

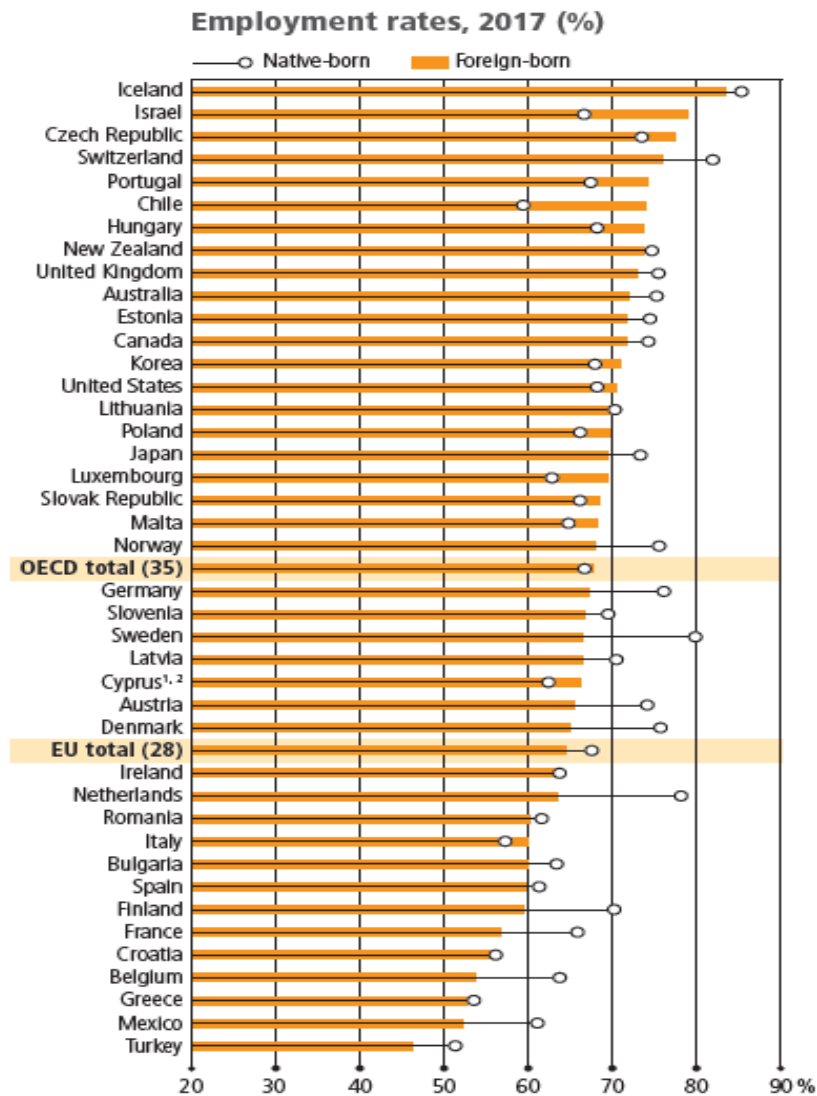
# Mentoring to work for highly skilled immigrants

**An effective tool against brain waste?**

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# Low employment rate for immigrants in Belgium

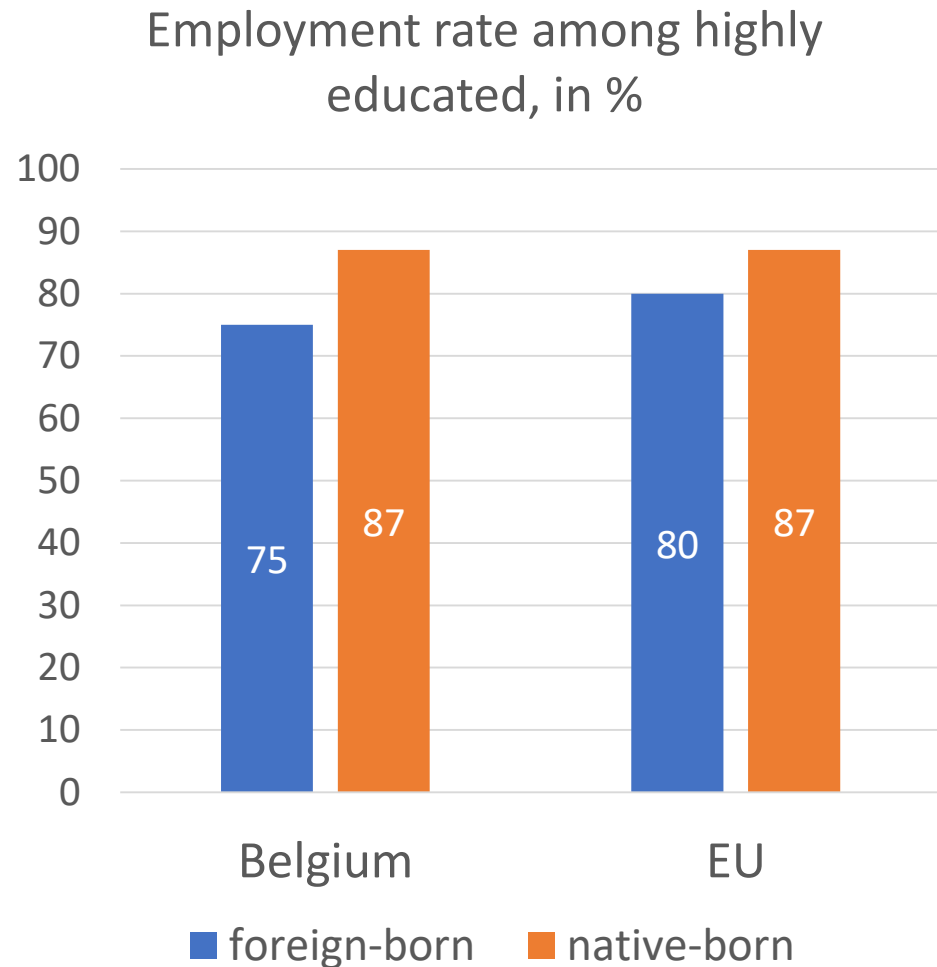
- Belgium is one of the 'worst pupils in the class' at OECD level
- Only Greece, Mexico and Turkey score worse



Source: Indicator 3.4 in OECD/EU (2018).

# Employment gap between immigrants and natives for highly educated

Source: OECD, 2018



# Mentoring to work

(De Cuyper, Vandermeerschen & Purkayastha, 2019)

## What?

A person with more localized experience (mentor) providing guidance to a person with less experience (mentee)

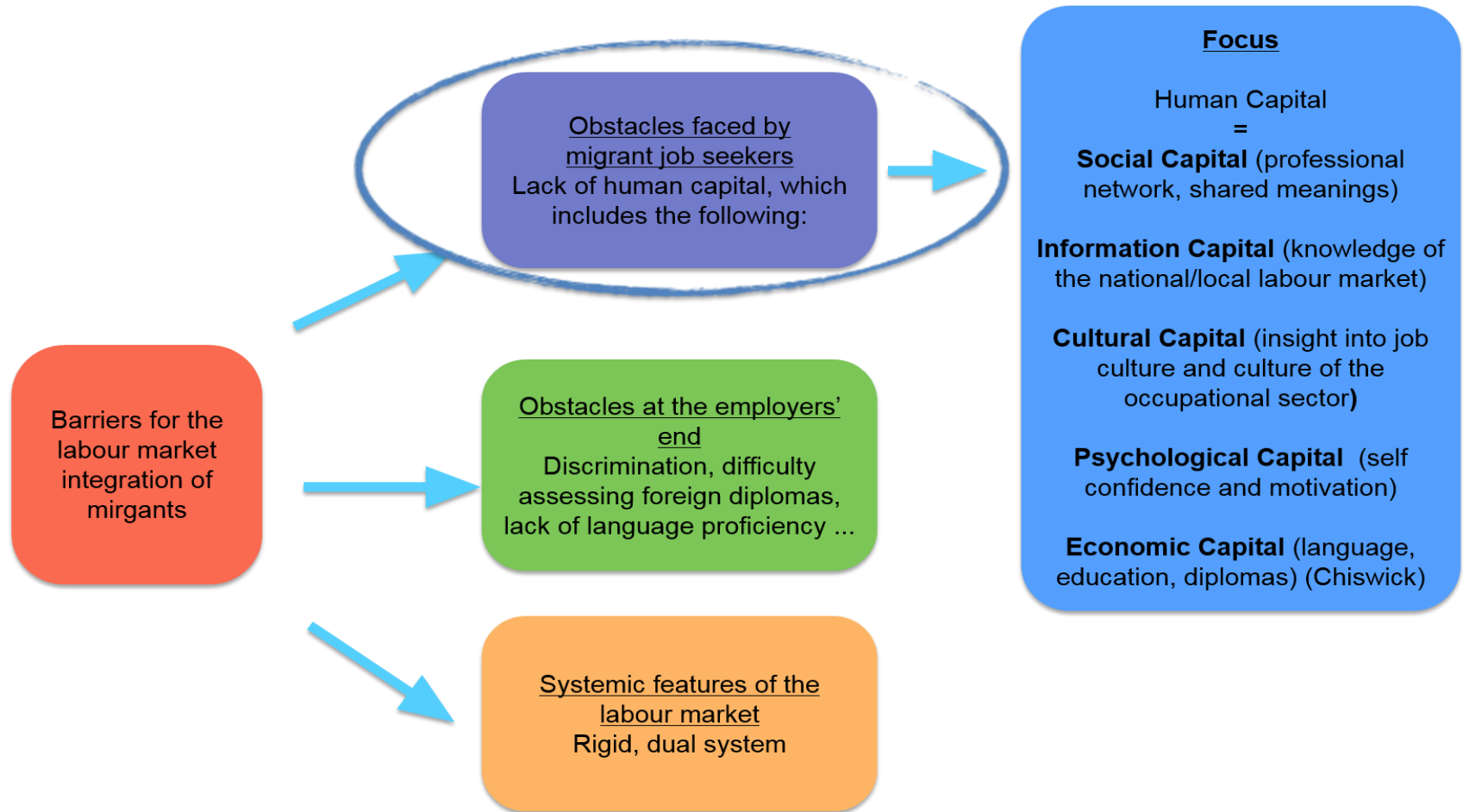
## Objective:

Sustainable progress in journey into the labour market

## Other characteristics:

- Voluntary
- Contact on a regular basis
- Facilitated by third actor
- ≠ mentoring AT work

# Barriers to entrance on the LM



Bron: De Cuyper, 2015



RQ1: Does mentoring address these different types of capital, strengthening immigrant job seekers?

RQ2: Is the likelihood for exit to unemployment higher for mentees (compared to other highly skilled immigrants)? *(exploratory)*



RQ1: Does mentoring address these different types of capital, strengthening immigrant job seekers? → **Qualitative data**

RQ2: Is the likelihood for exit to unemployment higher for mentees (compared to other highly skilled immigrants)? → **Quantitative data**

# Research context

- Evaluation of “@level2work”
  - Testing different interventions to increase LM opportunities for highly skilled immigrants – at the right level
  - For example job hunting, language projects, one stop shop,...
  - Lead by public employment service
  - 2016-2018
- Here: focus on mentoring
- 4 different mentoring programs
  - Differences in set-up and implementation
  - Pilot projects
  - Mentees all highly skilled
  - Mentors mainly from same sector



## RQ 1

Does mentoring address the different types of capital, strengthening immigrant job seekers?

# Data & method

- 4 focus groups and 12 semi-structured interviews
- 30 highly skilled immigrants in total
- Through mentoring coordinator
- 18 different countries of origin (non-EU); mentees aged 18-52
- Inductive approach

# Results: benefits for mentees?

## **Benefits**

- Culture specific and sector specific advice
- Orientation
- Job application advice
- Having a person of trust – ‘helpline’
- Learning and practicing Dutch
- Developing/repairing self-confidence; empowerment, not giving up
- (step towards) access to employers
- Mentor accelerates process
- Developing network

# Examples

- *“Honestly, the most important thing was that it opened my eyes to the biggest companies where they could hire talent like me, he also told me what special point to mention in the interview, what to ask the end... the range of salaries and market for engineers. This is also important information”*
- *“just having someone from the sector in which I would like to work was a good feeling. I have so many questions and he helped and most importantly, he gave me a sight to the future”.*

# Results: benefits for mentees?

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Type of capital</u>
• Culture specific and sector specific advice	Information capital; cultural capital
• Orientation	Information capital; cultural capital
• Job application advice	Information capital; cultural capital
• Having a person of trust – ‘helpline’	(different types)
• Learning and practicing Dutch	Economic capital
• Developing/repairing self-confidence; empowerment, not giving up	Psychological capital
• (step towards) access to employers	Social capital
• Mentor accelerates process	(different types)
• Developing network	Social capital

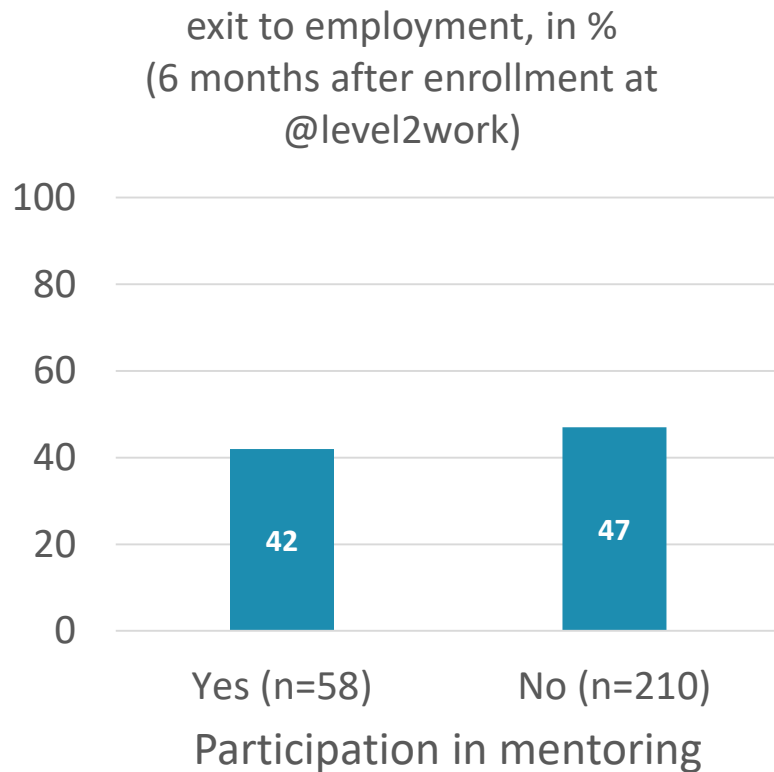
## RQ 2

Is the likelihood of exit to employment higher for mentees (compared to other highly skilled immigrants)?

# Method & data

- Administrative data
- From PES
- 1246 highly skilled; 158 mentees
- Profile
  - Gender
  - Education
  - Age
  - Nationality
  - Country of origin
- Enrollment in interventions
  - E.g. mentoring, jobhunting, counseling,...
- Exit to employment

# Results



- No significant association
- Logistic regression (controlling for background characteristics or other interventions) shows no significant effect

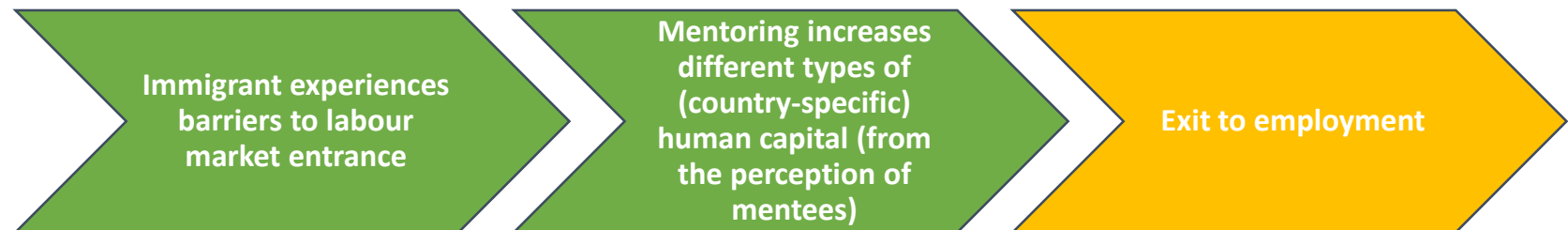


# However...

- No control group – all received *some* intervention
- Implementation flaws
- **Higher level of employment / different type of job?**
- Low number of cases to do elaborate analyses (due to late start up of mentoring programs)
- Selection effect?

# Conclusion

# Conclusion (1)



# Conclusion (2) – important nuances

- Mentees report strengthening of capital, but:
  - Large differences between mentees/ 'pairs' (& implementation)
  - Not all types of capital to the same extent – mainly information capital & cultural capital
  - Social capital (network) much less than expected
  - *Perceived* human capital
- Mentees report that it is 'not enough' to find a job / continued disadvantage with regard to natives
- Combined approach is necessary
  - Employers
  - Opportunities to develop 'professional' language skills
  - Etc.
- Future research needs to look at mentoring and the level of employment

# THANK YOU

## Questions? Suggestions?

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