



IWPMLS 2019

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## **Lost in migration...**

**Offers for academic post- and further qualification for immigrant academics in Germany – stepstones to labour market integration?**

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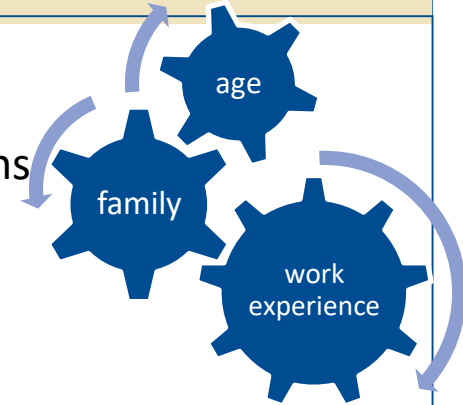
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## Structure of the talk

- Introduction
- Research project
- Selected findings
  - Programme offer for the target group
  - Utilisation and "utility value" of the programmes
  - Summary
- Policy recommendations

## Introduction: Highly qualified immigrants in Germany

- Germany has a high percentage of immigrants with high qualifications (while public debates often concentrate on migrants with low qualifications and problem groups)
- Immigrant academics are a heterogeneous group, but there often encounter similar problems and barriers
  - qualifications are not always formally recognised as “equivalent”
  - they often work often below skill level/increased risk of unemployment
  - uncertainties and ignorance on the part of employers
  - devaluation and contextualisation of cultural capital (Bourdieu)
    - not working in their professions after the process of migration
    - possibly different requirements in the same profession in the host country
    - insufficient (profession-specific) language skills
    - Lack of contacts/access to the labour market



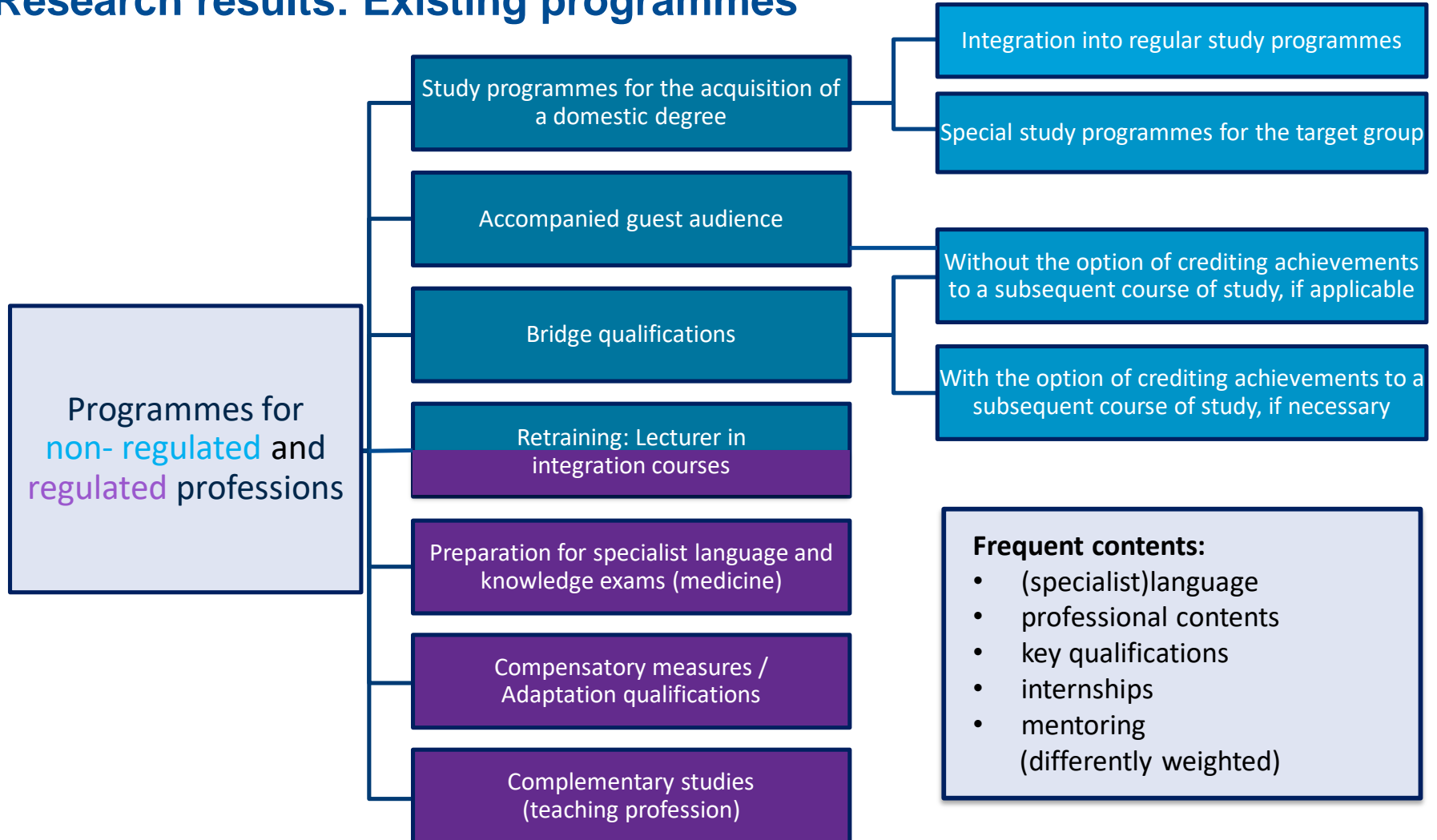
### ➤ **Need for further qualification**

## Research project “Nachquali“ (Klammer/Graevskaia/Knuth, 2016 – 2018, funded by FGW)

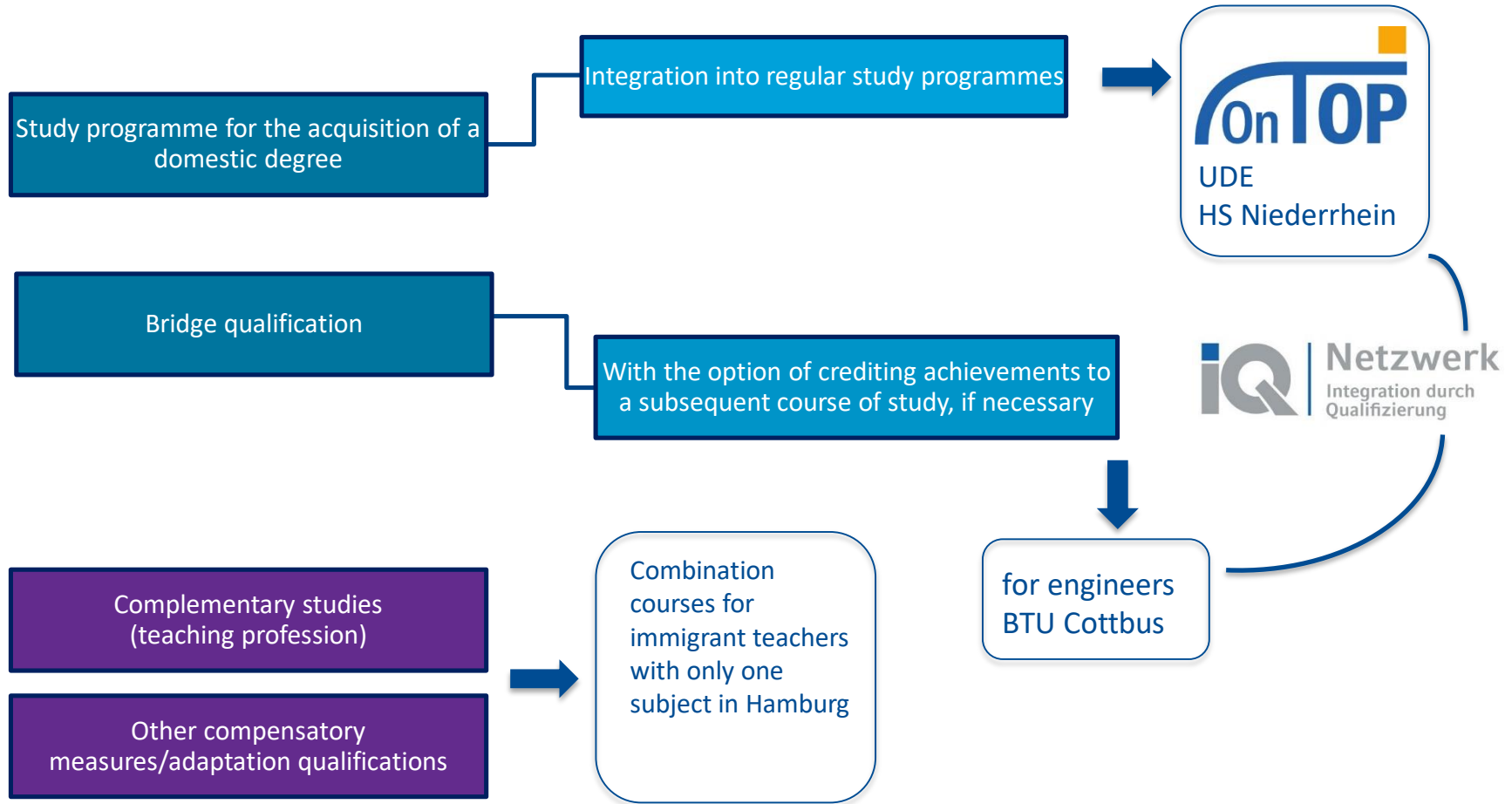
### Research questions

- What are the experiences of immigrant academics as users of existing programmes for academic post- and further qualification?
- From the participants' point of view, what was the "utility value" of their participation with regard to their professional and social situation?
- What needs for action and possibilities for further development exist from the perspective of the programme participants?
  
- **Research design:** desk research of existing programmes for the target group and legal regulations, qualitative semi-structured interviews with former participants and programme managers
  
- **Objective:** insight into the situation of highly qualified migrants in Germany; development of policy recommendations for the further development of programmes offered at universities and other institutions

## Research results: Existing programmes



## Research results: programme examples



## Research results: Central problems concerning the offer of programmes

- Mostly only projects with limited time horizon
- Mostly within the framework of the IQ network  
(funding period: 2015-2018; new applications were necessary to get funding from 2019 on)
- Hardly any programme embedded in the regular structures of research universities or universities of applied sciences
  
- The search for the right programme is a lottery
  - Knowledge about existing programmes is not widespread
  - sometimes complicated project formalities
  - hardly any (general) study programs
  - different offers in different regions
  
- Meritocratization
  - Offer often oriented towards usability, e.g. for training courses for lecturers in integration courses
  
- Cost of living during period of participation
- Participation fees as additional barrier (depending on the programme)

## Research results: utilisation and “utility value“

Empirical basis: 16 qualitative semi-structured interviews with former participants of programmes located at universities or cooperating with them + 7 expert interviews with managers or staff of such programmes

### Highly qualified, migration to Germany – and then?

- Paths and detours to the programmes: 1.5 to 15 years
- Unemployment, under-qualified employment, partly also retraining
- Job centers and immigration authorities usually did not have a supportive effect

### Paths to the programmes

- „*Word-of-mouth recommendation*“ (participants, programme managers)
- Career fair, university website / flyer, newspapers, language courses, advice centers
- In exceptional cases by jobcenters

### Perception of study conditions

- Digitalisation
- Module and subject selection (unfamiliar)
- Large and changing groups (problematic)



## Research results: Utilisation and „Utility value“

### (Special-)language

- Language certificates and language skills in everyday (university) life
- Requirement: "the everyday language, the educational language, the special language, all this must be served in a variety of contexts and communicated in a situation-appropriate way" (leadership)
- Language coachings were gladly accepted

### Independent learning strategies

- Private tutoring
- Familiarisation with the type of lecture and the language of the professor
- Success, but sometimes longer study duration

### Temporal structures

- More difficult than for regular students (acclimatisation phase, special domestic conditions)
- High burden due to studies and possibly work -> additional offers not always perceptible

### Study contents

- Depending on academic recognition
- Desire for less theory and more practice

## Research results: utilisation and “utility value“

### (Individual) offers of support during the programme

- Necessary: „ *Thinking together study counselling and career counselling*“ (programme manager)
- Language courses and individual language coaching
- (individual) application training
- Mentoring (by advanced students)

### Exchange among the users

- Encouraging (same challenges, different to regular students)
- „*We are a family*“ (participant)

### Recognition and respect

- ... experienced for the first time -> self-confidence
- but also a lack of appreciation of previous qualifications

## Research results: utilisation and “utility value“

### Transition to the labour market

- Establishing professional networks is important
- Internships as a transitional step
- Successful transitions, but also frustration: *"I hope I'm adapted before retirement or maybe someone realizes I'm suitable after all"* (participant)
- Use of knowledge from the programme for (re-)orientation

### Utility of different kinds of programmes

- Objective: Qualification-adequate employment
- If the target is not achieved: sometimes additional studies after a bridge qualification or guest audiorate

### Subsistence financing

- **Financing is often extremely problematic – THE central barrier!**
- Problem: very often no access to the system of study grants (BAföG)
- Official recognition of former degrees can even turn out to be an additional barrier
- Scholarships often not available due to lack of information (on both sides) and indirect discrimination

## Research results: utilisation and “utility value“

### View of the target group by programme managers

- Very motivated
- Predominant opinion: they have a special need for support, but also: they should use regular structures like other students

### Cooperation and barriers within universities

- For programme management: communicating the relevance of the programme
- Skepticism as well as cooperation and support from various actors in the universities

### Project character of many programmes

*"That's unfortunately the project business, it always takes a while until you get it right to the start, it takes a while until you have also advertised that people know that there is such a thing. And then a project unfortunately comes to an end after a few years, you have to look at sustainability, but of course that's only possible to a limited extent"*  
(project management, translation by the author)

## Summary: success factors and barriers

### success factors

- Individual counselling before and during participation
- Additional offers tailored to the target group, e.g. specialist language courses and application coaching
- Placement of interns and professional contacts
- Reliable ways to finance one's subsistence

### barriers

- Project character and limitation of many programmes
- Shifting consulting to regular structures is problematic if the responsible actors are not prepared for the target group
- Overload due to excessive learning workload + possibly additional offers, especially if part-time work is required to finance the livelihood during programme participation

## Policy recommendations

### **In the short and medium term:**

#### **adapting universities to the increasing diversity of (potential) students**

- more awareness for the target group within university structures
- establishment of unlimited programmes/offers
- tailor-made offers (not only for immigrant academics) – identification of groups with similar needs and set up of suitable counselling offers and additional courses  
-> diversity management in higher education!

#### **creation of reliable structures to finance training and subsistence during the training period**

- adjustment of the student grant system (BAföG), the criteria for scholarships and unemployment benefits
- no additional participation fees

### **In the long-term: social change**

- changing the standards towards "genuine" recognition and appreciation of foreign qualifications

Thank you very much for your attention!

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Project publications on the internet (in German language):

