

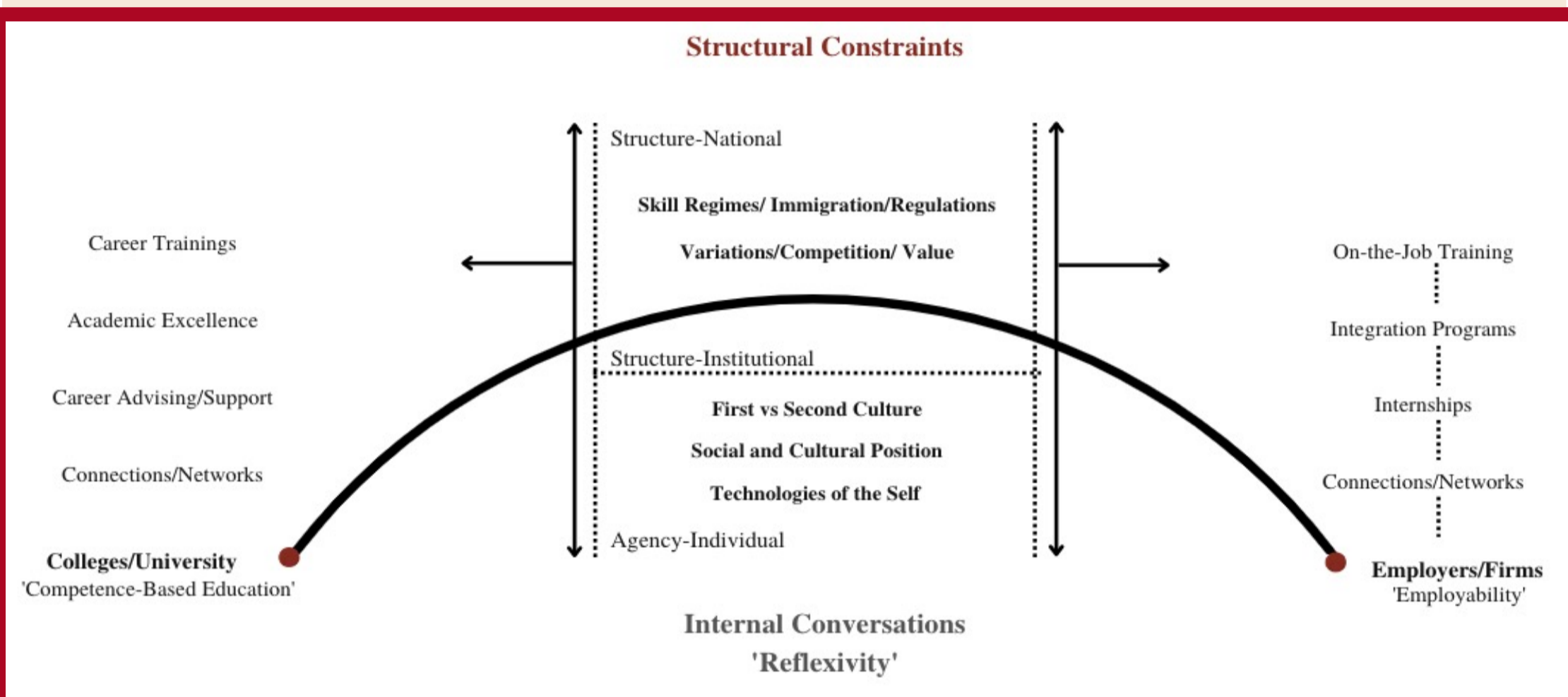
## Introduction

Using Archer's (1995) Morphogenetic Approach, my research explores internal conversations among international student graduates who transitioned to the labor market. This research shows how the focus on graduate employability has neglected the challenges faced by international students originally from the Global South and how they are not equally benefitting from their university degrees. These challenges include how they obtain work authorizations, pay immigration fees (Gopal, 2022), reintegrate into their home country's structures (Li, 2012), and adapt to the various employer's shifting requirements (Clarke, 2008; Bridgestock, 2017).



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## Conceptual Framework

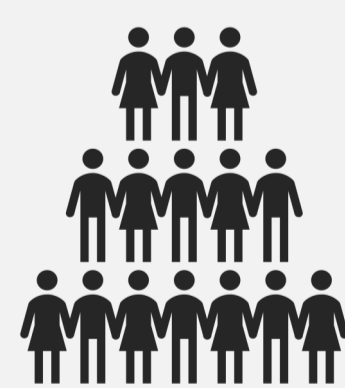


## Research Questions

1. What experiences are most deliberated in the international students' reflexivity after graduation? How do these deliberations influence their personal or social identity?
2. How does international students' internal conversations guide them in navigating through the various actions/decisions they make in the transition? What does the structure and agency interplay look like from the international student perspective?

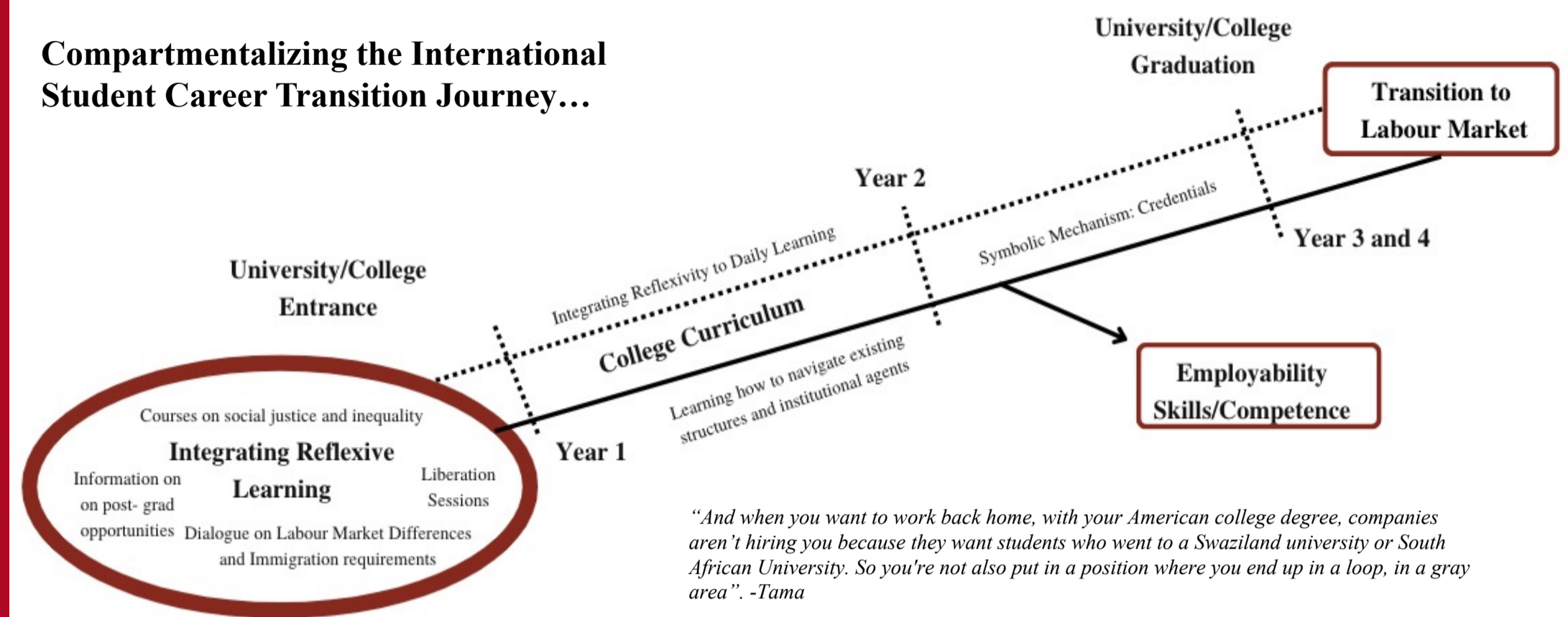
## Methodology

- **This research utilises** Homi Bhabha's (2004) concept of 'third space' or 'hybridity' from the post-colonial (PC) lens and Roy Bhaskar's (1989) critical realist (CR) 'stratified ontology' to rethink international students' employability and provide an alternative perspective to understand the realities of international student path to employment.
- **Data Collected:** In-depth qualitative-based narrative interviews with 25 international student graduates (from different institutions) who have worked and transitioned to a full-time job, either by staying in the host university country, returning to their own, or moving to a different country for employment.
- University/Government Documents & Observations.
- **The purpose** is to capture the complexities of each participant's process of transition to work, including their internal conflicts and how they reach their decisions/actions in the transition as they reflect on socio-cultural expectations vs. personal interests. In-person and online interviews were conducted in English or Indonesian, spread across four countries (US/UK/Germany for those who stayed) and (Indonesia for those who returned).



## Analysis

### Compartmentalizing the International Student Career Transition Journey...



**Phases:** Step 1 – Descriptions, Step 2 – Analytical Resolution, Step 3 – Abductive Inferencing, Step 4 – Retroductive Inferencing, Steps 5 and 6 – Contextualizations and Comparisons (Danermark, et al., 2019).

**Atlas.ti Coding:** Searched for descriptive explanations and links between interviews, literature, documents, as well as narratives that illustrate the interplays of structure and agency (CR).

## Emerging Findings

1. **Career Entrapment vs. Stability** – Creating a vocational identity requires downgrading opportunities, financial and familial sacrifices, and various bureaucratic processes.
2. **Overemphasis on 'Employability'** as an ability, not a process – skills, and achievement do not translate equally in the job market. (Theories on capital (ex. HCT/Bourdieu/VOC) are not adequate to explain this).
3. Universities tend to only scratch the surface of issues brought up by international students and without follow-up.
4. Institutions lack attention to the impact of international students' identity formations/shifts toward career plans and interests.

## Implications

- **Normative vs. Reflexive** – Learning/Advising and Support in universities need to move from assumptions such as 'this has worked before' to rethinking the transition, 'what do you seek and how can you or I help you get it'?
- Specific **attention to detail** of international student cases is critically needed. Review of CVs and facilitating informational seminars are not enough to support. Requirements are different across countries/cultures and constantly changing depending on political/economic climates and events. Dialogues are essential.

## References

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