

Mapping graduate employability and career development in higher education research

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Mapping graduate employability and career development in higher education research: a citation network analysis

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ABSTRACT

Greater attention than ever is being placed on how universities enable their graduates to achieve their career goals as a key return on significant private and public investment. Scholars in two distinct fields of research have explored the characteristics and conditions that promote or constrain graduates' career success: graduate employability and career development. In this article, we present visualisations of direct citation networks among 4068 journal articles focused on graduate employability and career development and consider the disciplinary landscapes that they reveal. Our findings show that despite a clear alignment of research concerns and educational goals, there has been limited theoretical or practical exchange between the two fields. We argue that purposeful exchange between the two fields will enrich both and, when applied to practice, could inform an evidence-based, integrative pedagogy of careers and employability learning in higher education.

KEYWORDS

Graduates; employability; career development; higher education research; citation analysis

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Employability:

multidisciplinary
more than just skills
antecedent more than outcome
lifelong psychosocial process of
learning and adaptation



Graduate employability:

A subfield of *higher education research* into:

individual,
institutional,
and socio-economic

factors that influence graduates' immediate employment and long-term career outcomes.

Career development:

Draws on applied psychology subdisciplines:

vocational psychology
industrial and organisational
psychology

Research into:

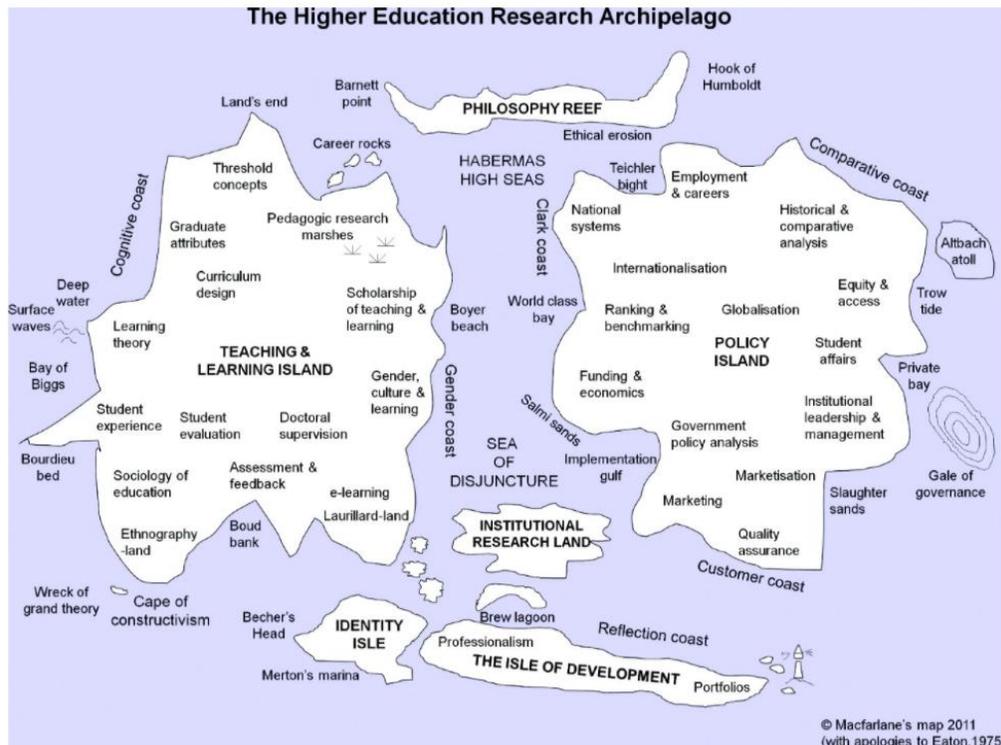
how individuals make career decisions and pursue career goals, employee recruitment, engagement, and productivity.

Higher education:

theoretically and methodologically diverse
weakly bounded
open to scholars from many disciplines
scattered and dis-integrated

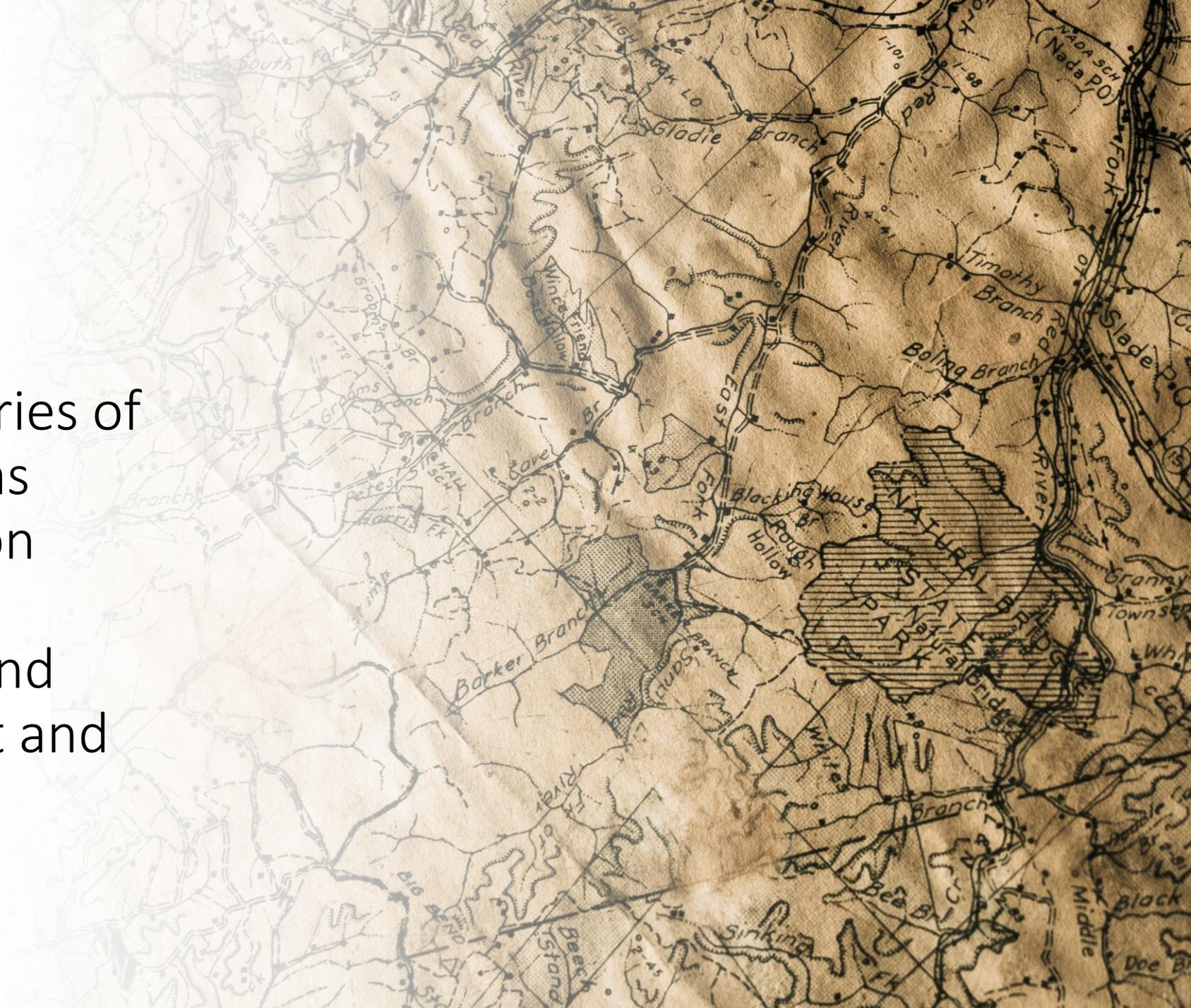
Career development:

insular and provincial
two islands: vocational psychology and I/O
lack of exchange between theorists,
researchers, and professional practitioners



Macfarlane (2012). "The Higher Education Research Archipelago"

What are the boundaries of GE and CD research, as represented by citation networks, within and between each field, and where are the current and potential points of exchange?



Direct citation network analysis

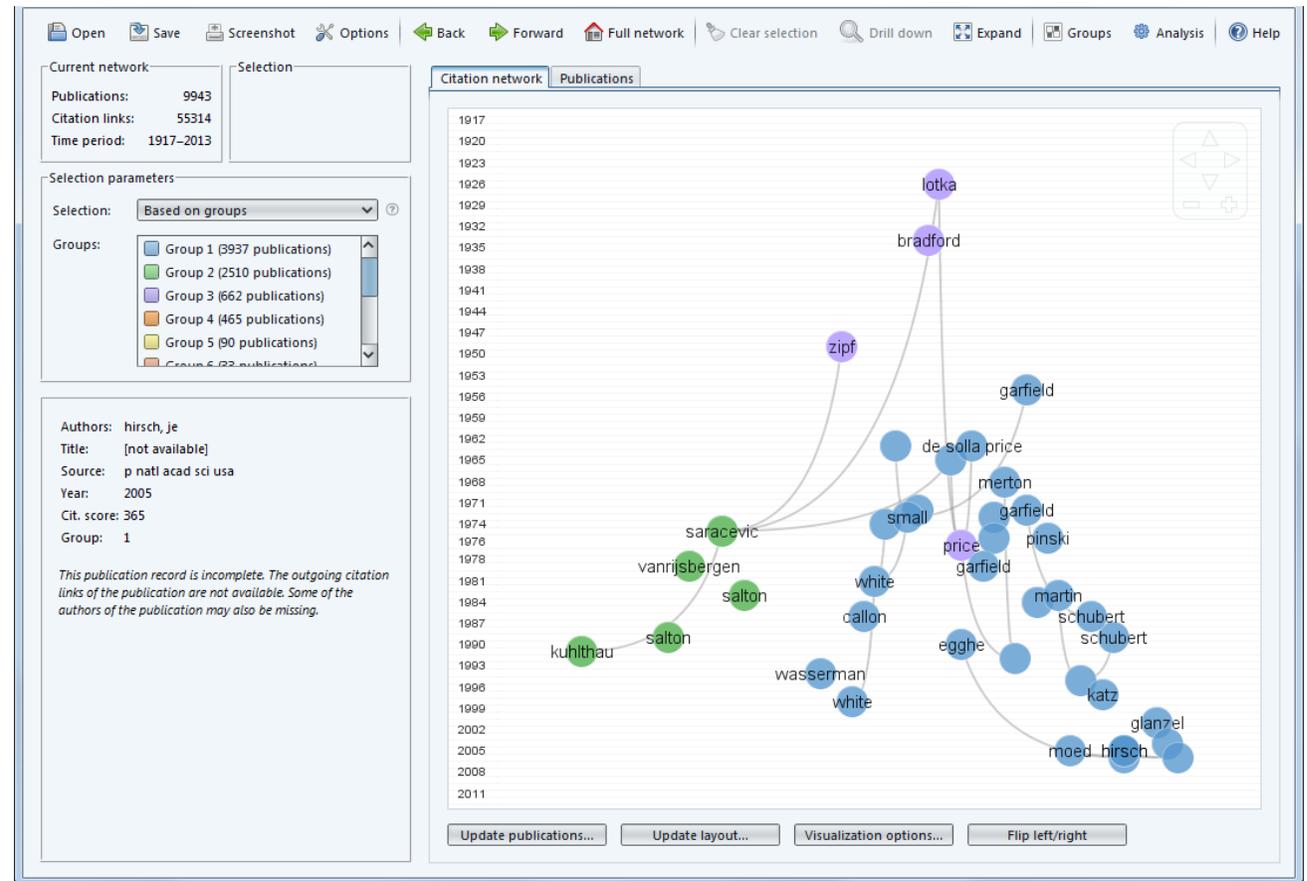
Search Web of Science for key terms

Export results with full bibliographic data

Import into CitNetExplorer

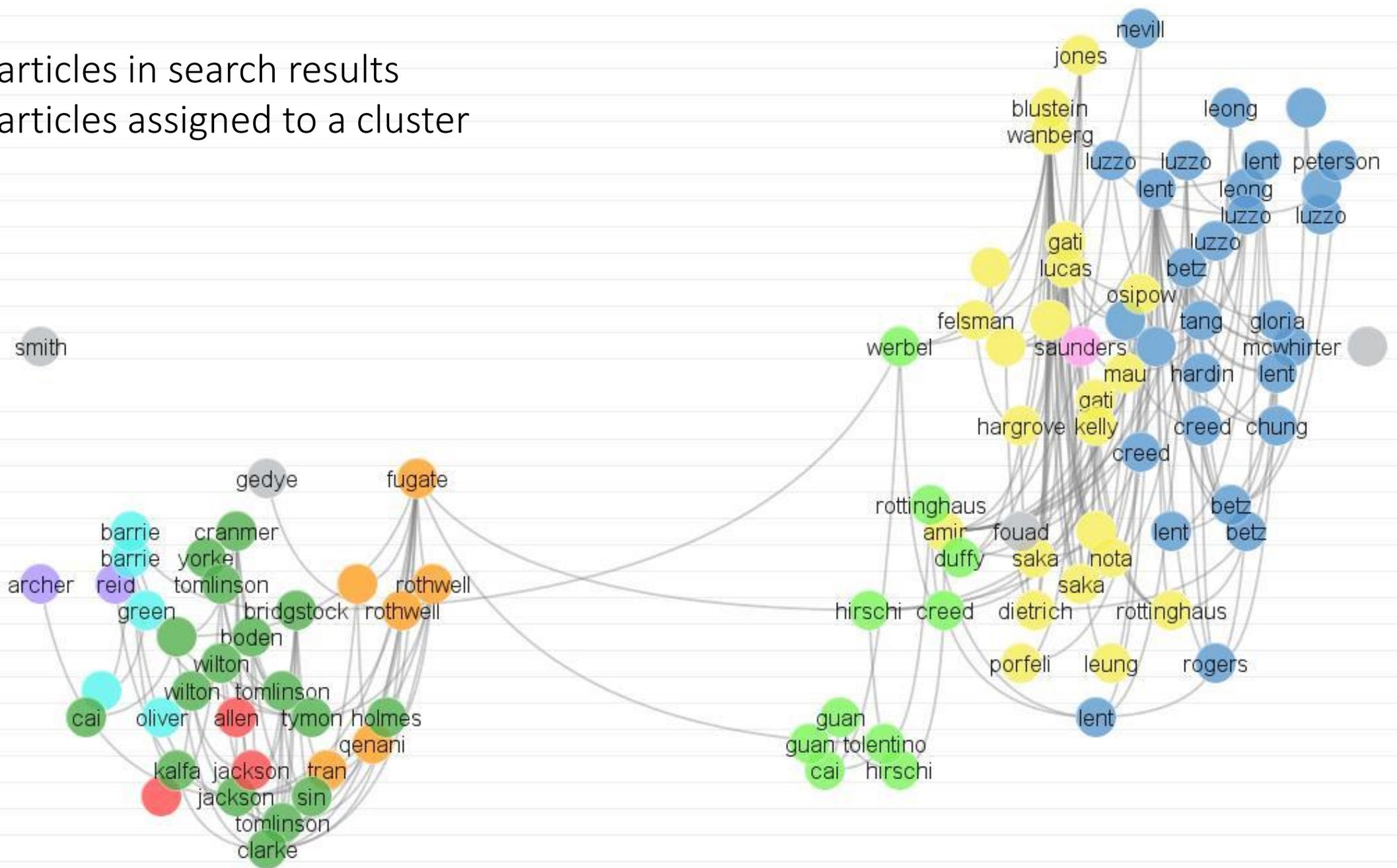
Apply clustering algorithm, iteratively

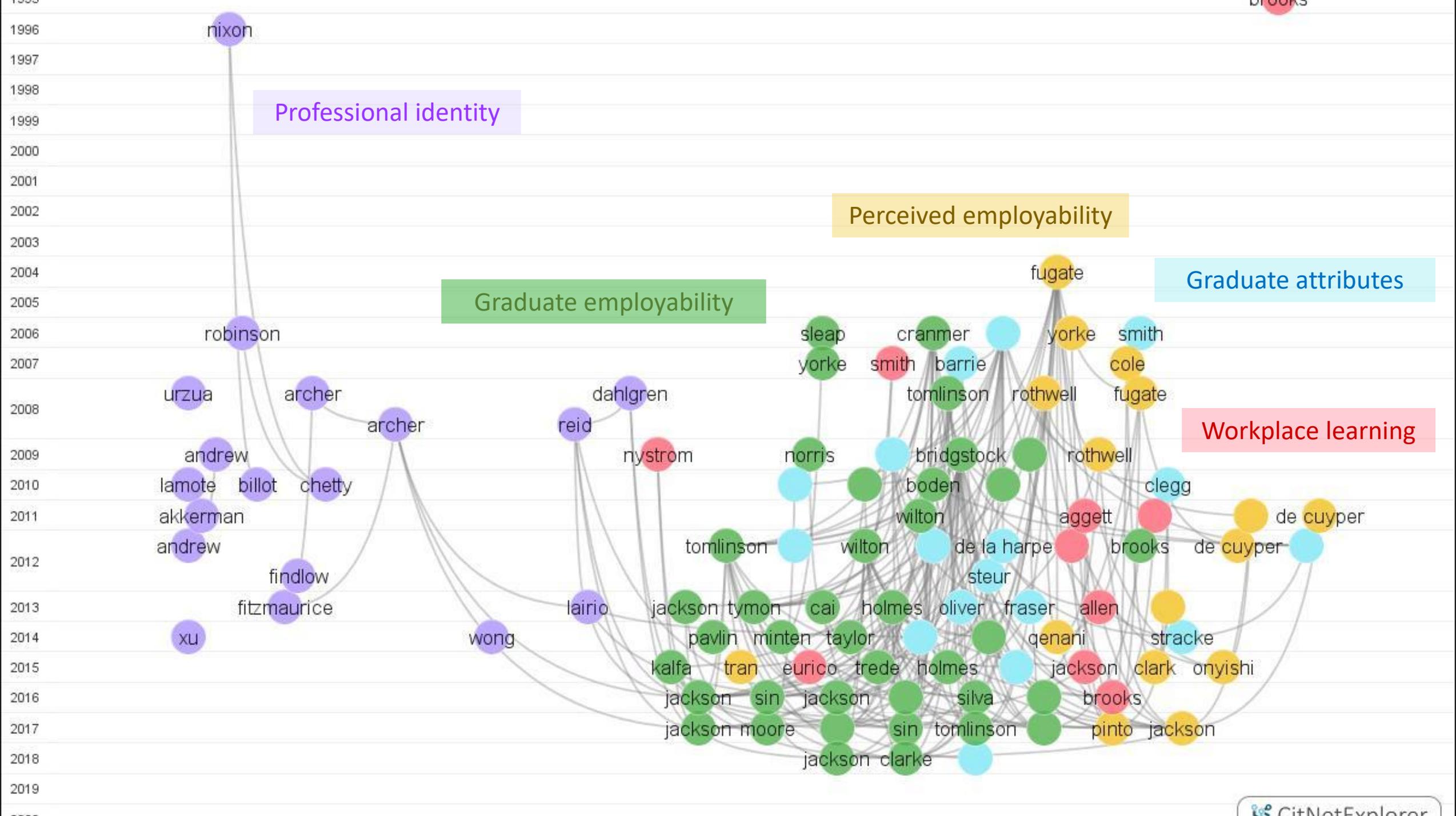
Analyse results and characterise clusters



www.citnetexplorer.nl

4068 articles in search results
1850 articles assigned to a cluster





Professional identity

Perceived employability

Graduate employability

Graduate attributes

Workplace learning

1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
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1998
1999
2000
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2003
2004
2005
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2019

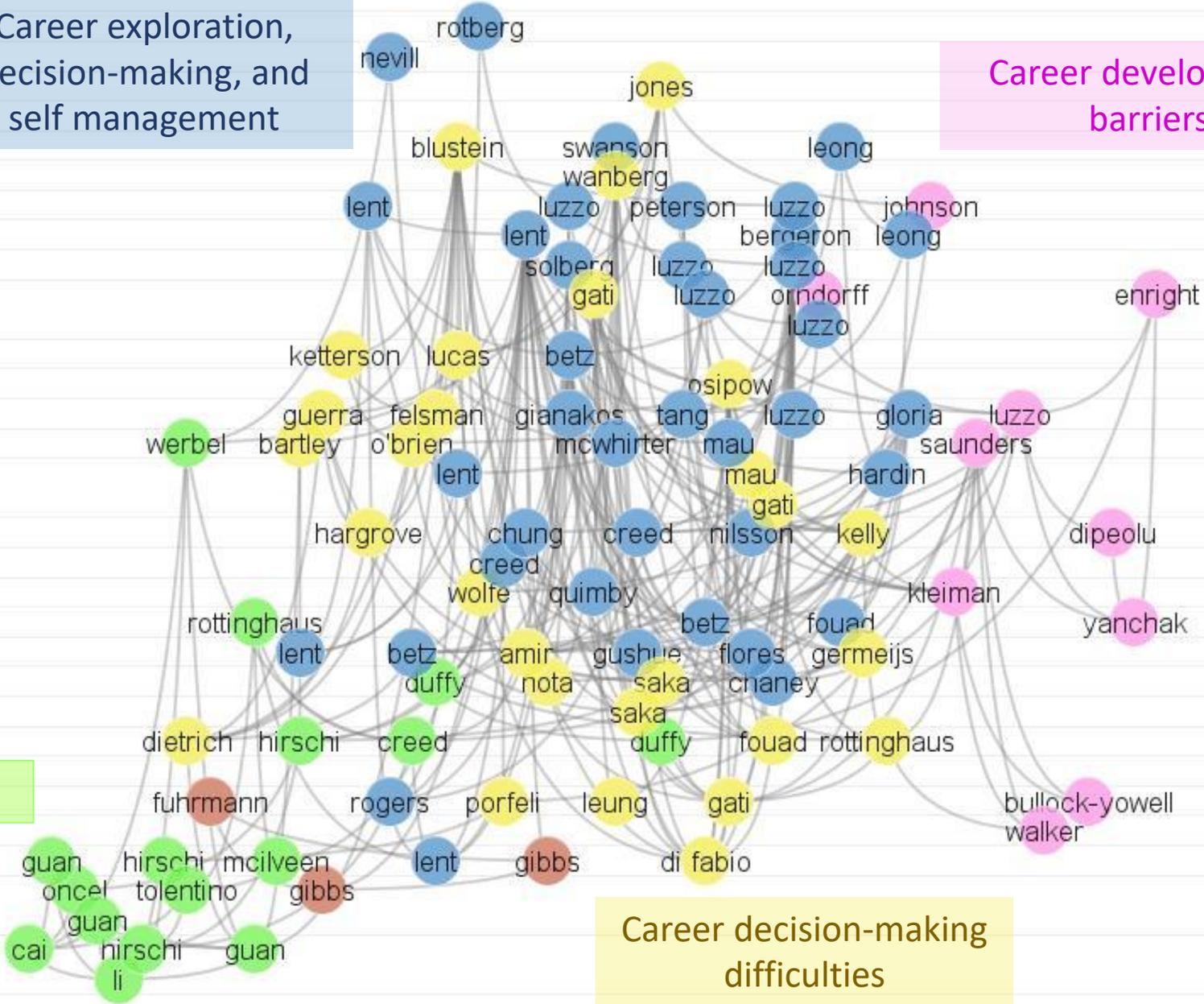
Biomedical CD

Career exploration,
decision-making, and
self management

Career development
barriers

Career orientations

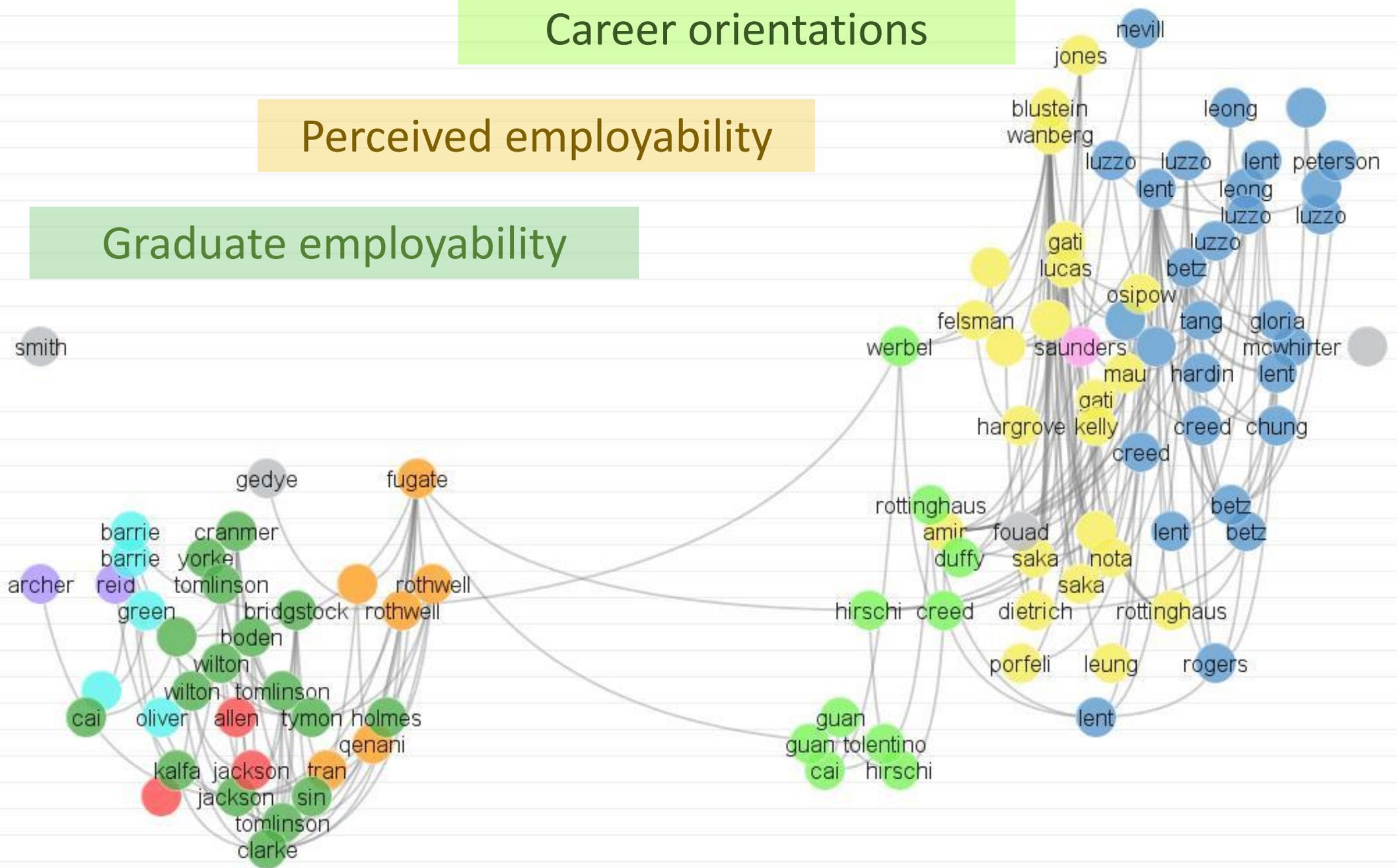
Career decision-making
difficulties



Career orientations

Perceived employability

Graduate employability



The jingle jangle fallacy?

Same name applied to different concepts,
or different names applied to the same
concept (Marsh et al., 2019).

For example:

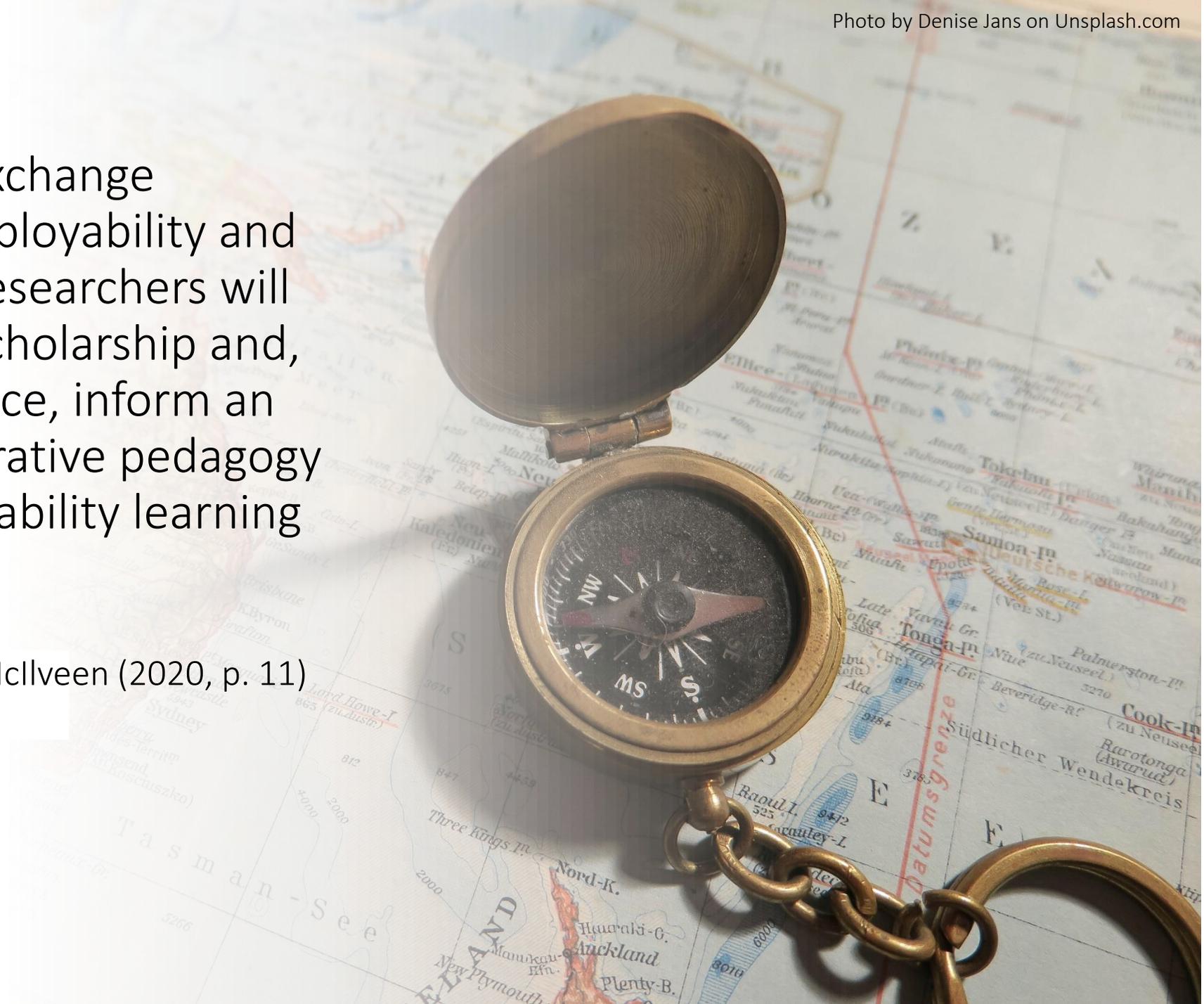
- vocational identity
- occupational identity
- career identity

- professional identity
- pre-professional identity
- graduate identity



“Further purposeful exchange between graduate employability and career development researchers will enrich both fields of scholarship and, when applied to practice, inform an evidence-based, integrative pedagogy of careers and employability learning in higher education.”

Healy, Hammer, and McIlveen (2020, p. 11)



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