

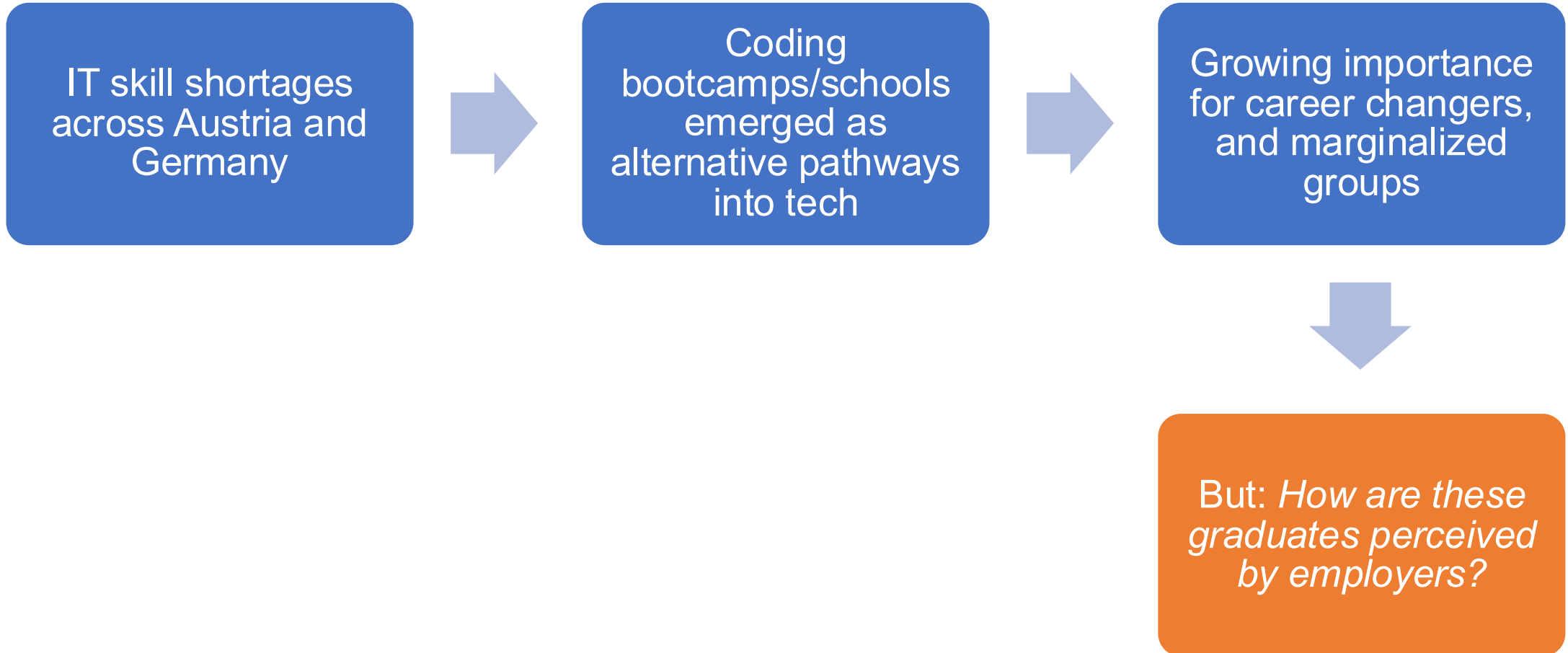
Code Meets Career: Employer Interpretations of Coding Bootcamp Graduates in Austria and Germany

Daniela Wolf, Martin Ebner & Benedikt Brünner

FERDINAND PORSCHE
FERNFH

 **TU**
Graz

Why This Matters



Coding Bootcamps are often framed as:

- a fast solution to skill shortages,**
- democratized access to tech,**
- a second chance,**
- an instrument of social mobility.**

But do companies really perceive them as equivalent?

Research Question



How do companies in Austria and Germany perceive and justify collaboration with coding bootcamps?



How do graduates transition into and integrate within everyday work environments?



What challenges emerge, particularly in comparison to university graduates, and what expectations do employers hold regarding bootcamp curricula?

Methodology



**Qualitative
exploratory
study**



**5-semi-
structured
expert
interviews**



**Participants
from HR,
software
development,
consulting
and public
administration**



**Qualitative
content
analysis
following
Mayring**



**Focus on
employer
interpretations
rather than
effective
measures**

Sample Visualization

Category	P01	P02	P03	P04	P05
Position	Tech founder with senior developer and leadership experience	Senior software developer, lecturer at a technical secondary evening school	Head of HR at an international IT company	Managing director of a medium-sized AI software company	HR manager in national public administration
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male
Country	Austria, Germany	Austria	Austria	Germany	Austria
Company	SME (50-249 employees)	Large enterprise (>5,000 employees)	Large enterprise (>18,000 employees)	SME (50-249 employees)	Large enterprise (>250 employees)
Industry	Software Development, IT Consulting	IT Consulting, Digital Transformation	IT Services (B2B)	Software Development, Industry 4.0	Public Administration, E-Government
Relation to Coding schools and bootcamps	Internal employees with bootcamp backgrounds through collaboration with coding schools and bootcamps	In-house bootcamp, job interviews, and indirect collaboration with bootcamp graduates	Recruitment experience with bootcamp graduates with refugee background	Internal employees with bootcamp backgrounds through collaboration with a coding school specialized in working with refugees	Internal employees with bootcamp backgrounds; experience in recruiting graduates from coding bootcamps and refugee-focused coding schools

Table 1: Overview of Interview Participants

Tension 1: Motivation vs. Missing Depth

Employers appreciate:

- _ Motivation and willingness to learn
- _ Practical orientation and adaptability
- _ Teamwork and openness

BUT employers also describe:

- _ Missing theoretical depth
- _ Limited project experience
- _ Missing system understanding

Employer Quote



“You can’t replace three or five years of university in six months - that’s obvious.”



At the same time:

“They are highly motivated and eager to learn.”

Tension 2: Inclusion vs. Structural Barriers

Bootcamps are often framed as inclusive pathways

Particularly for career changers and marginalized groups

BUT structural barriers remain:

- _ Language requirements
- _ Formal hiring criteria
- _ Immediate productivity expectations
- _ Limited onboarding capacities

Tension 3: Skilled- Based Hiring vs. Degree Culture

**Companies
increasingly talk about
skills over degrees**

BUT in practice:

- _ Formal credentials still dominate recruitment
- _ HR systems prioritize traditional pathways
- _ Bootcamp graduates must constantly prove legitimacy

The Role of Organizational Culture

Successful integration depends strongly on companies

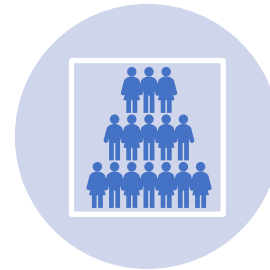
Positive factors:



MENTORING



STRUCTURED
ONBOARDING



LEARNING-
ORIENTED
TEAM
CULTURES



TIME FOR
DEVELOPMENT

Coding Bootcamps in the Age of AI

AI increasingly automates routine coding tasks

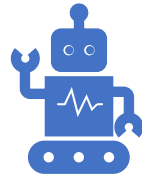
Future software developers may need:



SYSTEMS
THINKING



AI
ORCHESTRATIO
N SKILLS



CRITICAL
EVALUATION OF
AI-GENERATED
CODE



COMMUNICATION
&
COLLABORATION
COMPETENCIES



CONTINUOUS
LEARNING
CAPABILITIES

A New Tension Emerging

AI may reduce entry-level programming tasks



BUT the industry still needs future senior experts



Key Question: *How can organizations develop future expertise if fewer juniors get opportunities?*

Conclusion

Coding bootcamps are not simple replacements for degrees

Coding bootcamps function as entry points into longer learning trajectories

Success depends on organizational support and labor market conditions

The future relevance of bootcamps may increase in the AI era

The discussion needs to become bigger than bootcamps:

- The legitimacy of education,
- social mobility,
- access to tech,
- power structures in hiring,
- and the future of work in the age of AI

Coding bootcamps alone do not solve the skilled labor shortage, and access to technical education alone does not guarantee social mobility.



What forms of experience, knowledge, and biographies are even recognized as legitimate in the tech industry today and in the future?

Thank you for your attention!

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