school time. Most of these friends are not in the country. One person, whom he met coincidentally in Douala, has a higher position as a city magistrate, and he of all

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<sup>176</sup> French original: “Pour dire la vérité je dis non. Du secondaire, oui. Quelques, mais de très bons amis. Il y en a un qui est communicateur, qui a fait les études de communication. Il travaille dans une agence de publicité à Douala. Il y a une autre fille en Italie qui est partie comme ça, sans papiers, qui se bat là-bas. Il y en a un autre qui a fait les études méde-cine et qui est actuellement au Mali. Voilà les trois bons amis du secondaire avec qui je suis en contact. Les autres, on se rencontre de temps en temps comme ça, dans la rue en marchant à Douala. J’ai vu un avec qui je n’avais pas de contact. On a fait la même classe et on n’était pas de bons amis. Il est magistrat à Nkongsamba [city in south-west of Douala]. C’est depuis dès qu’il a fini à l’université, la même année que nous, qu’il est parti à l’école de magistrature. Le papa a été ministre ici, donc c’est normal” (Cameroon interview #14, 11.05.2010: 361-373).

people is not a friend of D's. This is surprising because the connection to this former schoolmate would have been a possible source for his own career. However, by noting that "*the father was a minister*" D. indirectly indicates that it was not this person's own personal impact which enabled him to reach this high position. This leads to the next section, which discusses the impact of family connections in the labour market entries of the returning graduates.

## 7.2 Family connections

The common characteristic of the family's function in the labour market entry is that it is double-edged: interviewees from both countries indicate that their families provided a safety net by offering direct employment or identifying a vacancy in case the regular labour market entry of the returning migrants turned out to be problematic. Almost all the respondents also report that their families had expressed high expectations which weighed heavily on the graduates' shoulders. However, a substantial difference has to be mentioned between the respondents from the two countries: the interviews with the Cameroonian graduates evoke the notion that job-relevant information is naturally channelled through family members. This is in contrast to the statements of the Ghanaian respondents, who describe the role of their families in the job search as a quick working safety net in case of emergency. Their stories create the impression that they had used their families only exceptionally.

Such a situation is recalled by Ms. F. from Ghana (case #08) during our interview. She remembers that when she left Germany she already had employment and was granted study leave from her workplace. Hence, she expected to resume service in her former work. However, reality turned out differently (chapter 7.5 will introduce the case more in-depth) and she says she instead experienced harsh problems. The department for which she had been working suddenly blocked her re-entry into the Ghanaian labour market. Thus, to bridge this unexpected unemployment she started working in her father's NGO: "*for the meantime that is what I do, to help my father's organisation*" (Ghana interview #08, 03.07.2008: 216). Similarly, Ms. S. from Ghana (case #27) describes how she experienced unexpected difficulties upon her return. Because of the economic crisis she did not find adequate work and alternatively started helping out in her cousin's small company, instead of getting "*bored sitting at home doing nothing*" (Ghana interview #27; 25.09.2009: 395-396). Both women, Ms. F. and Ms. S., are surely overqualified for the work they carry out and receive almost no salary because it is a family obligation to help out. Therefore, they describe this first employment at their relatives' places as a temporary solution only.

The next case from Cameroon shows that family members – similar to the function described earlier in the context of friends – identify vacancies for their kin who then in the next step secure a position by demonstrating their skills. Mr. O., a mechanical engineer from Cameroon (case #01) accomplished his labour market entry, as described earlier in detail (cf. chapter 6.1). However, he only managed to access the labour market because family members allocated him to vacancies. In our interview he describes that the first job was identified by his uncle:

“It's my uncle. (...) who also works in the field of mechanical engineering and anyway, when I asked my uncle about this internship he immediately told his friend to find a place for me, for a student as an intern and he found me a place. I did not know the company” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 97-101).<sup>177</sup>

The crucial aspect about O's story is that his personal contact in the job search, his uncle, is a contact who is embedded in the labour market. He himself worked in the same field as O. and he thus had a number of friends in the business to make contact with for his nephew, Mr. O. After his first internship, O. continues to gain practical work experience and for this reason again contacts a family member, this time his cousin who also was employed:

“The company [name] I knew already from before because I have a cousin who worked there (...) Yes before, before, before I flew out to Germany, I knew this company. It was also a chance for me (...) I was with one of my cousins. He had a job at that firm and he took my application and gave it to this company. (...) Yes, and then I made contact with this company. I spoke with the manager” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 96-141).<sup>178</sup>

It is noteworthy that O. not only finds out where to apply, but he also gets references through his relatives who work and thus have contact with potential employ-

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<sup>177</sup> German original: “Es ist mein Onkel. Der hat ein eh einen Bekannten, der auch in dem Bereich Maschinenbau arbeitet und eh, als ich mein Onkel gebeten habe dieses Praktikumsplatz der hat sofort sein Freund gesagt, der find ein Platz für mich für ein Student als Praktikant und er hat für mich ein Platz gefunden. Ich kannte die Firma nicht” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 97-101).

<sup>178</sup> German original: “Die Firma [name] kannte ich, schon von vorher weil ich hab auch ein Cousin, der dort gearbeitet hat (...) Ja deshalb vorher, schon vorher, schon bevor ich nach Deutschland rausflog, kannte ich diese Firma. Das war auch eine Chance für mich (...) Und als ich mit der Firma [name] aufgehört habe, hab ich mich mit einem meiner Cousin getroffen, ich hab ihm gesagt, jetzt hab ich auch gehört und schon vorher hatte er ein Bewerbung, hat er mein Bewerbung genommen und bei diese Firma abgelegt. (...) Ja, und dann hab ich Kontakt mit dieser Firma [auf]genommen. Ich hab mit dem Geschäftsführer gesprochen” (Cameroon interview #01; 01.10.2008: 96-141).



ers: his uncle, who is a retired engineer and his cousin, who works in a construction firm. That O. gets a reference from his uncle and places his application through his cousin resembles the practice which in the previous chapter was labelled as ‘pushing’ the application through, in that case done by friends. What is different in the context of references provided through family members is that it provides security for both: the job searchers because they expect their family members to guide them to a fair employer, and the employers because they have more control over the new worker, who has been referred by a family member - he is expected to act loyally and is obliged to the family member who referred him for the job.

Another aspect that is relevant concerning the use of family contacts in the labour market concerns not only the fact that the family members themselves are in employment but also which social status the particular family has in society. In this context family names gain importance.<sup>179</sup> The reputation of a family’s name is demonstrated and relationships between family members are maintained during events which Granovetter has labelled as “maintenance events” (1995: 82). Families gather at weddings, funerals and baptisms.

That these events could possibly also maintain the reputation of the family is explained by one of my informal contacts from his own experience, A., a student from Cameroon. He studied in Germany and today is married and has a child in Germany. In our encounter he tells me that his mother, who lives in Cameroon, urged him to celebrate the baptism of his firstborn as a family event in Cameroon. At first, he says he was reluctant because he did not see why he should celebrate the occasion in Cameroon and did not find the time to travel. He was also aware of the costs the event would create. When he realised that his mother would become seriously upset about him rejecting her suggestion he changed his mind and agreed. Remembering this he laughs out loud in our conversation and admits that he felt as if his mother had just waited for the right occasion to ‘celebrate something’. His mother, he explains, descends from an important family that reflects their family name, which is well acknowledged in Cameroon. The mother, therefore, once had a high reputation in society and a well-paid position in the government, before the economic crisis in Cameroon. She still works as a clerk in a governmental department but no longer has the influence she once had. For A. it appeared as if she wanted to tell people that she was back again in society. In addition, he interpreted the situation as she seeing this as an appropriate occasion to introduce her son to

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<sup>179</sup> One sign that denotes whether a person descends from an important family is the surname. Especially in Cameroon, this is a phenomenon which not only identifies the social class but also the ethnic affiliation. This is also reflected in working life: employment contracts bear not only the names of the employee but also their father’s and mother’s birth names. Through this the job searchers reveal their ethnic affiliation and social status.

Cameroonian society in terms of networking for his job search, in case he one day returns from Germany. He remembers that the event lasted for two days and hundreds of neighbours and old friends of the family whom he had never seen before came from all over the country. Among the participants, only two persons were friends from his school time. He soon realised, he says, that his mother seemed to have lost her reputation and that thus it would not be possible for her to provide him with relevant job information for entering the public services. Remembering this short trip to Cameroon in the context of a potential job search, he suggests that he would have better chances of getting a job, or a project in the private sector. For accessing this part of the economy he would rather use contacts with some of his friends who have become 'big men' after they returned to Cameroon and who are now active in a particular business club (Germany, informal discussion 12.02.2009).

That having a well-known name makes a difference in the context of the job search is also the experience of Mrs. N.-C. from Ghana (case #23). She bears a family name that is associated throughout Ghana with elite and "*being rich*", but her nuclear family is from a less successful branch of the family tree. Thus, she never enjoys being rich but realises that through the name alone she already receives positive attention:

"The name, and I would say, the one who actually made the name popular was my father's big brother. He used to be in Nkrumah's government. Actually, he was once in government a popular political figure and he was quite rich. And his children, I would say, there are still quite a number of them around. They are really big people I would say (...) other cousins, other uncles; they have had a lot of people who have made it: doctors politicians here and there. Some good names, some bad names. So when you mention the name N.-C. almost everybody knows where you are coming from. That I think helped with the social life. And I think even now, because when I go somewhere (...) So normally, I just mention my first name, when I don't want that kind of attention" (Ghana interview #23; 04.09.2009: 120-134).

Even though she does not actively use her family name "*I just mention my first name when I don't want that kind of attention*" to gain benefits in the job search her statement expresses the power that can derive from the family's name alone and that it "*helped with social life*". However, there are also obligations deriving from having a highly reputed family name is associated with the elite establishment. This is shown in the case of Mrs. Q. from Cameroon (case #16). She recalls that she always had to be among the best in school:

“This has shaped my entire school career. I also knew when it was hard in high school, I knew I always had to be among the top ten because it was didn’t matter at home, only the result was looked at and also so as a result was I, I belong to one of the most important families here in Cameroon, because the people are very successful. Many among us have companies, are senior officials of the army or ministers, they really have [achieved something], they have become really good people, doctors and so on. (...) having only a high school diploma. No, that is not enough for us. You have to have a bit more. This has led to this diligence in education” (Cameroon interview # 16; 18.05.2010: 41-52).<sup>180</sup>

Q. explains that the expectations weigh heavily on her and other family members who are obliged to reproduce and even increase the family’s social status through their careers. This interpretation becomes likely in the light of her statement that she originates from an “*important family in Cameroon because the people are very successful*”. Hence, she perceives the success of her family as a product of the family members’ achievements. Of course, to maintain this status in society and to generate returns on her family’s financial and social investments in her education, the family members expect her to become successful in life so that she will be capable of supporting them, too. She mentions that she has always had to be among the best because she belongs to one of the most important families in Cameroon. At home, she says, everybody paid attention to her grades: “*Only having the Baccalaureate is not sufficient. You have to present a little more*”. What she means by “*a little more*” is having a respectable career to sustain not only herself financially, but also her family members. This, she admits, was not clear to her before she returned:

“Above all, I was not prepared for it. I did not expect that it would be so difficult for me, so hard, I was not prepared for it. Or you should also always support people on behalf of the family. [For someone who] never does what one, or you always think you should have the same lives only on behalf of the family and you give and you give, but that is not enough (...) you can give as you want, for certain peo-

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<sup>180</sup> German original: “Das hat meine ganze Schullaufbahn geprägt. Ich wusste auch, wenn es war schwer im Gymnasium war, wusste ich, ich musste immer unter die zehn Besten sein, weil es war keine egal zu Hause hat man nur auf das Ergebnis geguckt und hat auch so als Ergebnis bin ich, gehöre ich zu einer der wichtigen Familie hier in Kamerun, weil da die Leute sehr erfolgreich sind. Viele haben Firmen bei uns, sind sehr hohe Beamte von der Armee oder Minister, sie haben wirklich [etwas erreicht], sie sind wirklich sehr gute Menschen geworden, Ärzte und so. (...) nur Abitur haben. Nee, das reicht nicht aus bei uns. Da muss man ein bisschen mehr haben. Darum es kommt dann von diese Fleiß, von diese Erziehung” (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 41-52).

ple you never gave enough” (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 123-142).<sup>181</sup>

Mrs. Q. mentions in passing that she is obliged to support the family members of her extended family, in the “*family’s name*”. As has already been mentioned, the family’s name not only bears a burden and expectations but also supports the job searcher. When Q’s first job turns out to be unfair and she foresees problems with her immediate boss, Q. gets a reference from her uncle for the opportunity of an interview in a bank. Despite the reference, she still has to perform and to show that she is qualified:

“(…) you are recommended, or someone calls. And that’s again the many contacts you have, and I ended up here, but it’s not that you’re simply recommended and you immediately begin work, you know, I’ve had several interviews, I’ve had five with various directors and so, that’s pretty challenging. Or a test as well, I also had them and then, yes, I ended up in management” (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 363-369).<sup>182</sup>

Even though Q. has to deliver a high quality performance to start working in the bank she would probably never have got to the stage of an interview without her uncle’s intervention. One reason for this might be because she lacks the necessary educational qualifications: she studied translation sciences in Germany and has never worked in the field of economics. Another reason could be that jobs in this sphere of the labour market – decent work in the formal economy – are perceived as being distributed exclusively to established families with a certain social status.

This interpretation, that job-relevant information in the Cameroonian labour market is circulated exclusively through family contacts, could also serve as an explanation why Cameroonian graduates seem to be reluctant to return after having studied in Germany. I argue that most Cameroonians who are still in Germany fear that they originate from less well-established families who have no influence and can-

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<sup>181</sup> German original: “Vor allem, ich war gar nicht darauf vorbereitet. Ich habe nicht damit gerechnet, dass es mir doch so schwer fällt, ich war nicht darauf vorbereitet. Oder man soll auch immer Leute unterstützen im Namen der Familie. [Für jemanden, der] niemals was tut ne, oder man denkt immer ihr sollt das gleiche Leben haben nur im Namen der Familie und du gibst und du schenkst, aber das reicht nicht aus (...) du kannst geben wie du möchtest, für gewisse Leute hast du niemals genug gegeben” (Cameroon interview #16, 18.05.2010: 123-142).

<sup>182</sup> German original: “(...) man wird dann empfohlen oder es wird angerufen. Und das ist auch wieder die vielen Kontakte, die man hat und da bin ich hier gelandet, aber das ist nicht, dass man hier einfach empfohlen wird und dass man gleich die Arbeit anfängt, ne, ich hab schon mehrere Interviews, dort ich hab fünf gehabt bei verschiedene Direktoren und so, das ist schon ziemlich anspruchsvoll. Oder ein Test auch, hab ich auch gemacht und dann, ja, bin ich dann in eine Direktion gelandet” (Cameroon interview #16; 18.05.2010: 363-369).

not refer them to an employer. Those who originate from less influential families and have no friends in the right places are afraid that they will not even get to know about a vacancy. This concern is expressed in the statement of Mr. T. from Cameroon, who still studies in Germany and whom I interviewed in Germany about his career-plans (case #22):

“I know this system in Cameroon and I know if I send it they will not really read, that is for sure. Because in Cameroon you need more than that to send a CV. You have to know the people if you have contacts. People to know you can even start to look at your CV. (...) What is more difficult is even to know which organisations have openings because you cannot get information about this on the Internet so it is really complex. You need some other contact there and some other person who are already there who knows ‘Here is [a vacancy]’ to really assist you to place you and that is unfortunately the problem. (...) The point is that I have to know where [to apply] because ideally there are companies in Cameroon that need somebody for the job but they didn’t advertise it as on jobpilot and monster.de<sup>183</sup> where everybody see it. We [Cameroonians] don’t do it. I mean they tell relatives [laughs], they tell relatives: ‘You know, this position is open’ and then they get somebody around their circle. That is the problem. (...) just getting a job in Cameroon, coming from nowhere is really a nightmare, it is not going to [work]. It is not easy and for me, the perspective getting a job in Cameroon for me is as low as almost 0 per cent because I am not from a family that has status, that has contact. My family is more close in the Presbyterian church. What I can do more in my field [laughs], so I lack that political contact to help you in getting a job. So that is it but I am expecting that maybe through an international development organisation who I think they are going to be fair. Then, I can get a placement in Cameroon” (Cameroon interview #22; 03.05.2008: 680- 713).

Mr. T. refers to himself as “*coming from nowhere*” because he is from a family with low social status, and his father, who works as a music programmer in the Presbyterian Church, has no job relevant contacts who could help T. for his career in the field of economics. It becomes evident that he fears that a problem derives from having to use strong family ties when there is little to no social mobility. Hence, once the information on vacancies is channelled through family networks exclusively, this creates a kind of monopoly reserved for a small elite. In the case where one does not directly belong to this elite and lacks bridging contacts to members of such an elite, this can barely be compensated for by qualification, as contrastingly demonstrated by the respondents from the Ghanaian group. Thus, as

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<sup>183</sup> Global internet job search platforms.

Mr. T. from Cameroon claimed, neutral structures, international companies, and external brokers gain importance. They can at least give those who return the opportunity to get access to information about vacancies. This leads to the discussion in the next sub-chapter.

### 7.3 Brokers

This sub-chapter deals with social contacts who act as ‘brokers’ of job relevant information.<sup>184</sup> These brokers are external intermediaries and do not usually belong to the job searchers’ natural private social networks as was the case with the previous two categories of friends and family members. Often, personal contacts who fall under this category have a more formal and neutral role. They assist the graduates in their job search as a part of their official job. Their characteristics very much resemble the definition of Boissevain’s brokers:

“A broker is a professional manipulator of people and information who brings about communication for profit. He thus occupies a strategic place in a network of social relations viewed as a communication network” (Boissevain 1974: 148).

This very brief definition includes three relevant aspects: first, the function (professional manipulator); second, the activity (communication for profit); and third, the position (strategic place in a communicating network). This definition applies to the reintegration counsellors who work in the context of the reintegration programmes (cf. chapter 2.5) and thus are brokers in the job search. It is insider’s information about openings with which they deal that makes them become ‘brokers’ in the job search of returning migrants. This information is what Boissevain usually labels as “second-order resources” (1974: 147). Whereas first-order resources in the context of this study have jobs to offer personally, second-order resources have access to circles and persons who control the first-order resource, jobs. Interestingly, these second-order contacts often hold the professional position of secretaries in companies or organisations. The secretaries organise the administrative tasks of the companies and arrange their bosses’ schedules. They are thus in the strategic position of having the power to arrange appointments with the company’s director or to brief them informally about an incoming application. At

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<sup>184</sup> The term brokers described in this section should not be mistaken with ‘migration brokers’ as Alpes (2011: 38ff.) presented them in her work on emigration of Cameroonians. Whereas these migration brokers do the paper work for prospective migrants who want to go abroad, the brokers in the context of this study do the opposite: they counsel and job-place their clients, the returned migrants from abroad, into the local labour markets.

the same time, they have access to internal information concerning potential upcoming vacancies.

Maintaining the relationship with certain persons who are a network hub, as for instance secretaries, provides access to an excellent second-order contact for the brokers. This was exactly the configuration in the case of #09 from Ghana, who was sponsored (cf. chapter 6.3). The reintegration counsellor knew the secretary of a recognised international automobile company and through her arranged an appointment with the human resource person. It can be seen that people who act as brokers typically obtain a central position in a communication network. This is because they must have a sufficient amount of job-relevant information (cf. Boissevain 1974: 155-157). Again, this applies to the reintegration counsellors who at the time of the interviews used to have a central function within the network associations, which provide them with the basis to act as an information hub. For the sake of having a tailored match, brokers have to not merely bridge the two players, potential employee and employer, but to prepare their clients before they can start the job hunt. Preparing the job searcher for taking on employment upon return often also means lowering the candidate's expectations. Interestingly, the professional reintegration recruiters from both countries mention that graduates' expectations are often too high concerning their income possibilities and that they are no longer familiar with the realities at home.<sup>185</sup> The longer the students live abroad and the younger they were at the time of their emigration the more they develop unrealistic expectations.

What is more, preparing also includes formal matters, as for instance the writing of the CV and the motivation letter. Reintegration counsellors from both countries complained during the interviews that the majority of candidates do not present their applications in the required professional form. This concerns not only the content of the application but also the formal requirements. Especially in the case of the group of the Cameroonian graduates, a former reintegration counsellor notes that many Cameroonians who have lived for a longer time in Germany lose their French language skills and hence their applications written in French are full of syntax errors (Expert interview #04; 11.10.08: 73). As soon as this step of the preparation has been successful and the candidate receives an invitation for a job interview, the candidate has to be prepared for the personal interaction with the

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<sup>185</sup> In an informal talk, a Cameroonian recruiter was honest about having had so many problems regarding the aspect that people were not used to their home environment anymore. Those who have lived abroad for too long do not adjust easily to the system again. In consequence, he said they only complain about the slow pace of bureaucracy, the less transparent organised hierarchies, and the lack of security at the workplaces. The recruiter said that it would be better to prepare mentally for the return whilst still being in Germany before finally returning for good (Memo expert interview #14; 04.05.2010).

potential employer in order to perform suitably.<sup>186</sup> Second, the brokers must also communicate with the potential employers, who are usually persons of higher education profile and status. Thus, in order to be a successful broker, these intermediaries have in common that they are very flexible in their communication strategies. Whereas they must guide and advise the jobseekers, they must also convince the potential employers of the qualities of the proposed candidates' profiles. This sometimes is difficult because recruiters and reintegration counsellors have only an intermediary position, which is a lower position of power than the employers who hold, as mentioned previously, access to the first-order resource jobs. Therefore, brokers use additional incentives.

Whereas recruitment companies generally use their reputation as an incentive for the employers to acquire well-performing staff (cf. expert interview #01, 47-51), recruiters in the reintegration programme can make active use of the tangible incentives deriving from reintegration assistance. The programmes' incentives are attractive for the employers in two ways. They can afford someone who has a higher degree from abroad because this worker will receive an additional top-up salary and thus is not reluctant to work in a place which would normally not be able to pay an adequate salary. In addition, employers who take on staff who are supported through a German reintegration programme have the opportunity to benefit from their grant of workplace equipment, which in the long run will professionalise the organisation's performance. The interview analysis suggests that brokers without this incentive have an equal impact as friends who can give referrals but have less impact as strong family connections, especially in Cameroon. Why is it then that brokers, especially in Cameroon, are chosen by graduates who have studied abroad and return? The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a private recruitment agency in Ghana gives a general answer, likely to be valid for Cameroon as well:

“Because we are contacting the people for them [job searchers]. They don't have to have contacts. You know sometimes contacts are good. If you are referred you have a foot in the door so it helps but you can have all the contact and you are not the person with the drive. I certainly may employ somebody by contact but if you don't deliver I will

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<sup>186</sup> Especially in Cameroon, the recruiters stress that graduates who return from Germany often underestimate the formality of the first meeting with the potential employer. Often, the graduates adopt a German style, which is too casual. In Cameroon, the dress code requires at least a suit, tie and high-gloss polished shoes for men; for women a trouser suit or knee length attire. However, not only the physical appearance of the job searchers but also their formal attitude has to be trained prior to the interview. During a reintegration seminar for Cameroonian students in Germany, the local counsellor emphasised this aspect, because in Cameroon the 'patron' is treated much more like a person of general respect than is the case in Germany (Cameroon event #09; 15.05.2009).



not keep you. Contacts help, that's not what keeps the job" (Expert interview #01; 08.07.2008: 124-130).

The crucial aspect of recruiters having contacts is noted by a Cameroonian return migrant, recalling his own experience. When he returns he at first receives no replies to his applications because as an Anglophone Cameroonian he lacks sufficient French language skills but only identifies potential employers in the French region:

"When I came back I went to National Employment Funds (NEF) which many people underestimate and I am always telling them, 'Well, the National Employment Fund were able to take me to three interviews.' They tried their own best; they were able to give me three job interviews that is more than what I got from sending my applications to the companies" (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 248-254).

In the end, despite the effectiveness of NEF's job placement services in finding him interviews, X. secures himself a job in a new international company under British management because of his specific professional profile and probably because of his habitus, too (cf. chapter 6.3 'being sponsored'). The strength of brokers, in comparison to friends and family, also derives from the fact that they are supposed to act independently of social status and economic pressure, instead offering neutral services. This seems to have been more important for the job searchers in the Cameroon group because they said that they lacked sufficient personal contacts to friends. Family contacts only turned out to be capital for those who had family members who were well-embedded in the labour market or who were from families of higher social rank. Brokers, in contrast, are supposedly neutral because they work embedded in local organisations and receive their salaries through the German reintegration programmes.

The regular salary they receive covers their job placement activities. The services of these formal reintegration counsellors are free of charge for the clients and the employers.<sup>187</sup> They have the freedom and the duty to take on every client regardless of their financial and social background. Hence, they offer counselling and job placement services at a lower threshold and on a neutral basis. Despite the theoretical neutrality which gives brokers an advantage over less neutral personal contacts in the job search, the reputation of brokers is always at stake. This is because their work is open to public scrutiny. Boissevain (1974: 161) states in this regard that

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<sup>187</sup> This is unlike the practice of typical headhunters who primarily work on their own and thus have to charge fees for their services. These headhunters work mostly exclusively for companies in a higher segment, who can afford to pay premiums for their services.

the profit of a broker derives from the faith other people have in the outcome of the service.<sup>188</sup>

In turn, this also means that any mismatch harms the reputation and thus puts the job of the recruiter at risk. During a two-day informal internship with official NEF recruiters in Cameroon, I personally witnessed the extent of gratitude those clients showed whom they had successfully sponsored. In this regard, one of the NEF recruiters mentioned that as soon as she is on the street with her car, which bears the logo of the NEF, people on the street greet her happily. This gratitude and the social reputation deriving from it is like a second salary to her. However, the fact that the public observes the actions of the official brokers carefully ensures that brokers do the job as best as possible. Due to this public attention, therefore, she is forced to do a good job because otherwise her social reputation would be at stake. This loss of reputation would not only concern the standing of the individual broker, but also the name of the whole institution. The formal brokers who work for the alumni organisation GGAN in Ghana and for the PARIC at the Cameroonian NEF know this problem very well. As soon as a mismatch happens the whole programme and the organisation they work for is blamed.<sup>189</sup>

Concluding, this sub-chapter about the role of the brokers shows that brokers have the strength to overcome weak tie gaps in the job searchers' personal networks. They can even compensate for a job searcher's lack of social status because of coming from a poorer family or suffering from any kind of structural disadvantages. Despite these advantages deriving from their neutrality, one also has to keep in mind that disadvantages can arise from being sponsored by a neutral broker. The fact that the brokers are neither closely connected to the employer nor usually to the job searcher means trust in their judgement is fragile. In consequence, these sponsored relationships are often short-term because neither side trusts the other:

“Those entering through agencies, advertisements or programs will have a harder time fitting into this social structure; if they come from a different ethnic group and/or share few common experiences with the other workers, the difficulty will be accentuated” (Granovetter 1995: 135).

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<sup>188</sup> Of course, one must note that Boissevain explains the functions of brokers through the example of Sicilian mafia structures. It is interesting to see that the model itself is transferable to other contexts, such as the given example of job placement.

<sup>189</sup> This discrepancy between the low opinion of the service of the Cameroonian agency NEF and its factual positive outcome might have to do with the fact that the PARIC cannot offer more qualified jobs than actually exist in the system. In addition, in an internal evaluation of the PARIC Ngbwa Mbala (2007: 55) assumes it is impossible for the brokers to guarantee that returning migrants can make a sustainable career, but the returnees sometimes expect this from the professional recruiters.

What this means in the worst case is shown in the sad case of the Anglophone Mr. P. from Cameroon (case #10). During a preparation seminar in Germany he becomes familiar with the reintegration programme and receives counselling service from the PARIC. They match him with a local NGO in the Francophone region. After a few months, serious problems arise due to corruption. During our interview P. claims that he was the person who revealed this corrupt business but when he reported to the NGO boss, the situation escalated violently. P. left for his Anglophone home region, where he recovered. At the time of the interview, which was then five years after his return, he is a part-time lecturer at a local private education institute and has no stable source of income. In our interview he sounds very bitter about the reintegration service and mentions that he himself would never have started working for this NGO if it had not been for the reintegration counsellor convincing him to start working there. From my point of view as an outsider, it was impossible to tell where the problem actually lay and how the situation really happened, but what I could tell is that trust – which ideally exists between job searcher and employer when they start working with each other – had definitely not been the basis of their working relationship. P. trusted the service of the recruiter.

The same is likely to be true for the employer who might have trusted the service of the PARIC, instead of his new employee who he himself had not selected personally. Such situations can easily turn into major misunderstandings. Although these cases are comparably small in number (about three out of 10 of these working relationships sponsored by brokers were not sustainable but ended in conflict) they have the power to ruin the reputation of the whole programme. More sustainable than using a neutral broker as an intermediary who has access to second-degree resources is to mobilise relationships that are based on common intellectual grounds. This leads to the next helpful personal contact category, the mentors.

## **7.4 Mentors**

This sub-chapter presents the most successful category of personal contacts, mentors. They are a sub-group of directly approached employers. Falling under the sub-group of directly approached personal contacts, mentors are usually in a position to recruit, they have direct access to first-degree resources, employment. Some of the employers the graduates contacted directly, they knew already or they established a special kind of relationship with, mentor-like relationships. The interviews with graduates who got their jobs by approaching a mentor-like contact expressed that such relationships were more successful than others, because they built on having common objectives and values. These can be, for instance, the same research subject, a certain work ethic, or the joint aim of reinforcing progress in general.

Mentors are primarily parent-like persons of respect. In addition, they have the intention of imparting their own experience and knowledge to their protégés. This is the case in Dr. E's (Ghana case #22) story. E. specialises his education profile in Germany in a rather exotic field: Tropical Aquatics. Because of this very specific niche topic, which he follows throughout his educational trajectory, E. assumes that his profile would fit best to a research institute. However, his profile is not in demand at the time he returns:

“Job? I remember that time, I started applying for job actually. Apart from looking for schools to teach, I applied to CSIR - our Centre for Scientific Research. That is the main body for scientific [research]. They employ researchers in Accra. They have other branches too in other regions. And CSIR, I applied. I also applied to EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]. I applied to our Fisheries Department and interestingly they all wasted time” (Ghana interview #22; 04.09.2009: 412-417).

His statement, “*they all wasted time*” indicates that he does not get any replies and is desperate to find a job. During his job search, as he remembers during the interview, he also takes the opportunity to visit his former professors. Among them is a professor he has worked with before:

“In Ghana traditionally when you travel, you have to come and greet your elders. (...) That is when I passed by to say ‘Hello’, that I am around. In that time, mobile phone wasn't common so you can't call people that I am around but now, you can easily call people. I came in person to greet them (...) to say that I am back finally, and I am looking for job. He [professor] was also giving me advice even though he also mentioned that they were to start this new department, but I can also look around and look for something and when everything is ready I think he will try and let me know” (Ghana interview #22; 04.09.2009: 394-403).

E. describes this particular professor in a very respectful way as an “*elder*”, who has to be greeted upon his return. In their encounter, the professor, who remembers the scholar from their previous collaboration, shows interest in E. and thus makes him aware of the fact that a new department will be launched soon and that he, the professor, will let E. know about the upcoming vacancy. At that time, the professor himself is the new department's head. Because he knows E's working attitude and his passion for the subject he encourages E. to apply and to work for him. Finally, six months after his return, E. gets an invitation for an interview at the university. His performance convinces the panel and he gets the position of an assistant lecturer. The professor becomes his mentor. After having worked together for two years, E. is granted study leave and carries out his PhD in Germany. On this second return from Germany he says that faces no problems and is directly taken on the payroll of the department again.

Thus, mentors, according to the description from E., build up their protégés in order to pass on their knowledge, to inherit their schools of thought. Mentors, E. continues to explain, do not take on everybody. According to his description they select only those who they think have the potential to follow in their footsteps and to perform well:

“You know the professor, he has an experience, he has worked for a long time, but he wants to pass on the experience to the coming ones (...) We call it mentor. So that by the time they will phase out, you will have picked the skills in addition to also what you have learnt (...) so it is very important. Not even one professor but all the experienced professors around, you have got around and built a good relationship with [them]” (Ghana interview #22; 04.09.2009: 659-665).

What E. emphasises is important because it makes clear that the mentors aim at recruiting followers. This shows actually how close mentoring and patron-client relationships are. They can easily be mistaken for each other. Of course, mentors who appoint someone they know are not merely philanthropic and altruistic but also have a reason to recruit the person, which can go beyond the applicant’s competence. In reality, such “semi-official discretion”, (cf. Willot 2011: 96) might play a role in recruitment, too, as a dean frankly admits in our interview:

“Definitely, within the academic environment, it is very natural if you attended the same secondary school that you as a dean the secondary school I attended and an application comes in from somebody who attended the same school. Naturally, I will be interested. I will not say I favour the person but you become more interested in the application (...). It could be a combination of several factors, one could be due to school affiliation. The second will be due to ethnic affiliation. For instance, if I am an Akan or Ewe or Dagomba [ethnic groups in Ghana] and the person needs an appointment (...). I think it is going beyond not using the merit. Your judgement is not based on merit. You are using other factors to influence your judgement, that is where politics comes in (...) or some social debts. Something the person might have done for you. Social debts or presents” (Expert interview #11; 16.09.2009: 192-204).

This practice of socially indebting a person of potential power is perceived as a contemptible form of corruption. It can compromise the mentor and enforce patronage, the dean continues to explain:

“Somebody might bring you a mobile phone, a wrist watch, with no expectations. That is also an embodiment of our culture that somebody travels and he brings something back. A token, a gift. But what happens when you finish your PhD and you come back, ‘Prof I need a job’ and you start thinking ‘Ooh this is the person, this is what he gave me’. And you begin to think of the kindness the person showed

you that compromises on your ability to make a very fair judgment because you are looking at the affiliation on gifts you have been collecting from the person. Gifts can vary. Presents could be a shoe, a mobile phone, an appreciation. But you don't know when this person comes to you to ask you for a favour. You cannot predict peoples motives, you might have a motive. So personally I am very careful with gifts and I try as much as possible to read the mind, 'Why do I deserve this gift?', and if I realise it can compromise my decisions I reject. The value of the gift has to be observed. Next time the person comes with demands and if you don't go along he or she will go around and says he gave you this and that and you did not help the person" (Expert interview #11; 16.09.2009: 213-226).

To prevent such situations in which he possibly might be compromised, the dean mentions that he is "*very careful*" and cautious, sometimes even rejecting a gift, if he cannot predict the motivation of the donor. This shows the problematic nature of such a patron-client relationship in an environment such as the university, which officially stands for academic achievements based on merit. At the same time that it is true that factors beyond merit might play a role in these relationships it must also be noted that without having prerequisite factors, an appropriate degree and a vacancy, even a person in such a high position as the dean's will not be able to recruit an applicant without following official application criteria.

The remarks of another Head of Department (HOD) should now be mentioned. He explained why it might even be counter-productive for the recruiting professor and the applicant to know each other personally. The reason for this would be that the relationship would be observed very well by everybody and the new staff member would have to work twice as hard as others to avoid 'bad blood'. This, the HOD explained, would apply even more to applicants who are from influential families. Without delivering high quality work, he emphasised, even having the best connections would not lead to a permanent employment position at university (Ghana, expert interview #08; 31.08.2009: 64-68). Concluding, from these ambivalent statements it can be seen that mentors cannot completely ignore the factor merit, not only because of the official regulations but also because of informal social control in the department. In addition, the mentor's relationship to the applicant, in contrast to typical nepotism, means they know of the applicant's academic strengths, instead of only having a personal attachment to the person. Knowing the person who applies enables them to better predict the applicant's qualifications and working ethics. The dean whom I interviewed as an expert on the topic knows how important these are, especially the latter – working ethics:

"Especially if people don't know you they have to judge from the CV. And you know CVs, at times can be deceptive. You can have all the qualifications but you go for an interview and the people might not be very impressed. People don't want you to come in and cause trouble. Somebody told me they are not doing inbreeding. (...) but in some es-

tablishments, they want to be protected and they want to bring in people they know because if you employ somebody you don't know about, especially character-wise [pause]. There are other personal issues which can compromise the academic record (...) we should be able to perform very good and there are also other factors, personal integrity [pause] all those kind (...) a person might be very good but if the other side is not that good that could cause problems with students (...). If you don't know the person very well and it comes into your establishment it could cause problems and such issues you will not be able to detect within an interview. Difficult to capture these things. But if it was your student before or you know him through collaboration it becomes easier for you” (Expert interview #11, 16.09.2009: 162-186).

The reason why professors are interested in appointing former students is clear: as soon as they know an applicant as their former student, the person's performance is more predictable. It is evident that mentors, who – as previously mentioned – must have access to first-order resources: the jobs, are at university level HODs. However, the specific recruitment process differs between universities in Ghana but very often, the HOD has at least a say in the pre-selection process of candidates and might even be asked to give recommendations to the Appointment Board. Such an Appointment Board usually consists of several persons who interview the selected applicants and report to the University Council if the candidate is to be recruited (Expert interview, memo #09, 31.08.2009: 36-44). When they are in such a position, such as being a HOD who has influence in the recruitment process, mentors can facilitate and speed up the recruiting process, tells the expert: “*If they know you then this could make the process a bit faster. So these institutional links also facilitates the job. It becomes easier if you have a collaboration*” (Expert interview #11, 16.09.2009: 170).

How this ‘speeding up’ of the recruitment process actually works is described by Dr. V. (Ghana case #12), who did her PhD degree in Germany. Upon return, she applies at her former university and is lucky because a former lecturer of hers has just become Head of Department. She knows him well from her final year in Ghana. This professor, she recalls, has been “*very instrumental, he was very helpful with me*” (Ghana follow-up interview #12; 07.09.2009: 308-309). Thus, when she applies he becomes her mentor and “*follows up*” her application. She explains the meaning of this:

“The follow-up was (...) they can place files [application] on the table for quite a long time. So talking about follow-up are one of the things like he did by sending there, going there personally to remind the person involved. You know because he is a professor: ‘Listen I am working on that so things must work out so that I can also have my things to work’. He made follow-ups in terms of fast tracking things. Reminding them in the office to do their part, in terms of writ-

ing letters and signing and sending it to the main administration. And over there too, he also had contact over there to cross check information if everything went on” (Ghana follow-up interview #12, 07.09.2009: 331-346).

So far, the facilitation of the recruitment process resembles what friends, who were ‘in the right places’, did to be able to ‘push’ the application (cf. chapter 7.1). However, being a mentor goes beyond this. Mentors not only facilitate the labour market entry, they continue in this role throughout the graduates’ academic careers because in those cases the job searchers get the position of personal assistants under their mentor, they research and publish together. Very similar is the case of the environmentalist Mr. B. (Ghana case #05). During his master’s programme in Germany he keeps in touch with one of his former university professors:

“I used to correspond with him. (...) he is a professor, he wrote back to me and said he appreciates what I have done, and if I need any help, I should not hesitate to approach him. So when I had the opportunity, I wrote to tell him that I am here [in Germany], doing this programme [Environmental Research Management, ERM]. He is a very good Christian, and whenever I wrote, he wrote back encouraging me. When I was looking for job, I wrote to him that ‘Sir, pray for me!’ He is more or less like a mentor. So he encourages me. When I finished I told him that I was coming home: ‘You could come and develop the place [in the Upper West]!’ , that was exactly his words” (Ghana interview #05; 30.06.2008: 236-250).

It should be explained that B’s former professor had become the Head of Department in a newly established polytechnic school. Thus, he was in a position to encourage B. to start in his school and to “*come and develop the place*”, which he did gratefully.

That not all direct recruitments at university are necessarily ‘mentor’ relationships is demonstrated in the final case, that of Dr. L. from Cameroon (case #05). He explains in our interview that he simply had the right professional profile to convince the head of the department. However, this did not prevent the fact that L. had to wait two years before he was made permanent. He concludes that it was a mistake only:

“In 2001, nobody was available in that field of mineral exploration. (...) So the head of department welcomed me in 2002 (...) and he was very happy to hear that I want to come and join them here. So eh, that is how I got... so I came back but it was not so easy, I mean the concept was clear that I will come and teach here but it was not easy because of one or two things. I mean so when I came, so I started teaching as part time (...) So I was not satisfied because I cannot leave Germany too come and teach here as part time (...) So it was like a self revolution, a rebellion when I went they and met the vice



rector in his office in charge of teaching. So he assured me that it was a mistake in terms of the budget. So I was recruited. It was a mistake. It was really a mistake and I had to be taken recruited immediately (Cameroon case #05; 03.10.2008: 128-151).

The difference between the previously presented cases is obvious: in the cases of the Ghanaian graduates their former professors supported their job searchers as their scholarly off-spring and thus created patron-follower alliances, albeit in academia and not in politics. In the case of Dr. L. the relationship is anonymous. He says that he had not known the head of department before and that only his specific profile facilitated this entry. However, this could not meet the necessary bureaucratic requirements and in consequence, L. says he had to wait almost two years until he received the salary of a regular lecturer.

The cases cited here exclusively involved mentors in the higher education sector. To complete the picture it must be said that mentors were also found in the private sector, as managers of small companies who had taken on a graduate whom they knew from earlier projects (Ghana cases #18, #19), and as directors in governmental agencies who had known the job searchers from their national service or prior employment (Ghana cases #02, #04). In addition, the cases only represent the graduates among the Ghana group. This is because in Cameroon only four persons approached their employers directly, of whom two applied directly at a university (Cameroon cases #04, #05).

In conclusion, the findings suggest that approaching a potential employer directly turns out to be very effective if the relationship between the job searcher and the recruiting person is that of a mentor-protégé. The contrary might occur in the case where the relationship between job searcher and employer – who already know each other – is distorted for some reason. Then, shows the next sub-chapter, the downside of social capital appears, in consequence blocking the returning graduate's career.

## **7.5 Being blocked**

The interviewees from both countries stated that there are many obstacles to the professional reintegration of returning graduates – also regarding personal contacts in the job search. In general, finding a well-paid job, coping with the expectations of family, kin, and friends and finally, working without adequate working equipment are typical problems that return migrants have to face. However, according to the statements of the interviewees it can all become worse if people in higher positions, such as superiors, in their working environment are hostile. According to the interviewees, superiors were hostile for two main reasons. Firstly, the bosses were described simply as being jealous of the graduates having studied abroad. Secondly, a less personal but more structural reason, experts revealed that those superiors in the working places of the returning graduates who were hostile feared los-

ing valuable access to their resources. In this case personal contacts do not turn into valuable capital, but the opposite happens. It resembles what has been labelled as the “downside” of social capital (cf. chapter 3.2). I will refer to the phenomenon as “being blocked” because this term expresses the fact that the ambitions, careers and the reintegration transition in general come to a stop through these unhelpful social relationships. Figure 10 shows schematically that if the resource wheel ‘personal contact’ turns in the wrong direction, it has the power to block all other resources and thus devalue them.

Source: Own compilation.

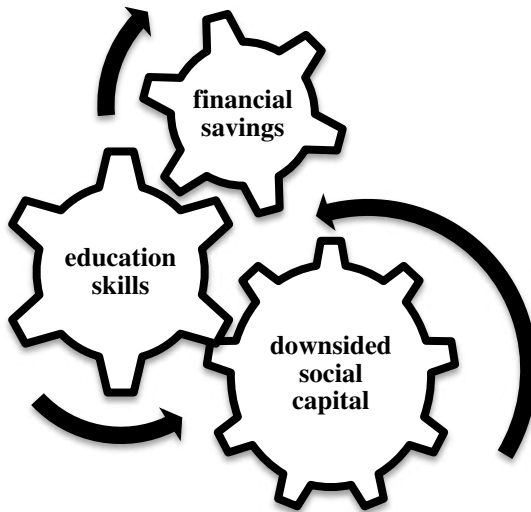


Figure 10: Scheme of ‘being blocked’

The interpretation of the interviews indicates that ‘being blocked’ has to do with non-migrants who are the superiors of the graduates fear of losing power over their own access to resources. As a reintegration counsellor from Ghana explains, the problem is widespread:

“Because somebody knows if you are in front he might not get what he wants. He will block you to bring in your innovations. It is quite funny that they don’t look at the results but individuals who like to always pursue their individual things first what they want to get and what they want to receive first and that I think is a problem in our system, everywhere. (...) Especially for people who go and train like Rueckkehrer [return migrant] and come back to their workplaces. They are people who are mostly affected in this kind of things, when they go back to the workplace they come back with a higher qualification. And other come apart with their bosses or sometimes will be even having a higher qualification than their bosses, than instead of

letting you in a way that the organisation will gain from the knowledge that you have got, they try to block you because they think if they let you in you will bypass them [laughs]” (Expert interview #02, 11.07.2008: 82-94).

The reintegration counsellor emphasises two aspects of being blocked. First, if personal contacts who are superiors are envious and fear losing their access to resources – “*he might not get what he wants*” – then they will block the return migrant. Second, the expert tells me he observed that this happens for those who return to their old working places. As an example the expert tells me the story of Mr. I. from Ghana (case #11):

“One example is Mr. I. He is facing that very seriously and he is saying that he even decided to have a change of job because it seems that the man there as a boss is only frustrating him. Because he has a master’s and the boss is having a first degree. A bachelor. So he seems to be somebody who will push him away from his position and he is blocking him. So he is not even giving him the chance. So that the knowledge that he has got he will be able to participate effectively because he will not even/ he came back and he [the employer] will not even give you an office, you don’t have an office. I mean/ you/ he is expected to do the very job routine that he had been doing before he went back and you have not been placed in any position of higher responsibility, it is just like you are being neglected: ‘Do what you want, nobody will mind you and take care’” (Expert interview #02; 11.07.2008: 94-106).

It shows that even though Mr. I. entered the labour market upon his return, the working conditions are not sufficient and he is frustrated. This frustration is also evident in my interview with Mr. I., the person mentioned in the previous quotation. Mr. I. presents himself to me as “*a poor boy from a poor country, going to study in Germany*” (Ghana interview #11, 07.07.2008: 64). The reconstruction of his biography shows that he indeed originates from a poor family and grows up in a rural environment in the Western Region. Both of his parents were illiterate. His father died when he was a schoolchild. Hence, he tells in the interview that he had to work during vacations, as an ice-water seller on the streets in order to finance his education. Nevertheless, he says that he was able to achieve his first degree at a university in Ghana. He specialised in forestry. He particularly focused on this industry because he says he observed that the timber business was booming and he had hoped for employment opportunities in this field. After his first degree he started working as a gamekeeper in a natural forest reserve. It was a low-paid job and hard physical work. He had to stay out in the forest during the whole night and often faced dangerous situations when the gamekeepers had to fight poachers. Therefore, he says he tried to get another, better job.

Because he only had a degree from Ghana and lacked international experience, he did not get it, according to his own account. In consequence, he decided to further his education in Ghana. He enrolled in Germany to get his master's degree in Forest Ecology and Management (FEM). Because he did not obtain a scholarship he sold his property, the farmland his father had left to him. In Germany, he recalls having had severe problems adjusting to the climate and the strange social environment. However, he finished his master's successfully and returned after two years to Ghana, where his wife and children were waiting for him. Upon return, he realised that the master's degree was not paying off. His attempts to find well-paid work in an international organisation in his field of studies all failed. Finally, he resumed work as a gamekeeper in the natural reserve. During our interview he sounds frustrated because despite his higher degree his salary is no better than before:

“Can you believe that my salary is not up to GHC 200, my salary is GHC 150 [about EUR 90] per month, it is very poor and I work since Friday and now they want us to work day and night! Work! And I ask you how can I and a wife and two children survive on GHC 150? [sighs tiredly].

I: How do you manage?

Mr. I.: By God's grace [laughs bitterly]. Well, my wife too is working small, small, she also understands the situation. At least it is better than staying home unemployed” (Ghana interview #11; 07.07.2008: 296-306).

I's situation is desperate. His income is indeed woefully low and according to him his job satisfaction zero. However, during the interview he says he sees little chance of receiving a promotion in his current job “*unless some put up the dice to create a vacancy*” (Ghana interview #11; 07.07.2008: 411). Mr. I's frustration also seems to derive from the fact that his former superior was reluctant to take him on again and barely supports his reappointment, for which the boss has to report to the headquarters in Accra. Instead, his boss delayed the process, because of jealousy, assumes Mr. I.:

“Because ehm, people don't have that qualification to recommend me for. They don't have that qualification so there is that sort of envy, that is why, yes (...) It took time for even to get a letter from here to Accra. It took some time. A lot telephone calls. Generally, I don't know. Because people are reluctant to study so when they see others studying they think and wipe us or something. I think it is a social science problem [laughs bitterly and pauses]” (Ghana interview #11; 07.07.2008: 256-270).

Like the reintegration counsellor, Mr. I. suggests that this kind of jealousy from his superior is a structural problem, a “*social science problem*”. This assumption is somehow supported through another, very similar case, also from Ghana (case #08). It is about the professional reintegration of Ms. F. (Ghana case #08). The reintegration counsellor knows facts about this case, too:

“And this lady also Ms. F. has had experience like that. She was also frustrated from the [state department] and she decided to leave. It is the mindset of people. They think if you are at a higher position maybe through manipulating things, they are able to get some things extra (...) So those positions become very enviable positions. They see that if I lose that position it means I am going to lose some of these benefits so they want to secure that nobody will actually take it from them. And by so doing they also block people who will come in with innovations and new ideas” (Expert interview #02; 11.07.2008: 106-115).

For her master’s degree in Germany she is on study leave and hence says she expected to continue to work for her former governmental agency. She recalls that the problem with her professional reintegration began when she returned. After having reported several times that she had returned she realised that they were giving her the run-around. Some months after her return, she tells me in the interview, she decided that she had had enough of this ‘game’ as she calls it:

“This is nonsense. I will not take this from them again. It will be better you reply the letter you don’t want to take me back again. You understand. Than to wait and not to reply the letter. So I called them [laughs]. I told them they are not serious people. Me, I will not call them again ehe! I will not also waste my time and money to come to the office and to follow any letter. So, since then I have not been there! Ya! Since then” (Ghana interview #08; 03.07.2008: 133-141).

Ms. F. continues to tell me that she later found out that the agency had replaced her with a national service staff member. However, she claims that even if they could not have given her the old position back, they could still have offered her an alternative position. During the interview she still seems to be stunned by this practice of blocking her because, as she says, she definitely knows that they need the workforce for their projects very urgently.

Even though it is true that many return migrants face such problems deriving from personal relationships, the interpretation of the interview statements also suggests that the return migrants themselves are not entirely innocent in this situation. However, this is difficult to reconstruct objectively, since the interviews only reflect the situation from the perspective of the graduates who describe their experiences during the job search.

Taking a second look at the two cases from Ghana, it seems as if both have communication gaps in general. In the case of Mr. I., this concerns the fact that I. does not make use of his strategic contact with the reintegration counsellor. This is surprising because, as I am told during the research, Mr. I. and the reintegration counsellor know each other from Germany where they studied at the same university in the same department. Similarly, Mrs. F. (Ghana case #08) seems to have problems regarding her communication with people. These communication problems already appear very early in her narrative, at the point when she starts preparing for going to study abroad. In our interview she tells of problems with the Human Resource Officer at that time. He wants her to postpone the scholarship and defer for one year because at that time she has to deal with important projects in her agency:

“Before I was leaving my human resource director said I should (...) defer it for one year because then he thought I was very busy (...) I was busy on biodiversity programme, a World Bank project eh! When he told me to defer the course for a year I said no, I won’t defer it and my direct manager also said no! It is difficult to get a scholarship so I shouldn’t defer it. But the human resource manager was insisting that I defer the scholarship for one year (...) So it was up to me to decide. And I said no I will not defer it. I will go for the course in 2005 and finish in 2007. So that was the agreement. So I had no problem with them” (Ghana interview #08; 03.07.2008: 27-46).

Even though Ms. F. thinks that at that time she has no problems with them, her quotes clearly show that she is a threat to her Human Resource Officer because she opposes his suggestion. Even more, by referring to her direct manager, who agrees that she should not postpone the study programme, the human resource officer loses face in public. This problem may be the source of the blockade Ms. F. later has to face. However, this is a suggested finding only. What leads to this interpretation is the fact that the story of Ms. S. contains further situations in which it seems that she lacks communication skills. She gets strong support from various friends who themselves have studied in Germany. They have already returned earlier than she has and provide her with job-relevant information. Still, she does not land a job. A friend of Ms. F. tells how he arranged an interview for Ms. F. in his research institute:

“I spoke with Ms. F.; it’s like she had problem with her work and she came to my end and I said ‘Ok, then you can bring your application to this woman [superior]. So she [Ms. F.] brought her application. But unfortunately I wasn’t in the institute, I was out, I was doing some survey. And, fortunately for her the deputy director was a relate to her, you know. So, they were having a chat and she was happy” (Ghana interview #04; 27.06.2008: 298-304).

It does not seem as if Ms. F. has communicated well in advance. Her friend who had arranged the interview, as well as the director, is not in on the day she visits to introduce herself to the institute. What is more, a close friend of her family is the institute's deputy director, but even this does not result in her receiving an invitation for an interview. Ultimately, it remains open to question what definitely caused the problems in Mr. I's and Ms. F's professional reintegration and in consequence delays in their professional reintegration. One year after the interview I learn that Mr. I. is pursuing his education and doing his PhD in Ghana. Finally, as his profile on the professional internet platform LinkedIn reveals, four years after he returns with his master's degree from Germany he is taken on in a private university as a lecturer. From the reintegration counsellor I hear that Ms. F. has had some more interviews but to no avail and in the meantime, to bridge her unemployment, works in her father's NGO.

So far it seems as if the bosses of the two cases described had simply been jealous in general and that it was just a personal thing between the agents based on mutual miscommunication. However, "being blocked" cannot be reduced to a 'social problem', as one of the interviewees (Mr. I., case #11) described it. This will become clear in the next and final case presented in this section. The case, which is from Cameroon, offers an explanation to the question what kind of resources the superiors – especially in the public services – protect so vigorously, not exclusively from the returning graduates but from all their employees.

The geology expert Mr. K. (Cameroon case #08) has been job placed in a gold mining project run by the government. The local reintegration counsellor hears of a vacancy which appears suddenly, and informs his client to apply quickly. The placement works out and K. gets the job. He works under a superior, whom he (and others who know this man) portrays as very authoritarian and unpredictable: "*The boss is the boss who does what he wants!*" (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 247).<sup>190</sup> However, what K. finds even more critical is the fact that his boss seems to be misappropriating the department's financial budget. To illustrate what he means he describes how budget money is – according to his observation – misused for purchasing the technical equipment that is used by the workers in the project:

"It works like this. For example, if we distribute shovels to people [workers in the project] then we have to buy shovels somewhere. He [boss] must somehow give the order to someone so that someone purchases the shovels or these pumps, these machines. From this he makes his business. (...) Of course - I know nothing about it, but [laughing] (...) for example, you might have to deliver 100 pumps,

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<sup>190</sup> German original: „Der Chef ist der Chef, der macht was der will!“ (Cameroon Interview #08; 06.10.2008: 247).

100 motor pumps, that's a lot of money? And then you say, ok, well for that we need to spend hundreds of millions of CFA [equivalent to EUR 150,000]. Okay. I'll give you 100 million but maybe you buy 100 pumps which are cheaper. Only 50 million CFA each. And there you have profit. There is 50 million left, you get maybe 10 million, because I'll give you this order, 10 million or 20 million and then I have 30 million [equivalent to EUR 45,000] but this is good business, right? [laughter]" (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 331-348).<sup>191</sup>

K. points out clearly that his boss never dared to miss these opportunities to gain such additional income, opportunities which K. observed occurred three to five times a year. Some civil servants, he claims, make more money like this than people regularly earn in Germany. During our second interview, K. still works in the project and says frankly that he has given up in believing that he will be able to make a career in the project. He receives a promotion but the increased salary is still negligible. The only way he can make a career in the public service, he says, is either if the government changes or his boss is removed. To express how unlikely this is, he starts laughing loudly and orders a beer (field note 14.05.2010). He mentions that he is sure to find other employment in a few years. He thinks he has a valued degree from Germany and has now acquired practical work experience. At the same time, he knows that in future private mining companies will start projects. Meanwhile, he continues to work in the project but in parallel actively engages in projects with other graduates in the umbrella network of the alumni groups (KBK) who have returned to begin a start-up in the mining business:

“Future, that's interesting, (...) maybe I have not enough money yet, but at some point, you know, and prospects in the mining area are coming up in two or three years. Well, so most companies will be operative. Mining engineers from here, there are not many here in Cameroon. Not many are here and I do not care how, I'll somehow get a chance, and if I get no chance getting into mining (...) then I do not know, maybe with KBK [Coordination Office] we will do something. That would be better, working with people who have the same atti-

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<sup>191</sup> German original: “Es geht so zum Beispiel, wenn wir Schippen an Leute verteilen, dann müssen wir irgendwo Schippen kaufen. Er muß irgendwie einen Auftrag an jemand geben, damit ihm jemand die Schippe liefert oder diese Motorpumpen, diese Maschinen. Davon macht er sein Geschäft. (...) Ich weiß davon nichts, aber [lachen] (...) zum Beispiel, du mußt vielleicht 100 Motorpumpen liefern oder so, 100 Motorpumpen, das ist schon viel Geld? Und dann wird gesagt, o.k., gut dafür müssen wir 100 Millionen CFA ausgeben. Ok. ich geb dir 100 Million aber du kaufst vielleicht 100 Motorpumpen, die billiger sind. Nur fünfzig Millionen CFA das Stück. Und da hast du Profit. Es bleibt übrig 50 Millionen, du kriegst vielleicht 10 Millionen, weil ich geb dir diesen Auftrag, 10 Millionen oder 20 Millionen und dann hab ich 30 Millionen, das ist doch eine gute Geschäft oder? [lautes Lachen]” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 331-348).



tude from the beginning. I noticed already, it might be that those who studied in Germany (...) most have this problem to adapt (...) when I say, ahh, this person is not a Cameroonian, the person is German. I hear sometimes that people say, oh, the Germans are always so complicated” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 564-595).<sup>192</sup>

In his statement K. also offers an explanation for the fact that he faces difficulties and feels blocked in his career: he – and other graduates who have returned from Germany (cf. Cameroon case #05) – are perceived as “*Germans*” who are “*always so complicated*”. By saying this, he refers to the public notion that Germans are correct and that Cameroonians who have studied in Germany reject corruption and the like.

The problem with such blocking contacts is that they appear rather unexpectedly. In contrast to the cases where job searchers successfully used social contacts, in these latter cases they did not foresee the impending obstacles. Whereas in Ghana it seems as if the graduates manage to bridge such an initial blockade and find an alternative workplace within a certain prolonged time, Cameroonians, if they have an alternative target destination as for instance Canada or France, may instead not wait for too long and will emigrate again (cf. Schmelz 2010: 53). The difference is not that Cameroonians do not like to work in their home country, but it seems as if they have more problems in securing follow-up employment than their counterparts in Ghana. This suggestion is based not least on the interpretation of the following section’s findings that describe the networking activities of the graduates who have returned. The findings present, again, a distinct picture: Ghanaians seem to have enough opportunities to communicate job-relevant information in already existing informal cliques, whereas Cameroonians seem to feel increasingly compelled to establish entrepreneurial networks that they hope will enable them to set up their own businesses.

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<sup>192</sup> German original: “Zukunft, das ist interessant, (...) jetzt vielleicht hab ich noch nicht genug Geld, aber irgendwann man weiß und Perspektiven in Bergbaubereich das kommt bestimmt in zwei oder drei Jahren. Naja, also die meisten Firmen werden operativ sein und lernen sie auch, egal wie, Bergbauingenieure von, hier sind nicht viel, hier in Kamerun. Hier sind nicht viel und es ist mir egal wie, ich werde auch irgendwie noch eine Chance kriegen und wenn ich auch keine Chance kriegen in Bergbau, in Bergbaubereich, dann ich weiß auch nicht, vielleicht mit KBK [Koordinationsbüro] werden wir was machen, das wär doch besser mit Leute zu arbeiten, die wirklich auch die gleiche Einstellung haben von Anfang an. Ich merk schon, es ist vielleicht die in Deutschland studiert haben, die haben auch, die meiste haben diese Problem sich irgendwo, sich anzupassen wir merken das. Wenn du das selber mit die Leute, wenn ich sage, ahh, der ist sowieso kein Kameruner, der ist Deutscher. Das hör ich auch manchmal, daß die Leute sagen, ach, die Deutschen sind immer so kompliziert” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 331-348).

## 7.6 Networks and cliques

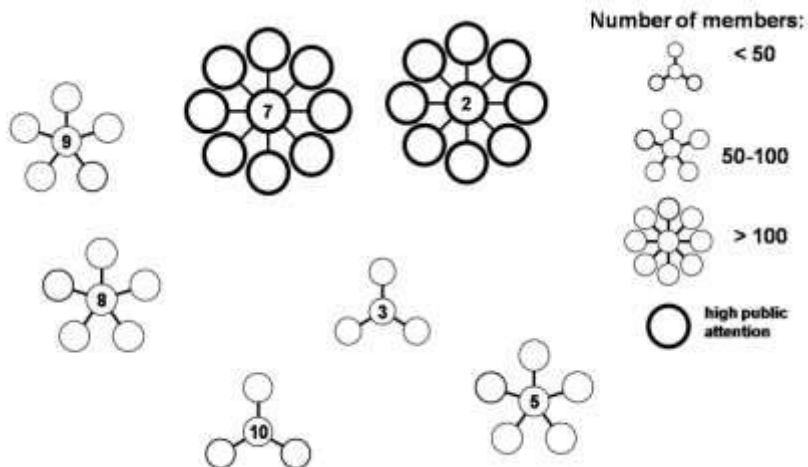
So far the career-related use of personal contacts has concentrated on the single personal contact. This section goes beyond these single contacts and intends to investigate the larger networking activities of the graduates: what kind of job-relevant information is channelled in which kind of networks and how this works. The chapter seeks to demonstrate that Cameroonian graduates who in the majority return through being job placed by brokers, build artificial networks after they have entered the labour market. By doing so, it is assumed that they intend to stabilise their career opportunities by establishing themselves as small-scale entrepreneurs in the local labour market. Building these networks is very time and energy consuming. Therefore, it might be a good reason why Cameroonian graduates who have returned are currently more active in networking than their Ghanaian counterparts.

The chapter further attempts to show that Cameroonian graduates seek to compensate for the fact that either they are not from a family of the establishment or that they cannot re-activate relationships with former friends who are today in positions of higher status. This also depends on the specific labour market situation in Cameroon, in which job-relevant information is preferably channelled through family networks, which turns out to be problematic for those who do not have family members who are in employment, or who are not from influential families. The chapter shows that Ghanaian graduates, in contrast, do not necessarily need to build or maintain artificial networks. They are already embedded in naturally developed cliques in which they have free access to job-relevant information, which is also the foundation for further entrepreneurial projects. They can, suggests the analysis, save their energy, which is needed for networking as long as these cliques continue to exist. This chapter has a closer look at how these networks, firstly the Cameroonians and secondly the Ghanaians, serve as a conduit to job-relevant information for the returned graduates.

The Cameroonian alumni networks of graduates who studied in Germany and have returned have developed steadily since the turn of the millennium (cf. chapter 5.3). They have two basic aims: creating a lobby for the graduates who studied in Germany and connecting each other for the purpose of exchanging job-relevant information or to work on opportunities of investment. The situation at first was that these associations were poorly interconnected. Seminars and events were not jointly coordinated. In addition, the associations and their various branches were only concentrated in the two locations of Douala and Yaoundé. The programs of most of the alumni organisations exclusively target former scholarship holders of particular scholarship providers. They are funded externally, by the donor organisations in Germany as well as by the fees paid by their members. Some of these alumni clubs exclusively address businesspersons and thus have tontines.

These alumni tontine groups are actually set up for investment purposes. Such saving groups are of interest for those alumnis who are interested to become entrepreneurs because formal banks have higher rates of interest and in the first place the guidelines for borrowers are too stringent for persons who are just starting their business. These tontine savings thus can become a stepping stone for small entrepreneurs. Especially those alumni clubs which have rotating saving groups, the tontines, are more exclusive and closed. The prerequisite of a well-working tontine is that their members know each other well, trust each other and the meetings are obligatory or else the membership is cancelled. To enter a tontine, the incoming new member needs a referral from another member of the tontine who guarantees the newcomer.

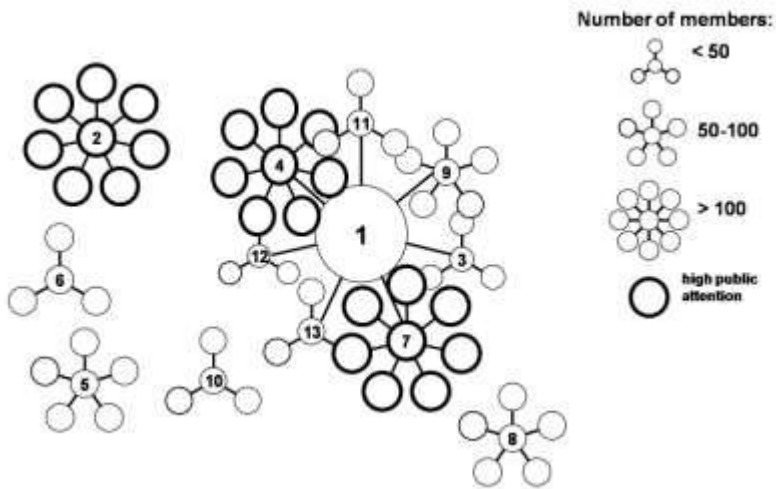
Until 2007 about 10 alumni clubs existed. The scheme in figure 11 shows the networks' distribution according to size (number of members), importance (public attention), and the level of their hierarchy. The numbers in the chart correspond to those of the networks listed in chapter 5.3, which gives the names associated with these numbers. In this graph, to simplify the structure a more anonymous system has been used instead of names. The graph suggests that three networks with the largest number of members and with the highest public attention are at the top of an unstructured hierarchy. Smaller and less visible networks follow below. However, what becomes clear from this graph is that the various networks are not interconnected. In addition, regarding the supposed hierarchical order of the alumni networks, the overview indicates that those organisations at the top are likely to access resources first. The smaller and less centralised networks are disadvantaged because they are not able to access funds from external donors, nor do they profit from information flows.



Sources: Own research; KBK newsletter 2012; Nkeng-Peh 2012.

Figure 11: Organisation of alumni networks in Cameroon until 2007

However, this situation has changed since 2007, because of the implantation of an umbrella network. The aim of the established umbrella organisation was to circulate information and create synergies for development cooperation as well as for job-placement for returning graduates from Germany (BMZ 2005: 36). Since 2007 the umbrella organisation of the Coordination Office (aka KBK) has existed. The founding members of the KBK are alumni of all social classes, from different ethnic groups, are of distinct generations and of various professions (see [www.kbk-cameroon.net](http://www.kbk-cameroon.net)). As figure 12 shows, since this umbrella organisation been in operation the various associations are more connected through the information hub of the KBK (position 1).



Source: Own research and compilation.

Figure 12: Organisation of alumni networks in Cameroon since 2007

Since then, instead of having three very popular network structures acquiring resources exclusively for members of their organisations, information is disseminated to all members of all alumni associations via e-mail lists and, at the beginning, via text messages, member to member. Information flows are more transparent, less hierarchical and reach returned graduates also in the more remote regions, not just in the two main cities Yaoundé and Douala. What is more, the new information platform through the KBK allows those to participate in events who are not members of one of the alumni associations.

For instance, Mr. F. (Cameroon case #06) explains that after he returned to Cameroon, he attended the meetings of one of the more influential alumni groups in Douala only once. He did not like the experience. Off the record, he explains why this was the case. He describes how he found the atmosphere to be full of tension and that members of this network seemed to look down on him, because he had fewer financial resources. In his opinion, the association has created a ‘two-class society’ of returnees based on their income situation. He was not even invited to participate in the tontine, because he could not afford the entry fee. Therefore, he refrained from becoming a member of the club (memo interview #06; 03.10.2008). However, when the KBK starts its activities, F. uses the opportunity to join some of the meetings, which are free of charge. He says he gathered with other returned graduates and exchanged his ideas in the field of agricultural micro-projects. His aim is to establish a small livestock breeding business but he has not yet gained any experience and thus needs helpful contacts, which he says he has been able to obtain through the KBK’s member networks.

The KBK umbrella has increased the scope of most return graduates' networks in that they not only get to know members of alumni associations outside of their own, but also they also meet return migrants from generations other than their own. The meetings are well attended. Usually, more than 100 alumni come together on such occasions, many who come from the remote areas, the east, and the north spending days travelling (field notes 18.10.2008, 15.10.2010). The hopes that make the participants invest so much energy in these network meetings are manifold. In the first place they expect to gain new information about potential investment schemes for entrepreneurial activities.

Such is the case of Mr. K. (Cameroon case #08), who even hopes to get in touch with other return graduates in his field of studies to team up with them and to become entrepreneurs. He prefers to work together with graduates from Germany, because "*we have been trained differently*" (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 191).<sup>193</sup> Since he has attended one of the KBK seminars on entrepreneurship, tailored particularly for academics who studied in Germany like him, he has more contact with other returned graduates whom he did not know before. He continues to meet them frequently with the purpose of establishing their business plans for an NGO offering services in the area of mining (field notes 16.10.2008). Similar is the experience of Mr. M. (Cameroon case #12). He states that through such network meetings of the KBK he has met a number of successful persons who studied in Germany and who he did not know of before, because they had returned in another generation. He benefits from such encounters, he says, because he can get first-hand information from those who have already established their businesses and who thus can give advice to him, the newcomer. From their own stories, he states, he could borrow from their experience and avoid making the same mistakes or try to take similar paths for developing his micro-business (Cameroon interview #12; 06.05.2010). Another, very important function of the KBK is that of regional integration. This concerns both the rural regions as well as overcoming the Anglophone-Francophone disparities of the country. Mr. C. (Cameroon case #18) has become the voluntary regional representative of the KBK for the Northwest Region. He explains how important it is to have an alumni group in the Anglophone region in order to make the benefits accessible for members in the less central regions, too:

"So those people in Yaoundé benefit from it and nobody else. Once in a while they can carry it to Douala and it's done in French. They finally just changed. (...) I recommend to them that we try to form an office here in Bamenda and one in Buea but at least Bamenda, which is the biggest metropolis in Anglophone-speaking Cameroon. So at

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<sup>193</sup> German original: "wir wurden anders ausgebildet" (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 191).

least we should have one here. So they said 'Yes' and that they had been thinking about that and need somebody to host it and he suggested if I want to host it" (Cameroon interview #18; 24.05.2010: 569-585).

The potential of the KBK is, as this quote clearly suggests, that it can also represent the regional groups of alumni who have a double disadvantage. They are disadvantaged because they are living far away from the city centres, where most of the activity takes place, and they are smaller in numbers and hence attract less public attention. However, through the network platform, the e-mail list and the internet presence of the KBK all groups have the means to present their activities equally. Yet not everybody is happy about the new alumni umbrella network. Whereas this coordinating network increases transparency and the range of information flows, it is also a threat to those social actors who have previously accumulated all resources exclusively for the members of their own association. In a less hierarchical network structure their primacy is in danger. The KBK has definitely increased processes of competition between the various networks in a positive sense. Whereas previously the control over resources was in the hands of few dominant players, it has now created a situation where all members are eligible to network freely and to communicate job-relevant information. However, this situation has also created competition and mobility between the alumni groups.

The criterion which dominates the control over resources is that of the degree of the organisation's functionality. This includes the degree of the association's administrative functionality, whether the organisation has a good leadership and transparent management and thus can manage public funds reliably. This degree of functionality also includes having an infrastructure which offers the space for all groups to be represented. In the case of the KBK this is an office that serves as a tangible meeting point, as well as the virtual internet platform. The whole of the infrastructure and primarily its long-term existence is what provides members with verified information about events. It also creates a reputation and lobbies the group of the returned graduates.

Having a professional working appearance also means getting better access to external donor funds, for instance from German institutions. This applies to the KBK. Within five years it has developed a professional reputation among the German institutions in Cameroon and cooperates strongly with them in seminars and suchlike. The members benefit from these activities in that the German organisations perceive the single alumni as part of the whole group. In the case where the group performance is professional, this can create trust and in consequence potential tangible benefits. To give one example: members who are known to be very active under the umbrella network are also known to the officers of the German embassy as very much devoted to their home country and being settled. Thus, as I was told, if a well-known member of the network applies for a visa on the occasion of a visit to Germany, the visa question is less problematic in those cases because

the willingness of the individual to return is obvious (cf. memo expert interview #15, 10.05.2010). Hence, the tangible benefit from these activities can be – though of course not always is – a facilitated visa application process, as is not the case for a person who is completely unknown to the German embassy.

In any case, the implementation and maintenance of such alumni networks which have been developed ‘artificially’ takes a long time (cf. Granovetter 1995: 133) and consumes a high amount of energy. This is different with social networks, which emerge more naturally, as can be seen in the example from Ghana. As has been mentioned, the formal network activities, the development of such alumni groups as just described for the case of Cameroon, have stagnated in Ghana (cf. chapter 5.3). A possible reason for this can be found in the interpretation of the interviews: Ghanaians have a less costly alternative in terms of energy. In contrast, Ghanaian graduates who have returned from Germany can easily rely on their personal networks, which are already in place because they have developed naturally. Such networks enable them to channel job-relevant information as well as being the foundation for entrepreneurial activities. Such natural personal networks can be cliques, a form of temporary coalition (cf. Boissevain 1974: 171, cf. chapter 3.2).

In Ghana, I observed that such temporary coalitions can often build on the shared experience of having studied together in Germany, which creates the so-called “fellow-feeling” (cf. Bochmann et al. 2008: 34ff). Such a clique, comprising four core members (Mr. U. case #10, Mr. R. case #16, Mr. L. case #18 and Mr. J. case #01) who were interviewed in the course of this thesis, is now described in-depth. The four core members of this clique are all former fellow students from a study programme in Stuttgart, Germany, where they enrolled for the same International Master’s Degree course in Water Resources Engineering and Management (WAREM) during the period 2001-2005. They all return in 2005 in the following order: first, in April 2005 Mr. J. (case #01). Mr. R. (case #16) follows in August, then Mr. U. (case #10) in September and finally Mr. L. (case #18) in October 2005. The relationship between these four is clearly that of the described fellow-feeling – unity and trust which has been built during their time abroad in Germany. There, they had limited social exchange with other Ghanaians and thus strongly relied on the contact with their fellow students. One of them, Mister U. describes:

“At the beginning I was feeling lonely, especially during the winter time you have nobody you can talk to and you have to remain in your room. I was happy because there are a lot of us Ghanaians in Stuttgart WAREM. Mr. L., Mr. R. was there, I was there. We were about 12 Ghanaians in Stuttgart so when we just met at a place, talk, argue, and make fun and we share a lot of experiences we watch films and movies and that was keeping us” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 320-326).



This relationship between these four continues also after they have returned from Germany. Mr. R. (case #16) reveals that they have teamed up to start a company:

“I have a future here but my biggest dream, which would be a dream come true is to own my own company [lowers voice] and I am already in the process. I Mr. L. (case #18) and Mr. U. (case #10). I don't know if you know Mr. U.? We have been able to form a company. We have a registered company, the three of us, which once in a while we get small, small jobs and we do it together but the company must grow so we are all doing: Mr. L. is in the ground water sector, I am also learning another thing and we will grow our company like this. So that is our future plan” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 613-621).

R. refers to his friends, Mr. U. and Mr. L., with whom he has teamed up with after they have returned. Apart from this entrepreneurial activity, these friends had also encouraged each other to return, because they provided each other with job-relevant information. Mr. L. describes this in the interview:

“In our class a lot of people came back, it is only two people who are still there. We were about 17, all of them are back. So it was a good idea, and we knew a lot of each other here, before we left. So when one comes ‘I have gotten a job you can also come and get a job here’ and then he will also come. So gradually everybody was coming. Almost everybody is in. Everybody except the two” (Ghana interview #18; 11.07.2008: 47-52).

The fact that these four have studied the same subject enables them to know of their skills and their reliability, which even makes them start a business together. However, at first they have to return and get a job. In this step they support each other but need help beyond their core group. The first two *spearheads* of our clique are Mr. J. and Mr. R. Mr. J. (case #01) takes the lead. He claims that he made his mind up to return in the final semester. What helps him was that he knew of other Ghanaians who had participated in the REP. He got to know them during the reintegration preparation seminars of WUS and stayed in touch with some:

“I made my mind up at the final semester. What helped me was - there were other Ghanaians, who had gone through ZAV [Central job placement agency in Germany, referring to the REP] and they had got some help to come to Ghana and settle and they had got jobs. So I made up my mind that I also have to go through. So they took me through most of the procedures like the forms you had to fill to ZAV to take care of your ticket and monthly allowance to be able to help you settle. Because that was my fear, to come and no job. Holding your certificate and no money and my mother was also not very rich, so if I come and burden her with my problems also, it would be difficult. So when I had the assurance, after you come back, every month

you get some money I decided to come back. (...) So even when I was writing my finals master's thesis I had already started processing with ZAV (Ghana interview #01; 25.06.2008: 170-181).

J's remarks suggest that he made the decision to return because he was encouraged by other graduates who had already returned successfully. Upon his return J. starts looking for his first employment. Again, people he knows as fellow students from his time in Germany help in the job search. One of these Ghanaian fellow students has a position in which he supports J's application:

“So I sent in a lot of applications and fortunately for me there was this other guy, a friend [Mr. X., Ghana case #19] who was at Freiberg. He had come back. (...) He is now a manager at a company [company 1]. He was the manager so he said oh once we deal in water and you now hold a master's degree in water you can come. So he convinced the others of the panel. I went for interview and he convinced them (...) through the interview also I performed well so they were convinced. (...) Two months, just two months after I got back I had a job” (Ghana interview #01; 25.06.2008: 211-221).

Mr. J. and the graduate from Freiberg finally team up and start their consultancy in the field of water supply next to their bread-winning jobs. Similar to J., who secures his first job in the company of one of his former acquaintances from Germany (Mr. X., case #19), Mr. R. (case #16), who returns next, also gets his first job via a returned graduate, Mrs. K. (case #06), who he has known from before their education in Germany, from university in Ghana:

“Her name is ehm [pauses very long] let me remember the name, the surname I do not remember. She has been trained in Germany. She did environmental engineering, she was even ahead of me in university here I think, I have her number on my other phone (...) I know her from UST. So before she got to go to Germany to do her master's. In fact, in Germany, I was coming to Germany to start at university of Hamburg [K's study location]. That was my initial place but I had a problem and I had to change to Stuttgart” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 696-707).

Interestingly Mr. R. seems not remember his saviour, Mrs. K., very well – “*let me remember her name*” – although she was the one who provided R. with information that enabled him to get his first job, because she returned two years earlier than R. Thus, she had already passed her first transitional phase and found a second job. This sequence can be interpreted as the ability of the networkers within the clique to remain in touch with other members of the group (returned graduates) without having a formal occasion. Thus, these cliques are open and flexible.

Finally, R. performs well and gets the job in the company, which is a state-run enterprise (company 2). The work in this company is not satisfying for R. He feels that he has not much scope to apply what he has learned in Germany. Around this

time he tells a friend from his time in Germany (Mr. L., case #18) that he is searching again. Soon he gets a chance:

“I told my friends like Mr. L. (case #18) I need to change job because I am wasting away. (...) I told him not knowing who is head of company 3, here he is L’s mate. So one day the lady called Mr. L. if he needs any job because there is a vacancy here. Then L. said ‘no he doesn’t need’, he is also ok with where he is, but he has a friend who needs a job (...). There is a friend and they said what the friend’s name is. Then the lady said she knows me<sup>194</sup> and quickly the lady called me and she learned that I need a job. She said “Come right now, right now! Bring your application!” So quickly she went and talked to the boss, that does he knows the guy who comes to the presentation here, that this guy said he needed a job. The director quickly said they called me on phone that I should come and bring application, so quickly I put up an application and I put application and then they said I should come to the interview [talking faster and agitated], so I came and it was just like formality, there was no question on technical issues because they know that from my presentation, they know that I am capable (...) that is just formalities of a conversation, just after that the director told me ‘I will employ you, tell me when you want to start’” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 509-534).

Obviously, R. gets his second job also through the help of a friend, this time one he knows from Germany, Mr. L., who is a core member of his clique. R., in turn, is of help when his former friend from Germany, Mr. U. (case #10) is searching for a job in Ghana. Mr. U. recalls this situation:

“Yes I had a link. My friend gave me a list of addresses I wrote. And I got a link when I heard that my friend Mr. R. was in company 2, so before I went for the interview at company 2 I called Mr. R.: ‘How is company 2, what questions are they going to ask me?’. And he gave me a hint so I was pretty informed before I went for the interview. Yes so. You need the links, you need the links to get a job” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 445-684).

So far, all members of the core group of our clique supplied each other with work. Obviously, it requires little administrative and organisational effort to maintain the personal ties among each other. In addition, the picture of this Ghanaian clique which developed naturally, in contrast to the network associations in Cameroon that are set up artificially, shows a lesser degree of competition, too. This is what

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<sup>194</sup> A few weeks before, R. holds a presentation in the particular company on bore hole drilling. The management is impressed by his skills and his expertise and the CEO even takes his card, to keep in touch.

Boissevain also claims: “Cliques are not necessarily rivals of or in competition with other cliques. As they come into being to fulfil the desire of the members for companionship, they do not compete for prizes or scarce resources” (1974: 180). This desire is made very clear by Mr. U. at the beginning, when he mentions his loneliness in Germany. He describes the quality of the relationship with Mr. B. (case #05), who is a very close and old friend:

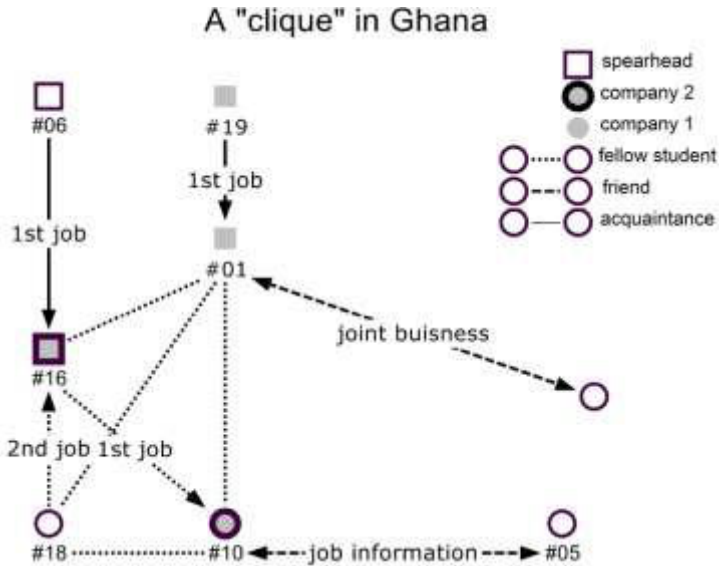
“I met B. at KNUST [Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi/ Ghana]. Yes he did my course, Agricultural Engineering. So we were all in the same department and also we attend the same church. So I had known B. here but I have some pictures during our inauguration. So he is one of my close friends and we met us. But I didn't know he was in Germany, maybe I am going too far? I was there and I heard from one of my friends B. is in Cottbus, so one of the vacations he came and he was going to put up with me in Stuttgart because he wanted to work during the summer days so. Since than B. has been coming during the summer break to Stuttgart and I have known B. in Stuttgart. We all came together in the same plane, we came on the same day to Ghana” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 135-145).

As U. reveals, the relationship between him and B. is very close. They share the same values in life, experience pleasant and unpleasant moments<sup>195</sup> in Germany and share the same humble family backgrounds. Despite the strong and close relationship between U. and B., the advantages of this friendship are merely emotional. B. gets job-relevant advice from his friend to move to the North that does not turn out well. Going to the North is a very radical decision and B. is not completely convinced that he has made the right step. He continues to have a very peripheral position in our clique. Even though he knows the friends of U. he does not really belong to their clique. This is expressed very frankly by Mr. R., our most successful player of the clique, when he talks about their plans for their company, mentioned briefly at the beginning: “*He [Mr. B.] is not with us! He is an employee of our company, URL. The directors that are Mr. U, Mr. R. and Mr. L. we have employed B. (...) to assist us to do a job. (...) We are the signees to the account. But he is not*” (Ghana interview #16; 09.07.2008: 686-689). B. clearly remains the outsider, although he is friends of one of the group's core members. The reason for

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<sup>195</sup> Unpleasant moments are the police controls in Germany: “In Stuttgart we had problems being the foreigners. We had problems with the Polizei. And I remember once B. and myself were in the train. We had gone to work during the vacation, then the Polizei met us. So they didn't ask me any question and he [policeman] asked B. about his passport. So after B. asked me ‘Why didn't he ask you for his passport and only me?’ He asked for my passport and I said ‘You are looking too black, you are too black that is why he asked for your passport!’ [laughs] and we have always been laughing at it. It has always been interesting” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 158-166).

him remaining an outsider are speculative and there was no further information providing a robust basis for an interpretation. Finally, the graph below (figure 13) shows the flow of information between the core members of the group just described in depth.



Source: Own compilation.

Figure 13: Communication in a naturally developed clique in Ghana

Mr. J. (case #01) returned as a spearhead and got his first job thanks to the tip received from his acquaintance who also had been studying in Germany, Mr. X. (case #19), in which he advised him to apply at his firm (company 1). J's fellow student, Mr. R. (case #16), follows in August. He gets his information from a Ghanaian woman (case #06) he also knows as and acquaintance from his time of Germany, but they do not seem to be in frequent touch anymore. When the third fellow student, Mr. U. (case #10), returns in September 2005 he gets a tip from Mr. R. to apply at his company (company 2). Finally, the fourth fellow student, Mr. L. (case #18), returns. He already has a job because he has approached his employer directly during a vacation. The graph shows that the job information is circulated freely. Thus, they seem not to need a formal networking opportunity.

## 8. Professional mobility

This chapter investigates the mobility of returned Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates concerning their professional mobility, concerning women's mobility in their careers and concerning the regional mobility patterns related to their employment situation.

Investigating the return migrants' various mobility patterns is important because it sheds light on the sustainability and outcome of professional reintegration. Various studies have suggested that the quality of the first significant employment determines the whole of a person's professional trajectory (cf. Dietrich and Abraham 2008: 69). This assumption, however, was not confirmed by the interviewed graduates and their career patterns show significant distinct trajectories in both countries. Graduates in both countries are mobile in the various contexts (job, gender, geography) but the mobility of the Cameroonian interviewees in contrast to their Ghanaian counterparts seems to lead less to improvement, whereas the mobility patterns of the Ghanaian interviewees indicate a general upward trend.

Measuring a person's career includes analysing the particular job mobility.<sup>196</sup> Generally, literature on job-related mobility primarily distinguishes between horizontal and vertical mobility (Pointner and Hinz 2008: 100). Horizontal mobility simply concerns job change between employing institutions of the same or different industries, whereas vertical mobility describes whether a career improves or declines. To examine this aspect of the graduates' careers, this chapter first (8.1) shows that there are marked cross-national differences regarding the professional trajectories. Concerning the horizontal mobility of the returned graduates, the data suggests that Cameroonians are less mobile than their Ghanaian counterparts. Slightly more than half of the Cameroonians in the sample [n=22] had changed their jobs after their initial labour market entry and were thus 'movers'. The number of these job-movers was even higher for the country case Ghana, where almost two thirds of the sample [n=28] had moved to another workplace. Most importantly, the vertical mobility in Cameroon also includes an occupational change. More than half of those 12 persons who left their first employment became entrepreneurs themselves and started their own consultancy micro-businesses and NGOs with less than five employees. Two persons were able to secure employment in international organisations for which they also accepted changing their occupational profile. Only three persons managed to integrate into the public sector, becoming lecturers in a higher

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<sup>196</sup> Veiling and Bender (1994: 1) distinguish between "job mobility", which defines the mobility between workplaces or "occupational mobility". The latter occurs when people change their profession. Both aspects of career mobility are relevant in this chapter's analysis.

education institute or working for the government. By contrast, in Ghana the majority of those 17 persons who had found other work went into the public sector and worked as lecturers in the higher education sector or for the government. Only five started their own businesses, of which the majority was of small size between five to 50 employees. It seems that Cameroonians make less progress in their wage employment careers than their Ghanaian counterparts. Remarkably, there is a significant difference concerning graduates who arrange their labour market entry and start in local organisations, in NGOs or in small and medium-sized companies. Whereas for Cameroonian graduates this often means suffering career setbacks after two years, the contrary is true for the Ghanaian graduates. They use their low-profile working entries as a stepping-stone and are able to secure subsequent wage employment successfully. The findings indicate that the reason for this difference lies in the strength of the private sector in both countries.

Second, the analysis in 8.2 concerning gender shows that the career mobility of the interviewed female educational migrants have similar patterns in the two countries. Among the surveyed graduates of this study more than a quarter (28%) were female. Interestingly, these 14 female graduates, of which five returned to Cameroon and nine to Ghana, mentioned that they would have to face certain diminishing career opportunities as soon as their status changed to that of being mothers and housewives. These personal obstacles exist universally and a crucial part of what has been classically labelled as the personal barriers of the so called “glass ceiling” (cf. Wirth 2001: 53). Structural barriers, such as a restricted career, start in a male-dominated field.

However, in neither country did women report having suffered from such discrimination as had been found in previous studies (cf. Martin 2005: 283). On the contrary, they indicated that they have good prospects in public service, especially in professions that are usually dominated by men. Surprisingly, they gave the enforcement of sex equality legislation as the reason for their relatively easy access to the public services. In consequence, most of the interviewed women found entry-level employment as lecturers in tertiary educational institutions or worked for the government. In Cameroon, two women even started in local micro/small enterprises and NGOs. They soon changed and have more lucrative jobs in international organisations. For this change they accepted employment outside of their subject, whereas their Ghanaian female counterparts had respectable careers in the occupation for which they had studied.

Finally, 8.3 closes the chapter by comparing the spatial mobility patterns of the returning graduates’ workplaces in the two home countries, Cameroon and Ghana. The findings suggest that in both countries the return migrants’ spatial mobility continues after their return. Whereas it is true that the majority of the interviewed Cameroonian and Ghanaian graduates tended to move at first to the urban centres because of better job prospects, they show continuous geographical flexible throughout their professional trajectories:

changing jobs often means that the location is also changed. But where do they move to after their first job? More than half of the Cameroonian sample [n=22] started in the two Francophone centres. The highest mobility takes place in the economic triangle between the two larger cities in the Francophone regions Douala, the economic hub (Littoral), the administrative capital Yaoundé (Centre) and Bamenda, in the Anglophone North West Region (cf. Warnier 1993: 49ff.). It is important to note that there is no significant pattern regarding the spatial distribution in the Western Region. Only a minority of the returned Cameroonians start working in this region. More significantly, the regional mobility of the graduates returning from Germany concerns movements between the two main employing Francophone cities Doula and Yaoundé and between the Francophone and Anglophone regions. This distribution is at first sight different to the spatial pattern of the interviewed Ghana group [n=28]. Almost 70% of the interview sample was based in Accra at the time of the interview and had settled. The impression emerges that the regional pattern of returned Ghanaian graduates is more centralised and less mobile than is the case with Cameroon. However, as will be shown, even though the Ghanaian interviewees start working in the capital, where they more often also settle permanently, they transfer their knowledge in a rural-northern setting: through their temporary working projects, which they carry out in the rural regions. In both countries, the spatial mobility patterns of the interviewed graduates reflect the countries' general regional disparities, as will be discussed in depth.

### **8.1 Job mobility: career setback or stepping stone**

Scholarly literature often stresses that the quality of the entry-level employment defines the career trajectory (cf. Dietrich and Abraham 2008: 69). This assumption somehow cannot be confirmed for the returning graduates to Ghana and Cameroon. The findings which have been drawn from the comparison of their trajectories rather point out that the long-term trajectories of returning graduates depend on the general labour market situation in their home countries. The basis of this section is the analysis of data stemming from the follow-up interviews. These were follow-up interviews with four graduates in each country [n=8]. The follow-up interviews were conducted one or two years after the first interviews. Of course, the period of two years for tracing progression of return migrants appears to be too short to measure any significant changes in contributions of return migrants to their trajectories or development. However, due to the time constraints of the PhD project it was impossible for me to investigate a longer progression period.<sup>197</sup> Therefore I

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<sup>197</sup> For results from long-term biographies of graduates of German universities from developing countries the upcoming longitudinal study of Bauschke-Urban et al (2012) 'Global Learning for Sustainable Development' is eagerly awaited.



concentrate on the existing eight follow-up interviews. These eight follow-up interviews have been analysed with special regard to two indicators: firstly, wage development and secondly, job satisfaction/reputation<sup>198</sup> against the backdrop of the respective social backgrounds. Having had a similar starting point in their careers, concerning the pattern of labour market entry as well as of the kind of entry-level employment, the careers developed differently regarding the two countries. Cameroonians more often seemed to face career setbacks, whereas Ghanaians could translate an unfavourable starting position into a stepping stone for their careers. Because the respondents in my survey have not yet reached retirement, this section presents a temporary picture of their career trajectories, which are continuously dynamic and thus might take another direction during the course of time.

The finding that the vertical mobility of the returned graduates' trajectories developed differently becomes obvious against the background of the employing industry (cf. table 13). As outlined in chapter 5.3, all graduates started in the service industries. The sample of the interviewees was selected equally in the two sectors: public service, consisting of higher education institutions (HEIs); ministries, government departments, agencies (MDAs); and private services which comprised local small and medium enterprises (MSEs), local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international enterprises (IEs) and international NGOs. Table 13 shows that the careers of all four graduates were stable and progressed, whereas that of their Cameroonian counterparts tended to stagnate – or in the worst case even declined.

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<sup>198</sup> The question how job satisfaction can be measured in surveys remains largely unexplored and is partly intuitive because it refers to 'soft' interpretative subjective statements and is difficult to compare (cf. Cabrita and Perista 2006: 3 or Fabian and Briedis 2009: 66). In this project, I tackled this complex aspect simply by asking if people were satisfied with their work and combining their statement with my complementary external observations. However, this aspect remains questionable and only can lead to interpretations of success or failure in combination with factual data such as salaries. Interestingly, it shows that factoring individual job satisfaction into the larger picture is helpful because raw information about wages can be misleading. This becomes obvious in the following example of Mr. K. from Cameroon (case #08) who works for the government and earns a fair wage but who is completely unhappy with his working conditions due to corruption (cf. chapter 7.5, 'being blocked').

Table 13: Vertical mobility of returned graduates' careers.

<b>Employing industry</b>	<b>Cameroonians [n=4]</b>	<b>Ghanaians [n=4]</b>
<i>Public Services</i>		
HEI	stable	stable
MDA	stagnant	upward
<i>Private Services</i>		
IEs, NGO	stable/ upward	upward
MSEs, NGO	stagnant/ decline	stable/ upward
<b>Mobility trend</b>	<b>stagnant</b>	<b>upward</b>

Source: Own research.

Sorting the career developments according to the employing industries, it seems as if the interviewed graduates in both countries who started their careers in a higher education institute, a university or a polytechnic school show relatively stable professional trajectories. Working for the government in Cameroon seems to be less rewarding, whereas the Ghanaian graduates even reported upward mobility. In both countries, international organisations were popular employers and starting to work for such an international organisation was regarded as a boost to the career in general, due to the fact that these jobs are more secure, working conditions are less precarious and payment is adequate. However, positions in such organisations are difficult to secure. Especially German development organisations preferably employ from the German labour market (field notes, 12.02.2009).

Thus, the majority of graduates instead start working in local private services, the small-scale enterprises and NGOs. Whereas these local employers allowed an uncomplicated and thus fast port of entry into the labour market for those who had 'arranged' (cf. chapter 6.2) their entry-level employment, these contracts were temporary and in general had to be financially supported by a salary top-up from the external reintegration programmes. However, comparing the careers of graduates who started in this category, an interesting difference appears: Cameroonians who started in this industry faced a career setback after the first two years when the subsidy of the reintegration programmes ended. Their careers either stagnated, meaning that they were stable but progress was slower than they expected, or in the worst case they declined. In Ghana the opposite was the case. The Ghanaian counterparts managed, after having gained an additional two years of work experience in their fields of expertise, to upgrade their profile through the work experience they had achieved and found adequate subsequent employment.

Hence, they had used their low profile entry-level employment as stepping stones and started to have respectable careers. The following table 14 presents the wage development of the eight respondents who started in the service industries, the HEIs (including research and development (R&D)), the MDAs, MSEs and NGOs. Among the eight respondents' careers which were followed up, none had started working in an international company but some had changed to an international company. The data has to be handled with caution: the information about the starting salary is derived from employment contracts and often did not include additional allowances, which are usually paid in the HEI and the MDAs.

Starting salaries were not paid at the same time. By this I mean that the lecturer who started in Cameroon entered the local labour market in 2002, whereas his Ghanaian colleague returned three years later, in 2005. Thus the data for the salaries is not representative in a statistical sense, but it is a supporting indicator for the following argument. The table clearly shows that the starting salaries in Ghana seemed to have been lower than in Cameroon, whereas the median increase of salaries in Ghana was EUR 100 higher than in Cameroon. The higher increase of salaries in the careers of the Ghanaian respondents correlates with the analysis of the interviews, which reveals that their careers also improved faster than that of their Cameroonian counterparts. This is now examined by presenting analysed extracts of the raw data, the narrations of the interviewees themselves.

Table 14: Salary increase according to industry. *Source:* Own research.

Country/ Industry	Cameroonians [n=4]		Ghanaians [n=4]	
	<i>starting</i>	<i>increased</i>	<i>starting</i>	<i>increased</i>
<i>Salaries in EURs</i>				
<b>HEI</b>	270	500	220	900
<b>MDA</b>	270	460	270	320
<b>SME</b>	330	410	140	200
<b>Local NGO</b>	230	0 <sup>199</sup>	150	1,150 <sup>200</sup>
<b>Median increase</b>	<b>~ 160 EUR</b>		<b>~ 260 EUR</b>	

<sup>199</sup> At the time of the second interview the Cameroonian respondent who worked in the local NGO, Mr. F. (case #06), did not receive a stable income because he had continued to work voluntarily for the NGO, after his two years of subsidy ended. During the interview he did not reveal his current income sources. Thus, the figure for the NGOs is not included in the median salary.

<sup>200</sup> Similarly, I did not include the wage for the NGO in Ghana for the calculation of the median wage, because Mr. S. (case #13) had had a huge jump in his wage due to the fact that he had changed employer: he had found employment in an international company.

First, the trajectories of the individuals who found entry-level employment in the higher education institutions are outlined. Both Dr. L. (Cameroon case #05) and Dr. V. (Ghana case #12) originate from an educational middle-class family and they have successfully maintained this status thanks to their careers which they have achieved due to their PhD degrees obtained in Germany. Both have developed stable careers and when I meet them the second time continue to work in their workplaces and have received a promotion. However, according to the income situation, Dr. L's career seems at first sight to be slightly behind Dr. V's career. Whereas L's initial basic salary was about EUR 270, his increased salary at the time of the interview (which was roughly five years after he had returned) is about EUR 500, by then in the position of a senior lecturer. In our follow-up interview, two years later, he happily reports that his income has almost doubled. The reason is, he says, because he has started a spin-off venture together with colleagues from his department. This spin-off has developed over a period of three years and is based on his expertise in the field of mineralogy. This activity has created a second income for L., based on the projects their small consultancy is able to contract. Their largest income is from international companies who invest in Cameroon's booming mining industry. However, during our second meeting, which takes place at his first workplace in the university, I get the impression that he has little time to spend at his department in the field of lecturing and instead invests most of his energy into the consultancy. Nevertheless, his satisfaction is high because his reputation has increased since the spin-off successfully consolidated and the project employs graduates from his faculty.

Dr. V. (Ghana case #12) also achieved her position as university lecturer in the field of chemistry thanks to her degree and her specific field of expertise. Although her starting salary of about EUR 220 seems to be quite low, allowances must be added to this basic salary. The university pays the rent for her house on campus and she gets further allowances for fuel and health insurance schemes. Concerning her career mobility, she sounds busy but also very satisfied. She receives support from her mentor and is working diligently to soon be promoted to the position of a senior lecturer. However, she has to publish a lot to achieve this goal. When we meet two years after our first interview her professional reintegration took place five years before. Meanwhile, she says she has increased her research collaborations and sees improvements in the laboratory work:

“Out of the project that we did last year we are going to publish about four or five [papers]. I have a colleague, an international research partner, that we are working together here at UCC [University of Cape Coast]. I have one at Korle Bu in the microbiology lab who is working with the microbial activity aspect. Then I have two at Ghana Atomic Energy Commission. Then I have two at Coco Research at Tafo. So we form a team. (...) So out of all this research that we did we publish about five of the analysis papers. We did a presentation just this August at Ghana Research Association at the national con-

ference and my students did a presentation. It was wonderful, I was so proud of them. Two of them are still around, they are working in the lab. So research too, I'll say there has been an improvement" (Ghana interview #12; 07.09.2009: 31-41).

From Dr. V's perspective, a serious challenge to her work with the students in the lab is to have sufficient equipment and research utilities. This, she explains, has serious consequences because it can delay the whole graduation process for the students in the final year:

"A certain situation of challenge. Yes, let me say in the research where the students could not have access to chemicals because chemicals were finished in the department. And to buy chemicals here it is a process you will have to wait, and it means that more than two three months will be going and the students are working with nothing, because they are in the final year and they are been in the project. They have only eight months so if they have to wait for three four months for chemicals to come for them to do their work. So that was quite challenging. (...) It was very challenging and some of them, the students were not completing. (...), searching [research] material from the internet was also a big challenge. Fortunately back two months my husband was in Netherland. So I quickly sent him some of the articles they needed because he could use the opportunity that he had free access, so he downloaded some information for me. And he sent them by e-mail and also downloaded my papers for the students" (Ghana interview #12; 07.09.2009: 49-73).

Whereas V. manages these infrastructural challenges very well, she also notes that her career depends on it, too: to get a higher degree as a senior lecturer and to get an additional increase in salary she has to publish more papers. Hence, such material obstacles as described in detail above not only delay the graduation of her students, but also cause her to progress much slower with her own career.

Whereas the careers in the higher education sector seemed to develop quite similarly – slowly but steadily – careers in the government differed between the two countries. While qualification and expertise were keys to rise in the hierarchy in Ghana's governmental agency, this is possible in Cameroon only to a limited extent. Both Mr. K. from Cameroon (case #08) and Mr. M. from Ghana (case #02) work in a ministry agency when I meet them the first time. They continue their careers in these workplaces where they are able to apply what they learned during their study programmes in Germany. Two years later, both report having received an upgrade and an increase of their salaries. Mr. K. reports his income has even doubled. However, he also sounds as if his career in Cameroon is stagnating, whereas M. in Ghana sounds very positive and says that his career working for the Ghanaian government is progressing well. This is surprising and shows how misleading so-called hard facts, such as information about income, can sometimes be.

K. expresses during our second interview how his career is somehow blocked (cf. chapter 7.5) and that his job satisfaction is very low. The reason is that, according to K., “*the job is not ‘normal’*” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 245)<sup>201</sup> because his boss will not pay any respect to official labour regulations and general principles. Thus, his boss continuously forces the employees to exceed their working hours without paying them overtime. In addition, indicates K., his boss is involved in corruption and fraud. This unpleasant working atmosphere has not changed when we meet again in 2010. It seems even worse because, K. appears to have resigned himself to the fact that he will not climb the career ladder in this working environment, because the ruling party supports his boss. Unless K. accepts the regulations of the ‘system’ and becomes involved in corruption methods himself, he sees only a small chance of starting his own business in the field of mining. To realise this project, he claims, he lacks financial capital (Memo follow up interview Cameroon #08; 14.05.10).

K’s narration is in direct contrast to the story of M. in Ghana. M. studied Environmental Resource Management in Germany and specialised in a particular field of environmental taxation. Upon his return, he achieves his entry-level employment in a governmental agency. After two years he receives his promotion, which he tells me when we meet the second time:

“The day I got my promotion, it was also a very happy moment. Why? Because the promotion went with increasing my pay [emphasizes silently] (...) so it would have taken me eight years to get to the current position. I hope you understand. But based on my qualification (...) I did not stay on this grade. (...) I jumped, my salary as well was increased twice. So it was a super moment for me I was so excited [smiles humbly]. Yes, I was so excited” (Ghana follow-up interview #02; 17.09.2009: 85-102).

What makes M. happy is not so much his increased salary, but the fact that his degree obtained in Germany and his work experience are both well-recognised, which made him “*jump*” in his career:

“You see so I was so excited for one, they recognized my certificate that I have been studying and am helping the agency. I am helping the country so they gave me a promotion and secondly it went with increment in my salary” (Ghana follow-up interview #02; 17.09.2009: 111-115).

This comparison between the two individuals’ career trajectories working for the government in Cameroon and Ghana shows that the income-indicator has only

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<sup>201</sup> German original: “Der Job ist nicht normal” (Cameroon interview #08; 06.10.2008: 245).

limited significance and cannot completely reflect the working conditions. What is more important is the job-satisfaction. Whereas K. suffers in Cameroon from inadequate working conditions, M. in Ghana has been fully integrated and has the opportunity to “*help the agency/ help the country*” with what he learned abroad. What is more, his superiors support his career. Two years later, M. is even granted a study leave again, to pursue his PhD in Germany. Both careers seem to be reasonable at first sight, but are not necessarily top-class careers. The extent of their success only becomes obvious in light of their social background. Both Mr. K. in Cameroon and Mr. M. from Ghana originate from their countries’ poorest northern regions and their parents were peasant farmers. K’s family had migrated from the Extreme North to the harbour city Douala where he grew up and went to school. He is one of eight children and his mother had a small business in the city but was never very successful in this. Similarly, M. is from the North, the Upper East Region, which is one of the poorest regions in Ghana. His parents were peasant farmers too and he has six siblings. Only through their immense efforts and his strong will did he achieve a formal education, even pursuing his master’s degree abroad. M. emphasizes this aspect of himself in our second interview:

“You know this part of our world, it is not easy coming from a very down dropping background. When I say down dropping background where your parents are peasant farmers and are not able to earn a lot and yet you had been able to educate yourself to that level [laughs], you see it is something that is remarkable. A lot of children drop out” (Ghana follow-up interview #02; 17.09.2009; 291-295).

The fact that M. mentions this aspect about himself shows how much he values his education abroad. It also shows that it is necessary to factor the individuals’ biographies into an analysis about professional careers because only then the whole scope of educational achievements and their impact will reveal themselves.

The careers of the individuals who start in the private services, in local micro and small and medium enterprises, tend to be stable in both countries. However, the career of the Cameroonian interviewee seems to stagnate, whereas the Ghanaian counterpart reports improvement because they have used the opportunity to accumulate work experience, which makes the first job become a stepping stone. These cases concern Mr. O. in Cameroon (case #01) and Mrs. K. in Ghana (case #06). Mr. O. ‘achieves’ his entry-level employment (cf. chapter 6.1) in a private, medium-sized company. There he is in charge of setting up a new production area and constructs hospital furniture. In parallel to this wage employment he starts setting up a small company of his own, an engineering workshop. When we first meet in 2008 Mr. O. has already been back for over a year. At the time of the first interview he predicts that he will be able to work in his own construction workshop within the next three to four years. Two years later, in May 2010, Mr. O. still works for the same private company. Even though he has been able to secure a number of orders for his boss, who promotes him, the returns for his efforts remain

modest. Now he earns little more than two years before (EUR 330/ EUR 410). He explains that his professional prospects in this company are limited and that he has already reached the highest achievable level. This often happens to those who start working in small and medium-sized local companies because these are mostly in the hands of one family:

“There are also people who come back and start in a small business, start in a family business. In such a company a career is [difficult]. They know that the father is already the boss, next is the mother, she is the accountant, then comes the son, and some employees, like Mr. J. (entrepreneur, Cameroon case #24). (...) I think most people will work in a company two, three, four years there and if they have enough budget they go to a larger company or become self-employed, that is my opinion. Yes, in my opinion, if you are no longer there [Germany], you must already know to which [emphasises] company you want to go, from the beginning. If you're in a big company you have greater chances to get ahead, than in a small company. In a small company you must know that there is no place for you right from the start, just need to work to get your money and experience” (Cameroon follow-up interview #01; 04.05.10: 974-984).<sup>202</sup>

What O. states clearly is that starting in a local private enterprise offers limited career opportunities and thus is often only temporary employment. At the same time, such temporary employment is important because it offers the job starter the chance to accumulate experience, to save money during the first transition phase, and to plan carefully for the next career step. This careful planning is what O. does, but according to his statements it proceeds only slowly because his plans to start his own company have not improved as fast as he had hoped for. Three years after his return from Germany he is still at the beginning of his project because he lacks access to financial loans and has to spend most of his time in his formal first employment. Nevertheless, even though he is not happy with his financial situation, he expresses great relief and satisfaction that he has made the decision to return to

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<sup>202</sup> German original: “Es gibt auch Leute, die zurückkommen und in einem kleinen Unternehmen anfangen, in einem Familienunternehmen. Dort ist der Berufseinstieg [schwer]. Die wissen, der Vater ist schon der Boss, daneben die Mutter, sie ist Buchhalterin, daneben hast du noch dein Sohn und einige Angestellte, wie bei Herrn J. (entrepreneur, Cameroon case #24). (...) ich glaube die meisten Leute werden in einer Firma zwei, drei, vier Jahre arbeiten und wenn sie Etat genug haben gehen sie in eine größere Firma oder werden selbständig, das ist meiner Meinung. Ja, meiner Meinung nach, wenn Du da [Deutschland] nicht länger bist, musst du von Anfang schon wissen, in welche Firma du willst. Wenn du in einer große Firma bist hast du größere Chancen weiterzukommen, als in einer kleinen Firma. In einer kleinen Firma musst du schon von Anfang an wissen, dass es kein Platz für dich gibt, musst nur arbeiten, um dein Geld und Erfahrungen zu bekommen” (Cameroon follow-up interview #01; 04.05.10: 974-984).



Cameroon. During our second meeting he enthusiastically talks of his family and the newborn baby that he is now able to see growing up. In contrast, Mrs. K. from Ghana (case #06) does not remain at her first workplace and is far from facing a career set-back but is able to make use of her entry-level arrangement as a stepping stone. She starts working in a micro-enterprise in environmental eco-engineering, belonging to a friend whom she knows from her national service. This friend had just set up his business when she returned and needed a helping hand to develop his business. The job was on a temporary basis only. When the additional salary subsidy from the reintegration assistance ends after two years and the external funds are coming in slowly, Mrs. K. seeks a more stable income. She carefully plans and is advised by a female friend who is also in the field of engineering. Finally, she secures permanent employment in a governmental agency due to her particular educational background in environmental engineering. There she receives a regular income, has not received a higher salary but is now second in charge (her position and career will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter on women's careers, 8.2). She is satisfied with her work and, similar to Mr. O. in Cameroon, happy that she is back home in Ghana. Her salary has not increased by much. It started at EUR 140 and she earns about EUR 200 at her new place. Her standard of living, however, has increased because her husband has found a top-class position in a finance institute. Five years after she has returned and three years after working in her second job, Mrs. K's career has consolidated successfully. An indicator for this interpretation is that she happily tells me in our second meeting that she has enjoyed her first official vacation, going to the UK together with her husband and her children. Before, this had not been possible due to time restrictions because she had to work for her career and also because they lacked the money for a costly overseas trip for the whole family.

The distinctions between the Cameroonian and the Ghanaian professional trajectories become most evident when comparing the careers of the two individuals who started working in local NGOs. Mr. F. in Cameroon (case #06) and Mr. S. in Ghana (case #13) have almost the same starting position but their careers develop very differently. Mr. F. is from a poorer family in Cameroon. In Germany, he studied electrical engineering in a polytechnic university. During his 10 years in Germany he never felt at home and had financial problems. When he returns his mother is not happy about it. She fears that he will not be able to support the household financially anymore and hopes that he re-migrates abroad again. He starts to search for employment. He applies at various international companies and is even invited for an interview but in the end does not get the job. Frustrated from the job search he finally arranges his entry-level employment in a small environmental NGO in his region and participates in the reintegration programme (cf. chapter 6.2). At the same time, he has plans to start a small business himself. When the contract and the subsidy end after two years he continues with his plan to become self-employed. Two years later, during our second meeting, F. seems to be overworked and appears harried. His income situation has become worse. Whereas

at the beginning of his transitional period, upon return, he at least earned some EUR 145, by now he has become highly indebted. This also affects his social reputation negatively, as he admits, because he has taken private loans from friends which he cannot pay back. Even though he mentions that his mother has by now accepted that he will stay in Cameroon and not migrate again, his social integration appears ambiguous. He says that he refrains from official meetings at networks, official alumni gatherings or informal meetings with other returned graduates. Thus, I suspect that he purposely separates himself more than other returned graduates because he is afraid of appearing as an unsuccessful migrant (memo follow-up interview, 05.05.10).

The story of Mr. S. from Ghana (case #13) contrasts the career decline of Mr. F. from Cameroon. He, like Mr. F., originates from a poorer family in the Upper West of Ghana and tells me that he had a very disadvantaged educational career: he has 17 siblings and his father died at an early age. The family definitely lacks the money to pay for his school equipment, the books, the school uniform and his meals at school. Only through a supportive neighbouring teacher does S. remain in school and is able to pursue his master in Tropical Forestry in Germany. When he returns after three years abroad he too faces financial problems and has difficulties in finding formal employment in Ghana. He does not even get a reply from the various international organisations to which he sends his application. He then arranges his entry-level employment nearby the place where he used to carry out his national service, a local community NGO. S. also benefits from the reintegration package. At the time the subsidy ends he has gained practical working experience. This, as he points out in our interview, is the crucial aspect in his CV why an international timber company contracts him as an expert on sustainable forestry. Because they have to implement Ghana's enforced environmental regulations for international companies, they urgently need an expert who has experience in training the local population in sustainable forest management. He changes his job and starts in the international company. During our second meeting S. proudly presents his impressive career that he has been able to pursue only three years after his return. He shows me around at his new workplace and tells me that his income has increased immensely: he now earns over EUR 1,000 monthly and has additional allowances. He now has his own small, modest office, a pick-up for work and his social reputation has progressed too. He has married and started a family. S. has even been able to finance his mother's most precious dream: the pilgrimage to Mecca. In conclusion, comparing the story of F. from Cameroon and S. from Ghana the different trends are obvious. F. faced a serious career-setback by starting in a local NGO, whereas Mr. S. from Ghana used the opportunity to accumulate work experience and thus his first temporary job in a local NGO became an important stepping stone along the path to establishing a career.

This final comparison indicates once again that the careers of the returned graduates are likely to suffer setbacks as soon as their reintegration subsidy ends whereas the Ghanaian graduates are able to use these temporary employments as

an opportunity to accumulate practical work experience. Their entry-level employment becomes a stepping stone into their careers. I argue that this interpretation of a rather small sample of only eight respondents is substantial because an internal evaluation on returned Cameroonian graduates and their professional trajectories comes to the same conclusion: Schmelz (2010: 40-43) also stresses that those graduates who start in temporary employment at NGOs or micro-sized companies in Cameroon have only limited success. Therefore, to overcome their setbacks in wage employment, notes Schmelz (2010: 40-43), Cameroonians very often start entrepreneurial activities and try to set up their own companies. The reason why Ghanaians make more progress in their wage employment careers supposedly is twofold: firstly, because they leave their country at an older age and at least have worked during their national service in Ghana already, they know the economic infrastructure in their country better. Secondly, this infrastructure has changed only a little during the three to maximum four years abroad. However, as the case of Mr. O. from Cameroon shows, even in the case where the return has been well planned and the starting company carefully chosen, the careers progress only slowly.

However, the finding that the Cameroonian graduates who had been interviewed in this sample seemed to be less successful in their wage employment careers upon return in the formal sector counts primarily for the men. Their female counterparts, as the next sub-chapter on gender disparities shows, perform well in both countries.

## 8.2 Women's careers

Almost all of the 14 interviewed female graduates in the samples of both countries (Cameroon  $n=5$ , Ghana  $n=9$ ) performed well and said that they had made substantial careers after they had returned.<sup>203</sup> Their professional mobility is now discussed by presenting their starting position in terms of salary, by highlighting the aspects concerning the so-called glass ceiling, personal and structural potential obstacles. Furthermore, in reconstructing their careers it may be presumed that most women found their work through male personal contacts, which is a contrasting finding to scholarly research. Interestingly, most differences can be seen not between women

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<sup>203</sup> The women's professional success becomes more evident in a comparison with the employment situation of women in their home countries: In general, the majority of women in Cameroon and Ghana works informally. In Cameroon, only 6.2% of women are wage earners whereas 12.5% of their male counterparts work in the formal sector (NIS 2011: 48). Even more striking is the fact that in Cameroon the proportion of unemployed and job searching female academics with a tertiary degree is more than twice the size (22.1%) of that for male academics (10.8%), according to the latest employment survey of the Cameroonian NIS (2011: 68). In Ghana, only slightly more women, about 8.2%, are in wage employment (in contrast to 25% men) (GSS 2008: 37).

from the two countries, but between married and unmarried women. The latter said that they are more independent, have more time to invest in gender-related activities and the former expressed that they invest more energy in balancing their careers with their family duties as housewives and mothers. Despite the fact that all interviewed women had respectable careers, they also mentioned during the interviews that in recent times, due to increasing scarcity of formal and decent work, the job search for female graduates had become increasingly problematic and that young women often faced sexual harassment.

Earlier studies have already shown that female educational migrants seem to be the group which benefits the most from their investment in education (cf. Rozario and Gow 2003: 71-73), although they are underrepresented in highly skilled migration in general (cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 170).<sup>204</sup> Both, having respectable careers and being a small group might have to do with the fact that these female educational migrants often originate from households where they received a privileged educational foundation. In consequence and in addition to their degrees from abroad, these female educational migrants have often been said to become the “cream of society” (Heinze 2000: 54), who upon return enter the public services in key positions as lawyers, ministers, professors or make careers as medical doctors and entrepreneurs (cf. Martin 2005: 276-277). Consistent with this, the majority of the women in this study had made respectable careers and at the time of the interview had a stable income as wage employees. They had found entry-level employment as lecturers in tertiary educational institutions or worked for the government.

In Cameroon, only two women had started as entrepreneurs, but soon had to give up and instead became wage employees in more lucrative international organisations. For this change they even accepted employment outside of their subject.<sup>205</sup> In Ghana, the distribution of the employing industries was equal. A third of the surveyed women had found their entry-level employment in local private NGOs and small size companies, from which they changed to more stable positions in the public services after a while. The second third had started as lecturers in tertiary educational institutions. The final third had started working for in the public services, the MDAs. The trend of women preferring the public sector instead of the local private sector possibly has to do with the aspect of security. One of the main motivations to work for the government is often said to be having a stable income

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<sup>204</sup> It is important to note that until 1981, by law Cameroonian women were not allowed to travel and to cross national borders without their husbands' official permission. Thus, Cameroonian women per se had restricted spatial mobility in the past (Tsagué 2009: 17).

<sup>205</sup> Mrs. I. (Cameroon case #15), who studied Information and Communication Technology has become a consultant for agricultural projects in an organisation of the German development cooperation and Mrs. Q. (Cameroon case #16), originally a certified translator, today works as a service officer in the middle management of a bank.

(which in reality is often not paid regularly) and obtaining the benefits of pension rights (cf. Walther 2011: 64).

Regarding the entry-level employment of female returning graduates, their comparably high entry-level salary is remarkable. Table 15 compares the women's starting salaries to that of their male counterparts. The figures taken from the official employment contracts of the interviewees are the basis for this comparison. They were not accessible for all cases. In addition, only the basic salaries were considered. This means, for instance, in the case of the university employees additional allowances have to be added. The comparison is not meant to be representative, but should give a rough idea of the income prospects of returned academics.

Table 15: Comparison of starting salary according to gender.

Basic salary EUR/month	Cameroonians [n=22]		Ghanaians [n=28]	
	women	men	women	men
Lower quartile	230	80	140	90
Upper quartile	900	830	350	850
Median quartile	420	340	260	280
<b>n =</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: Own research.

Women in Cameroon seemingly had higher starting salaries than their male colleagues as well as their Ghanaian female fellows. The difference in the income situation between Cameroonian and Ghanaian women is probably explained by the higher educational profile of the Cameroonian women. Among the group of the Cameroonian female interviewees, more women had studied in the field of sciences in which two had obtained their PhD degrees, whereas in Ghana the majority of the surveyed women had taken a comparably lower degree course, a postgraduate master degree in the field of environmental studies. Therefore, they started in less highly-paid position upon their return than their Cameroonian female counterparts.

In Cameroon, the highest starting salary of a woman was about EUR 900, which was a salary paid in an international finance organisation to which the woman had changed soon after she had not received payment from her first employer in a local private industry (Cameroon case #16). The lowest starting salary of about EUR 230 was paid to a lecturer in a private college that was managed by her own husband (cf. Cameroon case #03). The median starting salary was about EUR 420. In general, the starting salary of Cameroonian women was about EUR 100 higher in all quartiles than that of their male colleagues.

This income gap is because two women started working for international companies and thus had a high starting salary. The starting salaries of Ghanaian women were somewhat lower than that of their Cameroonian female counterparts. The highest salary was about EUR 350, which was paid to a researcher in a ministry department (Ghana case #24). In contrast, the highest salary, at EUR 850, was paid to a Ghanaian (case #09) who found entry-level employment in an international automobile company. The lowest wage was about EUR 140, paid to a woman who arranged her entry-level employment in a local NGO (Ghana case #06). In comparison, the lowest salary of EUR 90 was paid to an employee in the public services. The median starting salary in Ghana was about EUR 250, which is almost equal to the median starting salary of the men but almost EUR 200 less than the median salary of the returned female graduates in Cameroon.<sup>206</sup>

Regarding the personal situation of the female educational returnees, more things seemed to be in common between women from both countries. Interviewees from Cameroon and Ghana expressed the opinion that their social environment, especially their fathers and husbands, had been very instrumental in their careers. This fact has already been pointed out in earlier works on highly educated women (cf. Wurster 1996: 284, cf. Heinze 2000: 35). However, the support from men also seemed to have another side, causing personal obstacles for their careers: it led to having family obligations and thus a lack of time for career-related activities. Regardless of their country of origin, all married women expressed that they had to struggle for a balance between their modern urban careers and their aim to fit into the picture of an ideal woman.<sup>207</sup> For the Cameroonian sample, four women out of five were already married and had children whereas only one woman, aged 29, was not married when she returned from Germany. In the Ghanaian sample the distribution was similar: the majority of six women out of nine were already married, of

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<sup>206</sup> This finding is quite surprising and has to be treated with caution. In general, it is assumed that women's salaries are lower than men's. A collection of studies on wage disparities summarised in an ILO study by Wirth (2001: 16) indicates that in general the starting salaries of women are far lower than that of their male counterparts and that even higher education degrees do not outbalance these inequalities. In the case of the study the figures are not representative but only reflect a very small portion of returned women's incomes. That their salaries are higher than their male counterparts might be because more women of the sample started working in international companies, where salaries in general are the highest, or in the public sector. The men, in contrast, mainly started working in NGOs or small-sized companies.

<sup>207</sup> The common cross-over feature in studies that investigate the image of an 'ideal woman' and women's economic participation is that independent from the women's ethnic backgrounds they have to face the expectations of society to be 'good mothers and wives', whereas their economic productivity in formal wage employment receives less attention – from society as well as from research (cf. Kost and Callenius 1994, cf. Werthmann 1997, cf. Kruk 2000, cf. Behrends 2002).

which three were married but had not yet become mothers. Three women were single when they returned.

Firstly, selected interview quotes demonstrate how the married women described their father's and later their husbands as being tremendously supportive and enabling their educational emigration to become successful. First, Mrs. V. (Ghana case #12), a PhD holder from Ghana, explains that from her perspective, first her father and later her husband were the founders of her career. These statements are almost equivalent to those of Mrs. G. (Cameroon case #04), a PhD holder from Cameroon who also states that she owes a lot to her husband. Firstly, I present the comments of Mrs. V., who answers my question about who she thinks was of importance for her career:

“My father played a very very important and a major role which I appreciated so much and maybe I must use this platform to commend him. He did very well for me when I was a little girl. Growing up I was so dear to him, so dear to him and eh he also really liked me because I was a serious type who always was ready to learn. You know parents when they see their child is learning you know they take more interest in the child. So he really supported me, he really supported me. Other things I may ask for like clothing or something, which he refused but when I asked him for something for academic he never refused. He paid my fees perfectly well he even paid always in credits. He never played with my school fees. So I had that smooth you know education (...) and he gave me that attention, was always listening to me and also advising me yeah (...) he has really supported me. He has been a very big influence in my life as my father I must commend” (Ghana interview #12; 07.07.2008: 70-91).

Mrs. V. praises her father as a caring man, who pays a lot of attention and “*never played*” with her education, meaning that he had always paid her tuition fees and expenses in the course of her education. When she continues to point out who was helpful in her educational career, she refers to her husband:

“One other person who has also influenced and helped me in my PhD. And my master's was my husband. You know we married before my master's and eh you know in Ghana or in Africa, you know most men will always want their wives to stay at home or not playing with them in terms of additional [competition]. But he is an exception. We did the master's together. He did physics, I did chemistry and we supported each other. He allowed me and even with the PhD. He went to Germany first, he went first. And there was the need for me to join him. But he wouldn't like me to join as a wife where I'll sit there doing nothing because you know the German system when you come as a spouse and your partner is a student, you are not supposed to work that thing is there. So he said that will not be wise than you have finished your master's (...) so, I could come to Germany and

ehh, he supported me. He gave me all his support encouraging here and there and as a husband, so he is also very important and influential in my education. I am sure I shall say he took over from my father [laughs] my father did it up to a point and then he took over (...) so I will say he took over from my father He became my father [laughs loud]" (Ghana interview #12; 07.07.2008: 122-150).

Mrs. V. stresses that first her father financially supported her education and always paid interest to her abilities, which encouraged her.<sup>208</sup> Later, her husband "*took over from my father*" and "*allowed*" her to join him during his own PhD studies in Germany. This gave her the opportunity not only to be an 'accompanying woman' but instead to achieve her own degree, too. Because of this, her husband, she claims, was an "*exception*" because unlike other men "*in Africa*" he supported his wife actively. What is most remarkable in this short narration is that Mrs. V. refers to her own intellectual success by stressing her diligence, "*I was a serious type who always was ready to learn*", but from her perspective it seems as it was dependant on the good will of her closest male family members. Without the support of these two men in her life, she assumes, her education and later her career would not have been as "*smooth*". Similarly, Mrs. G. from Cameroon (case #04) stresses that the approval from her husband was necessary for her to go abroad and pursue her higher education. In her case, her husband stayed behind in Cameroon and waited for her to return and to get married:

"My husband was my boyfriend by that time and for him too it was horrible. I said I don't know, normally it should be three or four years maximum if I am lucky. If I start a project [PhD] and if it also works. So if we are lucky and if I am hard working. You need to be really hard working for that to finish [laughs]. Yes. And then I thought I asked my boyfriend. He was the one at that time to convince my mum, my mother, that she should let me go because here in Africa it is not good when you want to go somewhere and your parents does not agree, it is very bad. Yes, so you need to have, like we say, their benediction (...). So my husband just talked to my mum and then she said 'ok if you are ok then there is no problem'. (...) and it was also difficult for the financial situation because I myself had to pay the travel expense of myself at that time (...) and that was my husband helped me a lot yes (...) he paid the flight, he paid the ticket for the flight" (Cameroon interview #04; 02.10.2008: 164-183).

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<sup>208</sup> Martin makes a similar observation that her female interviewees often referred to their fathers as having been of great support for their careers (2005: 278).



In Mrs. G's case, her husband also actively supported her educational plans by convincing her parents that it was a good idea that she travel abroad<sup>209</sup> and make use of the opportunity to achieve her PhD degree abroad and by financing her travel costs. Without his help concerning these two crucial points, Mrs. G. would probably not have been able to get to Germany and to further her education. During the long time of her absence of about "*three or four years maximum*" her husband, who was at that time still only her boyfriend, supported her by sustaining the relationship. The gesture that he paid her airplane ticket must not be seen as merely an economic act, but also a symbolic one. It is more like a promise that he still is involved in the relationship and that he will wait for her. Both Mrs. V. in Ghana and Mrs. G. refer to differences in the social structure "*here in Africa*" and thus highlight that the role of women in an African context is different than the ideal of an allegedly independent woman in Europe.<sup>210</sup> However, despite this social dependence on their husbands, the women's professional trajectories continued to be mobile in order to work and get a promotion. Only Mrs. Q. (Cameroon case #16) accepted a slight downturn in her career because of her husband's career. She starts working in an international finance institution in Douala and soon receives a promotion. Then she meets her husband, who works in the capital Yaoundé where he starts his clinical practice. Instead of continuing her career in the bank department in Douala, she accepts work in the bank's branch in Yaoundé in order to be near her husband, allowing them to live together, but has a lower position than before. In other cases, women sometimes have to be extremely mobile, as the example of Mrs. N. (Cameroon case #07) shows: at the time of our interview she held three positions as a lecturer in three different cities and commuted between these three locations continuously.

Being supported by fathers and husbands also includes the fact that most female interviewees mentioned that they have to "balance" (Wurster 1996) their duties as wives and mothers in the household with their formal careers, which is often a critical task because it affects their career activities and their professional networking. This is turning out to be problematic for their careers because networking is regarded as a major career-building strategy (cf. Wirth 2001: 127). An example is offered in the next statement, made by Mrs. K. from Ghana (case #06). She is a mother of two children and married to a successful return migrant. In the interview

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<sup>209</sup> Pelican et al. (2008: 121) also stress the point that prospective migrants would hardly leave without having the explicit blessings of their parents which would indicate that migration is a collective – a family – decision.

<sup>210</sup> This resembles Wurster's finding on Kenyan women working in positions in the formal labour market again, whom she describes as very grateful for their husbands support and who thus were eager to "please their husbands" (1996: 284) in order to gain more professional freedom and economic independence.

she admits that she – in contrast to her husband - rarely finds the time for social gatherings, such as meeting her friends from her ‘old students’ association’:

JB: “Have you been in a club or any social gathering?”

Mrs. K.: “Social gathering. Hmm I can say that apart from my work, I don’t involve myself so much in social activities. Why is it so? It is not easy working and taking care of the family. It is not easy. It’s like every little time that I get I will spend it with my children. Most of the time my free time I spend with my children, that’s I don’t joke with it (...) I realised that I haven’t really time for meetings, whenever they call me for a meeting I have to disappoint (...) It was my schools old old students’ association that was the one I wanted to join. They organise programmes but I couldn’t make the time for the meetings.”

JB: “So you didn’t join your husband at the football club as well?”<sup>211</sup>

Mrs. K.: “Hah [short slight smile]. I can’t [laughs loud] I can’t because I leave the house very early on Saturday mornings. They meet on Saturday mornings. By 6:30 a.m. they are already in the park and that 6:30 a.m., that is the time I have to wake up and do the washing and do the cleaning up and you know so I wouldn’t get the time for it. And also my Saturdays are days that I go to the market and do a lot of cooking for the week Because almost everyday I get home after 6:00 pm so I should have something at home so that the whole family [mumbles]. When I finish with all this i have to go to the market and than come home do my cooking. So I have very little time. Maybe I can say it is/ it is church which is my social (...) I joined [the old girls’ network] and they called me several times for about four times to meet them and all those times I couldn’t go so now they don’t even call me again [sighs and laughs silent]” (Ghana interview #06; 02.07.2008: 754-802).

The statement of Mrs. K. reveals that her main priority is to take care of her children and the family’s well-being. In consequence, she lacks time to join her “*Old Students Association*” meetings. Even though she is very organised and plans her week well by doing “*a lot of cooking for the week*” on Saturdays, ultimately this only gives her a better system for getting through the week, but it does not offer her the time she needs to maintain her social contacts. However, these old student associations are, as Heinze (2000) notes, the most important networks for the ca-

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<sup>211</sup> A few sequences before this part of the interview Mrs. K. told me that her husband had found his entry-level employment through personal contacts that he had maintained with members of his football club which he met every weekend.

reer trajectories of the female Ghanaian elite. These elite-women who once went to such meetings, on returning from Great Britain organise themselves in dense and exclusively small networks, which already form during secondary school days in highly reputed boarding schools, such as Wesley Girls' High School, Achimota college (cf. Heinze 2000: 38ff., cf. expert interview #01). Mrs. K. attended one of the smaller elite girls' schools but it is not likely that she will benefit from being a member in such an important network if she is not able to be present during meetings. She knows that these personal contacts are the most powerful resource for having a successful professional career for both men and women, to introduce the job searcher to a potential employer, or to identify a vacancy:

“With women so far as I am concerned (...) I would say is it depends on who you know. Getting a job here (...) if you don't know. If you are a man and you don't know anybody it would still be difficult for you. If you are a woman and you don't know anybody it will also be difficult for you. So the most important thing is you know, not necessarily knowing someone there [in the organization where one seeks employment] but at least you should know somebody who can also introduce you (...) when something [a vacancy] comes the person will give us the information: ‘There is a job a vacancy here’ or maybe ‘These people are about to do some recruitment’. Than I will direct you to go and then maybe we will find [a job]. Otherwise it is difficult for both, men and women” (Ghana interview #06; 02.07.2008: 697-723).

In contrast to these examples of married women, women without children clearly have the advantage of having more time and being able to plan their time independently.<sup>212</sup> This independent time they can invest to engage actively in gender-specific networking activities, like Ms. A. from Ghana (case #24). Throughout her academic career she enthusiastically builds strategic networks during summer schools, in clubs of female engineers at university:

“The talks were given by women engineers working in fields. We went to a company and actually met women who go to offshore and

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<sup>212</sup> However, being a highly educated single female older than 25 also causes problems. Ms. A. states after our interview that it is not easy for independent women in Ghana to find a partner who is interested in a serious relationship with a ‘career woman’. Similarly, Ms. S. (Ghana case #27) indicates that the man she used to date, a bachelor degree holder, refrained from proposing to her because she had a higher master degree than him. One of the experts I interviewed pointed out this problem: women with higher education face conflicting situations in their relationships. She claims that among her former classmates who all belong to an educational elite the divorce rate is higher than the norm. The reason is that the men are not able to cope with their successful women, regard them as competition and do not like their wives to be in wage labour (Ghana expert interview #01; 08.07.2008: 154-160).

they have five kids. How they balance, that is the whole idea. To be a great engineer and to be a wife or to be a mother or to be whoever you wanted to be and still work” (Ghana interview #24; 08.09.2009: 345-349).

During such occasions Ms. A. not only learns how a career woman can be “*a great engineer*” while at the same time being a wife and a mother, but she also establishes a sound understanding for gender issues. She uses her free time to become actively involved in gender topics, giving speeches herself at campus to talk to younger girls about how they can make a career in technical subjects, and she writes a column for women in engineering. In addition to this gender-related engagement, her investment in her gender-related networks pay off when she returns from Germany with her master’s degree in resources engineering. She assumes that she secured her first significant employment as a technical officer in a ministry thanks to the fact that she is a woman:

“Luckily for me, I would say, the minister came, she was a lady, she is a gender activist already and all that. And like what I do [she] liked my work and she was very supportive. Now, I am employed as I said as a research scientist here” (Ghana interview #24; 08.09.2009: 533-535).

A. points out that the new minister in charge, a woman, was also a “*gender activist already*”, which she thinks had to do with her being recruited in addition to the fact that the minister liked her work. Ms. A’s case and the fact that she describes her job-attainment process as being influenced positively by the fact that she is a woman seems, interestingly, not to be exceptional. Most female graduates interviewed in this research saw their womanhood as an advantage in the job finding process. Mrs. G. from Cameroon (case #04), who found entry-level employment as a lecturer in a university in the field of natural sciences, states that she thinks that women have a strategic advantage because of governmental gender policies:

“You know that women normally are (...) they are more considered than the men because there is a policy of the government to encourage women to do a lot of things. So when you are a woman applying somewhere when there are usually men you will be in the first position yes. So [laughs] I think that is what I can say that women are a bit favoured” (Cameroon interview #04; 02.10.2008: 461-466).

Similarly, Mrs. K. in Ghana, (case #06) an environmental engineer, notes that women have good career opportunities when they enter workplaces in the public sector in industries which usually male workers dominate. Initially she started working for a small environmental NGO but was soon able to move on and today holds a higher position in a ministerial department. When I ask her in our interview if it was difficult for her to enter this high position her answer surprises, because she thinks that being an engineer – a male-dominated domain – in combination

with her womanhood and labour shortages in the public services gave her a favourable position:

“Oh no – it’s not. It’s not difficult it is not for me. I can say that God is on my side [laughs]. Being a female plays also a little role in some of these things. In the department, about a year about two years ago we were only three lady engineers in the whole department in the whole country only three ladies! It's like there aren't ladies. When they get ladies applying they keep them because you have not many applicants. And a lot of people too, don't like the department. Because we do more for the rural roads so we go often to the rural sectors and a lot of ladies prefer to be in the cities than go to the villages in the rural areas. (...). But someone also advised me to go to the department because they need female engineers and even the graduated engineers aren't so many like the other road agencies. So my ability to rise faster is better over there than in the other agencies. Like right now the position I told you, it's like now I am the 2nd in charge in the region. In another organisation I would have been the 4th or the 5th because a lot of people are there and the system is choked but the department is not choked” (Ghana interview #06; 22.09.2009: 99-125).

What is so surprising about the answers of Mrs. G. and Mrs. K. is that they mention it being easy, because of gender equity policy, to enter the public sector as women. Although national labour laws of both countries theoretically should guarantee gender equality and equal access to employment, these measures are often said to be poorly implemented in both countries according to ILO and women’s rights activists organisations (Hodges and Baah 2006: 3).<sup>213</sup> What is more noteworthy is the remark that the domain also plays a crucial role. Mrs. G. from Cameroon describes this rather vaguely “*So when you are a woman applying somewhere when there are usually men you will be in the first position yes*” and Mrs. K. clearly states: “*about a year about two years ago we were only three lady engineers in the whole department in the whole country only three ladies!*” She thus makes clear that her profile as an engineer in combination with being a women offered her a strategic advantage to have an unusually successful career: “*In another organisation I would have been the 4th or the 5th because a lot of people are there and the system is choked but in the department, it is not choked*”.

Finally, the question of through which personal contacts the interviewed female educational migrants entered their entry-level employment has been tackled. As

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<sup>213</sup> Ghana’s National Labour Law Profile of 1996 includes measures in its chapter 6 “to achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices” (Hodges and Baah 2006: 1). However, I found no similar law paragraph in the Cameroonian Labour Code of 1992.

shown in chapter 3.2, gender also plays a role when it comes to the personal contacts used in the job search. Women, as has been stressed, tend to use more female and family contacts than men do (cf. Hanson and Pratt 1991: 240). This seems to be different for the returning women in both countries. Most of the interviewed female educational migrants used a male contact to identify a vacancy, to arrange an entry-level job or to get a referral. In only two cases from Ghana were the assisting contacts female: a female member of the same church (Ghana case #28); and a former female boss known from national service times (Ghana case #06). The relationship of these two women was based on their common background as engineers, a domain dominated by men. The older of these two women helped the younger to establish her career and gave advice where she should apply to get a promotion. The rest of the women found their entry-level employment through male contacts. What differed according to the country context was the quality of the ties to these male contacts (see table 16). In Cameroon, women secured their labour market entry through family members, whereas in Ghana women used the help of friends.

Table 16: Comparison of personal contacts used by women.

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Cameroonian</b>	<b>Ghanaian</b>
Friend	0	5
Family	3	2
Broker	1	0
Mentor	1	2
<b>n =</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Own research.

The table shows that in Cameroon more women relied on strong ties, whereas in Ghana women used their weak ties. Here, once again, especially former colleagues from their national service were instrumental as ports of entry (cases #08, #17, #24). In most cases in Cameroon the assisting contacts were referrals from members of family and kin: an uncle arranged an interview in a well-reputed company (Cameroon case #16), a husband became an entrepreneur and employed his own wife (Cameroon case #03), a brother placed the application documents in various institutions of potential employment (Cameroon case #07). In Ghana, only two women (Ghana cases #08, #27) relied on the help of their male family members who offered them direct employment when the two women faced unexpected serious problems in finding formal employment. These were arranged and temporary jobs only. Mentor-like personal contacts also played a role among the weak-tie relationships, especially for women who started in academia (Ghana case #12, #23, Cameroon case #04).

The relationships they had to the professors to whom they applied were on the professors' appreciation for the women's specific profile or degree, and in addition they appreciated the fact that the women had studied abroad, in Germany, where the professors had studied themselves.

A very negative aspect, which respondents indicated from both countries concerning gender, concerned sexual harassment. My interview partners said this abuse not only concerns women in the informal sector, who are less protected by labour laws in general, but increasingly affects young graduates searching for work in the formal sector (cf. Oppong 1995). Mrs. L. in Ghana (case #20) explains that it has become a problem "*these days*", referring to the start of the economic world crisis and the decline of formal employment:

"Ok, the only one more challenge to get a good job, I don't know but these days I have been hearing from students who graduated is that some people demand more than they can pay for. Like some people would like to take a lady to bed before they give the person a job. I mean, I heard it, I heard two such cases and I keep wondering, is there no way we can flush those people out of the system? To me, I would just walk out to the Chief Executive and tell him that this is it. So such a person has to be out of a place like that. Yes. But it is difficult to know how it goes. So that is one challenge that is quite a challenge. That is why I was saying that most people should upgrade themselves so that you should be higher than the one who employs you so that he cannot bluff you" (Ghana Interview #20; 01.09.2009: 491-506).

Mrs. L. gives an example of abuse: employers blackmail the applicants and "*take a lady to bed before they give the person a job*". By saying this, she refers to the situation whereby desperate job searchers who have been looking unsuccessfully for formal labour are forced to trade their bodies<sup>214</sup>, instead of promoting their qualification and degrees. The phenomenon is symptomatic of the increasingly scarce formal labour market and in addition is a sign that labour laws lack implementation. Nevertheless, during our interview in 2008, Mrs. L. is still positive that having a higher education degree will prevent women from having such negative experiences and that they do not have to depend on such disreputable offers. She thus advises, "*most people should upgrade themselves so that you should be higher than the one who employs you so that he cannot bluff you*". Previously, the problem

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<sup>214</sup> This involuntary form of sexual relationship has to be seen in contrast to the consensual and voluntary practice of young students who have sexual relationships with elder men or women who are their "Sugar Daddy" or "Sugar Mummy". In exchange for the students' sexual services they receive economic benefits and gifts and thus these relationships are perhaps even desired (cf. Kuate-Defo 2004: 2, cf. Bochow 2010: 149).

of sexual harassment was a typical female problem for girls at school or women in their workplaces. In an expert interview I was told that especially in countries where workplaces lack enforced labour laws, women are put under pressure by their employers to offer their sexual services in return for wage employment even in the formal sector. The expert, who is the CEO of a private recruitment agency in Ghana brings the problem to the point: *“In western countries at least the law is on my side. Here the law is on my side on paper. Let me go to court and see what happens”* (Expert interview #01; 08.07.2008: 311-312). In consequence, women often have to suffer from “economic, demographic, social and psychological sequelae” (Oppong 1995: 44). However, today these abusive practices increasingly affect both sexes. Especially in Cameroon, men also mentioned the problem of sexual abuse in the job search. My interview partners referred to it in the context of involuntary homosexuality. Rumours about this alleged form of sexual abuse in the professional world in connection with occult practices that are local beliefs syncretised with freemasonry rituals has been an ongoing topic in the Cameroonian media since 2006, reveals Geschiere (2010: 127). In this regard, in addition to rumours by ‘radio trottoir’ several interviewees in Cameroon pointed out that they had heard of these practices from friends of friends, that job searchers had to *“become gay for getting a job”* (Cameroon off-record notes from interviews #16, #08; #10). However, these statements are only speculative and it has been impossible to verify these vague but persistent rumours about unusual recruitment practices and to what extent they correspond with reality.

### **8.3 Regional disparities**

This sub-chapter discusses the spatial dimension of the interviewees’ professional mobility upon their return. The most interesting finding is that a side-effect of their professional mobility is that they indirectly strengthen the decentralised rural regions. Anglophone Cameroonians return into the two Anglophone regions and Ghanaians work temporarily in the deprived North. The data also shows that the Anglophone graduates set off less often in the opposite direction and that Franco-phone Cameroonians start less often in the Anglophone region. The Anglophone interviewees’ professional mobility was more or less voluntary and rather a reaction to scarcity of employment opportunities for them as Anglophone speakers in the French region. Their Ghanaian counterparts showed an even more interesting geographical pattern: they settled in the urban centres in the South, primarily in the capital city, and worked temporarily in the rural North on project sites. The chapter now illustrates these geographical patterns by taking an integrated, translocal perspective, as offered by the livelihoods approaches in the context of professional reintegration (cf. Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005: 96). Instead of taking the household as the investigatory unit, the focus is set on the return migrants’ workplaces. At first, the regional distribution of the returning graduates of the interviewed sample is contrasted with larger data sets deriving from the Returning Experts Programme



in order to put the findings from the interview samples into a broader perspective. Firstly, the sub-chapter discusses the regional mobility of returning graduates in Cameroon and secondly, it demonstrates the regional distribution pattern in Ghana.

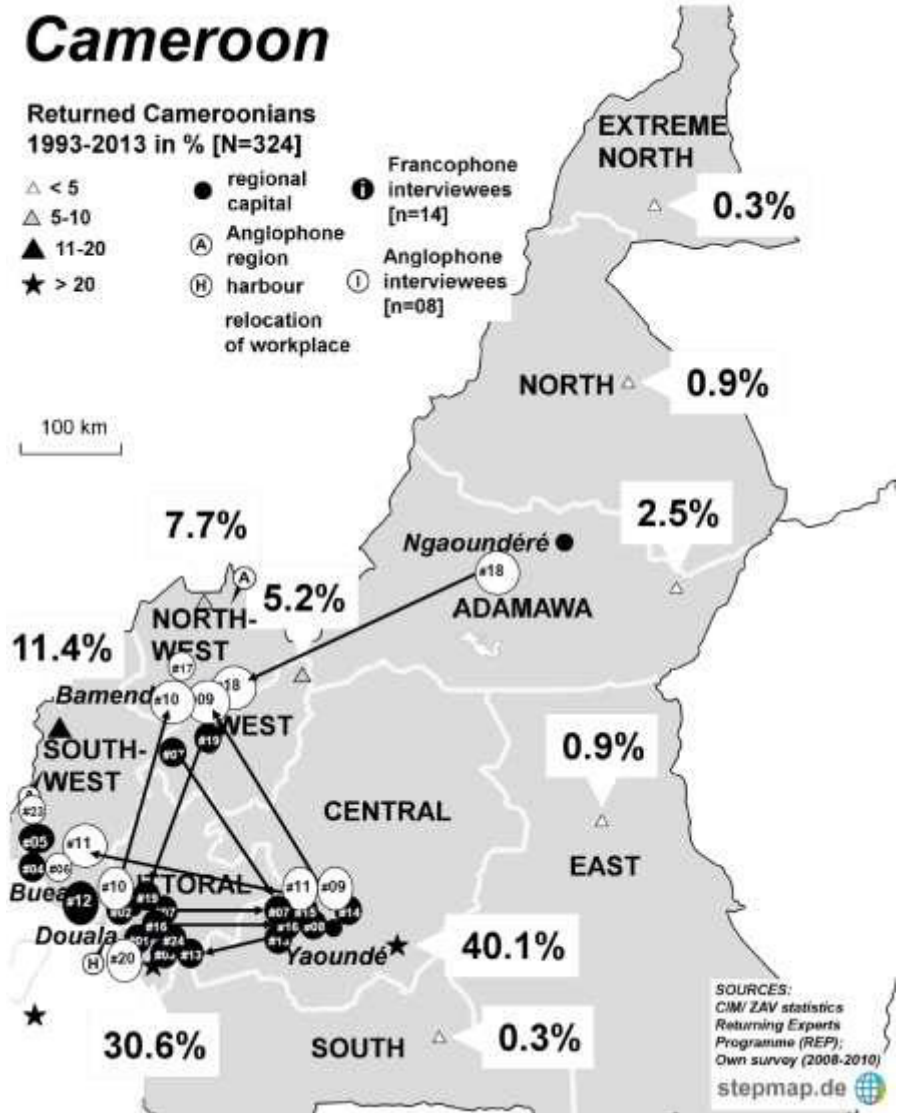


Figure 14: Regional distribution of returned Cameroonians

As the map (figure 14) shows, most of the Cameroonian graduates who studied in Germany start their professional careers in the urban centre of their home country. According to internal statistics taken from the Returning Experts Programme for the years 1993-2013, most returned Cameroonians [N=324] settle first in the country's capital Yaoundé (40.1%), followed by about 30% who start in the economic hub and a harbour city, Douala. The remainder, almost 20%, of the returning graduates is distributed almost equally in the two Anglophone regions, in the South-West (11.4%) and in the North-West (7.7%). Only a minority of 3.7% venture north to Adamawa (2.5%), the North (0.9%) and the Extreme North (0.3%) because of the lack of infrastructure and harsh climate conditions. Similarly, only a very small fraction starts working in the tropical forest regions in the East (0.9%) and in the South (0.3%).

This distribution correlates with the Cameroonians interviewed in this study, illustrated in the map as numbered points, black for Anglophone and white for Francophone interviewees. As can be seen, more than half of the Cameroonian sample [n=22] started in the two Francophone centres. A third (36.4%) started in the economic hub and harbour city Douala, and about a third (27.3%) first went to Yaoundé, the administrative capital. Five persons (22%) found their entry-level employment in the South-West region on the coastline. The three remaining interviewees were distributed equally between the northern Adamawa region, the West and the North-West. However, their regional entry changed over time depending on the country's regional disparities.

As the map also shows, the highest mobility takes place in the economic triangle between the two larger cities in the Francophone regions Douala, the economic hub (Littoral), the administrative capital Yaoundé (Centre) and Bamenda, in the Anglophone North-West Region (cf. Warnier 1993: 49ff.). It is important to note that there is no significant pattern regarding the spatial distribution in the West-Region. Only a minority of the returned Cameroonians start working in this region. This is comparably low if one recalls the estimation that most Francophone Cameroonians who study in Germany originate from this region and given the fact that authors have emphasised the regional attachment of Bamileke (cf. Ndjio 2009). One explanation for the finding that only a few Bamilike return to their native village in the West region is that it is one of the most densely populated regions, which in consequence means that land is difficult to obtain for those who return (Warnier 1993: 43).

In addition, many of those who originate from the West have already immigrated from their native villages to the larger cities at an early age (cf. Warnier 1993: 62), prior to their educational migration to Germany. They only visit their native villages mainly for holidays and do not return to make a living (cf. Warnier 1993:

64).<sup>215</sup> More significantly, the regional mobility of the graduates returning from Germany concerns movements between the two main employing Francophone cities Douala and Yaoundé and between the Francophone and Anglophone regions. This latter spatial pattern reflects the country's general regional disparity as I will now discuss in depth by interpreting the data deriving from the interviews.

Out of eight Anglophone returned graduates only three embarked on their careers in their native Anglophone regions, and the rest started working in the Francophone cities. So far, the fact that most returning migrants started their careers in the French-speaking section upon their return is not a surprise. It is likely that the job market offered them better prospects in the Francophone cities. The Anglophone labour market offers little opportunity for wage employment. Even though the Anglophone regions have seen some improvement, Warnier's observations, made two decades ago concerning the agricultural sector regarding these regional disparities in Cameroon, are still appallingly valid:

“Dans les deux provinces Anglophones, ce marché reste embryonnaire, limité aux plantations de la province du Sud-Ouest et aux quelques villes (Limbé, Mamfé, Bamenda) qui sont relativement peu développées et dont la capacité à offrir des emplois est médiocre au regard de ce que l'on trouve du côté francophone” (Warnier 1993: 49).

In consequence of the fact that the Anglophone region offers limited opportunities for wage employment it seems at first to be surprising that the Anglophone interviewees tended to move back to their native English-speaking home region in the course of their careers. The reason for this homeward trend after the first transitional phase might not be sentimental but it probably reflects a need. This assumption is supported by the case of Mr. I. (Cameroon case #11), an Anglophone returnee who starts working in the French section. Mr. I. originates from a small town in the Anglophone North-West region, south of the region's capital, Bamenda. Upon his return he starts searching for a job by identifying potential employers from the country's capital, Yaoundé. Eager to find a workplace that is in line with his field of studies, Environmental Resource Management, he searches for a job in the field of environmental protection. At first he investigates the website of the United Nations and finds various local NGOs listed all over the country. He applies at several NGOs, most of which are located in the French administrative capital, Yaoundé. His profile, the degree and qualifications obtained in Germany

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<sup>215</sup> This strong attachment to the native home village of the Bamileke from my view resembles what Lohmert (2007: 36) finds for the case of South African urban migrants. Whereas their first home remains in their place of birth, in parallel they establish professional networks in the urban places they currently live in. They create an image of living only temporarily in the cities and maintain the hope of returning one day.

match these NGOs' demands, but unexpectedly he faces problems because he lacks French skills:

“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. I told them that I spent all my years in the English sector and done in English and then I went out but the little French I know I could improve upon so they were not very interested” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 489-494).

I. is taken by surprise because officially, Cameroon is a bilingual country and he does not expect that his degree and qualifications will not compensate for his lack of French. He suggests that this may be the reason for other Anglophones not returning to Cameroon:

“You know Cameroon is bilingual. I think the Francophone are coming more than Anglophones because our country is, to be very sincere, it is listed as bilingual but everything as you may have noticed, is in French. So we the Anglophones are the most, we are a minority and we don't have access to many things in Cameroon. So, this god-fatherism which is also crippling corruption when they come like this they find their way. Many of their brothers are ministers, are responsible people in society. They come and find their way. So, Anglophones, we are lost” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 330-338).

His efforts to find work in the Anglophone regions are not successful either. Those NGOs he applies to in the Anglophone cities Bamenda and Buea only offer him freelance work in the field of “*consultancy. Sit down, write project, maybe they materialize. That is how they live*” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 500-501). Such an offer is too insecure and not attractive in terms of salary. Therefore, Mr. I. starts working at a local NGO in Yaoundé, which accepts him as an Anglophone employee. The boss assures him that he will be allowed to “*express yourself in any language you feel. So, we are ready to work with you. That is how I came to here*” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 496-497). After two years, when his contract ends, Mr. I. searches for other work. Finally he moves back to his Anglophone home region in the South-West. In Buea, he teams up with colleagues with whom he has studied in Germany, in the field of environmental resource management. The three of them successfully set up their own consultancy in the environmental sector.

In a very dramatic case, returning to the Anglophone home region was necessary because of a complete breakdown. It is Mr. P's case (#10) that already has been touched on in chapter 7.5, in order to illustrate what happens when the graduates face the downside of social capital and get blocked in their reintegration. At first, his professional reintegration starts quite smoothly, not unlike that of his counter-

parts. As already described, he returns after he has obtained a polytechnic degree in electrical engineering and is sponsored and job placed by a reintegration counselor. He finally starts working in a Francophone NGO in the country's economic capital, Douala. The problems soon begin. When he is accused of embezzling the project funds the mistrust between the Anglophone newcomer, Mr. P., and his immediate Francophone colleagues come to the surface. Finally, the employment relationship breaks up violently. After having a physical fight followed by a breakdown, P. returns to his Anglophone home region, a small village in the North-West. He rests for a long while at his family's house in the village and recovers. After some months he works in temporary jobs until he finds employment in a private university as a part-time lecturer. In our interview he frankly admits that without having had the strong support from his family and being in an environment familiar from his childhood days he would not have survived that time.<sup>216</sup>

Mr. B. (Cameroon case #09) has another more pragmatic reason to return to his Anglophone home region in the North-West: he is promoted into the position of a regional delegate.<sup>217</sup> After B. returns from a postgraduate study programme in the field of renewable energy, he finds his first employment in the Ministry of Energy in the Francophone capital, Yaoundé. His career proceeds and after having lived and worked for 15 years as a director in Yaoundé, he is happy to be promoted to work as a regional delegate in his home town. There he enjoys a great reputation from his external family members. What is more, Mr. P. pragmatically claims that life in his hometown is simply cheaper than in the capital:

“My salary is not like an engineer in Germany but the cost of living here is not like in Germany. Take for example; I have a small pillar in which I stay here. Here, I pay FCFA 80,000 [equivalent to EUR 120]. If I take a house in Yaoundé, it will cost FCFA 200,000 [equivalent to EUR 300] or more” (Cameroon interview #09; 08.10.2008: 301-305).

As the interview quote indicates, in his hometown the cost of living is cheaper but also the living standard is lower than in the capital. Mr. C. (Cameroon case #18) originates from the same village as Mr. B., from the North-West Region. C. also returns to his home region for the pragmatic reason of inheriting land in his hometown region. After having lived and worked for about eight years abroad, C. finally returns to a larger town, near his home village. He sets up his own NGO, a consul-

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<sup>216</sup> In this case, the obligatory ‘support’ role of the family network as a safety net, as described in sub-chapter 7.2, is evident.

<sup>217</sup> For more information about the role of the regional delegates and decentralisation in Cameroon see Werthmann (2008: 13-38).

tancy in the field of health education. He also lectures part-time at the university and has plans to start a business in agriculture:

“I personally, I am not tied down here. I am thinking of moving down to the Southern Province. I mean if I get this agricultural project moving. I will move down to Southern because the land is more fertile. Yes I have lands (...) [My] family is here. I am from North-West (...). For me anywhere in Cameroon I will live. So long as I can be able to do what I want to do and contribute to the development of the country and I have any impact in the lives of people you understand?” (Cameroon interview #18; 24.05.2010: 730-742).

C’s statement shows that even though the region is not as fertile as in the South, and emotionally he is “*not tied down here*” as he puts it, he has his family own land in his native region, which somehow “*ties*” him in pragmatic terms. Hence, it is most likely that he will settle permanently to carry out his agricultural project in his hometown.

Only in one case does a graduate who originates from the North-West start and remain in the Francophone part of the country there. This is Mr. X. (Cameroon case #20), who originates from Limbe in the South-West. He studies Business Information Technology in Germany and has some years of practical experience in his profession. However, when he returns he realises that despite his high profile it is difficult to get a job. He, too, lacks adequate French skills, which causes him problems at the beginning of his job search:

“My French is not that good. I had problems with French language so [laughs] here in Cameroon if you really want to get somewhere that French is very, very important. So, I had reported during some of my interviews. Yeah, there was one of the interviews I was / because by then I had already got this job” (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 256-262).

The “*job*” that X. mentions, where he finds his entry-level employment, is a high profile permanent position in an international private company. This company is a franchise of an international company based in the UK and has its headquarters in Nigeria. Thus, English is the working language and it is no problem for X. to start his work without having sufficient French skills. The company offers him a very good working environment: Mr. X. has his own well-equipped office, interesting work, and a top-class salary. Mr. X. is very satisfied even though he does not like Douala as a city. Therefore, he maintains his ties to his home region on a private level:

“I grew up in Limbe. And my parents have been there and they are still there up to now. So, so mostly the weekends I go down to [Limbe]. That’s because I can still [be there]. Douala, I don’t really like Douala that much but as we always say, you have to be in Douala

if you want to have a good job. Douala is the place to be but in terms of environment, climate, I don't really like the place" (Cameroon interview #20; 28.05.2010: 79-87).

This final statement of Mr. X. expresses the fact that the regional patterns of returning Cameroonians' workplaces highly depend on the country's general regional disparities and that job seekers have to adjust to these and have to "*be in Douala if you want to have a good job*".

In contrast, their French counterparts who secure their entry-level employment in the Anglophone regions remain there and settle for good, as the following case of Dr. L. (Cameroon case #05), who originates from the Extreme North, shows. He finds his entry-level employment as a full-time lecturer in geology in the governmental university in the Anglophone South-West Region. Because of the university's general policy of promoting bilingualism, the university's high demand for qualified lecturers in natural sciences and thanks to his doctorate degree, he faces no problems starting in the Anglophone region. In addition, Dr. L. finds the environment more appealing than living in the larger cities:

"I like this environment. This very small town makes me to remember life in Europe where it is a bit quiet although the town has become so loud. But I remember four years ago it was a bit more quiet. But when I am going to Douala or when I am going to Yaoundé, they will have the same noise but I will just stay there maybe for one week to do one or two things and then come back to here" (Cameroon interview #05; 03.10.08: 366-372).

Because of the quiet location of the "*small town*" and because he holds a permanent lecturer position, Dr. L. does not feel the need to move away from the Anglophone region. He can easily commute between his place of living and a bigger city like Yaoundé. The situation of Mr. M. (Cameroon case #12) is different and a little surprising. Mr. M. originates from the Francophone part in the Western Region. In Germany he studies geography and specialises in sustainable tourism. Additionally, he upgrades his professional profile through practical experience in internships in Germany. Upon his return to Cameroon he been announced as the heir of his family and thus is responsible for his native village and his extended family in the chefferie.<sup>218</sup> Nevertheless, he does not return to his native village but seeks employment in the South-West region, which has several natural attractions: Mount Cameroon, the coast with its black sands in Limbe, and the former colonial

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<sup>218</sup> Hirsch notes that the heir in Bamileke societies is not automatically the eldest, but the son who is economically and socially most dynamic. The heir becomes the "chef de famille" (1987: 89) and inherits the largest proportion of the farmland. In return, he bears the responsibility for the whole of the local chefferie and the extended family members.

architecture in Buea. The region already has a basic touristic infrastructure. Thus, it is an area where his profile definitely should be in demand. Despite his well-matching profile, M. faces difficulties at the beginning. Local employers are reluctant to employ him because he comes from the French speaking part of Cameroon. Finally, he gets a position as an officer in an Anglophone parastatal ecotourism organisation following commendation from an informal contact at the German development cooperation who sponsors him. After two years, when his first contract ends and the local organisation cannot afford to pay his salary continuously without any additional top-up, M. is forced to find a new source of income. Instead of moving to his native region, M. remains in the South-West due to the area's natural attractions, an ideal place to transfer his skills in sustainable eco-tourism. He sets-up his own NGO in the field of environmental protection:

“I created an organization (...). It is promoting touristic activities like trekking, mountain bikes that do not require a lot of energy” (Cameroon interview #12; 06.05.2010: 128-139).<sup>219</sup>

In addition to his start-up in the tourism industry, M. has also started a family with an Anglophone, has rented a house as his new office and thus it is likely that he will continue to live in this region of Cameroon permanently.

Finally, the geographical mobility pattern of the Cameroonian return migrants who were interviewed for this study shows that especially the Anglophone Cameroonians who start in the Francophone region work there only temporarily. After their initial phase of one to two years they return to their Anglophone native regions – and often start their own consultancies or agricultural projects. The interpretation of the interviews shows that, similar to the authors of the translocality approaches, who argue that social ties between members of translocal communities (Steinbrink 2009: 52) are the driving force that make migrants weave a social web decoupled from time and space, the same is possible through the return migrants' professional mobility upon their return. The cases presented of the Cameroonian return migrants make clear that the country's general regional disparities in Anglophone/Francophone regions influence the regional distribution of the returning migrants' workplaces, too. Return migrants from both regions have to overcome problems if they start in an administrative region other than their own.

However, the cited Francophones, who started in the Anglophone region, were able to compensate for this obstacle because they started in industries which urgently demanded their profiles. In contrast, the interviewed Anglophones who started in the Francophone region faced complications as soon as their contracts expired.

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<sup>219</sup> French original: “J’ai crée une organisation (...). C’est développer les activités touristiques comme le trekking, le mountain bikes qui ne demandent pas beaucoup d’énergie, sinon ta propre énergie” (Cameroon interview #12; 06.05.2010: 128-139).



Instead of searching for subsequent employment in the Francophone region, their career plans brought them back to their native regions in the Anglophone part of the country. Supporting this trend is their educational profile obtained in Germany. Because Anglophones more often enrol for English master degree programmes, they lose even the French skills acquired in school. At the same time, these English language degree programmes are often particularly tailored to students from developing countries and thus focus on environmental studies and development. Hence, a developing effect can occur if these educational migrants move back to their more deprived home regions to start their own micro-enterprises, NGOs or infrastructural projects. Projects in these industries somehow can be regarded as a sort of informal infrastructural development. However, this impact on decentralisation can be also achieved without returning to the home region and to settle permanently, as the analysis of the country case of Ghana now shows. At first, as in the case for Cameroon, a general overview on the geographical distribution of the returning graduates is presented (figure 15), by using data from the REP. Again, most Ghanaians who return start working and settle in the country's economic hub, Greater Accra.

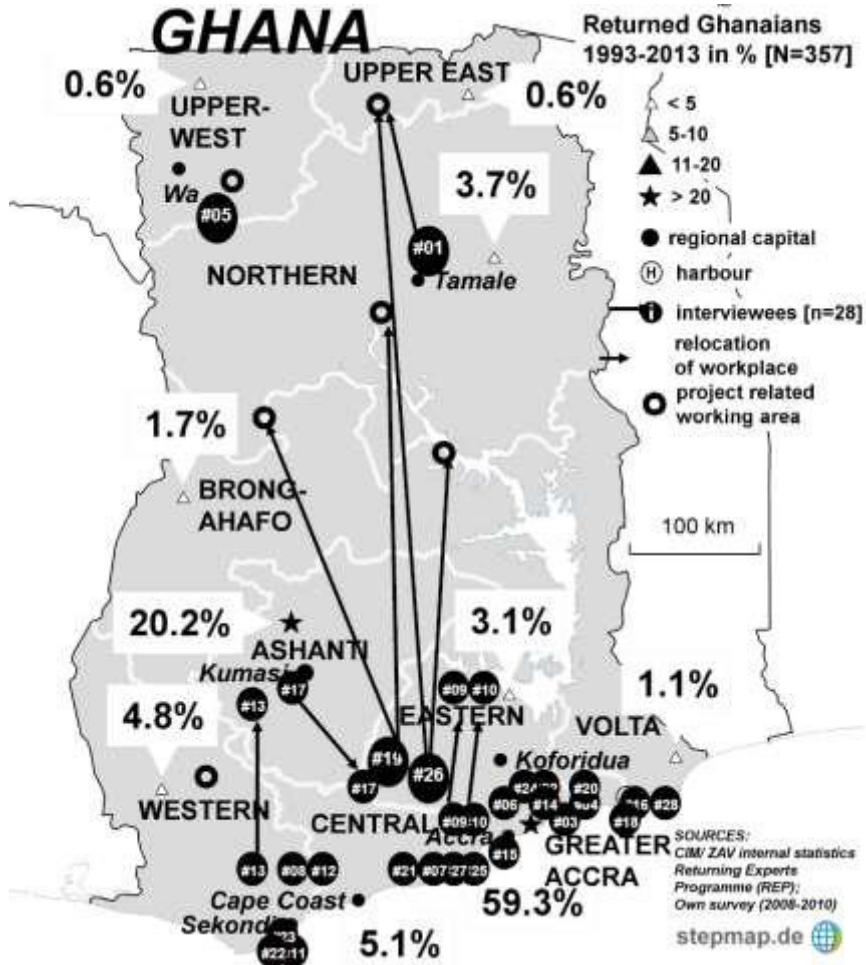


Figure 15: Regional distribution of returned Ghanaians

The regional distribution [N=357] seems to be even more centralised than in Cameroon: almost 60% start working in the capital followed by only 20% who go the Central region. Nearly 5%, which is slightly more than in the case of Cameroon, take up the challenge of starting work in the arid and dry regions of Northern Ghana (Upper West 0.6%, Upper East 0.6% and North 3.7%). Similarly, only a very small part of the Cameroonians return to the tropical forest regions in the East (0.9%) and in the South (0.3%). The rest are spread over the other regions of the country, 5.1% in the Central Region around the coastal city Cape Coast, 4.8% in the Western region with its mining fields, and only 1.1% in the Brong Ahafo Region which offers employment only in the agricultural industry.

The Volta Region (1.1%) and the Eastern Region (3.1%), in contrast, offer employment in the field of renewable hydro energy with its Volta dam. This distribution is similar to the spatial pattern of the interviewed Ghana group [n=28]. Almost 70% of the individuals from the interview sample were based in Accra at the time of the interview and almost 15% worked in Cape Coast, in the Central Region. Two persons (7%) started working in the Western Region and one (3.6%) each in the regions of Kumasi (Ashanti Region), Wa (Upper West) and Tamale (North). The first impression, that the geographical distribution of returned Ghanaian graduates is even more centralised than is the case with Cameroon appears in a completely different light by considering the work sites of the returned graduates. As I will now demonstrate, even though they start working in the capital, they transfer their knowledge in a rural northern setting: through their temporary working projects, which they carry out in the rural regions.

As has been said, only a minority Ghanaian educational migrants who have returned start to work in the rural northern region. A major reason is that the north does not offer adequate infrastructure and therefore life in general is at a lower standard. That this could become a problem for the spouse is a fact known by Mr. B. (Ghana case #5). He has been advised by a friend, Mr. U. (Ghana case # 10), to accept an appointment offered as a lecturer in a new polytechnic school in the Upper West Region. During our interview he indicates that he did not know what he was letting himself in for by going to the deprived region:

“I never thought of coming here – to the north! Even though things are different, the way what we hear about the north. And you know Mr. U., he is also from here. And he encouraged me that ‘Ooh lets go, this place [the Upper East Region] is not bad’. (...) In the long run he had to disappoint me because then he was not married and if he gets here [the Upper East Region], it was going to be very difficult for him to get married. So he wants to be in Accra” (Ghana interview #05; 30.06.2008: 250-258).

It shows that going to the Upper West, one of the poorest of Ghana’s regions, does not seem very attractive for young couples wanting to start a family. Because of the lack of employment opportunities and poor infrastructure most people tend to emigrate from this region to the country’s south and thus this region has the country’s highest emigration rate (cf. van der Geest 2011: 76). For Mr. B., who originates from the Western Region which is known for its dense forest cover, moving to the arid Upper West Savannah was quite a huge change. The climate is hot, dry, there is a lot of sand and moreover, because his current location is too far from his hometown B. admits “*I don’t think I will be here forever from here to my hometown is about more than 2000 kilometres – yes because, I have to go to Kumasi and continue to Takoradi – Axim before going there*” (Ghana interview #05; 30.06.2008: 171-173). It becomes clear that most young returning graduates also want to live comfortably, have at least minimum standards, and hence prefer to live

in the urban regions. At the same time, that graduates settle in the city does not necessarily mean they have less influence in the rural regions.

This is the case for environmentalists, hydro-engineers, and foresters who start in small and medium-sized companies and NGOs. An example is the case of Mr. X. (Ghana case #19), who studied International Management of Resource and Environment (IMRE). His family originates from the Volta Region in the eastern part of Ghana. The family migrated before he was born and he was raised and went to school in the Greater Accra Region. Hence, he returns to this region upon his graduation. In Accra he starts working in a medium-sized water drilling company. Although the headquarters of the company is in Accra he has to carry out his construction work in the country's dry regions, where access to potable water is rare, and is a constant source of conflict:<sup>220</sup>

“(...) currently we drill boreholes. We also construct water systems for community service and manage water systems. (...) We are currently managing water systems in Brong-Ahafo region: Yeji and then Upper Western Region. So these are the things we are doing now. So basically that is our core business. We drill boreholes, we manage water systems and we construct water systems” (Ghana interview #19; 01.09.2009: 398-409).

Mr. X., as the General Manager, not only has to do administrative tasks based in the headquarters in Accra, he also has to analyse the geological data and results of the borehole drilling in the rural project sites. Therefore, in contrast to those few who settle for their work in the rural regions, he is able to commute between his “*city-life*” in Accra, where he grew up, and the rural regions: “*at one moment you are in Accra. At the next moment you are in a typical village, because of our work, because drilling is rural based*” (ibid: 573-576). It shows that despite the fact he lives in the capital, Accra, X. applies his knowledge in rural regions. Similarly, Mr. J. (Ghana case #01) and Mr. H. (Ghana case #26), who are both hydro engineers, start working for private small-sized companies which offer services in the field of water supply and wastewater treatment. The headquarters of these companies are in Accra, too, but both of the men carry out borehole drilling and water supply works on project sites based in the northern parts of Ghana, in the Upper East and the Northern Region (cf. project related working sites ring symbols on map). Similarly, H. (Ghana case #26), whose family originates from the Upper East region but who was raised Accra, reveals during the interview that he never thinks of going back to the north permanently – but temporarily works in his home region. He says that when he returned from his studies in Germany his entry point naturally was Accra,

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<sup>220</sup> For more background information about the topic of social conflict over natural resources like potable water in the Middle Volta basin, see Tonah (2008).

the economic hub. He embarks on his working life in a small-sized company in the field of water supply and sanitation, based in Accra. For some of the projects carried out by the small private company he has to travel temporarily to rural regions:

“I remember I did something in the Upper East Region. That is in the north. We did something also in the Volta Region. And I think in the Western Region. (...) He [company owner] probably funded 50% of them and then government tops up with 50%” (Ghana interview #26; 10.09.2009: 255-258).

The fact that H. starts in an industry where he has to go to the rural regions leads him to transfer his knowledge not only to his native home region in the Upper East, but to other deprived regions as well. His projects are only temporary. Mr. H’s comment that the “*government tops up with 50%*” is noteworthy. H. refers to a practice whereby projects of small and medium-sized private companies in the field of water supply are supported through the Ghanaian government within the framework of the Ghana’s Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).<sup>221</sup> Thanks to this financial support through the government, these small and medium-sized organisations have enough funds to carry out projects. For these projects, they need personnel. The returning graduates who study Environmental Resource Management or Water and Waste Management in Germany can fill this demand. Nevertheless, despite the funds to carry out projects, the companies lack sufficient working infrastructure, as the statement of Mr. J. (Ghana case #01) shows. He is in charge of setting up an office branch of his company in Tamale, the capital of Ghana’s Northern Region. He says that it was difficult in the beginning to commute between Accra and Tamale in order to build up this new branch:

“It is very, very difficult at first because we had to work in very remote areas to be able to get some water for the villages and it was very difficult. Initially even setting up an office there was difficult. We did not have equipment. So the equipment I got from WUS, that was what I took there to set up an office: computer, everything, and I go with the projector. It helps me a lot. (...) So with the projector, I was able to get slides for them [clients in the target region], with pictures they are able to see it and appreciate, so now things have moved up a little. The road network in Tamale, initially some of the areas were very remote, sometimes you have to use motorbikes. You can’t use four wheel drive vehicles. But now things have improved a little but we still have very huge water problem there” (Ghana interview #01; 25.06.2008: 495-506).

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<sup>221</sup> For more information about the role of NGOs and small and medium-sized private companies in the field of sanitation and water supply read Yirenya-Tawiah and Tweneboah Lawson (2012).

The statement makes clear that the demand for qualified personnel who run water supply projects is high and that the problems deriving from a lack of basic services infrastructure is also high. Thus, it is not attractive for young people who start their families to go to the deprived regions on a permanent basis. Through temporary projects the graduates can overcome these regional disparities by stimulating development processes and establishing the grounds for infrastructure projects. At the same time, they can enjoy the advantages that come from living in the more developed urban centres.

Concluding, it is evident for both countries that the distribution of the returned graduates' workplaces follows general geographical disparities in the two countries' labour markets. In both countries this primarily concerns the north-south divide. Fewer graduates tend to start working in the deprived dry, hot and less developed regions in the northern parts of their countries. In Cameroon as well as in Ghana the return migrants start their careers in the cities, where they have access to employment opportunities. However, during the course of their working lives, their geographical mobility continues. Whereas Cameroonians in the interview group needed to return to their Anglophone native region as soon as their first employment contract expired in the Francophone region, the contrary was the case in Ghana. Here, the interviewed graduates were likely to remain in Greater Accra, regardless of their native origins.

What is more, in Cameroon the Anglophone/Francophone divide creates a situation, which indirectly encourages the Anglophones to return to the Anglophone regions and establish their own start-ups in their field of studies. Whereas this mobility towards their home regions could be read on the one hand as a sign that their education abroad has not prepared them adequately to overcome their home country's regional disparities, on the other hand it means that through this entrepreneurship they actively contribute towards decentralisation and sustainable development. Their impact on development becomes more likely if they have studied in the field of environmental resource management in Germany, which means that they have the potential to transfer these skills in the rural region. Nevertheless, it is not easy to live and work in the more rural regions. Hence, the problem with these more marginal enterprises is that they are located in areas which lack infrastructure. This has already been stressed much earlier by King who warns in this regard: "the administration with the job of providing roads, electricity and water systems that might be more cost-effective if allocated elsewhere" (1978: 179).

Here, their Ghanaian counterparts have an easier starting point: because the Ghanaian government supports projects based in the rural deprived regions within the framework of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategies, small and medium-sized companies have demand for environmental engineers. These companies are based in the capital Accra, but have their project sites in the rural areas. Hence, those Ghanaians who commute between rural and urban regions have an advantage in that they can profit from the higher standard of living in the city. This spatial return

migration pattern resembles to some extent what Lohnert and Steinbrink find in the context of their research at the household level. They highlight that “urban and rural livelihoods are often merely subsystems of a translocal system, which through spatial diversification allows for a combination of diverse economic strategies in different locations” (2005: 100).

However, in both cases it becomes clear that the return migrants transfer their knowledge achieved in Germany, and in both cases this concerns environmental development. How and on which socio-economic levels they actually pass on this knowledge is the topic of the following chapter.

## 9. The impact on development

This is the last chapter presenting the study's findings. It is a kind of supplement to the main study because it goes beyond the question of how to get a job and discusses whether the educational migrants achieve structural development effects through their professional return migration. Here, the notion of development is that of sustainable development, which covers social, environmental and aspects of knowledge transfer (see also chapter 2.2, discussing the potential development transfers in the context of migration). The results of the data analysis concerning this aspect of development suggest that the returned graduates contribute to development processes in both countries by directly applying their resources at their workplaces. But again, differences between the two cases, Ghana and Cameroon, can be deduced. A major difference between the Cameroonian and the Ghanaian graduates concerns the kind of resource they used in order to stimulate development processes. My respondents from the Ghana group could apply their education and skills at their workplaces and thus had the capacity to 'innovate'. In contrast, the Cameroonian respondents had to make use of their financial resources in order to build their home country's economic infrastructure. Thus, they instead had to 'invest' in addition to applying the knowledge they had gained in Germany. The study concentrates on those return migrants with qualifications in the range of subjects that are connected to environmental and natural resource sciences for Ghana, and mostly engineering and sciences for Cameroon, because these are the main subjects of incoming Ghanaian and Cameroonian students in Germany, as outlined in chapter 5.2, in which I discussed the fields of study of both groups. In addition, I specifically selected graduates from the STEM-fields because these are the subjects, which are particularly in demand in the two labour markets in Ghana and Cameroon (see also the analysis of African labour markets in chapter 3.3) and thus these subjects are likely to offer an entry opportunity. In contrast, graduates of arts have fewer opportunities to expect, because their subjects are not in demand on a large scale. Hence, the findings of this chapter are not necessarily replicable for other disciplines, notably the social sciences, law and humanities. However, because only a minority of incoming Ghanaian and Cameroonian students chooses these subjects, it can be assumed that their impact on development processes upon return to their home country is limited

The finding that Cameroonians tend to become 'investors' versus Ghanaians who turn out as 'innovators' can be explained from two perspectives: firstly, from the side of the graduates and their opportunities to accumulate resources in Germany. Here, the Cameroonian graduates seemed to have an advantage because they generally stayed longer in Germany and had more opportunities to accumulate savings than their Ghanaian counterparts who stayed for only a few years and lacked access to the German labour market (cf. chapter 5.2). However, this does not offer a



full explanation because not all Cameroonians were able to save money during their time abroad but they still founded an NGO or a micro business as soon as they returned. Therefore, the second perspective, the perspective from the labour market, seems to be relevant. In Cameroon, decent work is scarce in the formal private sector. In addition to this, the graduates perceive public institutions as ill-functioning and thus they themselves invest in building up the infrastructure in the private services. In contrast, I argue that institution building in Ghana has so far been more successful. I interpret the findings as this allowing the Ghanaian graduates to integrate into already existing structures where they can transfer their specific knowledge. Furthermore, this interpretation also means in consequence that the educational migration of the Cameroonian graduates only contributes to development processes in combination with their financial resources. In contrast, the specific educational migration of the Ghanaians studying in the fields of environmental and resource management seems to match the current labour market demand in the emerging field of ecology. Since the turn of the millennium, Ghana has been increasingly adopting measures in line with the “green economy” (UNEP 2011)<sup>222</sup> that comprises the inclusion of sustainable development in their poverty reduction schemes (GNA 2012). It should be kept in mind that not all educational migrants who study this particular subject automatically have an impact on development processes, but that this section only presents the successful cases. Nevertheless, a generalising conclusion can be drawn from this section. The return of educational migrants creates most benefits in those cases in which the students choose programmes in line with their countries’ labour market demand.

Development, in this chapter, is understood as “sustainable development” (cf. Kößler 1998: 176ff.). The concept of “sustainable development” promotes the idea that development not only is achieved through economic growth, but also through knowledge transfers. This notion on development contrasts with the classic picture of migration and development in which return migration is only perceived as successful if it comprises economic investments contributing to economic growth (cf. chapters 2.2, 2.3 and 2.5). To analyse the development impact three different levels were identified on which the interviewed Cameroonian and Ghanaian returning migrants transferred their resources: the individual (9.1), the institutional (9.2), and a policy-related level (9.3). The cases presented in the following sub-chapters flesh out this schematic overview (cf. figure 16). Analysing the resource transfers of the two distinct types, the Cameroonian investors and the Ghanaian innovators, on these three levels it can be seen that Ghanaians seemed to have an impact through

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<sup>222</sup> According to the United Nations Environment Programme’s definition, “green economy” is a concept which improves well-being and social equity and at the same time considers protecting the environment and the ecological balance. One of the main indicators is growth of environmentally friendly producing industries, low carbon and resource management (UNEP 2011: 16).

specific knowledge transfers on all three levels. On the individual level, they promoted environmental education among family and friends; on the institutional level they implemented environmental policies and they even contributed to environmental policy design. In contrast, the investors mentioned situations in which they transferred their financial resources on the individual level; further, they invested in institution building. However, on a higher level, the impact of the Cameroonian graduates on their home country’s economic development was negligible, because it only concerned very isolated, very outstanding cases who performed on a high professional level. Nevertheless, if the number of these sustainable high performers among the Cameroonian return migrants increased it could build the foundation for such economic changes on a larger, structural level.

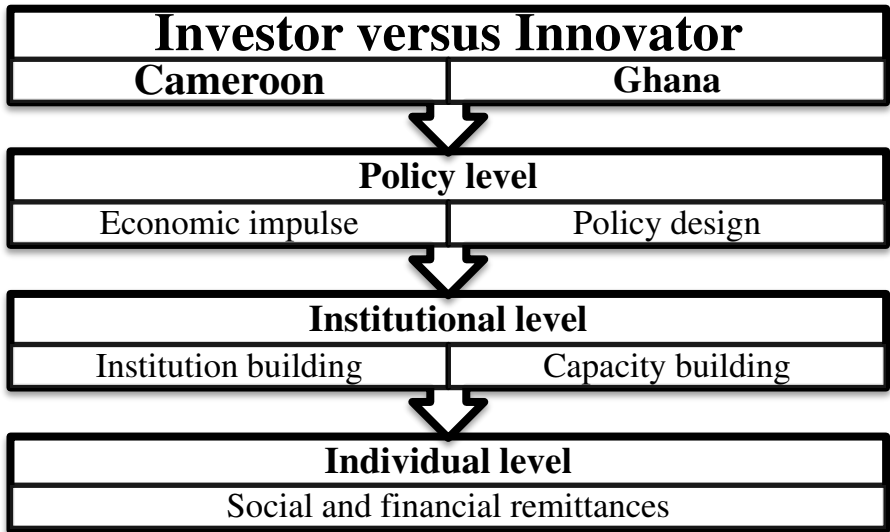


Figure 16: Levels of knowledge transfer. *Source:* Own compilation.

### 9.1 Individual level

The resources that the interviewees transferred on an individual level supported their families. This support comprises in both countries financial support as well as the “social remittances” consisting of “norms, practices, identities and social capital” (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 3).

Naturally, returning migrants want their nearest family members to be part of their success. Therefore, they contribute to their family’s well-being by supporting them

financially as well as by less tangible means.<sup>223</sup> Nearly all returned graduates of this study talked about their presents and gifts, mainly consumer goods and electronic devices, which they brought from abroad for their families and kin. Dr. Y. remembers how he distributed these gifts from Germany in his first days after arrival:

“After I arrived I visited my parents [and] my friends to announce that I had come and definitely as I came down I must bring some presents for them. They expect it [sharpens voice]. All they know is that you have been to *aburokyire* - abroad - Whiteman’s land – abroad, so if you are coming down bring them something from the white man you know. Some presents. They expect it. I was prepared for that with some candies, chocolate (...) And wherever I go I send presents, yes” (Ghana interview #14; 09.07.2008: 152-164).

The presents Dr. Y. talks of are rather modest, like “*candies, chocolate*” he has brought from “*aburokyire*”, a Twi term that can be translated as “country beyond the horizon” (cf. Prothmann 2009: 48). However, as Mr. F., another interviewee, reveals, his family in Cameroon (case #06) expected far more from him and his mother wanted him to re-emigrate immediately:

“And at first, nobody wanted me to stay. And even if I said ‘I am back to stay’, everybody wanted me to leave, even my mum, it was like everyday, every time they started quarrelling (...) but this was at the beginning, it was like they want to push me out of the country, you know. When I came back she [mother] wanted me to leave again” (Cameroon interview #06, 03.10.2008: 45-56).

He continues to tell how the pressure the family puts on him to find a source of income in Cameroon is enormous, because during his time in Germany he has sent funds to his family. F. has another brother, who also lives and works abroad, in Italy. Because F. had many serious problems during his 10 years in Germany and was barely able to finance his living, it was not likely that he sent large sums to his

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<sup>223</sup> Interestingly, previous researchers who investigated return migration to Ghana observed the same aspect but interpreted it very differently. Martin interprets her observation from an anthropological perspective and applies the concept of “amity” after Meyer Fortes’ research (2005: 254). Ammassari notes that Ghanaians have devoted more thought to development issues than Ivorians (2009: 303). Unlike Martin, she considers a political reason for this awareness and suggests that Ghanaian returning migrants are more aware of their responsibilities towards the community thanks to the attention paid to the topic of brain drain, for instance by events such as the ‘Homecoming Summit’ in Accra, 2001 (2009: 293, 303). In their recent studies, Bochmann et al. (2008: 40) also highlight the “development mantra” repeated by their Ghanaian interviewees who had returned from Germany but saw it as a constant that defined the group of return migrants and made their ‘social cement’.

mother in Cameroon. In the interview he assumes that his mother fears that if F. remains in Cameroon this second income source from abroad will leave a gap in the household budget. That family expectations can become a burden is also experienced by Mr. D. from Ghana (case #04). Like F., he tells of having had many problems financing his life in Germany. He thus is very relieved when he leaves for Ghana after being in Germany for three years. He brings with him his master's degree and various presents for his family. Unfortunately, D's family are not as happy as he hoped, he says. On one occasion, his father harshly expresses that he is ashamed by denying that D. is his son:

“The way my daddy or my parents saw me, they were disappointed. Even though I didn't have money. (...) I knew things will be difficult so I bought microwave, mobile phones, you know. I bought three microwaves, one for my parents, one for my uncle and than one for myself. When I came to Ghana I bought, you know, these digital cameras my daddy requested. My mother requested for a videophone. Everything I bought was more than EUR 1,000 and you know when I got to Ghana and I gave it to them. It's like you know, they were not satisfied [smiles] and even some of the things I planned to give to other people I have to even add it to my mother's. You know things were so difficult. Finally, I said ok. My daddy send me to some man and he introduced me as - a - ehm, brother ehm - as the cousin. Because the way he has already described me to the man and said that the son is in Germany and the son is this. I wasn't even looking that way. So more or less it's like disgrace to him [laughs]” (Ghana interview #04, 27.06.2008: 362-382).

D. felt as if he could not meet his family's expectations. He was not “*even looking that way*”<sup>224</sup> as if he had come from abroad and had not even a car. Only when D. settled, found himself a good job, and started earning a respectable income did his father change his mind. The pressure and the wish to support the families at the same time are enormous and sometimes a burden. In this regard, one interviewee mentioned that she felt constantly overstrained because the whole of her family expected her to contribute financially to the costly funerals (Ghana case #06), another complained that she was supposed to support family members any time they were sick and had to report to the hospital (Cameroon case #16). One man happily reported that due to the income he had earned upon his return to Ghana he had been able to fulfil his mother's greatest wish: the pilgrimage to Mecca. Furthermore, because he himself had come from a very deprived region in the Upper West and thus knew how difficult it is to get access to education, he started supporting

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<sup>224</sup> D. supposedly was referring to the famous dress style of those Ghanaians who returned from abroad in the 1980s to 1990s, as the “Burgers” (cf. Jach 2005: 207).

10 school children from his region, which not were from his family (Ghana case #13). In contrast to the very tangible and visible financial support of graduates from both countries, the return migrants also stated that they had less visible and tangible contributions, as for instance pointed out earlier by Ammassari (2009: 260): the return migrants also promote new attitudes and evoke different behaviours among family members and friends. Because this concerns a change of attitude and notions, this impact is very difficult to measure and hence it often remains merely suggestive whether these social remittances have an impact on development at all. In addition, it is important to note that social remittances do not automatically bring only positive change. As Levitt (1998: 944) correctly remarks, they often are “ethics blind”. There is no guarantee that the remittance is appropriate for the context of the home country. Nevertheless, an attempt will now be made to outline which intentions the returning graduates had by transferring their knowledge to their kin, starting with examples from Cameroon.

One aspect the interviewees who returned to Cameroon mentioned was that they hoped to impart ‘less material values’. This means that they found society and their external families too materialistic and concentrated only on economic growth. A very ambitious young man, for instance, remarks: “*It annoys me that people have simply lost their values. They all concentrate on material things, only*” (Cameroon interview #19; 27.05.2010: 487-489).<sup>225</sup> That instead knowledge about certain values is itself already an important factor to bring change to the home country is known to Ms. S., who I interviewed as a student in Germany (Cameroon case #21). She aims at making an impact in a practical field – rehabilitation of disadvantaged children:

“Why I choose that subject? Ahh because my main effort doing rehabilitation is because I grew up in Cameroon I saw the situation there. The situation of vulnerable groups and handicapped people yeah. It is really deplorable, they stayed for example// to the best for my knowledge I didn't see any offer that the government of Cameroon is placing for such people. I know it is difficult even for the normal people for the state to assist them but the situation with the vulnerable groups including handicapped people, it is the worst (...). For example I saw it in my own family yeah. I have a sister who is somehow handicapped and if my parents are not able to take care for everything for her. Then she has to be like that as where as many other people who are like here in N. [small town in North West Region] where I grew (...) She can't speak. But with us in the family, with time at least we

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<sup>225</sup> German original: “Was mich ärgert, die Leute haben einfach diese Werte verloren. Sie konzentrieren sich auf materielle Dinge, Materialismus” (Cameroon interview #19; 27.05.2010: 487-489).

understand what she is saying. With other people, other people cannot understand her. But she doesn't speak, then she had some learning difficulties and there are many of such people with both such mental and physical handicaps especially in the remote areas in Cameroon who are living in very difficult social situations, social and economic situations (...). That is why I got to do something in that direction. Maybe someday somewhere in Cameroon I will be able to help in one way or the other" (Cameroon interview #21; 03.05.2008: 137-163).

Mrs. S. clearly states that she intends to be of help in the field of social work, because she herself has made the experience and she "*saw it in my own family*" that there are no medical and therapeutic offers for handicapped children or their families in Cameroon.<sup>226</sup> Whereas the initial motive for her study subject is clear – providing professional therapeutic help for her handicapped sister at home – it remains vague as to how she will make use of her knowledge acquired in Germany: "*maybe someday somewhere in Cameroon I will be able to help in one way or the other*". This sentence shows that she does not know where exactly and in which way she is going to implement what she has learned abroad. Further crucial aspects to which S. refers are the "*very difficult social and economic situations*" especially for the people living in the remote areas. In many cases it is a personal obligation for the returned graduates to improve this situation, especially when it concerns their own families. To make this improvement happen, most of those who return to Cameroon talk of having to build up a small start-up to be able to employ family members. Only then have they the guarantee that their attempts to help are sustainable. Because as the previous case shows, the country seems to lack adequate institutions. Hence, the careers of the interviewed Cameroonians express the tendency that they first build a structure in which they enable their families to empower themselves. This can for instance be achieved by starting micro businesses in the informal sector, which they run next to their main income activities. An example is Mr. I. (Cameroon case #11), who tells me why he has taken the challenge to import a used car from Germany. He says he uses this car as a taxi and employs one of his relatives. However, the pressure to build such a structure is enormous because the families are big. Despite very careful preparation, the goal to employ every family member is often far away, if not beyond reach. Nevertheless, some Cameroonians are very ambitious and brave to take this challenge. One of

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<sup>226</sup> The interviewees in both countries often mentioned that initially they wanted – or their parents wanted them – to study medicine or pharmacy. The reason did not become very clear. According to the interviewees this wish had to do with the fact that having a doctor in the family is a kind of health insurance. I also assume that it has to do with the high reputation of medical doctors in general. Some Ghanaian interviewees mentioned that the fact that they had not been able to become doctors, because of their insufficient grades, made them become "disappointed medical doctors" (cf. Ghana interview #17; 10.07.2008: 314).

them is Mr. R. (case #19), who previously was cited as a critic of the loss of moral values in the society of his country. He emphasises in the interview that he has returned even though he had an extremely well paid and decent job in a very highly acknowledged German software company. He returns (first as an employee in his father's NGO, and after two years sets up his business in the field of software management) because he wants to bring change to his country, chiefly to his family:

“I knew I will set up a company that is so large that I can employ many friends and [family]. I know so many families who would love to return but they do not return because they think there are no jobs for them. (...) And so I've done that, but even now it's still not complete, I need to [save] a lot of money” (Cameroon interview # 19; 27.05.2010: 134-152).<sup>227</sup>

The situation in Cameroon is that if the returning graduates want their families to benefit from their knowledge achieved abroad, then they first have to build structures that empower their families and kin with self-help measures.

Concerning the graduates who returned to Ghana, there was evidence that a number of returned graduates strongly advocated different and more conscious principles on how to deal with their natural environment. They partly adopted what they had been exposed to in their host country, Germany. They imparted this new understanding of environmental responsibility to their closest social environment: families and children. A very good example is Mrs. K. (Ghana case #06), who tells me during the interview how impressed she was by the German dual recycling system for domestic waste. She finds this system works so well because in Germany the individual person feels responsible for the environment. This responsibility, in her opinion, can be trained. Hence, she imparts her knowledge by training her children to live environmentally consciously:

“So even with my kids, I've started training them. If you would sit with my child right now and would throw something on the floor, my child would rebuke you. Because I know that// that is it the mentality there [in Germany] and I know that it is something that can be done. That those who haven't been [abroad] maybe if I haven't been [abroad] I wouldn't put so much importance on that. I would also behave just like the other people. That are like in our own small way we can do something. If I start with my home, somebody else is starts with his or her home. By the time our kids get to a level they will

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<sup>227</sup> German original: “Ich wusste ich werde hier eine Firma gründen die so groß ist dass ich so viele Bekannte [und Familie] einstellen kann. Ich kenne so viele Familien, die gern zurückkehren würden, die nicht zurückkehren, weil sie meinen, es gibt hier keine Arbeit für sie. (...) Und dann so hab ich das gemacht, aber - auch jetzt ist es noch nicht so komplett, ich muss noch viel Geld [sparen]” (Cameroon interview #19; 27.05.2010: 134-152).

have in the minds that that this is how things should be done. And gradually people will be spreading and in the long run we will reach where we want to reach. But if we not try to forward this we will definitely not see things like the way I will see things” (Ghana interview #06; 02.07.2008: 631-646).

The fact that Mrs. K. imparts her particular knowledge of environmental protection schemes to her children shows her motivation to impart innovative normative behaviour in her home country’s context. She believes “*that is the mentality there and I know that it is something that can be done*”. Even though she knows that this change of mind will take a long time (“*gradually*”) she sees the benefits deriving from these practices. Similarly, Mr. W. (Ghana case #09) has been impressed by the way the immediate environment is kept clean in Germany. Like Mrs. K. he sees his role as an active disseminator of this particular knowledge. He raises environmental awareness:

“Germany affected my way of doing things a lot. There were certain things that didn’t bother me before I left for Germany. But now they do a lot. For example, the way people litter about. Somebody is holding some papers around, he walks around and just leaves them on the road. I feel so embarrassed about it. And it is quite sad, you look around and you find there things are all over. Sometimes, I wish people have the chance to move in there [Germany] for just a week to see how things are going on there to get some change of attitude. It is not working. Even I thought our ministries and things will bring policies and rules to, as to you know, how to keep our cities and surroundings clean and things like but, you know, nobody seems to care. And I feel like, now, maybe what I will do will not go far but still I will try to in my own small way. And if one or two people are able to learn from it, it will go quite far. This is my aim now” (Ghana interview #09; 04.07.2008: 393-409).

Similarly to K’s statement, Mr. W stresses the notion that policies towards protecting the environment are not effective enough if people do not change their attitudes. To change their attitudes he knows that one has to have first-hand experience to realise how differently things can be handled. Hence, he wishes that “*people have the chance to move in there [Germany] for just a week to see how things are going on there*”. Like Mrs. K., he believes that the waste problem in Ghana could be tackled by increasing awareness and that society could change from the bottom up “*if one or two people are able to learn from it, it will go quite*



far". To effect this change, Mrs. K. trains her children and Mr. W. passes on his knowledge in his "own small way".<sup>228</sup>

This section has presented the major differences between Cameroonian and Ghanaian impacts on development processes on their individual, the micro level. Cameroonians intend to remit new moral values as well as opportunities for their family members and friends, to engage in entrepreneurial self-help activities. The analysis of interviews with the Ghanaian returned graduates suggests that Ghanaians show a particular tendency to impart new norms to their social environment concerning their knowledge on environmental protection.

## 9.2 Institutional level

This section presents the effects of the interviewees' resource transfers on an institutional level. The differences between the two countries are substantial: Cameroonian interviewees tend to mobilise their knowledge in institutions, which they first build. Thus, they also invest economic resources. Their Ghanaian counterparts invest their particular environmental knowledge in already existing institutions.

The first example from Cameroon reconstructs the case of Dr. L (case #05), who is a lecturer in the field of geology. During the interview, I learn that he has established a spin-off, a consultancy in the field of mining with his colleagues from university. Their consultancy closely works together with the Ministry of Mines and various mineral exploration companies in the field of iron and gold exploration. They offer services for project design and development, resource evaluation, ore microscopy and geochemical studies of viable mineral deposits, to foreign investor companies. Additionally, a foreign-run company has established two post-graduate scholarships for students, who start researching in this area of mineralogy. Dr. L. tells what it needs to reach this goal:

"The opening of a business is not so complicated, and taxes are not so expensive. The most difficult thing is to raise the capital which is around 100 Million CFA to 500 Million [about EUR 150,000]. It is more important is to have a business attitude and to think innovative to have a good solid idea. We teamed up and are a 'Mannschaft' [typical German expression for team]. We can even employ our students, our graduates from the department there [11 students and 4 permanent workers]. The HOD [Head of Department] teamed up with

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<sup>228</sup> Levitt (1998: 933) refers to a very similar example for such migration-related normative structural changes, from her study on migrants from the Dominican Republic. A migrant explains how he is very conscious of his domestic waste and that by demonstratively throwing his garbage into the garbage bin instead of on the ground he intends to make a better example.

us and another lecturer because I could not do the work alone [consultancies and project proposals]. After two years, we were established on the market and in February 2010, an Australian mining company contracted with us. The consultancy consolidated. Especial iron is being exploited” (Cameroon case #05; interview memo 07.05.2010: 518-528).

It shows, the consultancy in the field of mining exploration is an innovative spin-off, which first had to be built. Whereas in this example L. emphasises the “*innovative*” character that he says is more important than the founding capital, this founding capital still has to be invested. Without registering the consultancy as a company, the structure would fail. Through teaming up and following a sound business plan the group of lecturers were able to acquire additional external funds. The result is impressive: their spin-off creates employment opportunities for their own students from the department of geology.

The next example from Cameroon is similar. The difference is the field in which the graduate builds the institution: agricultural resource management. Mr. I. (Cameroon case #11) is a graduate from an English international master’s degree programme on Environmental and Resource Management in Germany. He already knows – prior to his educational migration to Germany - that this particular subject will have a future in Cameroon, soon:

“Cameroon needs many environmental experts. There are, there, there are no experts. So I said, 'Oh, so if there are no experts, if I can study this thing and come back at least I will be an expert'. That’s when the idea started. And this is [what I said] when they asked me at the German embassy [why I wanted] to go and study. That’s when the motivation actually started. And that’s when I saw that it’s actually true. There is no college, there is no university in Cameroon training people on environmental stuff” (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 231-238).

Mr. I. makes clear that he sees this increasing potential for environmental experts in Cameroon forthcoming because of the country’s rich natural resources that are the number one export commodity, but from his perspective Cameroon lacks accountability to exploit these resources adequately:

“Our problem in Cameroon is resource management and accountability. If our president is struggling to install accountability, we need people to start teaching resource management. How can we use [our resources]? I think if we will do this, I think Americans will come to Cameroon to work. Yes! Because we may not know how to go about it harnessing diamonds. Diamonds have been discovered in Cameroon, ha? There is bauxite, there is iron that has been discovered and iron ore another, another there is enough gas, natural gas that has been discovered and other, oil, eh, rubber has been discovered in

Kumba, still going to be tapped. What will we need to be doing in Europe? Making beds or washing toilets? In fact, it is so upsetting to see a PhD student cleaning toilets and we are singing, 'Hallelujah!' over it. Singing songs over toilets!" (Cameroon interview #11; 09.10.2008: 437-461).

What Mr. I. points out in this quote is that he suggests “*start teaching resource management*” in Cameroon in order to “*install accountability*” and to make the local population contribute to the resource exploitation. This, he claims would be a countermeasure against the increasing out-migration of economic migrants who, in his view, cannot access decent employment abroad and often end up in menial jobs (“*making beds or washing toilets*”). The quotes show that he has already been very conscious of this prior to his educational emigration to Germany. Upon his return he at first starts working as an employee in a local NGO. For this job he receives sponsorship from a reintegration programme. After the subsidy ends, he continues to apply his specific knowledge of resource management, but first builds the particular institution, a small NGO. He teams up with Cameroonian fellow student who have also studied Environmental Resource Management in Germany. The NGO is located in the less developed South-West Region and the goal is to train the local farmers on how to farm snails and mushrooms. These measures offer the local population the chance of making more efficient and income generating use of their environmental resources.<sup>229</sup>

The final most compelling evidence for the claim that the Cameroonian interviewees activate both resources, economic resources as well as knowledge, to invest in institution building is provided in the example of Dr. H. (Cameroon case #02). The reconstruction of his case shows that he invested his financial resources to build a private technical college in the field of applied sciences, to apply what he had studied in Germany, physics. After 14 years studying and working in Germany he returns for good in 2001. Upon return he starts pragmatically by setting up the basic infrastructure, a two-storey building for the institute. His main objective besides having a safe workplace in his field of physics is to modernise the Cameroonian education sector by introducing applied technical sciences. H. hopes that this opportunity will enhance the professional profiles of young Cameroonian graduates and prepare them for emerging technologies, for instance in the fast growing field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). H. hopes that providing such learning opportunities in the country will have the advantage of

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<sup>229</sup> Farming products like snails and mushrooms is also called “farming without blisters” (Njonga 2011), because it is a very effective means of recycling waste and making a profit from it. It is cheap, easy and thus can be applied by physically disadvantaged population groups, like elderly and ill persons.

reducing at least a small part of the large flows of educational emigrants and diversifying their educational profiles:

“The majority, 85% of them, want to study a discipline of applied sciences, Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Civil Engineering. So there are very few who will study physics, mathematics. So then I said to myself that yes, if we ask for action in this sense, we can not recruit throughout Cameroon, but at least if we can already recruit 50, 100 who can study here, we would have brought an early solution as small as the effect is, but at least we would have committed an act that tends to solve this problem” (Cameroon interview #02/03, 02.10.2008: 205-218).<sup>230</sup>

Hence, H. invests large sums of money – all of his accumulated savings from Germany as well as the private loans which he access through his personal networks – in the Cameroonian educational infrastructure. These contacts were the main donors for founding the institutions, because it was almost impossible to get a local loan from a Cameroonian bank as the local banks did not accept his guarantees: “*Either you do not have a solid guarantee or you simply do not have enough relationships*” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 247-249).<sup>231</sup> Therefore, the external support from German partner firms and donors enabled him to start the project.

Most important in this regard was the support for the institute’s high-tech laboratory equipment, which was provided by different sources, such as the workplace equipment subsidy provided by the WUS in the context of the Returning Experts Programme, and his former university in Germany, which made connections to lab equipment sellers who gave higher credit. This high-quality equipment is the institute’s most important asset because almost all governmental educational institutes lack exactly this equipment. The returns on these economic investments, he says, were not immediate. It takes two years until the first students enrol for their bachelor’s, which are about 100 to 150 students annually. Their degree takes these students a period of two to five years for an annual tuition fee of up to EUR 400. Today, the institute employs 6 permanent and 15 temporary lecturers. H. managed

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<sup>230</sup> French original: “La majorité, 85 % de ces jeunes veulent aller étudier une discipline de sciences appli-quées, ingénierie: génie électrique, informatique, génie civil. Alors il y a très peu qui vont étudier la physique, mathématique. Alors je me suis donc dis que certes, si nous posons une action dans ce sens, on ne pourra pas recruter tout le Cameroun, mais au moins si on peut déjà recruter 50, 100 qui peuvent étudier ici, on aurait apporté un début de solution aussi petite que cette action soit, mais au moins on aurait posé un acte qui tend à la résolution de ce problème” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 205-218).

<sup>231</sup> French original: “soit vous n’avez pas de garante solide ou tout simplement vous n’avez pas assez de relations” (Cameroon interview #02/03; 02.10.2008: 247-249).

to adopt the curricular of a German applied sciences university and established an institutional partnership with his former university in Germany, as well as with another company in Germany.

Hence, H. has made a step forward in improving the situation in the Cameroonian education sector by building his private institute. Regarding the financial resources that he had to mobilise to achieve the goal of being independent, H. emphasises that he and his wife took a serious risk by starting their project as entrepreneurs in the education sector: any unforeseen challenge, like an illness, could have easily ended the project and then he would have lost everything at once. Not only their career but also their whole existence would have been at stake. However, 10 years later the institute consolidated and only recently, the German partner institution officially announced the start of joint projects on ICT research in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Whereas these examples explain the claim that Cameroonians first have to build institutions and organisations through which they can pass on their knowledge to contribute to development processes, the following cases show a different picture for the case of the Ghanaian interviewees. By reconstructing selected cases from the Ghana sample it becomes clear that they transferred the resource of their knowledge more directly – into already existing institutions because their profiles were in demand. Their profiles, in the field of environmental resource management, were in demand because at the time of their return the government's policy orientation strongly invested in institutions that carried out their policies. This for instance concerns the country's directive regarding sufficient water supply in the communities.

The lack of modern sanitation and sewerage systems is responsible for serious health problems in Ghana. Endemic illnesses, like malaria, cholera, and the incidence of guinea worm, are attributed directly to poor quality of water and insufficient sanitation (cf. van Roosbroeck and Amlalo 2006: 22-23).<sup>232</sup> Therefore, because it is regarded as a major precondition for general development, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) strongly promotes the improvement of countrywide water and sanitation supplies in rural and urban areas. Hence, the government has mainstreamed many measures that foster surveying for safe, potable water and implementing sanitation policies. On behalf of the government and through

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<sup>232</sup> In contemporary Ghana about 40% of the population still does not have access to safe and potable water. They have to rely on natural sources of water, which are unprotected wells, lakes and rivers (NDPC 2010: 71). Many open waters are polluted and not safe because of illegal mining and the usage of toxic chemicals like arsenic and cyanide to extract gold and other minerals from the soil. These chemicals are not disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, but simply drained into the rivers and lakes. In addition, only 14% of Ghanaians have access to improved sanitation (Yirenya-Tawiah and Tweneboah Lawson 2012).

governmental funding, Ghanaian small and medium-sized companies and NGOs carry out these water and sanitation projects (Yirenya-Tawiah and Tweneboah Lawson 2012). Therefore, the NGOs and micro-enterprises needed well-qualified employees in this field and provided an entry port for five hydro engineers among the Ghanaian sample, who studied Water Resources Engineering and specialised in Water and Wastewater Management in Germany. Mr. L. (Ghana case #18) is one of them. He obtained his international master's degree in Water Resources Engineering and Management (WAREM) in Germany and started working as a hydro engineer in a small company. At the time of the interview, he carries out projects which facilitate the water supply of people living in rural communities:

“For one year we have to be with the community. We go there to check the facility whether it is the way we want it to run, we look at the test, also check the quality of the water; look at the facility whether it is stable and we do recommendation for one year. (...) Like, where I went to from Monday, you pass through villages, and you see a lot of them [people] carrying water from streams. If money is available all this people should be given boreholes with water (...) but there is no money, so the people are left to fetch from those streams anything (...) when I design, we do construction, the first time you open the tap, they get water, they start shouting: ‘Eeehh’ [making sounds expressing joy and amazement]. At least you have solved some problem. Since I came I have done quite a lot, I have done about 10 designs and everybody is getting water out of it (...)” (Ghana interview #18; 11.07.2008: 28-30).

As a hydro engineer who has been trained in Germany, L. has a very tangible and direct impact that improves the living conditions of people living in the communities. At least 10 communities have already benefited from his projects and have access to clean water. The difference from the previously described cases from Cameroon also becomes evident: the whole of the institution, the micro-company, already exists and he therefore can transfer his knowledge very effectively on an institutional level.

Applying resources on the level of institutions also concerns capacity building, according to the reconstructed working spheres of the respondents from Ghana. As has been mentioned, Ghana's government has mainstreamed environmental protection into their poverty reduction agendas. To carry out these tasks, the institutions need qualified personnel required to solve the critical energy and natural resources challenges. Only recently new programmes and universities emerged in Ghana,

offering training in these fields.<sup>233</sup> Until then, students had to migrate abroad to seek this kind of training, in Northern America or in Europe. The reconstruction of the interviewed graduates' trajectories shows that their profiles match the demand very well and that they therefore often integrate into academia, to work as lecturers and researchers in Ghanaian higher educational institutions. There, they not only act as multipliers of their knowledge about environmental resource management and build human capacities but also implement the programmes in these emerging subjects in the institutions. Such is the case of Mr. U. (Ghana case #10), a master's degree holder from the University of Stuttgart in the field of Waste Water Management. After his return, U. first starts to work in a governmental consultancy and after two years he applies at a polytechnic school. He is surprised when he immediately gets the position as a head of department even though he only holds a master's degree. He suggests that it is his specific knowledge that is his entry key:

“Yeah the qualification I got from Stuttgart, of course it has been very helpful because to lecture in a tertiary institution, the minimum is a master's level and if you have a B.Sc. in a polytechnic you can be an instructor but your conditions of service is not good. Getting the master's degree had positioned me in a better place. In fact, there were other people, who had been in the department before I came. But because they didn't have their master's even though they had a lot of experience in terms of 'on the job', they are now at the background and I just came and I was made the Head of Department, it was a new, a new thing to me [smiles] (...) it is because of the qualification, yes” (Ghana interview #10: 04.07.2008: 557-571).

From U's perspective, “*it is because of the qualification*” about the natural resource programmes that enabled him to become the Head of Department despite his lack of teaching experience. In this position, he indicates during the interview, he has an even higher degree of influence than a lecturer. He designs the curricular of the institution:

“There are some of the courses you can't get them here (...) there is no institution in Ghana that handles waste management and K-Poly is now trying to work on it. We are developing a curricular (...). So for such a course like this we need to train people at the MSc level, there is no any fair degree, we don't have technology, we don't have it. MSc we don't have it but each course is run in Germany, water resources (...) so for such courses if you don't travel outside then you

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<sup>233</sup> To name a few examples of institutions which have recently started to train students in the field of natural resources in Ghana: in 2011, the Ghanaian African University College of Communications in Accra established the Institute of Green Studies. Also in December 2011, the university of Energy and Natural Resources opened in Sunyani.

can't have it and if you don't have it there is no chance, there is no way Ghana will have any education in that line” (Ghana interview #10; 04.07.2008: 845-860).

The impact of U. is clearly in the field of capacity building in the field of environmental resource management because at that time in 2008 there was “*no institution in Ghana that handles waste management*”. Thanks to the specific knowledge he gained in Germany U. improves his individual situation, but moreover he applies his knowledge on the institutional level and adopts the course curricular from German universities. He contributes to institution and capacity building but does not have to invest his finances because the institution as such already exists. A final case from Ghana shows that interviewees who integrate into tertiary educational institutions use their position to disseminate their knowledge on a broad level. They build capacities not only in class, but also in the community. Mr. B. (Ghana case #05) is a graduate from an Environmental Resource Management (ERM) programme. He points out during the interview that he also is engaged in community activities to raise public awareness of waste problems:

“When I came home, because of the experience in Germany, I realized that the situation was very bad (...) And that is why I established with some other colleagues, we started a clean up service.<sup>234</sup> We organise the students, go to the hospitals and market areas, and planted trees. We also made educational campaigns to educate people on how to clean the environment. We organise forums, made some presentations and because of my teaching roles we were not able to do it more frequently. This is one thing that I have done for this particular region [in the Upper West]. I had to develop this brochures because I think we had to move forward and advertise in the schools so that people will come (...) And I think that is my social responsibility help the nation to move forwards” (Ghana interview #05, 30.06.2008: 112-124).

What is interesting is that the actions concerning awareness creation are not part of his lecturing duties. B. has to carry them out in his spare time. Still, by using his formal role as a lecturer he reaches a broad audience. Of course, this case resembles the cases presented from Cameroon, the lecturer Dr. L. (Cameroon case #05): B. and his colleagues started a local community group. However, in contrast to the story of the lecturer from Cameroon who had established a consultancy together with other lecturers, I interpret the activity of B. and his colleagues as ‘extended

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<sup>234</sup> The association B. refers to was founded by a group of Sub-Saharan African participants during a STUBE workshops in Stuttgart (Marful n.D., Salazar 2006:7). Today, the NGO is active in Uganda and Nigeria and is run by former students from Germany who have established successful links to their former Alma Maters.



engagement' of lecturers on a community level. In my understanding, the difference between the cases is the degree of professionalism. Whereas in this case from Ghana the lecturers established the club besides their main tasks – lecturing – they remained in their roles as lecturers and thus kept attached to the university. In the case of Dr. L. in Cameroon it was indicated that L. used the consultancy as a new income-generating workplace.

### **9.3 Structural level**

On the third, the structural level, the respondents applied their resources the least according to the analysis of the interviews. Previous researchers in their empirically-led studies have already concluded the same. They have pointed out that return migrants' impact on a structural national level is very limited (cf. Iredale et al. 2003: 5, Arthur 2008: 155, cf. Ammassari 2009: 292). This is only half true, as this section will show, by presenting a more nuanced picture of this claim. The comparison between the Cameroonian and the Ghanaian interviewees suggests that some Cameroonian investors start businesses. They contribute to development by employing people in the region who in return sustain their families. Above this level, the few Cameroonian entrepreneurs only seem to create isolated impetuses in the local economy. At the same time, the interviews reveal that these entrepreneurs carry economical risks. Hence, it seems as if the argument that returning graduates only have limited impact on a national level is correct. However, the Ghanaian interviewees tell different stories: they say that as employees in the public services in the field of resource management they even design environmental policies. They, in contrast to their Cameroonian counterparts, do not have to risk as much, but they still progress in their careers. Firstly, I reconstruct how Cameroonian entrepreneurs create impetuses in the economy and secondly, I retell from the experiences of the Ghanaians how they influence environmental policy design.

The youngest entrepreneur in Cameroon is Mr. U. (Cameroon case #23). The reconstruction of his profile reveals that he studied, worked and lived for almost 10 years in Germany. He obtains a degree in processing engineering as well as a master's in agricultural economy. Alongside and after his studies, he works as an agricultural consultant in several international projects in palm oil production in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Finally, more than three years after his graduation in Germany, he and his wife return to Cameroon and set up a palm oil mill. Their micro-company processes crude palm oil to produce high-grade cooking oil - the most important oil used for cooking in many African countries. The production process of his company is unique in Cameroon, because the by-products from the production process are used as raw materials in the agricultural industry. The palm kernel meal is sold to pig breeders in the locality as a substitute for the more expensive imported soybean meal in the feed. An important goal of U's oil mill project is that

it realises the principles of sustainability and aims to support people living in the region.

Even though six direct employees is a very low number, the numerous regional farmers are supposed to profit significantly from his investments. For U's project, the regional stakeholders, farmers, and local small animal breeders are important. This integration of local farmers is highly important, not only for the oil mill owner to benefit, but also for the farmers. The regional palm farmers are motivated to sell their best fruits to the mill and in return receive a free advisory service and fertiliser bonus. Having a processing unit in their immediate neighbourhood enables the farmers to deliver high quality fresh fruit bunches without investing time and money in transportation to industrial oil mills in locations far away from the palm oil plantation. From this reconstruction, two development effects derive from U's investment: firstly, the local farmers are encouraged to farm sustainably and if they process oil themselves, to do it cautiously.<sup>235</sup> U. invests a lot of time and effort to give free advice to the farmers by which he intends to increase the efficiency of the small farmers' production and wants to ensure the high quality and safety of the product, which they sell on the local market. In addition, by selling them high-quality fertilisers, U. strategically binds them to his particular mill. The fact that he belongs to the area helps him to negotiate with the people and to convince them of these innovative measures. U. invests all his savings in this project: in addition to the time, effort, planning and work which he and his wife have invested, the oil-mill alone costs them nearly EUR 100,000. To accumulate this high amount of savings required great effort from U. and his wife when they still were in Germany. At that time, both had an income and U's consultancies were lucrative. Without these personal savings, the project would not have been possible, because in Cameroon it is very problematic to gain access to external sources of funding. U. and his wife explain that they have been to many banks but that local banks are reluctant to offer credit to start-up entrepreneurs because they can barely raise adequate security. In U's case, the oil mill, the company's asset, is not accepted because it is located in a remote rural area where the bank has no control over it. Hence, it would be impossible for the bank to confiscate the assets if problems occurred in repaying the loan. However, U. and his wife manage to overcome this major hurdle of the first project phase and successfully enter the second phase of marketing and client acquisition a few years later. By then, they are financially in the black. In the

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<sup>235</sup> Often, to avoid this long distance travel, the farmers themselves start palm oil processing, which has caused severe problems with the quality of the product. Because the farmers lack sufficient knowledge about how to preserve the oil product adequately and the quantities of which chemicals they have to add, the sold product causes food safety problems. Alternatively, if the farmers deliver less fresh fruit because they have to transport them over a long distance, not only the price for their harvest declines but also the quality of the product (cf. Ngando Ebongue et al. 2011).

near future, U. tells me during an informal encounter, they expect to increase their production and to export to the neighbouring country, Nigeria, too.

A similar, quite impressive example for an investor, is the story of Mr. F. (Cameroun case #24). It also presents a case in which entrepreneurial investment leads to sustainable employment creation and setting standards in a particular industry. F. has his business in the textile industry and offers custom embroidered high-quality knitted garments. He returned around 2000. Since then he has invested the large sum of about USD three million in his company. At the time of the interview, the company, which started as a small embroiderers with only one sewing machine, consists of two production sites with many high-tech machines and a complete production line with supplementary manufacturing. The way to achieve this was not easy, tell me F. and his wife during one of our meetings. F. studied engineering in Germany but claims that it was life in Germany in general, which trained him to become an entrepreneur:

“Me referring to Germany, I can tell you that it is a model in the accuracy and if we can copy this example at least 60%, success can be expected in the future. The training which is provided actually in institutions or German companies does not predispose us to work for others (...). The training we received is for self employed and thus creates jobs” (Cameroon case #24; email 11.10.2006: 94-101).<sup>236</sup>

In his e-mail, which actually is a draft of an official speech held at a meeting of returned graduates, F. points out that the education received in Germany primarily teaches universal knowledge, like becoming independent and precise, what he describes as “*exactitude*”. Applying this universal knowledge from his perspective are prerequisites for entrepreneurial activities. The benefits for development are, according to his understanding, that he has been able to employ other, chronically unemployed Cameroonians. However, he admits that this path as an entrepreneur is hard and privation-rich:

“For the record, I must remind you that I found myself very often in certain offices with clothes soaked with sweat. Sometimes I had to carry the cartones to ensure their delivery. These constraints have led me to choose a new way of clothing that suits me very well today [re-

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<sup>236</sup> French original: “M’en [sic !] référant à l’Allemagne, je peux vous avouer que c’est un modèle dans l’exactitude et si nous pouvons copier cet exemple au moins de 60%, la réussite peut être escomptée à la condition supplémentaire d’être soutenu. La formation reçue en effet dans les institutions ou la société allemande ne nous prédisposent pas à travailler pour autrui (...). Les formations reçues sont faites pour s’auto employer et partant créer des emplois” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 94-101).

fers to his indigenous cloth, made in Cameroon]” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 74-79).<sup>237</sup>

Apart from these physical and emotional dry spells the most difficult task, however, was to gain access to local loans in order to invest in the infrastructure and buy new machines to replace faulty ones. In this regard, F. is a strategic networker and establishes strategic business contacts with multi-lateral donor organisations like USAID. Since this contact, the company has started to internationalise. For this, F. maintains business relationships with company owners in South Africa as well as in Ghana. 12 years after his return and the start of the business, it has become one of the leading companies in Cameroon in the textile industry. More than 150 persons work on the production line as well as in management and product distribution. Recently, the company even started to export its products in the garment industry to neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, despite he achieved a lot, F’s business is an economical impetus only and it has not changed the structure of Cameroon’s economy. In case his business would collapse, his employees would be again without work.

A bit different is the final case from Cameroon. It indicates that return migrants are also limited in what they can achieve for their home country’s development, albeit they enter the public service in a key position. It is the case of Mr. B. (case #09), who has studied renewable energies in Germany. According to his own accounts, he entered the public service upon his return. At the time of the interview he already had been promoted into the position of a regional delegate, which is an influential position. Even though his aim is to improve the infrastructure in his home community in the North West his statement shows that he has only limited freedom. To improve the infrastructure in his community, for example street lighting, he needs a higher financial budget. B. explains the situation during the interview:

“You must have seen quite a difference because in Yaoundé now, and we are fighting because our program is also emitting street lighting. Come next year and you will see. There will be a change in street lighting. I have that as my master plan and that is why I am requesting the government for 100 million francs for street lighting because if mayors and councils cannot, the government should fund the project. We supervise for that because the councils don’t have the resources, so the councils don’t have money. I have proposed a 100 million francs to be given for that project. And quite a good number.

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<sup>237</sup> French original: “Pour la petite histoire, je dois vous rappeler que je me retrouvais très souvent dans certains bureaux avec des vêtements trempés de sueur. Parfois je devais transporter les cartons pour assurer la livraison. Toutes ces contraintes m’ont amené à opter [pour] un nouveau mode d’habillement qui aujourd’hui me sied à merveille” (Cameroon case #24; e-mail 11.10.2006: 74-79).

This is the first project I have proposed to take to Yaoundé to see that they try to get funding for and you must push because the situation here is not like in Germany where you send something and it goes forward. You must be behind it” (Cameroon interview #09; 08.10.2008: 527-539).

B’s explanations reflect his strong support for the development of his hometown’s local infrastructure and that he hopes to be able to convince the government in Yaoundé to provide funds for the development.<sup>238</sup> However, despite his key-position in the public services and despite he is devoted to the issue to improve his hometown’s infrastructure, his attempt remains without avail. When I visit the town, the second time, two years after he had made the aforementioned promise, the streetlights still re not in place. However, only few months later, in course of election campaigns, president Biya announces his visit to town. Immediately the local newspapers reported about the town’s ‘face-lifting’: streetlights have been placed all over town and even shine during broad daylight. The anecdote shows that the impact of returning graduates seems arbitrary in Cameroon even if they manage to get into higher key-positions in the public services.

This is very different to what the Ghanaian agents reported in the interviews for this study. Even though the number of those who can be said reached this higher level is as small as in Cameroon (three), in Ghana the impact seems to be more stable. This might have two possible reasons: firstly, they have to risk less and secondly their superiors seem to appreciate their knowledge, which they thus can transfer and hence influence policies. Two selected cases underline these claims. The first one is that of Ms. A. (Ghana case #24). She is a graduate of environmental engineering. After only two years of studying in Germany she finds employment as a research assistant at the Ministry of Environment. There she works in a section that is directly responsible for ministerial decisions and international cooperation:

“I will give you a typical example, like a letter from the German government wanting to establish ECOWAS climatic change research desk. The letter came and then normally what they will do (...) the minister will write letters ‘let us go straight to them’ so I will write a minute to them (...) I wrote a memo to the deputy minister saying that OK, reading what they want to establish, I think the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) can host this because they have research scientists on climatic change. It has thirteen institutes

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<sup>238</sup> Unfortunately, when I was in the particular town for the second time, in May 2010, the streetlights had still not been set in place. Efforts to get in touch with Mr. B. to find out if and why his project had not been granted were unsuccessful. My attempts to get in touch with Mr. B. through e-mail and text messages remained unanswered.

so they can give enough people to do these things, so the project should be and he agrees. What happens is, if he agrees with my suggestion, I go ahead and write a letter to the German government. But I don't sign. He will sign but I write a letter" (Ghana interview #24, 08.09.2009: 581-596).

In this example, A. expresses that she has sizeable influence in the background of policy making by stating that the Minister even follows her advice: "*he will sign but I write a letter*", due to her expert's knowledge. She is even in a position to shape international cooperation on climate change by giving her "*ok*" to "*establish ECOWAS climatic change research desk*". She clearly points out that she is in this responsible position thanks to the specific knowledge that she has gained in her study programme in Germany:

"And more also another thing why they chose me (...) is the course I did in Germany (...) It is for policy makers, you know. It is for decision makers (...) And when I came here, it was also where I have to be from here. I make decisions" (Ghana interview #24, 08.09.2009: 510-519).

From A's perspective her study programme in Germany has not only enabled her to get a stable job, but reconstructing her single case and bringing it into context with those of other returning graduates, the structural impact of the returning graduates which I claim is a pattern becomes more obvious. Those who studied in the field of natural resources seem to be able to – at least in the cases which are presented – apply innovation on the highest level. Another case that underlines my claim is that of Mr. M. (Ghana case #02). He studied Environmental Resource Management (ERM) and his master's thesis is on environmental taxation. Upon his return, he took this thesis as a model for Ghana:

"And then it happened that I had to do my master's thesis and I contacted my boss at IRS [Internal Revenue Service, JB.] and he said (...) we have this problem in Ghana how to tax environmental resources. So, when I say environmental resources, minerals for instance gold, bauxite, manganese and diamond, timber and all that (...) look at the German tax system and then how I can apply it to Ghana (...) My supervisor helped me to study the tax system, especially in the area of environmental resources. So, I did that and then I used that as a model. If you look at my thesis, Germany is a model to what I did, So, I looked at what Germany has done and did a similar thing. I then brought it back to them and they were so excited because they have not had that thing done before" (Ghana interview #02, 26.06.2008: 234-245).

The example of M. shows that he specialised in a very specific topic, environmental taxation. By transferring this expertise and adopting the German model to Ghana's context, he even influenced the government's budget indirectly because

such measures are an ‘economic instrument’ that have created a new source of income for the Ghanaian government. On the basis of these schemes, foreign-based mining companies have to pay for the destruction they cause through their mining activities and thus reimburse the Ghanaian state for the damage. The start of such a taxation model in Ghana generates budgetary income and at the same time encourages foreign companies to exploit the resources with environmentally friendly technologies (cf. Kombat 2009: 26).

Wrapping up, this chapter about the returning graduates’ impact on development processes has shown that those graduates who return to Cameroon have the tendency to act as investors and thus represent the classic type of returning migrants, of whom it has been said they could develop their home countries by contributing to economic growth. This economic growth is visible on three different levels. On the level of the individual, almost all Cameroonians reported that they had been able to support their family members and they encouraged them to establish self-help measures, such as micro-enterprises. On an institutional level, the reconstructed professional biographies reveal that some Cameroonians are able to build institutions and create stable employment opportunities. Of course, due to their entrepreneurial activities, Cameroonians tend to gain a high degree of independence from the government. However, their impact on a structural level remains vague because these are a very few and isolated cases. As individual businesspersons and founders of larger companies, they can create impulses and produce on a high quality level. Nevertheless, they still depend on the arbitrary decisions of government and finance institutions and their enterprises are always at risk. This high and unpredictable financial and personal risk includes the danger that not only the graduates could lose their financial savings but also their employees could lose their stable source of income.

In contrast, the interviewed graduates who returned to Ghana reported that they pass on their knowledge. They thus fall under the category of highly skilled migrants who become innovators. The presented examples demonstrate that these innovators stimulate development processes on all three levels: they support family members, which somehow seems to be limited due to the fact that the Ghanaians who studied in Germany were less able to accumulate sufficient financial resources. On a second level, the graduates support institution building through disseminating their knowledge to students and communities. They built institutions to a lesser extent, but rather contributed to capacity building. On the third – a structural level – the presented cases suggest that a few Ghanaians had an impact on policy making in the field of natural resource management. It became clear that the interviewees who are employees seem to have lesser risks to bear.

Although they are also less independent at the beginning, they can, over time, become successful entrepreneurs, too. The explanation of this fundamental difference in the impact the returning graduates have on development processes in their home countries lies chiefly in two aspects: the migration profiles of the returning gradu-

ates and their home countries' policy making. Cameroonians who study in Germany have more opportunities to accumulate financial and social resources, which they can invest upon their return. Even though those who are able to establish stable medium-sized companies are very successful, their financial investment and the personal risks they take are comparably high with respect to the outcome. This differentiated perspective weakens the notion that most return migrants to Sub-Saharan Africa have the most efficient and effective impact on development as entrepreneurs (cf. Black et al. 2003b, cf. Black and Castaldo 2009, cf. Ammassari 2003) and that innovators are generally unlikely to meet their own expectations (cf. Cerase 1974: 258). It also opposes the overly generalised observation of Black and Castaldo that migrants are "quite capable of saving investment capital themselves" (2009: 56), and this in certain respects defines their status as entrepreneurs. This is not the case for those Ghanaians who studied international degree courses in the English language. They have little to no chance of finding lucrative jobs in Germany (cf. chapter 5.2). Thus, when they return as graduates from Germany they have only limited financial savings. They are thus more likely to start as employees. The fact that their profiles fit so well to their home country's demand has to be seen in the light of contemporary governmental policies and the government's aim to implement sustainable development measures.

However, these findings only can be suggestive since the samples of the interviewees are rather small and cannot be seen as representative for returning migrants of all generations. What this chapter has demonstrated is that the particular impact of returning migrants always has to be seen in the context of the country setting. That these country contexts change quickly can be seen from the remark made by Black et al. (2003b: 6) when they write about the country setting in Ghana: "it depends which skills are in demand. For a country like Ghana, technicians and entrepreneurs may be more important than academics and scientists". The validity of this statement has definitely changed. This is proved by the success of the contemporary generation of returned Ghanaian academics and scholars who disseminate a very particular knowledge – that of environmental and ecological sustainability. The homogeneity of the Ghanaian educational profiles and their likeliness to return indicates that they can have structural effect which has been said to occur if many returning migrants apply their knowledge in the same field (cf. Gmelch 1987: 136). That they jointly apply their knowledge, especially in the important field of natural resources, may lead to realising positivists' visions that circular educational migration has the potential to make Sub-Saharan African countries frontrunners in eco-industries (Patterson 2007). This positive notion must not be under- nor overestimated. It should be mentioned that Ghanaian graduates are also able to apply their knowledge achieved abroad only as far as their country's infrastructure allows. Therefore, referring to Iredale et al (2003: 189), returning graduates are not necessarily the drivers of change, but "they can serve as 'navigators' in a system that has already begun to address its basic economic, social and political problems" (Iredale et al 2003: 189).



## 10. The job hunt: conclusions

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, Sub-Saharan African students have often been praised as the most mobile group of which nearly three-quarters are said to pursue their tertiary education in countries in Western Europe and Northern America (cf. Chien and Kot 2012, cf. Campus-France 2013). An analysis of the existing studies on students from African source countries in Germany identified that many graduates are worried about their source country's economic and political situation and thus fear that they will not find suitable (meaning fitting their educational profiles and being well-paid) employment. Therefore, it is surprising that, apart from a few exceptional studies, almost no information exists as to how these graduates find work before they can utilise their knowledge achieved abroad in a professional context and whether this contributes to development. This lack of studies on labour market success of returning graduates has been criticised by previous researchers, too (cf. Blaud 2001: 12, Martin 2007: 207, cf. Maringe and Carter 2007: 459, cf. Günther 2009: 14, cf. Thomas 2008: 653, cf. Barry 2011: 22). Therefore, this study concentrated on the question of the job hunting process.

This thesis questioned returning graduates from the two source countries, Ghana and Cameroon, about their experiences during their transition into the local labour market, whether their educational migration had personally paid off and if it had contributed to development processes and whether these graduates became the so-called "agents of change and innovation" (de Haas 2007: 38). The research was embedded in the contemporary discussion of the so-called Migration Development Nexus (cf. Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002, cf. Faist und Fauser 2011, cf. Nieswand 2011, cf. Nyberg-Sørensen 2012) which currently understands migration from a transnational perspective. This combination of research strands – migration, development and labour market transition – examined from the perspective of the migrants, has made the research original.

In this particular study, emphasis had been put on the physical return migration of highly skilled migrants and returning graduates. Because the debate about the financial remittances of migrants living in the diaspora often dominates the Migration Development Nexus, it is important not to forget that when migrants physically return and find suitable jobs, they also have skills and knowledge by which they can give an impulse to development processes. This was seen in the case study of Ghana. The Ghanaian returning graduates showed very specific profiles, especially connected to environmental and natural resource management, which fit perfectly well into their home country's labour market demand at that time, because the Ghanaian government had invested into the fields of the 'green-economy'. Thus, the returning Ghanaian graduates with such a profile were in the lucky position of being able to apply their skills within an overall performance-oriented labour market.

But this positive matching situation can vary from country to country as shown in the example of Cameroon. Following the professional trajectories of the Cameroonian group it became clear that their educational profiles often were not the driving factor in their labour market entry, but their personal contacts and their social position in Cameroon's society.

Of course studies about educational migration from South to North have been shifted from the classic framework of brain-drain/brain gain and have been said to have become more mobile and flexible, seeking to improve a "brain circulation" (Patterson 2007, 2013). However, the reality still proves to be more complicated, as shown in the biographies of the interviewed graduates. From comparing the biographies of the interviewed Cameroonian and Ghanaian students it became clear how different their life plans were. Whereas only a very dedicated minority amongst the Cameroonian graduates seems to feel equipped for the return and eventually returns, the opposite has been observed with the contemporary generation of the Ghanaian students in Germany.

Because not enough reliable data about the transition process of labour market entry exists, this thesis systematically produced empirical data by conducting qualitative Problem-Centred Interviews (Witzel 2000) with 22 Cameroonian and 28 Ghanaian returned graduates from STEM fields. They were complemented by 23 expert interviews with practitioners from the fields of the two countries' economies, the field of foreign tertiary education and from the field of recruitment. In particular, graduates from the two countries Cameroon and Ghana were interviewed because students from these two countries have formed very distinct groups in Germany in the last decade. Also, their source countries' political features have developed differently, and thus Cameroon and Ghana were identified as quite contrastive cases. Despite these differences – that Cameroon has been said to be performing less democratically than Ghana – both countries' labour markets suffer from tight and highly intransparent labour markets. Hence, it could be assumed that graduates from both countries would face similar problems in the matching process, concerning finding an adequate employer.

The findings drawn from this comparison have together presented a relatively clear picture of opposing trends in the two countries. The educational migration of the Cameroonian group seemed to have led in only a few cases to development through knowledge transfers upon return because the matching process was very difficult, but more often educational migration led to a permanent emigration to another country in the Global North. Among the small number of persons who returned, only very successful persons were able to evoke a stimulating impetus on Cameroon's development and thus in conclusion, educational migration of Cameroonian graduates is cautiously evaluated as rather belonging to the category of a brain drain. The return migration of their counterparts who instead returned to Ghana, a country which has been said to be a democratic reformer, was on a larger scale (in correlation to the proportion of students in Germany) and more impor-

tantly, their labour market entry seemed to be less difficult. Therefore they have – comparably – supported, if not accelerated, the development path of their country and thus are assessed as the opposite, a brain gain for the source country.

So far, the findings of this thesis are mixed. This is in line with the usual controversial findings which have emerged, ever since the debate about return migration started. As was outlined in chapter 2.1, on the one hand, empirical studies have assessed return migration at first as a potential brain gain, if the return was said to be permanent and contributing to knowledge transfers (cf. Gmelch 1980, 1987, cf. Black et al. 2003a). On the other hand, empirical evidence has often been used to claim that a brain drain has occurred, because the emigrants hardly return (especially observed in the course of economic decline in the home countries), or where they do return, they do not have enough financial resources (cf. Cerase 1974, cf. King 1978). However, beyond simply confirming these opposing views, this study has demonstrated quite unmistakably three general conclusive aspects. Firstly, the outcome of return migration of highly skilled persons on their source countries in the Global South always has to be investigated against the background of the particular political situation, which highly influences the source country's economy and general development paths. This finding is consistent with results from Iredale et al's (2003) research on the return migration of highly skilled migrants to Asia Pacific.

Secondly, the findings suggest that accumulating qualifications in the form of a university degree abroad seems to have stimulated the development process far more sustainably than financial savings. This actually contradicts previous studies that used the migrants' financial savings as an indicator to measure their impact on development (cf. King 1978, cf. Black et al. 2003b, cf. Cassarino 2008) and confirms those studies that considered tertiary education to be a possible key factor for the development in today's knowledge economies (Gmelch 1980, 1987, Ammassari 2009). Of course, this study has also revealed in more detail how the field of studies in which the degree is obtained must match the local labour market demand in order to start a stable career. Thirdly, belonging to transnational networks can be an asset but only few educational migrants really fall into this group and not all can make use of this added value.

Concerning the concrete country comparison, the finding that the Cameroonian group of educational migrants who returned from Germany had less impact on development processes at home than their Ghanaian counterparts was surprising at first. Surprising because the Cameroonian group of students in Germany seemed to resemble the typical image of transnational migrants, maintaining close ties to both home and host country, being highly educated and predestined to foster change and development if they returned, compared to the Ghanaian group of educational migrants in Germany. It was also surprising because it clearly showed improvements on the side of the Ghanaian returning post-graduate students. The previous generations, who came to Germany as undergraduates, were said to have faced

serious challenges during their professional reintegration. These challenges, at least during the decade 2000-2010, seemed to have become less and the professional profile of the Ghanaian students who returned from Germany with a master’s degree seems to have become more adequate for the home country’s demand. The overview in table 17 presents firstly how much of their various resources the two groups’ accumulated in the context of their host country, Germany, by differentiating between ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’. The table then continues to compare the outcome of their resource accumulation in various fields upon return. Finally, the table sums up how the returns of international educational migration vary for the graduates returning to Cameroon from those who return to Ghana.

Table 17: Comparison of findings.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Cameroonians</b>	<b>Ghanaians</b>
	<i>Accumulation in Germany</i>	
Education	high	medium
Finances	high	low
Networks	high	low
<b>Field</b>	<i>Outcome in source country</i>	
Labour market entry	difficult	rewarding
Long-term trajectories	stagnant	upward
Development impact	individual	institutional
<b>Returns of international education</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>medium</b>

Source: Own compilation.

As already described in chapter 4.6, a large proportion of the Cameroonian group among the respondents had acquired a higher degree (diploma or even a doctorate) and therefore they are said in the table to have accumulated a ‘high’ amount of education. In contrast, the level of education of their Ghanaian counterparts, who came for a Master’s degree, can be categorised as ‘medium’. The same applies for the financial resources: Cameroonians were well able to work in Germany and to gather a comparably ‘high’ amount of financial savings because they - in contrast to the group of the Ghanaians who only accumulated ‘low’ financial savings - had very good German language skills and stayed for a longer period in Germany. Similarly, Cameroonians seemed to have a ‘high’ range of social networking, whereas the group of the interviewed Ghanaians had developed a ‘low’ degree of networks. So far the comparison suggests that Cameroonians accumulated a higher amount of resources than their Ghanaian counterparts. They thus seem to be well

prepared for their return, using Cassarino's theoretical terms of his return model (cf. chapter 2.5) and thus in combination with their willingness should be successful upon return. But how does this suggestion match the finding, presented in chapter 5.2, that Cameroonians are reluctant to return, whereas Ghanaians return in larger numbers, despite the fact that they seem to be less equipped with resources and hence supposedly are less prepared?

This discrepancy could have to do with the fact that the situation upon return was said to be more difficult for the group of the Cameroonians than for the group of the Ghanaians. Firstly, the Cameroonians faced a more 'difficult' labour market entry than their Ghanaian counterparts. This assumption is made because their entry patterns were dominated by personal contacts (cf. sub-chapter 6.5), which were described as being difficult to maintain (cf. sub-chapters 7.1 and 7.2). The group of the Ghanaians instead seemed to be able to make use of their education (cf. sub-chapter 6.5) due to the situation in their home country's labour market. Because they could make efficient use of their resource education (which was said to have been accumulated on a 'medium' level), their labour market entry was categorized as 'rewarding'. Regarding their long-term career trajectories, Cameroonians also seemed to be comparably less successful upon their return. They more often risked a devaluation of their educational migration, especially if their first job was not in a higher pay segment. Their careers more often 'stagnated'. Among the group of the Ghanaian returning graduates, more careers went 'upward'. Similarly, among the group of the Cameroonians, development-related impact was only visible in a few mostly 'individual' cases, if the person was able to invest financially in the local infrastructure by building institutions as an entrepreneur of a micro or medium size company. The returning Ghanaian graduates seemed to have comparably more often stimulated development processes upon return on a larger, 'institutional' level. Due to these solitary findings the table eventually concludes that the returns of international education is comparably 'low' for the group of the Cameroonian graduates, whereas it seems to be 'high' for the group of the Ghanaians, who did not have to accumulate as many resources but seemingly had a more rewarding professional reintegration.

### **The patterns matter**

The study's core finding, that the labour market entry of Cameroonians seems to be less rewarding and more resource-intensive than that of their Ghanaian counterparts, is based on the analysis of the graduates' labour market entry patterns. The model used to illustrate these patterns was a mixture of two concepts, firstly from Cassarino (2004), with which he analysed preparation activities before the return, and secondly from Bourdieu (1983), which he applied to differentiate between the different types of capital with regard to social class differences.

Both models focus on the subjects' three personal resources: financial savings; acquired knowledge and practical qualifications; and personal contacts. That these resources are said to be important in the return migration process has already been remarked upon by previous empirical researchers (cf. Cassarino 2004, cf. Åkesson 2011, cf. de Haas 2011, cf. Baraulina and Kreienbrink 2013) and therefore was investigated in detail in chapter 2.5, in reviewing theoretical concepts on return migration. Mostly, these concepts concentrate on how much time is invested in accumulating them abroad. The findings of this study did not completely contest this but by showing the reintegration pattern model, it was demonstrated that more importantly than the timing of using these resources was the way in which the graduates combined these resources to reach their goal. An interaction of all resources, like intermeshing cogwheels, was found necessary for employment entry to function. The resource which dominated as a driving force determined the role of the other resources in each pattern. In concrete terms, this meant that those who 'achieved' their positions primarily deployed their knowledge and qualifications in the job search. This sometimes meant several months' unemployment during the search for work, a period which needed to be bridged financially. Often it was a friend or acquaintance who gave the decisive hint, where exactly a vacancy existed and where to apply. Here, the interplay of resources was clear: without a personal contact the returnee would not have been able to identify a vacancy and without the degree or expertise, which had to match the labour market demand, the graduate would possibly not have received the attention from an employer. The financial resource was – as previous authors such as Baraulina and Kreienbrink have already claimed (cf. 2013: 55) – a supporting resource to sustain the unemployment phase during the job search.

This interplay of the three major resources appeared different from pattern to pattern. The role of personal contacts was more dominant in the next pattern. Here, the professionals 'arranged' their employment entry with the help of targeted contacts, mostly before their emigration. These contacts shared the commonality of either being able to support an appointment themselves, or being employers and therefore having been able to offer a position. However, these were usually owners of smaller micro enterprises or local NGOs, and the jobs were created specifically for the returned professionals. Because these micro enterprises mostly could not afford to adequately pay a returned professional holding a bachelor's or master's degree, the reintegration support programmes were particularly applicable in this pattern. The salary subsidy and support for workplace equipment were often referred to as a key by those professionals who arranged their own employment entry. Again, all three resources were combined, but in another way than that shown in the previous, achieving pattern: the personal contact offering direct employment together with the financial resource (here in the form of the reintegration subsidy) were the key to employment, which naturally had to match the profile of the graduate. But because the position was tailored for the graduate, their qualifications were only a supporting aspect in the whole pattern.

Much more complex was the labour entry pattern of those who were ‘sponsored’ in their job entries. At first glance this appeared to be matter of conventional job placement of professionals. In the case of Ghana this took place via the advisors of the alumni network (GGAN), in Cameroon via the employment agency (NEF), which is specially oriented to assist highly qualified returnees in a particular programme (PARIC). Observing why these professionals must use these placement services revealed very interesting findings: in both countries, highly qualified professionals required an advocate to gain access to employment areas located mostly in the higher segment. The returnees’ advocates – professional advisors and personal agents – created a positive impression of the sponsored professional in the course of the placement procedure and consequently evoked what Bourdieu terms “symbolic capital” (1986: 56): the returning professionals were purposefully raised in status, mostly in connection with their experience abroad and through their appearance, the so-called “habitus” (Bourdieu 1986: 56). This pattern far was highly interesting, because in many points it referred to resources which were not possible to accumulate consciously. Especially the notion of the habitus implied that a certain appearance had been learned over time, by being exposed to a particular upper level of society (either one’s family or the middle/upper classes). Especially Anglophone Cameroonians tended to make use of this pattern, leading them to search for persons to upgrade them, because they faced structural disadvantages in the labour market of their country: their profiles matched the labour market demand in the Francophone part of the country, which offered more employment opportunities than in their native region, but the employers in the Francophone region lacked interest in them.

Interview partners from the final job entry pattern, that of professional ‘independence’, were only found in the Cameroonian group. Nevertheless, this did not mean that Ghanaians did not become independent after returning. The interviewed Ghanaians’ CVs showed that they became company founders only after a longer phase as employees. This appeared to be particularly associated with financial resources, which for the group of Ghanaians were more difficult to accumulate in Germany (on account of the language barrier and the relatively short stay in Germany). Many interviewees from the Cameroon group appeared, however, to have large financial resources from their time in Germany at their disposal. Yet only three of these people were able to establish themselves permanently as entrepreneurs from the outset. The vast majority failed in their attempts. They were exploited by supposedly good friends or underestimated demand and often lost their savings at a stroke. They then pursued the path of an employee. The analysis of the interviews suggested that the success of the returnees who became entrepreneurs seemed to result from them at first commuting between the host and home countries over a longer timeframe (mostly two years). During this time they had the possibility of reactivating their knowledge of the ‘system’, as they expressed it, and also of nurturing long-term, international, business-related networks in Germany and Cameroon. This knowledge of local conventions in both cultures was compared to what

Bourdieu terms “incorporated cultural capital” (1983: 187). This kind of capital, in the context of this study, was a mixture of knowledge of how to acquire local financial sources, how to establish local business relations as well as how to maintain and expand international donor-related contacts. This was the entrepreneurs’ driving resource, almost impossible to accumulate whilst abroad. This “embodied cultural capital” was not easily raised and took time to develop. More important than the time that it took to build this latter resource is the fact that it required being able to move freely without financial or legal restrictions. This aspect raised the question of facilitating multiple visas (cf. Black and Castaldo 2009: 55). Despite modern communication tools, it was said to be necessary for business people to make frequent trips abroad for meetings with their counterparts and to seek opportunities for external funding. Without constantly keeping in touch with their international counterparts over a longer period upon their return, the Cameroonian entrepreneurs would not have been able to run their businesses sustainably.

The distribution of the patterns showed clear country-specific differences: in Ghana most achieved and arranged their labour market entry, because they had well-matching resources: their qualification obtained in Germany matched the labour market demand. This was natural resource management because the Ghanaian government has embarked on the path of sustainable development, meaning the government is investing in this field, which in consequence has created workplaces in local NGOs during the recent decade and increased the demand for experts in this subject. The personal contacts they had from their studies in Germany and from their first work experience in Ghana both worked well, which made it easy for them to arrange an entry-level job.

In contrast, many of the Cameroonian returnees were sponsored because otherwise they did not find employment. This difference is noteworthy as it clearly demonstrates that recruitment strategies in Cameroon seemed to require more effort in terms of investing in the intermediary personal contact. In addition, Cameroonians, if they wanted to gain employment, had to reach a far higher formal educational degree, that of the PhD, and to be best in a particular subject as well. The most significant indicator was the fact that despite the Cameroonian interviewees having accumulated higher degrees of resources, this did not guarantee them having better careers than the Ghanaian interviewees (cf. chapter 8.1). The latter used low profile jobs as a stepping stone whereas the Cameroonians’ careers showed a tendency to stagnate or even decline.

Personal contacts were shown to be a very important resource for job entry in both countries and hence were found in all four of the aforementioned labour market entry patterns, as the analysis in chapter 7 showed. However, these contacts performed different functions according to each pattern, and furthermore there were country-specific differences concerning who played this role in a personal network. A closer look at the usual categories of personal contacts – friends, family, former professors and colleagues – also revealed a very country-specific difference con-



cerning personal contacts: the Cameroonian interviewees pointed out far more intensively the importance of family members. Family contacts were, however, helpful almost invariably only in the case of higher-ranked families from the social establishment, or when the family members had direct access to employment. If the family's social reputation was insufficient, the support of an agent was used as an alternative. These agents were labelled brokers in this study in accordance with Boissevain's (1974) and Burt's (2000) definitions of the term, because these persons deal with job-relevant information. In Ghana the interviewees named a broad spectrum of helpful friends and acquaintances from their time in Germany, or during their national service in Ghana, who were already in employment and thus had access to job-relevant information in their own working environment. To these were added the group of mentors. These were former professors or older, non-family supporters in the job search. This difference is noteworthy inasmuch as family networks are not selectable, but friends are likely to be chosen by the persons themselves. In this context the markedly different professionals' networks can be explained: the Ghanaians seemed to fall back on freely-selectable information networks, the 'natural cliques', whereas the Cameroonian professionals 'artificially' built networks as an alternative to their non-selectable family connections. Concluding, the difference between the two groups' outcome of educational migration also concerns the fact that Cameroonians seemed to need to reactivate more home country based resources (knowledge of the system, symbolic capital) than their Ghanaian counterparts, who still maintained these natural links.

From a scientific-theoretical perspective the analysis shows very clearly that personal contacts are highly important but alone do not provide an automatic guarantee of finding a job, nor of becoming professionally independent. The strength of the relationships, whether Granovetter's so-called "weak" or "strong-ties" (cf. 1995: 44-45), appeared not to be the variable that determines the outcome of using a personal contact in the job search as is suggested in existing literature on this subject, presented in a brief overview in chapter 3.2. This analysis rather showed that the function of the personal contact was relevant in the context of a complete job entry pattern and thus this study confirms recent remarks made by Weiss and Klein (2011), who claim that instead of the tie, it is the personal contact's function in a network which determines the success of graduates' job searches. This shows that in Cameroon, family members took on the role of referring and putting a word in for their kin, whereas in Ghana friends – close and less close friends – had a similar but less binding function. This can be seen as an indicator that the kind of personal contacts used in the job search of returning university graduates is not at all homogenous.

In conclusion, the impression that the Cameroonians had a comparably resource-intensive job entry (sponsored, independent) than appeared to be the case for the group of interviewed Ghanaians (achieve, arrange) continued in that part of the analysis which addressed development policy results of return migration, in chapter 9.

By means of a multi-level analysis it was shown that the interviewed professionals from both countries supported their families on an individual level and in most cases could improve their personal careers. On the institutional level, however, the first major differences became obvious: Cameroonians appeared to have to establish the institutions in order to utilise the specialised knowledge gained in Germany, in terms of development policy. At the highest, the macro level, an impact was only recognisable in a few, very successful cases of entrepreneurs, who additionally had to bear enormous existential risks. Consequently, the interviewed Cameroonian returnees tended to conform to the classic type, designated as “investor” in remigration research (cf. Bovenkerk 1974, cf. Cerase 1974, cf. King 1978), and in this context development was economically-oriented. By contrast, owing to their profile which was oriented towards resource protection, it was clear that the group of Ghanaians was able to transfer to existing institutions and indeed effected changes at the highest level. Their role was similar to that of the “innovators” (cf. Gmelch 1980, 1987, cf. Patterson 2007), because they were able initiate knowledge transfers in today’s knowledge based economies.

### **Practical implications, further research and outlook**

The core finding of this study, that return migration seems to be less promising for Cameroonian graduates who studied in Germany than for their Ghanaian counterparts leads in this concluding part to practical implications. These practical implications concern three different sectors: firstly, the sector of international students in Germany, secondly reintegration subsidies and thirdly - and finally - the sector of the migration and diaspora policies of the source countries. In order to implement these practical implications, further research would also be needed. This final sub-chapter outlines the potential further fields of research.

The findings affect the first sector, studies for international students in Germany in as much as they show how crucial an accurately fitting study subject has become. In other words, a university degree in general no longer guarantees a good job. Instead, it is important for incoming international students from the Global South, or African countries, to choose a study subject which fits the local labour market demand. The Ghana case showed that the choice of the study subject abroad is important for the future career. The Ghanaian students were already quite mature before coming to Germany and had gained experience in their home country’s local labour market during national service prior to their educational migration. They thus knew that they had made a good choice by enrolling for environmental and resource management and though they were afraid to return they were not reluctant (see also chapter 5.2, about the three choices upon graduation). Hence, upon return they were confident enough to job-search continuously. Eventually, most of the graduates profiles matched the Ghanaian labour market’s demand very well, because the Ghanaian Government had invested in this particular field of natural resource management. In contrast, Cameroonians, who were said to be

quite young and professionally inexperienced when coming to Germany, seemed not to have selected their study programme guided by the question of whether their profiles would be in demand in their home country's labour market. Their fear of the unknown labour market in Cameroon in combination with the problematic political situation might be one of the reasons why the Cameroonian graduates were said to be more reluctant to return than their Ghanaian counterparts (see chapter 5.2, discussing the different return rates).

This finding, that knowledge about the home country's labour market and the right study choice are good instruments to ease the fears about returning, leads to two possible scenarios for the conceptualisation of the studies for foreigners in Germany. First, pre-counselling before coming to Germany is necessary. Young incoming students should receive earlier and better tailored job counselling prior to their studies abroad. That such a pre-counselling is urgently needed for the large numbers of incoming young Cameroonian students in Germany has already been acknowledged by German institutions in Cameroon. By cooperating with the local alumni network, the KBK, the German educational institutions and the German Embassy initiated the "Jour fix meeting" to forward first-hand information from returning graduates to the potential incoming students a few years ago, as briefly touched on in chapter 5.2. Apart from this pre-counselling in order to make the right choice of subject, the practical experience and the language skills of the international students from the Global South have to be strengthened whilst they still are in their host country, Germany. By doing so, they supposedly not only become more employable in their home countries' context but also have better chances to make some additional professional experiences in Germany to practically apply what they have learned in theory, which is an asset to their profile. Both improving their employability in the source as well as in the host country can be achieved through internships during their study programmes. For those who are interested in an internship in their home country, the STUBE programmes in Germany offer support for a study-related internship in the home country during the course of the studies in Germany. That this measure can be extremely helpful for the graduates to identify possible employers at an early stage of their tertiary education was shown in the example of some of the interviewed Ghanaians, especially for those who achieved and arranged their labour market entries (see chapter 6). Some of these graduates had returned knowing about possible employers because they had already carried out internships or subject-related research for which they collected data in their home country and thus got in touch with institutions in their field of expertise (see for instance Ghana case #13). Knowledge of potential employers in the source country made the thought of return less challenging to them and they seemed to be better prepared than those who returned without having such information. Especially for those students who came to Germany as professionally inexperienced undergraduates (such as the majority of the Cameroonian incoming students), such a measure to improve work experience in the home country's labour market could be most rewarding.

However, in view of the large numbers of Cameroonian students in Germany, the annual number of about eight scholarships offered by each regional STUBE programme is too small to be efficient on a larger scale and consequently would have to be increased. In addition, there is no alternative support scheme that organises and financially supports internships in Germany. But especially internships in Germany would be – in the long run – very stimulating for the professional careers of foreign students. Facilitating the student's work experience in the German labour market could also be of interest for the German government in light of the fact that the German labour market will soon face a shortage of qualified personnel. Despite the fact that in recent years the German government has taken measures to relax immigration regulations for foreign graduates who have a degree from a German university, this opportunity is extremely seldom used (cf. Sykes and Chaoimh 2012). Most students are reluctant to start this process because they fear that if they do not secure employment, they will lose a lot of time and money. Instead, they seem to see more and better opportunities in other immigration countries. This leads to the quite schizophrenic situation, where Germany on the one hand builds human capacities and on the other hand loses highly qualified graduates to other countries.

If foreign students in general were better prepared for the German labour market from the beginning of their studies, they would not predominantly continue to emigrate to another country in the Global North (as many Cameroonian graduates do), which of course means a loss for Germany, the host country, which has invested in the person's education, as well as a loss for the source country. Also, those students who currently enrol in the new English speaking postgraduate studies in Germany would profit from having better access to the German labour market. The example of the contemporary generation of the Ghanaian students showed that these courses which are offered in the English language and which are tailored for the specific needs of students from the Global South are very rewarding. It almost seems as if the change of programme structure in combination with an improving economy in the home country has also enabled the current generation of Ghanaian graduates who return home to be more employable in their home country context, compared to the experiences related by previous generations (cf. Martin 2005: 301-302).

However, this concept that focuses primarily on postgraduate incoming students also has shortcomings. Because these students only concentrate on English courses, they are less integrated in German society and therefore have few chances to accumulate financial savings as well as relevant transnational contacts which could help them to start an international career or to become an entrepreneur. Integrating an opportunity, through which they can achieve more study course related work experience in Germany, or more broadly thinking in Europe, would make them more likely to start such high-level careers. Of course, this would require improving their German language skills during their stay.

This, in consequence, means that their stay in Germany would be prolonged, which is difficult to realise, especially for the privately sponsored freemovers, who make up the large majority of 90% of Sub-Saharan African students in Germany. In any case, such a practical-oriented measure would upgrade their knowledge as well as their symbolic capital, making these graduates more attractive to international companies in their home countries, especially more attractive for companies under German management.

The findings also affect the German government's measures concerning reintegration and alumni activities, because the findings of this study suggest that job-relevant information is circulated according to the specific situation in the particular home country. The example of Ghana showed that because the labour market in Ghana is comparably stable and improving, information was circulated in relatively open and naturally developed cliques, which can even be temporary coalitions. It thus could be concluded that in Ghana there was no real need for artificially constructed alumni groups in which job relevant information could be circulated. This might explain why alumni activities in Ghana have declined, whereas they have increased in Cameroon, because in Cameroon, the opposite was the case. Here, due to the different labour market structure and the politically tense situation which made foreign investment very insecure, job information was circulated in comparably closed and mostly family-related networks. Returning Cameroonian thus had a strong need for self-organised artificial and more neutral networks in which they could channel information about vacancies. In conclusion, the German government should opt for a flexible country-specific strategy that focuses on supporting the self-organised networks of returning graduates, because the fact that such groups develop is already a clear sign that they are needed by their clients. However, since these network structures have been proved to come into effect only after a certain time, when trust of their own members has reached a certain level together with that of local companies and potential employers (see the analysis in chapter 7.6), the networks should be supported long-term by the German government. This partially concerns financial means, because these self-organised groups need external funding beyond their membership's fees. More importantly, the German organisations would need to integrate these locally and self-organised groups into the instruments of return migration subsidies. Here it is the task of the alumni groups to continue their good work and to present themselves as reliable and sustainable in development cooperation.

The third and final practical implication which the findings of this thesis suggest concerns the sector of the migration and diaspora policies of the source countries. I will now briefly outline why I argue that, firstly, the findings point out that both countries need to improve their official job counselling systems. Whereas the Cameroonian government at least offers specific job counselling for their returning citizens through the National Employment Fund (NEF) and their specific programme, the PARIC (cf. chapter 5.3), the Ghanaian government lacks such job counselling.

Thus the Ghanaian government somehow seems to miss the opportunity of facilitating the job hunt of their returning expats. This not only means an increased job search time and hence a loss of money and precious time for the individual person, but also could be seen as wasted potential which could instead have been used in favour of Ghana's development. However, despite the fact that in Cameroon the NEF has set the PARIC in place, it also has become clear in this study that many returning Cameroonian graduates mistrust the institution because they mistrust Cameroonian institutions in general (cf. chapter 5.3 describing the recruitment and job search process in Ghana and Cameroon). Therefore, it could be recommended to strengthen the institution's reliability and to build trust among the Cameroonian students in Germany, who are the PARIC's future clients. A probably very fruitful synthesis would be to combine the instruments of the German STUBE with PARIC.<sup>239</sup> Secondly, the findings could lead to the conclusion that both countries' governments should increasingly regard their highly-skilled citizens who are living in the diaspora, as resources. However, the governments should not merely regard these citizens living in the diaspora as financial or political resources, but should also appreciate them as potential immediate transmitters of knowledge, innovation and investment towards sustainable development, as is possible (shown in the Ghana cases in chapter 9).

To encourage their diaspora members to return and become such immediate transmitters, the migrants should be allowed to move freely between the source and the host country. Therefore, the two source countries' governments as well as the German government should improve migration rights for highly skilled migrants. Germany should - also in the face of increasing international competition for the best brains and a predicted shortage of workforces - increase legal measures for labour migration from African countries (cf. de Haas 2008b). For the source countries this could mean, to offer dual citizenship rights. It became obvious from the findings that Cameroonians seemed to have no clear knowledge about existing institutions and that they highly mistrusted governmental structures. This was different in the case of Ghana, because the graduates seemed to be less reluctant and they knew that investment chances, as well as the labour market, had improved in recent years. Thanks to the Ghanaian government's efforts to implement good governance policies, institutions seemed to work not perfectly, but more efficiently, than was seen in Cameroon. Hence, Ghana's institution building has already borne fruit and it fosters at least a positive rhetoric towards their diaspora citizens (cf. Kleist 2012). It shows that institution building creates trust and more-

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<sup>239</sup> Such a collaboration between STUBE and NEF/PARIC existed between 2000 and 2008 by offering joint seminars on the job chances in Cameroon, but due to changes in the German development cooperation this collaboration was given up in favour of the German development organisation GIZ.

over allows people to identify with their country. In conclusion, people are more likely to return and seem to have a better reintegration in terms of adjustment to what has been called 'the system' (cf. chapter 6.4). These two aspects, combined and adopted for the case of Cameroonian graduates who actually want to return but are reluctant to because they are afraid to fail and this would mean that they cannot re-migrate again, demand of the Cameroonian government the strengthening of a more positive diaspora policy and offering dual citizenship rights. Such a measure would probably lead to more trust, more enthusiasm and could stimulate Cameroonian graduates to return instead of continuing to migrate to a third country in the Global North.

The aforementioned practical suggestions, also call for not only commissioned studies but also university research that would focus the various governmental strategies concerning migration and development. They also call for an examination of the various alumni and self-organised returnee groups in Cameroon and in Ghana. Due to time constraints, these aspects could be barely touched on in this study. Likewise, more knowledge has to be gained on what makes a returning graduate's job search easier, because getting a suitable job has been identified as a core precondition for returning migrants to implement their skills and disseminate them in their home countries. Further comparative research could also compare the labour market entries of non-migrants in other African countries. Such a study could use the patterns which have been outlined in this thesis and find out to what extent they form a suitable theoretical frame.

Finally, this thesis definitely calls for more qualitative research on the returns to educational migration from the Global South to the Global North and vice versa. That the group of international is worth further investigation should be clear by now: today's foreign students are tomorrow's highly skilled who have the potential to actively shape the future in the countries of the Global South. This aim is not only relevant from a philanthropic perspective focussing on the benefit of people living in less privileged regions of the world. Moreover is extremely important for people living in the Global North as well because today, in our global world, issues such as climate change and natural resource management affect the more vulnerable poor countries first, but also have already started to affect the lives of people in the richer Global North. In the face of such far-reaching global changes, all peoples will face serious problems alike. Effective solutions that would at least slow down these processes can only be found by conjointly working on these topics because as stated on a famous world map of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development: "No half of the world can survive without the other"<sup>240</sup> (BMZ 2002).

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<sup>240</sup> German original: "Keine Hälfte der Welt kann ohne die andere Hälfte der Welt überleben."

## 11. Appendices

### 11.1 Appendix A: Questionnaires

#### A.1 Questions to individuals

Before we start with the interview I would like to explain to you in short what my aim is within my PhD project. The working title is: “How to get a job? Return from Germany to Ghana and Cameroon and the career entry on the job market” I am interested in the personal experiences of German trained experts from Ghana and Cameroon during their job finding process after they come back to their home countries. I would like to hear of personal experiences within the application process – which means how YOU found your job place and how YOU are working now as a highly skilled expert. Because you are my key person for information I would like to thank you very much for giving your time (token “key holder”). During our conversation I am going to ask you several open questions to which I would like you to feel free to mention anything that comes to your mind or which you find of relevance from your point of view. During your answers I will not intervene. Do you agree to me recording this interview? **START RECORDING – NAME, DATE and PLACE**

A – Biographical approach – introduction and narrative:

First of all, I am interested in your personal educational career. I’d be honoured to hear your full story, beginning with your earliest school memories until today.

B – Time in Germany:

When you remember the time when you decided to go to Germany to start your studies there: when did the idea first come up?

C – Career planning at home:

Please tell me, when did you decide to return and how did you make up your mind? Please tell me, how did you get on after your return to Cameroon? And now considering your current job, how did you get there?

D – Prospects/comparison:

How would you describe the situation of your school and university mates? Do you know any stories about them, of either success or failure? Who would you say has the better job opportunities today: the person that has been trained in Cameroon or any African country, or the one that has been trained in the UK or US, or the German trained?



E – Final question:

Well, that is it from my side. Is there anything else you would like to add to the topic or in general?

**AGREEMENT:** Do you agree to the transcription of this interview, conducted and recorded by Julia Boger, within the framework of her PhD proposal on the career entry of returning experts? Do you agree to sections of the transcribed interview being quoted within her thesis, which will be published and used within further research? You are assured that personal information will be treated confidentially and that you will be quoted anonymously. **DATE – PLACE – NAME**

## **A.2 Questions to experts**

Introduction/agreements: see questions to individuals.

A –Introduction/field of expertise: As an expert in the field how did you get into the position you are in today?

B – Labour market entry/recruitment: From your experience, could you describe what the job search looks like in Cameroon today? What are the differences concerning education? What is helpful to getting a job? What are the challenges in the job search? Was it different in the past?

C – Labour market in general: Please describe how the labour market in Cameroon/Ghana has changed within the last 10 years. How would you describe the situation today? Which political decision had an impact on the situation? Which industry demands highly qualified workers today? In your opinion, what should change and how?

D – Institutions: Who are the actors in the labour market? What role do the trade unions/ministries/ILO play?

E – Final questions/reflection: How would you describe the situation today, after the latest financial crisis?

**AGREEMENT** (see above, Appendix A.1).

## 11.2 Appendix B: Lists of interviews/ events

### B.1 Cameroonian interviewees

#	Title	Pseu.	Degr.	Field	Occupation	Return	Place	Dates
1	Mr.	O.	Dipl.	Engi- neering	Engineer/ Entrepreneur	07.08.2007	hotel/ hotel	01.10.2008 04.05.2010
<p>Mr. O. originates from a teacher's family in the Western Region. He is 22 when he goes to Germany and starts studying. He returns after eight years and enters the Cameroonian job market through internships in construction companies, organised by his uncle and cousin. After two years, at our second interview, O. still works for the company he started with. The project, to become independent, is developing slowly, due to a lack of financial capital.</p>								
2	Mr.	H.	PhD	Physics	Entrepreneur	14.08.2001	work	02.10.2008
3	Mrs.	H.	MSc	Physics	Lecturer	14.08.2001	work	02.10.2008
<p>Mr. and Mrs. H. are two of the few graduates who received a governmental scholarship for the German Democratic Republic (GDR). They study and live for 14 years in Germany. After returning, they start their project in the field of private education and establish their own educational institute with the help of their German-based institutional networks.</p>								
4	Mrs.	G.	PhD	Chemistry	Lecturer	01.02.2005	work	02.10.2008
<p>Mrs. G. originates from a middle-class family in the Western Region. After her first degree in Cameroon she gets a scholarship to pursue her PhD in Germany. Before she graduates she visits her husband during vacation, makes contact with a university and has an informal interview with the Head of Department. She gets the position as an assistant lecturer after having been in Germany for four years, due to the great demand for lecturers with a higher tertiary degree. After two years her position has become permanent.</p>								
5	Mr.	L.	PhD	Geology	Lecturer/ Entrepreneur	01.05.2002	work	02.10.2008 07.05.2010
<p>L., who originates from the Francophone South, is also one of the few governmental scholarship holders and obtains his first degree in Russia. He returns in the early 1990s and continues to pursue his PhD in Germany. By chance, he meets another researcher from Cameroon, who gives him the tip to apply at the new university in the Anglophone region. Through this contact, he is appointed as assistant lecturer and two years later has become a permanent staff member. In the second interview, five years after he has returned, the spin-off, which he and two of his university colleagues have started, has successfully consolidated.</p>								

6	Mr. F.	Dipl.	Engineering	Engineer/ Entrepreneur	01.03.2006	hotel/ bistro	03.10.2008 05.05.2010
<p>Mr. F. descends from a poorer family in the Anglophone Southwest Region. He is 21 when he goes to Germany, to study. In Germany he continually faces financial and residence problems. After 10 years he returns with a polytechnic degree and applies unsuccessfully for jobs in the bigger companies. Finally, he arranges his entry-level employment in a local NGO, which he gets to know through a friend, using the reintegration programme as an incentive. Two years later, he and a friend have started a project in the media industry, but they lack a stable source of income.</p>							
7	Mrs. N.	PhD	Physics	Lecturer	01.09.1999	work	04.10.2008
<p>Mrs. N., who is from the Francophone West, is 23 when she starts studying in Germany. After her first degree, she continues with a PhD. She and her husband return after 13 years. Before, she had explored the situation during a holiday visit. Later, her brother submits her application at various universities and she finally gets a positive response, whilst still in Germany. Today, she is a part-time lecturer in three different universities.</p>							
8	Mr. K.	Dipl.	Geology	Engineer	01.04.2007	bistro / bistro	06.10.2008 14.05.2010
<p>Mr. K. is from a large peasant family in the North. He is 25 when he follows his sister to Germany. After his first degree, he returns after 11 years. His first employment is not clear. His second position is a parastatal project, where he works for the government but is not a civil servant. The local reintegration counsellor knew that the position was vacant and advised him to apply. Two years later, he has been promoted but is not happy with the work, because of corruption and problems with his boss.</p>							
9	Mr. B.	MSc	Resource Management	Civil Ser- vant	01.01.1997	bistro	08.10.2008
<p>Mr. B., originating from the Anglophone North West, is 29 when he gets a scholarship for a German exchange service. He spends only one year in Germany. He returns to his former workplace at the ministries and immediately gets his job back. Five years later, he has been promoted and is in the position of a regional delegate in his hometown.</p>							
10	Mr. P.	Dipl.	Engineering	Manager/ officer	12.11.2003	bistro	08.10.2008
<p>Mr. P. follows his brother to Germany when he is 22. During a preparation seminar he gets to know the reintegration programme and receives counselling from the PARIC. His first employment is at a local NGO in the Francophone region. After a few months, serious problems arise due to corruption and the situation escalates violently. P. leaves for his Anglophone home region, where he recovers. Today, he is a part-time lecturer at a local private education institute and has no stable source of income.</p>							

11	Mr. I.	MSc	Resource Management	Manager/officer	01.11.2007	bistro	09.10.2008
<p>Mr. I. obtains his first degree in his home region, Anglophone Cameroon. At the age of 28 he pursues his master's degree in Germany and leaves three years later. He is job placed by the local counsellor into a Francophone local NGO. The financial support from a reintegration programme serves as an incentive for the employer and as a financial safety net for Mr. I. Two years later, he starts an NGO in his home region together with two former Cameroonian students from Germany.</p>							
12	Mr. M.	Dipl./MSc	Geography	Manager/officer	01.08.2008	work	06.05.2010
<p>Mr. M. comes from the Western Region and starts studying in Cameroon. After his bachelor's degree, at the age of 23, he pursues two master's degrees in Germany. Through a reintegration programme he prepares his return and is job placed into a local NGO in the Anglophone Southwest. Two years later, he sets up his own NGO in the region, having already gained a good reputation with foreign partner organisations.</p>							
13	Mr. A.	PhD	Environment. Law	Manager/officer	27.02.2002	work	07.05.2010
<p>Mr. A. is from a working-class family in the Francophone Central Region. He studies law and gets a PhD scholarship for Germany. Before completing, he receives reintegration information through the student seminars of STUBE and participates in one of the reintegration programmes. He returns after seven years and starts working at a local NGO, where he is placed at. When problems occur between him and the employer, he changes his job and starts as part-time lecturer at the university.</p>							
14	Mr. D.	BSc	Geomatics	Engineer	01.03.2009	work	11.05.2010
<p>Mr. D. is from a teacher's family in the Francophone West. At the age of 27 he goes to Germany after doing his first degree in Cameroon. 10 years later, he returns. Initially, he thinks of going to Canada, but receives information about the reintegration programmes through a STUBE seminar. He starts working for a local NGO which he gets to know through his brother during a field trip in Cameroon. His reintegration is financially supported by a reintegration programme.</p>							
15	Ms. E.	Dipl.	ICT	Manager/officer	29.10.2005	bistro	12.05.2010
<p>Ms. E. originates from a middle class family in Francophone Cameroon. When she is 19 her family decides she has to study in Germany, like all her siblings have before. Eight years later she returns to Cameroon and fails in her attempts to start her own IT company. A friend informs her that a German development organisation needs a translator. She gets the job and soon after gets the position of a manager for an agricultural project. Today, she still works for the organisation, has many benefits and enjoys a good reputation, but she works outside her field of studies.</p>							

16	Mrs. Q.	Dipl.	Translation	Manager/ officer	31.08.2001	work	18.05.2010
<p>Mrs. Q. is from an upper class family. At the age of 19 she pursues her tertiary education in Germany. 10 years later, she returns. Her first attempt to start a business in media fails because a partner cheats her. Her uncle provides her with a reference for an interview in a foreign bank, and since then she has worked as officer. She receives a stable and high income, but does not use the knowledge she obtained in Germany.</p>							
17	Mr. Y.	MSc	Development	Manager/ officer	01.10.2007	bistro	21.05.2010
<p>Mr. Y's family is from the Anglophone Northwest region. His parents are very poor and illiterate. Nevertheless, Y. obtains his bachelor in Cameroon. He starts working as a freelancing consultant for local NGOs and as a researcher. At the age of 32 he gets the opportunity to participate in a European scholarship programme. He spends three years abroad, one year in Germany. After he returns, he starts working in a local NGO which a friend has introduced to him. The reintegration programme works as a safety net for him and as an incentive for the employer.</p>							
18	Mr. C.	PhD	Nutrition studies	Lecturer/ Entrepreneur	01.03.1989	work	24.05.2010
<p>Mr. C. originates from the Anglophone part in Cameroon and is from a well established family. He starts working after obtaining his first degree in Cameroon, and at the age of 29 goes to Germany on a scholarship. He returns five years later to Cameroon and pursues his PhD in a sandwich programme between his German and a local university which he starts working for. By then, the economic crisis has started in Cameroon and he and his family leave for the U.S.. After an additional seven years, he returns permanently and starts his own NGO, and at the same time works as a part time lecturer at a local educational institute.</p>							
19	Mr. R.	PhD	Maths	Manager/ officer	01.07.2007	work	27.05.2010
<p>Mr. R. is from a Francophone middle class family originating from the Western Region. He follows his sister to Germany at the age of 23. He receives a scholarship. After nine years in Germany, having a master's, a PhD and considerable work experience in the field of IT and software programming, he returns. He starts working at his father's NGO and receives a financial subsidy from a reintegration programme. Meanwhile, he sets up his own business in the software industry.</p>							
20	Mr. X.	MSc	ICT	Manager/ officer	01.04.2006	work	28.05.2010
<p>Mr. X. descends from a well off family in the Anglophone part. He attends a very well reputed college and at the age of 21, enrolls at a German university. Besides his studies, he works in the field of IT. After 11 years, he returns. He searches for a job and coincidentally meets a CEO who is searching for an administrator for a new branch in Cameroon. He gets the job immediately, due to the fact that he has been working in Germany for a well-known company.</p>							

21	Ms. S.	MSc	Social work	Student	none as yet	seminar	06.05.2008
<p>Ms. S. originates from a less wealthy family in the Anglophone Northwest Region. She enrolls at a German university, where her brother already lives and works, at the age of 25. She obtains a master degree and starts her PhD. She partly receives scholarships but also has to work to finance her studies. She only wants to return to Cameroon when she has a secure job. She is married and has a child.</p>							
22	Mr. T.	MSc	Economics	Student	none as yet	seminar	03.05.2008
<p>Mr. T. originates from an educated but poor family in the Anglophone Southwest. After his bachelor in Cameroon he goes to Germany, at the age of 25. There he obtains his master's degree, starts his PhD but then gets a job offer for a microcredit company in Nigeria. Currently, the company plans to expand to the Cameroonian market, which he sees as his chance to return.</p>							
23	Mr. U.	MSc	Agric.	Entrepreneur	01.10.2008	home	07.05.2010
<p>Mr. U. also originates from a better-off, middle class family in the Anglophone Southwest, like his schoolmate Mr. X. He is 22 years old when he starts studying in Germany. He completes his studies and accumulates work experience as consultant for German companies. Finally, after 11 years and having visited Cameroon several times, he returns and sets up his own company in the agricultural sector. Two years later, his company has become stable.</p>							
24	Mr. J.	Dipl.	Engineering	Entrepreneur	01.01.1998	home	04.05.2010
<p>Mr. J. is from a poorer, large family in the Francophone Western Region. His first degree he obtains in Cameroon. By then, in the late 1980s, the economic crisis has reached a peak and, at the age of 28, he finds no job. He participates in a short-term vocational training in Germany and continues to study civil engineering. After eight years, he intends to return. After three failed attempts and having commuted between Germany and Cameroon for about two years, he starts a successful business in the textile industry and creates jobs for about 200 workers.</p>							

## B.2 Ghanaian interviewees

#	Title	Pseu.	Degr.	Field	Occupation	Return	Place	Dates
1	Mr. J.		MSc	Water Resources	Engineer	24.04.2005	hotel	25.06.2008
<p>Mr. J. grows up in the Central Region. His mother has to bring him up as single parent. He has to contribute early to his school education. In Kumasi, he obtains his bachelor. For a development-related English master programme in Germany, he gets a scholarship. After three years he returns at the age of 28. He applies at several companies but only when he gets a tip from a friend who also had studied in Germany, to apply at his company, does he get an appointment as an engineer in his field.</p>								

2	Mr. M.	MSc	Resource Manager	Manager/officer	12.10.2005	hotel	26.06.2008 07.09.2009
<p>Mr. M. originates from the Upper East and both of his parents are illiterates. He obtains his first degree in Ghana, carries out his national service in schools and then starts working as a tax collector. He continues to pursue his education and specialises in Germany in environmental taxation. After three years, at the age of 33, he returns with his master's degree and contacts his former employer. They are interested in his expertise and reemploy him. Two years later he has received a promotion and another year later has been granted study leave to pursue his PhD in Germany.</p>							
3	Mr. T.	MSc	Resource Manager	Lecturer	01.10.2005	hotel	27.06.2008
<p>Mr. T. is from the Central Region and attains his first degree in Kumasi. For his national service he works as a lecturer in secondary schools. He gets to know about tuition-free courses in Germany and applies. Four years later he returns to Ghana, at the age of 31. His sister submits his application to potential employers before he returns. One month after arrival he has his first job in a governmental organisation where he had placed his application. He leaves after not even one year, due to the low pay. In the new place, a private company, he has problems with the boss. Finally, three years after he has returned to Ghana, he leaves for the U.S. where he starts as a university lecturer.</p>							
4	Mr. D.	MSc	Horticulture	Researcher	01.12.2007	bistro	27.06.2008
<p>Mr. D. is brought up by his grandmother and his two sisters because his father works abroad. After a difficult school time he achieves his bachelor at university in Kumasi and carries out his national service for a well-known international development organisation. When his wife gets a scholarship for Germany he follows her as a freemover. For his final thesis he carries out field research in Ghana before he returns. Finally, after three years he returns, at the age of 31. At one of the institutes where he had carried out his research, they are interested in his work and he is appointed as assistant researcher. In parallel he starts a small computer sales business.</p>							
5	Mr. B.	MSc	Resource Manager	Lecturer	01.09.2005	work	30.06.2008
<p>Mr. B. has been brought up as an orphan by his grandmother in the Western Region. After his bachelor and his national service he decides to study in Germany, because they offer tuition-free courses in English. Before he completes after three years, he contacts one of his former professors who offers him a position as a lecturer in a new polytechnic in a remote region. Because B. already has a family at that time and seeks security, he accepts the offer although the situation turns out to be more difficult than he expected.</p>							
6	Mrs. K.	MSc	Engineering	Manager/officer	28.01.2003	mall	02.07.2008 22.09.2009
<p>Mrs. K. originates from an elite family and is educated at one of the most reputed private girls' boarding schools. She is 26 when she goes to Germany together with her husband to pursue her master's degree. Two years later they return. Before, she had already arranged her entry-level employment in a new NGO which she knew through her former national service superior, a very influential woman who supports women's careers. After two years she moves to a position at the ministries where she gets promoted.</p>							

7	Mr. N.	PhD	Water Resources	Lecturer	01.03.2004	work	02.07.2008
<p>Mr. N. has been raised in a middle class family in Greater Accra. He obtains his first degree in Norway due to contacts made during his national service. When he returns, he only applies at his former university department, where he gets the position of an assistant lecturer. To get a permanent position as lecturer he needs a PhD degree, which he pursues during roughly one year in Germany. After completing, he simply returns to his former job at the university, where his profile matches the demand.</p>							
8	Ms. F.	MSc	Tropical Forestry	Manager/officer	01.07.2007	hotel	03.07.2008
<p>Ms. F. originates from a middle class family who had migrated from the Volta Region to the Central Region. She receives her school education in a well-known girls' boarding school, achieves her first degree and starts working in a governmental agency. She receives a scholarship for studying in Germany and officially is granted study leave from her employer. However, after three years, when she returns and reports to her former workplace, she finds her position is occupied by a national service staff member and the human resource personnel put her off. After four months waiting to be reemployed she finally starts searching for another job. To bridge the time spent unemployed while searching for a job, she starts helping out at her father's NGO.</p>							
9	Mr. W.	MSc	Engineering	Engineer	01.03.2006	work	04.07.2008
<p>Mr. W. is brought up in a middle class family in Greater Accra. After his first degree he works in his father's workshop and continues his education as a freemover in Germany. After four years, he returns and seeks support from the local reintegration counsellor because the job search phase takes too long. Thus, W. is sponsored by the counsellor and is introduced to a manager of an automobile company under German management. He succeeds in getting a job with this car company, but leaves after one year, because he is overqualified for the job. During a conference he approaches a Dutch resource person in German who becomes interested in his skills and finally arranges an interview for him at a university for the position as a lecturer in a new department which he is supposed to build up. He gets this job and is very satisfied with the employment conditions.</p>							
10	Mr. U.	MSc	Water Resources	Engineer	27.09.2005	work	04.07.2008
<p>Mr. U. is descended from a teacher's family in a remote region in the North. He attains a bachelor's degree in Kumasi and goes to Germany as a freemover, because the courses are tuition-free and in English. When he completes after three years (at the age of 31) he directly returns and gets a job after only two months. He applies at a company where one of his friends (who has also studied in Germany) has already worked at. The friend, Mr. R. (case # 16), briefs him in detail about the place and U. gets the job. Two years later, he applies to a newspaper advert for the position as a lecturer and gets the job. After one year he is made Head of Department and granted study leave to pursue his PhD in China.</p>							



11	Mr. I.	MSc	Tropical Forestry	Manager/ officer	01.02.2007	work	07.07.2008
<p>According to Mr. I's narration, he is from a very poor family in the West. He achieves his first degree and starts working, but is not satisfied with the salary. To improve his profile, he goes to Germany as a freemover and returns at the age of 30 with a master's degree. At his former job, which he had left on study-leave, the boss offers him no promotion to match his new degree. His applications fail. Finally, he continues with his education, pursues a PhD and after four additional years gets the position of a lecturer in a private university.</p>							
12	Mrs. V.	PhD	Organic Chemistry	Lecturer	09.09.2005	work/ work/ home	07.07.2008 07.09.2009 11.10.2009
<p>The family of Mrs. V. originates from the Volta Region but today lives in Greater Accra. She receives a very good education and after her first degree starts lecturing at a public university. She gets study leave to do her PhD in Germany, together with her husband. After four years she returns. Her reemployment is a formality that normally takes longer, but thanks to the support of her head of department she gets her contract one month after she returns.</p>							
13	Mr. S.	MSc	Tropical Forestry	Manager/ officer	25.03.2006	Univ./ work	08.07.2008 14.09.2009
<p>Mr. S. is from a large and very poor family in the deprived north. He struggles during his school time but always gets access to further his education. He gets admission to a German university, where he acts as a freemover. For his final thesis he collects data in Ghana and gets in touch with people in the region where he had carried out his national service. He starts working upon his return in one of the NGOs in this particular region. Two years later, he is working in a well-paid and reputable job in an international company where earlier he had submitted his application. They urgently needed an expert in resource management due to the new restrictions of the Ghanaian government.</p>							
14	Mr. Y.	PhD	Water Resources	Lecturer	01.08.2004	work	09.07.2008
<p>Mr. Y's family originate from the Volta Region but moved to Greater Accra. He attends an elite private boarding school. During his national service he gets in touch with German development organisations and after his master's, moves to Germany on a scholarship to pursue his PhD. When he returns, at the age of 33, he has already contacted a friend who is a Head of Department at a university. The friend hands in his application forms. He bridges the six months until he starts working as a lecturer with consultancies.</p>							
15	Mr. O.	MSc	ICT	Manager/ officer	17.09.2005	work /home	09.07.2008 12.09.2009
<p>Mr. O. is the only child of a single parent mother. They are upper middle class and O. attends an elite boarding school. At the age of 29, after his bachelor's degree, he moves to Germany together with his wife. He studies and works in Germany for seven years. Finally, he gets divorced and his wife stays in Europe. He and the children return. The job search is difficult. He seeks assistance from the local job placement counsellor and starts working in a small software company. After less than one year they close. Again, he seeks the help of the counsellor. Finally, one and a half years after his return, he is employed in a government department.</p>							

16	Mr. R.	MSc	Water Resources	Engineer	01.08.2005	work	09.07.2008
<p>Mr. R. is 30 when he goes to Germany as freemover. After initial problems he returns four years later with his master's degree. Upon return, he spends three months on the job search. Then he gets an invitation to a public service company. He gets the tip from a friend whom he knows from Germany (Mrs. K. # 6). Three years later he has a better paid job in a private service company. Again, a friend gives him a tip to apply.</p>							
17	Mrs. C.	MSc	Tropical Forestry	Manager/ officer	17.09.2007	bistro	10.07.2008
<p>The family of Mrs. C. is upper class. She is sent to an elite boarding school and attains her bachelor in Ghana. She gets a scholarship for an English programme in Germany. After two years she is 27, she returns and marries her friend, who has been studying in the UK. Before she leaves Germany she gets in touch with a former national service colleague who has started a NGO. He offers C. to work for him. One year later she gets a job in a research institute.</p>							
18	Mr. L.	MSc	Water Resources	Engineer	01.10.2005	work	11.07.2008
<p>Many of Mr. L's siblings study and live abroad, in Russia and in the UK. Therefore, it is natural that he also obtains his master's degree abroad. He chooses Germany because of the particular study programme. After three years he returns at the age of 31 and starts working at the place where he had helped out, during his first degree. The boss is a friend of his sister and currently needs personnel. After only one month, L. signs a contract.</p>							
19	Mr. X.	MSc	Resource Manager	Manager/ officer	11.09.2003	work	01.09.2009
<p>The family of Mr. X. is very poor, originating from the Volta Region and migrating to the Central Region. X. does his first degree in Ghana and moves to Germany to do an MBA. Before completing, he goes on holiday to Ghana and visits his former workplace where he had worked for a few months. It is a private company in the hydro industry. His boss needs staff, because they have been granted a budget from the government but lack well-trained workers. X. returns at the age of 31 and immediately starts working. Only two years later, he and two friends found a start-up in the hydro industry.</p>							
20	Mrs. L.	MSc	Engineering	Lecturer	01.12.2006	work	01.09.2009
<p>The family of Mrs. L. is typical middle class: her father works in a state company and her mother is a seamstress. She is sent to one of the best public schools and obtains her first degree at university. She gets a scholarship for Germany, where she pursues her master's together with her husband. After two years they return. By then she is 27. She gets a tip from a friend to contact a former head of department at university to ask for advice where she should submit her application. After five months she is appointed and after two years she is on study leave to pursue her PhD, in Germany again.</p>							

21	Mr. G.	MSc	Agric. Economics	Manager/officer	01.05.2009	work	02.09.2009
<p>The family of Mr. G. seems to be a middle class family. Both of his parents work abroad and send money home to his grandmother, with whom he grows up. He is very confident and during his national service he gets a position in a German development organisation in Ghana. He decides to study in Germany, as a freemover. He has to work at the same time. Before he completes his studies, he starts applying to potential employers and sends them his thesis. The German development organisation is interested in his profile and they invite him to come for an interview. He gets the job and since then has been a junior assistant.</p>							
22	Mr. E.	PhD	Aquatic Ecology	Lecturer	01.09.2001	work	04.09.2009
<p>Mr. E. talks very much about his early childhood at the coastline. There he develops his interest in aquatics. He sees an advert for a German master's programme where he applies for. When he returns, three years later, he searches for a job, very unsuccessfully. Coincidentally, he meets a former professor who tells him he should apply at his university. After more than a year, E. finally finds employment at the university. Soon he is granted study leave and pursues his PhD in Germany. After he completes, he continues lecturing at the university, in a higher position, without facing problems.</p>							
23	Mrs. N.-C.	MSc	Development	Lecturer	13.08.2007	bistro	04.09.2009
<p>The family of N-C. is educational lower middle class. She attends only the best schools but has to start work to support the school fees. She gets a scholarship for Germany, where she has decided to study because of her interest in a particular programme. Interestingly, the programme changes during her course and she continues with a MBA. At the time she returns, she is 29 years old. She reports to the university department she had worked with during her national service and gets her first employment thanks to her expertise in a field for which the university has just built a new department.</p>							
24	Ms. A.	MSc	Engineering	Researcher	01.01.2009	work	08.09.2009
<p>Ms. A. is from an entrepreneurial family. Her parents own three hardware shops and she and her five siblings grow up helping out in these shops during holidays. She is very confident and receives a scholarship for Germany. She completes 2 years later, at the age of 28. She leaves Germany via the UK to work and to raise money. In Ghana, she applies for jobs in international companies. Coincidentally, she meets a former superior of her national service in the ministries and gets the tip to apply. She secures her first significant employment and is soon in a higher decision-making position under the minister.</p>							
25	Mr. P.	PhD	Engineering	Engineer	01.02.2000	work	09.09.2009
<p>Mr. P. describes his childhood as difficult. He leaves Ghana for Germany at the age of 23, when he receives a governmental scholarship. Thus, he is of the older generation of educational migrants. After his magister in Germany he continues with his PhD. He and his Cameroonian wife return after 15 years in Germany. He finds his first job in a public service department. After three years he changes to the private sector and in parallel builds up his own company. After five years he has become independent in his field of studies.</p>							

26	Mr. H.	MSc	Water Resources	Engineer	01.12.2004	bistro	10.09.2009
<p>Mr. H. originates from a family of the establishment. He attends a private international boarding school and his friends are all sons and daughters of ministers. He does his national service at a water research institute and decides to go to Germany for his master's because the study fees are less costly than in the UK. After he returns at the age of 31, a friend, with whom he has shared his student experience in Germany, arranges his entry-level employment in a small company. After two years he finds follow-up work in the ministries.</p>							
27	Ms. S.	MSc	Resource Manager	Student/officer	15.01.2009	seminar/house	07.06.2008 25.09.2009
<p>Ms. S' family is upper middle class. Both parents are judges in a high court but the parents are divorced. Before her study programme in Germany, S. often visits the UK. to visit family and to work during holidays. She knows study fees are expensive. Thus she starts an English degree programme in her desired field in Germany. When she returns at the age of 29 she has no access to the public service because of the freeze on public spending by the government. She arranges her entry-level employment in the company of a cousin.</p>							
28	Mrs. Q.	MDM	Management	Manager/officer	01.07.2004	work	25.09.2009
<p>In our interview, Mrs. Q. tells me she originates from a large, poor family and education has been difficult to achieve. She starts studying the French language in Benin. Her national service is in a media company. They take her on and when she gets a scholarship for Germany, grant her study leave. After she returns, at the age of 32, they reject her unexpectedly. She has to start job searching. Through a friend she is directed to a vacancy. Because she has a specific expertise – she did her master thesis in health insurance schemes for Ghana – at first she faces difficulties in the job search but eventually secures the job in the Ghana Health Services. She has to wait 16 months before she gets a permanent work contract.</p>							
29	Mr. V.	MSc	Resource Manager	Student	01.12.2009	seminar	07.06.2008
<p>Mr. V. is from a middle class family in which the father was a police officer and the mother a nurse. He seems to have acquired a certain lifestyle in university where – according to his description – live was more 'party-like' than in Germany. He says he pursues his master's in Germany because he wants to further his education. He is a freemover and has to work besides studying. He says he misses Ghana a lot. After he completes his studies, we lose e-mail contact. He leaves Germany but does not return immediately. I am told by the reintegration counsellor that, after one year, V. finally returns to Ghana and starts in an international project in a higher position.</p>							

### B.3 Expert interviews

#	Name	Institution	Position	Expertise	Place	Date
1	Mrs Thompson	Consulting	Director	Recruiting	Accra	08.07.2008
<p>Mrs. Esmeralda Thompson, the CEO of the company, started the business in 2001, specialises in front staff job placement. Thomson Consulting is a small but exclusive HR consultancy, offering their services to the management of middle-size companies.</p>						

2	Dr. Bih	GGAN	Recruiter	Recruiting	Accra	11.07.2008
<p>Expert Dr. Kofi Bih acquired his expertise in recruitment as a local counsellor in Ghana, working for the Ghanaian German Alumni network during the period 2007 - 2009 in the Returning Expert Programme. His tasks were to job place fresh returning graduates, to give application training and to organise networking events. Dr. Bih has been the gatekeeper for a number of students and researchers on the topic of return migration.</p>						
3	Mr. Tsentso	NEF	International Cooperation	Economy	Yaoundé	06.10.2008
<p>Mr. Jean-Marie Tsentso has been the Head of the International Cooperation Unit of the National Employment Fund (NEF) in Cameroon since 1998. He has been involved in designing the framework of the PARIC and is an expert on labour market data in Cameroon and international cooperation. Today, Mr. Tsentso is the Head of the NEF Agency in Ebolowa, in South Cameroon.</p>						
4	Mrs Eyenga	NEF	Head of Agency	Recruiting	Yaoundé	11.10.2008
<p>Mrs. Marie Sylvie Eyenga has years of first-hand experience in recruitment in Cameroon. First, she was local counsellor for the PARIC during the period 2000-2002, continued as recruiter for university graduates at NEF and today is the head of the job placement agency in East Cameroon, Bertoua.</p>						
5	anonym	DAAD	Lecturer I	Migration	Phone	12.01.2009
6	Mr. Müller	CIM/ ZAV	Officer	Migration	Phone	06.02.2009
<p>Expert Gerd Müller has been an official in the REP at the ZAV since the start of the programme in the 1980s. He is an expert on return migration, reintegration policies and programmes and has many years of experience working with foreign graduates and highly skilled migrants in Germany. Additionally, he has been to both countries, Ghana and Cameroon, frequently.</p>						
7	Dr. Okinda	DAAD	Lector	Migration	Phone	09.02.2009
<p>Dr. Edelmann-Okinda was interviewed as an expert in educational migration. She has been working as a lecturer for the German Academic Exchange Service in Ghana during the period 2007-2013 and hence had first-hand insights into the situation of outgoing Ghanaian students to Germany, as well as knowledge on DAAD alumni and their contemporary networks in Ghana.</p>						
8	anonym	Private University	Director	Recruiting	Cape Coast	29.08.2009
9	Dr. Tonah	University of Ghana	Head of Department	Recruiting	Accra	31.08.2009
<p>Prof. Steve Tonah was informally consulted as a gatekeeper to further experts. He gave valuable insights into recruiting processes at the higher educational institutions in Ghana. In his position as Head of Department (HOD) he is one of the key persons in the recruitment process at university.</p>						

10	Dr. Diehl	GIZ	Agric. economy	Economy	Accra	11.09.2009	Dr. Lothar Diehl was interviewed as an expert on the economic situation and the labour market in Ghana. He worked for several years in Ghana's North during the 1980s and has again worked for GIZ in Accra/Ghana since 2005. He has a broad knowledge of Ghana's agricultural sector.
11	anonym	University of Ghana	Dean	Recruiting	Accra	16.09.2009	
12	Mr. Antwi	GGEA	Dep. Chairman	Economy	Accra	22.09.2009	Mr. Stephen Antwi was interviewed due to his insights into the Ghanaian economy. He is president of the Ghanaian German Economic Association GGEA, an organisation with the goal of becoming a foreign chamber. He thus has insights into economic development in Ghana.
13	anonym	German Embassy	Visa officer	Migration	Accra	23.09.2009	
14	anonym	NEF	Assistant	Recruiting	Yaoundé	05.05.2010	
15	anonym	German Embassy	Visa officer	Migration	Yaoundé	10.05.2010	
16	Mrs. Buchecker	DAAD	Lecturer II	Migration	Yaoundé	14.05.2010	Mrs. Katja Buchecker is an expert on educational migration from Cameroon as a DAAD lecturer in Cameroon (2008-2013). Her sound insights into the networking events of returned Cameroonians have been helpful.
17	Mr. Mey	Afriland First Bank	Gen. Director	Economy	Yaoundé	15.05.2010	Mr. Alamine Ousmane Mey was consulted as an expert on the Cameroonian economy. By then, he held the position as general director for Afriland First Bank, and is a member of the executive council of the umbrella organisation of the local alumni associations, the Koordinationsbüro Kamerun (KBK). Since 2011 Mr. Alamine Ousmane Mey has been Cameroon's Minister of Finance.
18	Mr. Ahidjo	NEF	Dep. Director	Economy	Yaoundé	18.05.2010	M. Ahmadou Sali Ahidjo was interviewed as an expert on the Cameroonian labour market in his position as the NEF Deputy Director, a position he has held since 2002.
19	Mr. Ngomez'o	NEF	Officer	Recruiting	Bafoussam	19.05.2010	Mr. Leopold Ngomez'o has an expertise in recruitment because he was the first PARIC counsellor for the NEF, in 1998. He was interviewed in his position as an officer of the NEF Agency in the Western Region, Bafoussam. Today, Mr. Ngomez'o works at NEF's headquarters in Yaoundé, at the Department of International Cooperation.

20	Mr. Peltzer	DEG	Procurator	Economy	Köln	12.07.2010
<p>Roger Peltzer is procurator at the German Investment and Development Society (Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft DEG). He has first hand insights into economic development in Cameroon and beyond his official work tasks he actively engages in North-South dialogue and development activities.</p>						
21	Mr. Tette	GGAN/ GIZ	Advisor	Recruiting	Accra	21.06.2012
<p>Mr. David Yaw Mensah Tette has a long background in recruitment practices, being a local counsellor for the GGAN (by that time Rückkehreroffice) during 1998-2000 and from then on President of the association. Currently, David Tette is again working as a counsellor and networker for the Returning Expert Programme in Ghana. David Tette has been the gate-keeper for numerous researchers and study groups working on return migration to Ghana.</p>						
22	Mr. Kolbilla	Local NGO	Manager	Labour market	Tamale	27.06.2012
<p>Mr. Dan Kolbilla was consulted informally in his function as a chief officer and employer of one of the returned graduates. He has insights into the NGO scene and recruitment practices in this industry.</p>						
23	Mr. Etoundi	KBK	Manager	Alumni networks	Yaoundé	27.06.2012
<p>Ludovic Etoundi, who has been working since 2007 as the executive manager for the umbrella network of the coordination office (KBK), was consulted frequently and informally, via e-mail, phone and personally, as an expert due to his sound insights into the networking of Cameroonian alumni.</p>						

#### B.4 List of events

#	Topic	Institution	Group	Context	Place	Date
1	Diaspora	Federal Ministry Rhine-Westphalia	North 30	Ghana	Düsseldorf	23.02.2008
2	Reintegration	STUBE Bavaria	23	Cameroon	Bayreuth	29.03.2008
3	Reintegration	WUS Germany	30	Cameroon	Kassel	02.05.2008
4	Diaspora	Challenge Camerounais	> 1,000	Cameroon	Munich	10.05.2008
5	Reintegration	WUS Germany	23	Ghana	Bad Neuenahr	06.06.2008
6	Network	Network GGAN	29	Ghana	Accra	18.06.2008
7	Network	NEF	60	Cameroon	Yaoundé	11.10.2008
8	Network	KBK	130	Cameroon	Yaoundé	18.10.2008
9	Reintegration	WUS Germany	30	Cameroon	Bonn	26.10.2008
10	Reintegration	WUS Germany	25	Ghana	Bad Neuenahr	10.04.2009
11	Reintegration	WUS Germany	32	Cameroon	Bonn	15.05.2009

12	Network	Network GGAN	50	Ghana	Accra	27.08.2009
13	Presentation	CMS	20	Ghana	Accra	24.09.2009
14	Diaspora	Private event	200	Ghana	Mainz	19.12.2009
15	Presentation	Université Protestante	~40	Cameroon	Yaoundé	26.05.2010
16	Network	KBK	~100	Cameroon	Yaoundé	15.10.2010
17	Reintegration	STUBE Westphalia	20	Cameroon	Bielefeld	12.11.2010
18	Reintegration	Network GGAN	8	Ghana	Mainz	17.11.2010
19	Diaspora	Challenge Camerounais	> 1,000	Cameroon	Hamburg	12.06.2011

## 11.3 Appendix C: Screenshots

### C.1 MAX QDA visualisation

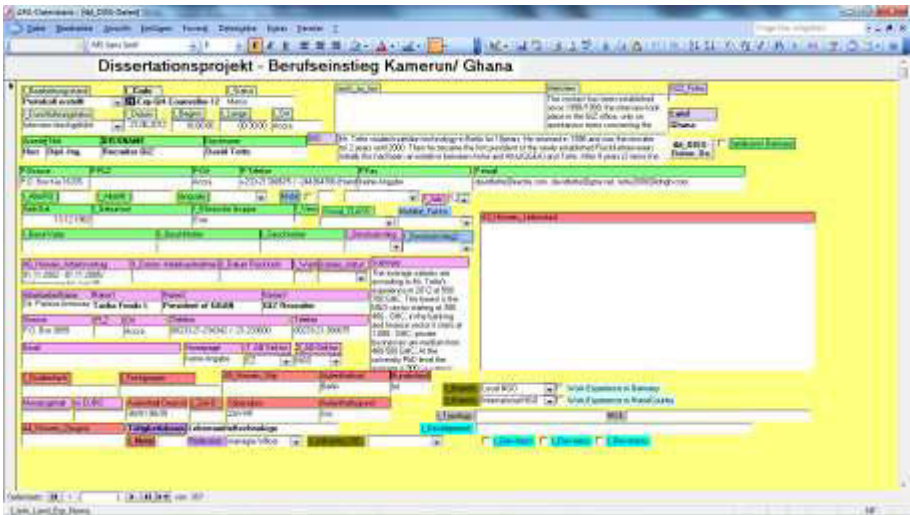
The MAXQDA Code Matrix Browser offers a tool for visualising the distribution of codes throughout a selection or all of texts. The matrix provides an overview of how many text segments from each text have been assigned a specific code (cf. Kuckartz 2010: 192ff.). On this basis I developed a visual scheme to illustrate the characteristics and dimensions of the types. After the first coding of the texts I sensed differences between the cases but could not clearly define them. Based on this vague ‘feeling’ that the cases resembled each other I started “clustering” (Kuckartz 2010: 237) the texts into four different types. Taking for instance the two diverging patterns: ‘achieving’ and ‘arranging’. The difference between the two types already becomes obvious in the first code, which I called ‘entry key’ and which was supposed to identify which resource was the most relevant for getting the job from the perspective of the interviewee as well as from my interpretation of the texts and the trajectories. Whereas the interview texts that I had classified into the achieving pattern show coherence in the sub-codes ‘expertise/subject’ as well as ‘practical experience’, in the picture to that of the arranging pattern the coherent sub-code is ‘reintegration programme’. These differences continue for the code ‘social capital’, which I firstly divided into ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ ties and secondly into ‘entry contact’ (which I will not discuss here). What can be seen in this code is the clear difference between the seemingly major role played by the ‘weak’ ties in the achieving pattern, and the ‘strong’ ties that are evident in the arranging pattern. This is also expressed in the code ‘quality of relation’, which shows that achievers more often seemed to have factual/businesslike relationships with the person who helped them in the job search, whereas the personal contacts in the arranging pattern had a tangible ‘benefit’ – they said they helped each other. The distinction between the patterns becomes even clearer if one regards the visualisation of the



code ‘preparation’. In the achieving pattern almost all job searchers entered their significant first employment because there was a formal demand, a vacancy.

In contrast, those who arranged their entry-level employment missed this coherence but claimed more often in the interviews that they ‘had no alternative’ and had to leave Germany. Of course, the two examples presented here cannot fully describe the development of the patterns, but it makes clear how I visualised the codes, and that this helped enormously to identify the coherent and distinct codes. This process contributed to sharpening the profiles of the four types.

## C.2 Database



The database is a variation of WUS’ database, which was developed for the workplace equipment subsidy. It has been modified and used for the purpose of this thesis. It comprises all datasets including addresses and contacts to returned Cameroonians and Ghanaians who were contacted and interviewed in the context of this thesis. The screenshot shows the dataset for expert #21 (see appendix B.3). Information, such as study subject, date of return, age profile, ect. were all integrated and supported parameterized queries and allowed the correlation of factors.

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