

Competing with skills for clothing: A comparative case study on the skill-formation regimes for the garment industry in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

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Paper session 11: Competencies in specific VET domains

1 Introduction

1.1 Skill formation regimes in developing countries: the debate

General concern

There exist quantitative and qualitative mismatches between VET programmes and the skill-needs of the labour market.

1.1 Skill formation regimes in developing countries: the debate

Position 1 (e.g. Psacharopoulos 1985 / World Bank 1991)

Vocational education and training often is ...

- a) ... too academic,
- b) ... not cost-effective,
- c) ... produces unemployable students.



More private sector involvement in training!

1.1 Skill formation regimes in developing countries: the debate

Position 2 (e.g. Klees 2002; Bennell/Seegerstrom 1998)

Private sector under-invests in training because of ...

- a) ... high-labour intensity,
- b) ... poaching strategies of rival firms.



More public investments into vocational education and training!

1.2 Common methods in the literature

1. business climate surveys
(Position 1)

1.2 Common methods used in this body of literature

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2. rate of return analyses
(Position 1 and 2)

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1. business climate surveys
(Position 1)
2. rate of return analyses
(Position 1 and 2)
3. manpower-planning analyses
(Position 2)

1.3 Shortcomings in this body of literature

Lacking analysis of the political economic context of skill formation, which would allow for an explanation of the perceived mismatch.

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Why are skill-formation regimes in developing countries evolving the way they do?

1.4 Focus and problem of the study

Genesis and development of formal skill-formation programmes for the garment industry in Sri Lanka und Bangladesh



How and for which reasons have these skill-formation programmes evolved?

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How and for which reasons have these skill-formation programmes evolved?



Comparative analysis to explain the respective evolutionary processes

1.5 Theoretical approach

Institutions of industry specific skill formation regimes

- are highly path-dependent
- are involved into positive feed-back mechanisms



Thelen 2004 (political economy of training)

1.5 Theoretical approach

Paths of industry specific skill formation regimes are rooted in the social dynamics of

- ➔ educational regimes Archer 1984
- ➔ production regimes Hollingsworth/
Boyer 1997

1.6 Data gathered during field work (= 13 months)

Qualitative interviews with

- a. entrepreneurs/senior managers (= 80)
- b. members of associations (= 16)
- c. public servants at various levels (= 70)

Survey on biographies

of employees/students (= 160)

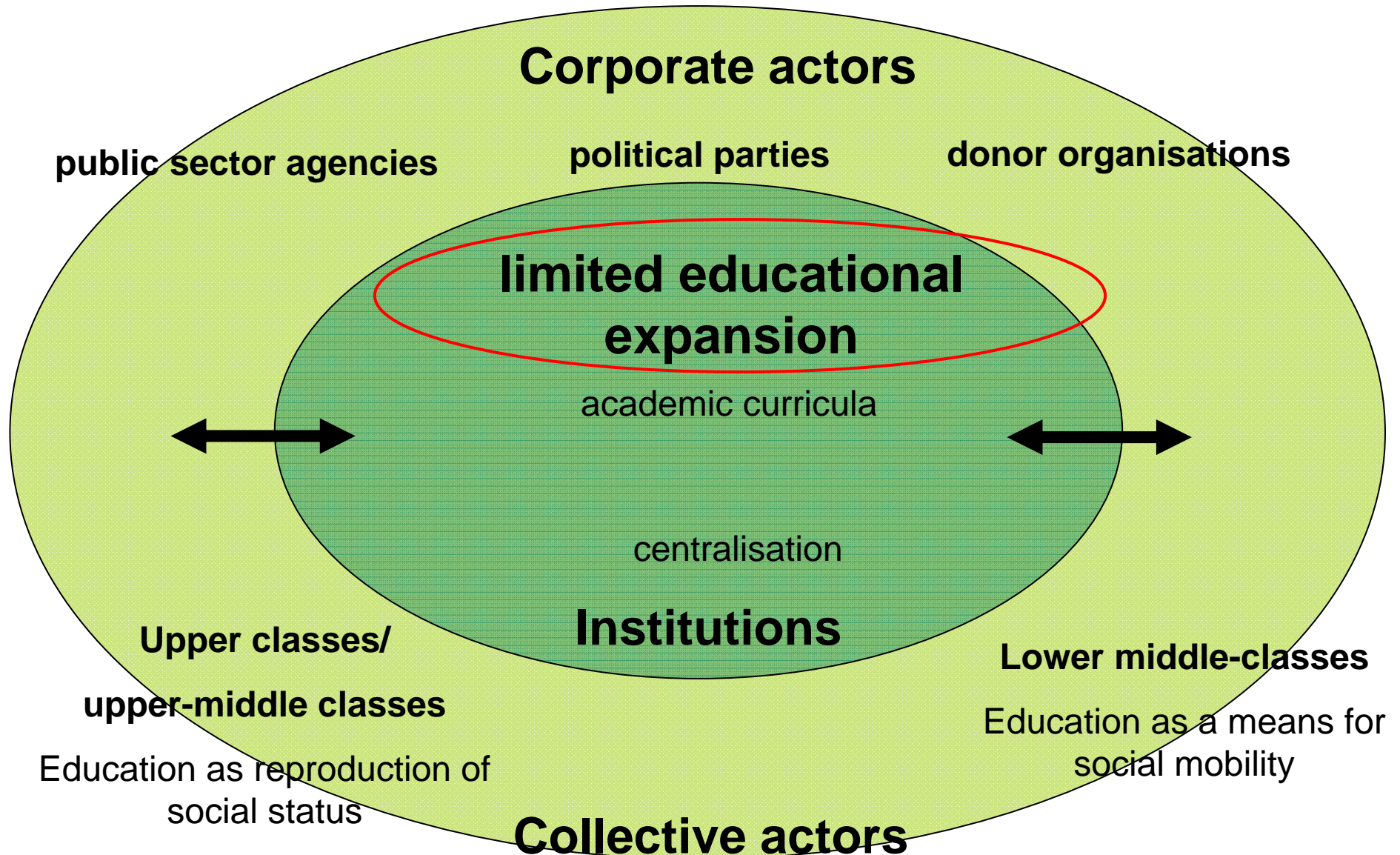
Documents 1977-2008 (Curricula etc.)

2 The educational regimes of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

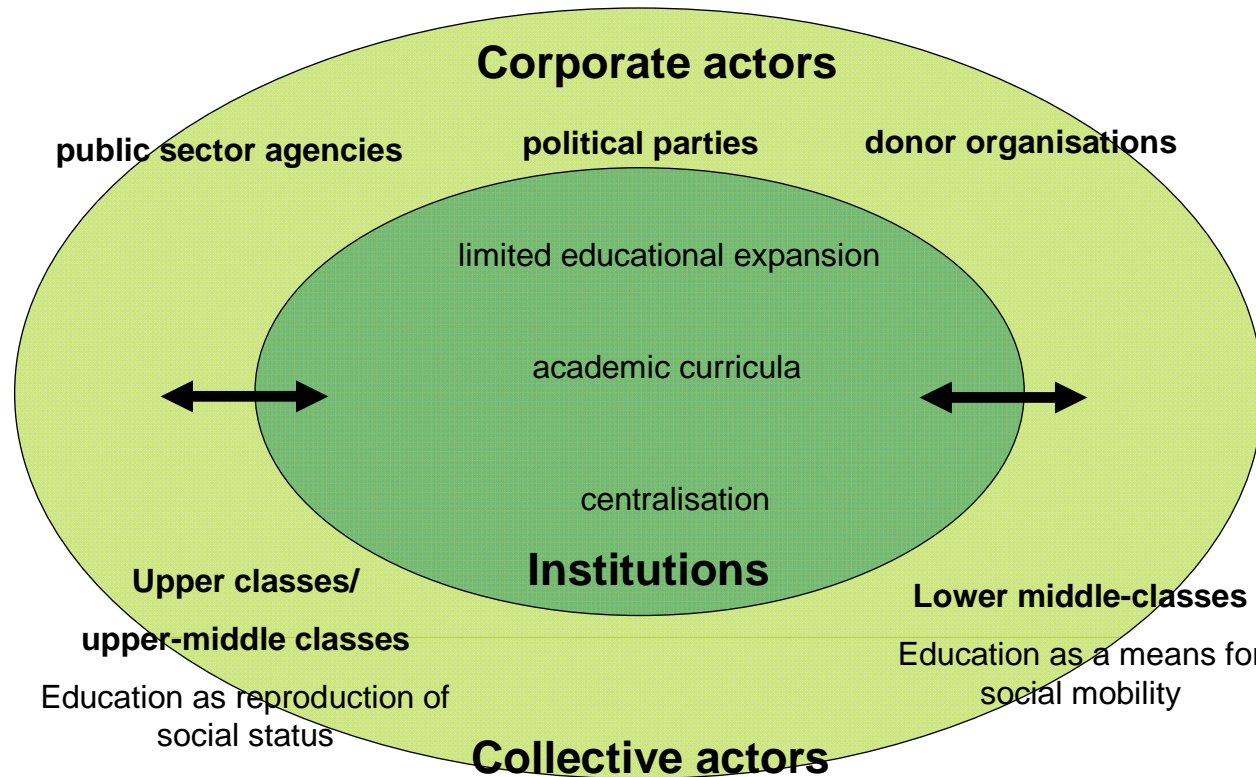
Bangladesh

HSC Vocational “Clothing and Garments Finishing”	
Length of the programme	2 years
Type of programme	Vocational education at the higher secondary level, including a general introduction into garment production
Students’ interest in credential	high
Students’ interest in employment in the garment industry	low
Monitoring	Department of Technical Education
Curriculum development	Officers without industry experience
Instructors	Instructors without industry experience
Locality	Rural areas

Educational regime: Bangladesh

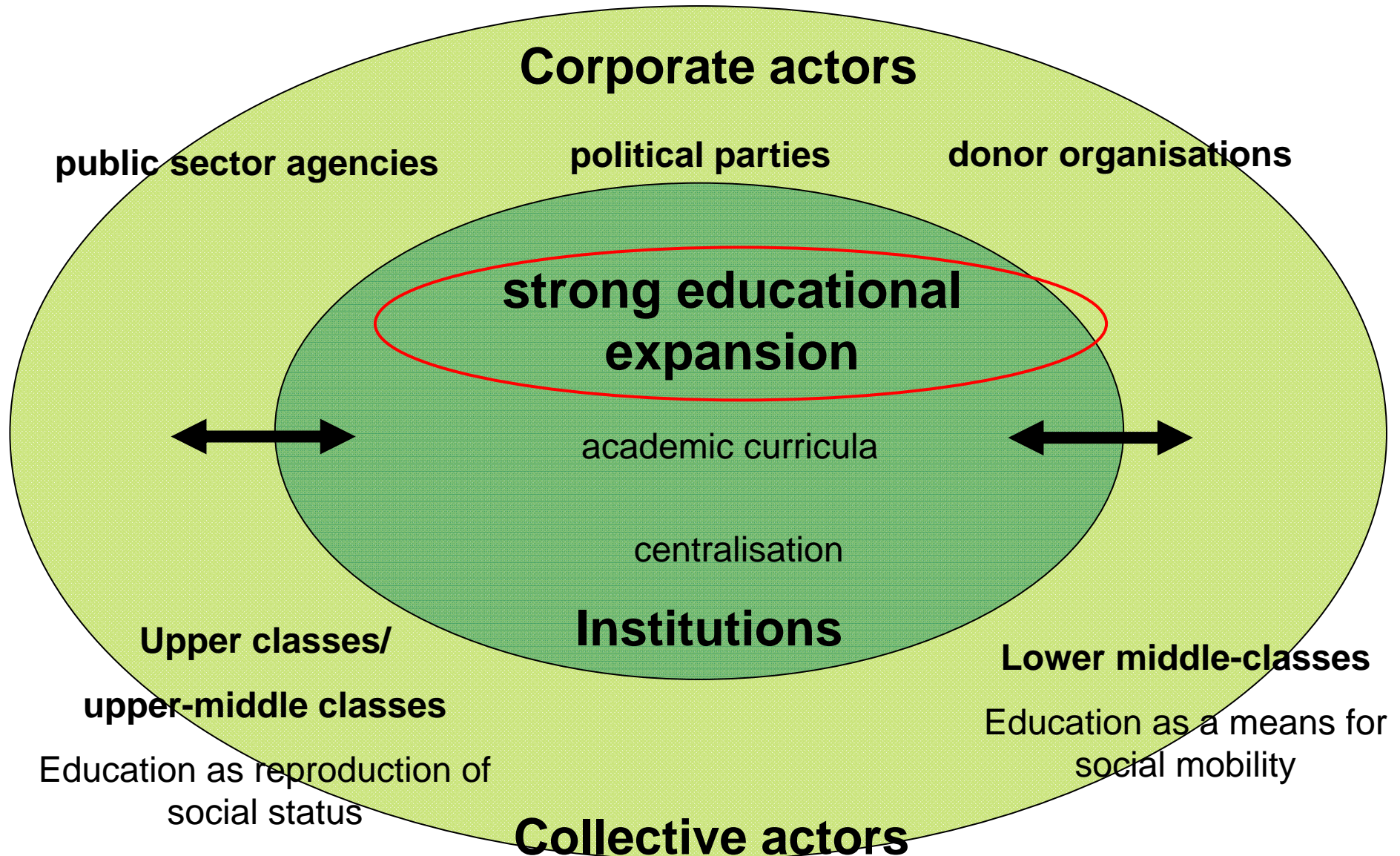


Educational regime: Bangladesh

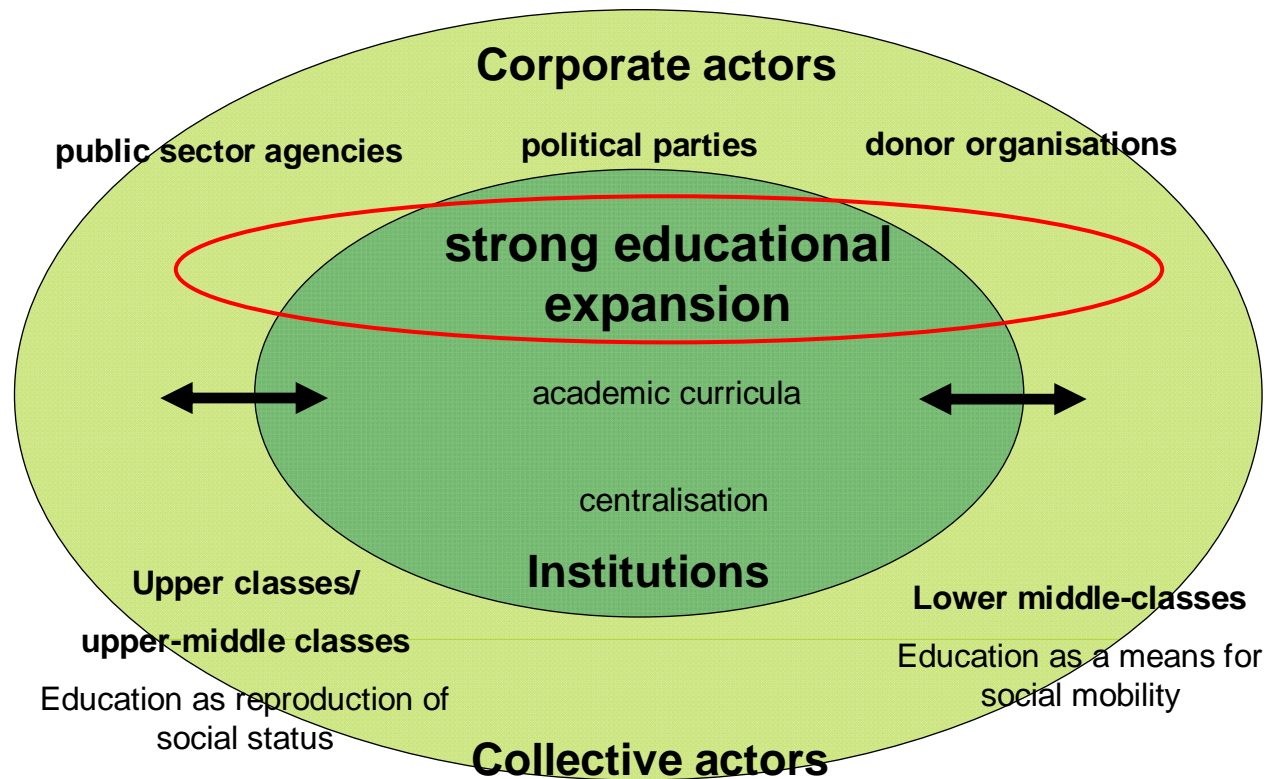


Limited supply of formally trained skills that are considered relevant by the private sector

Educational regime: Sri Lanka



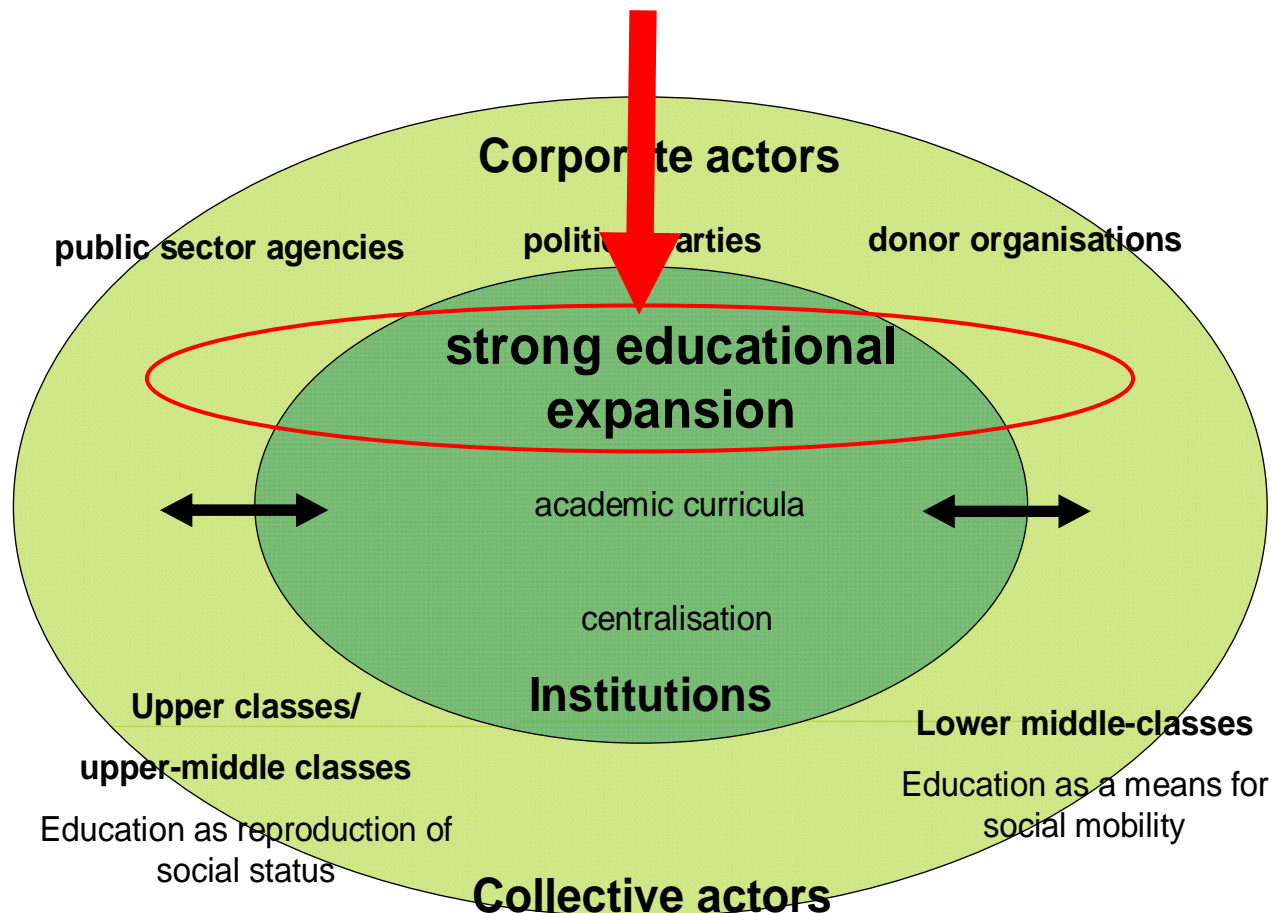
Educational regime: Sri Lanka



Higher supply of formally trained skills that are considered relevant by the private sector

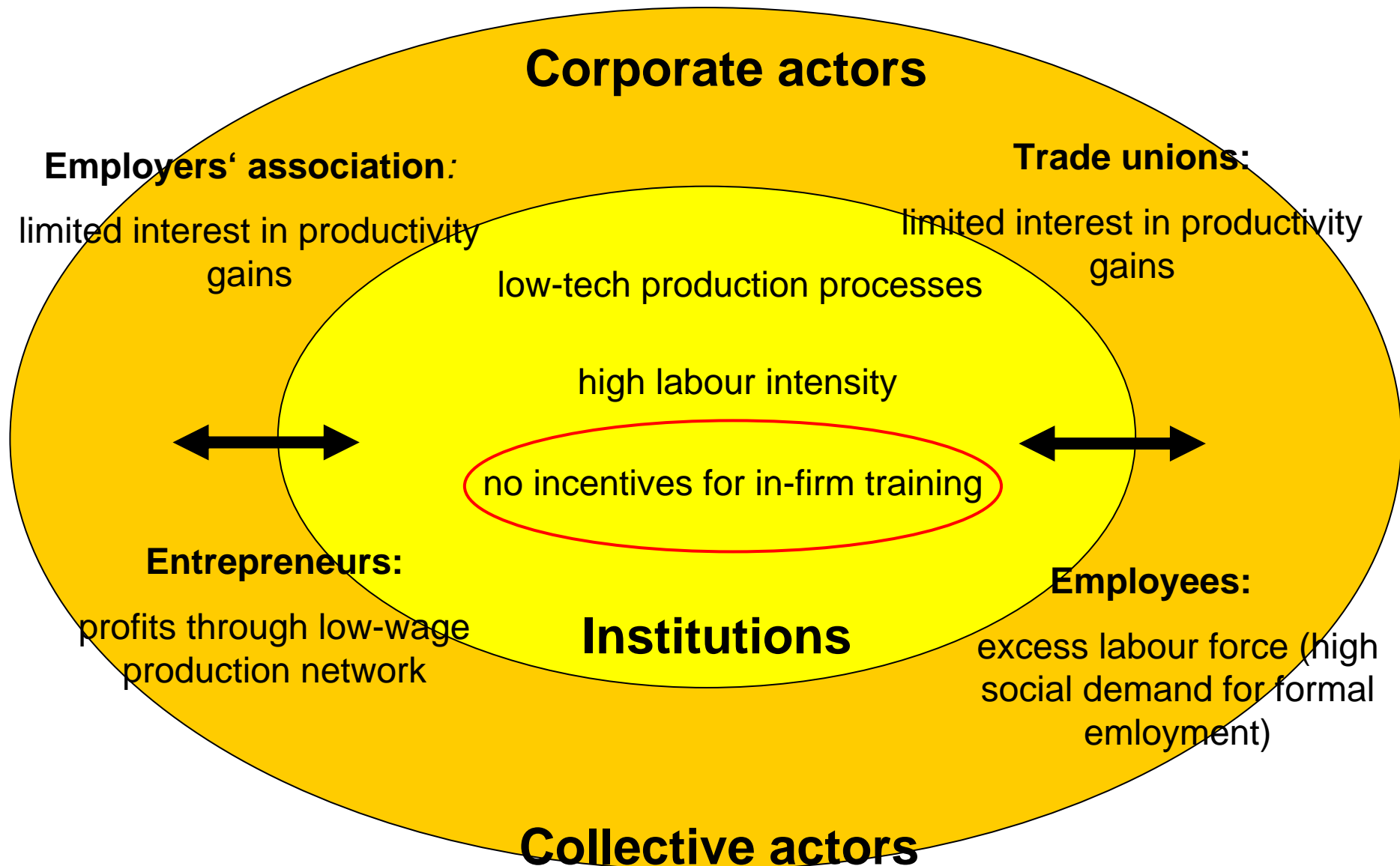
Educational regime: Sri Lanka

Critical juncture 1:
**Social welfare policies as central feature of the
post-1948 nation-building process**

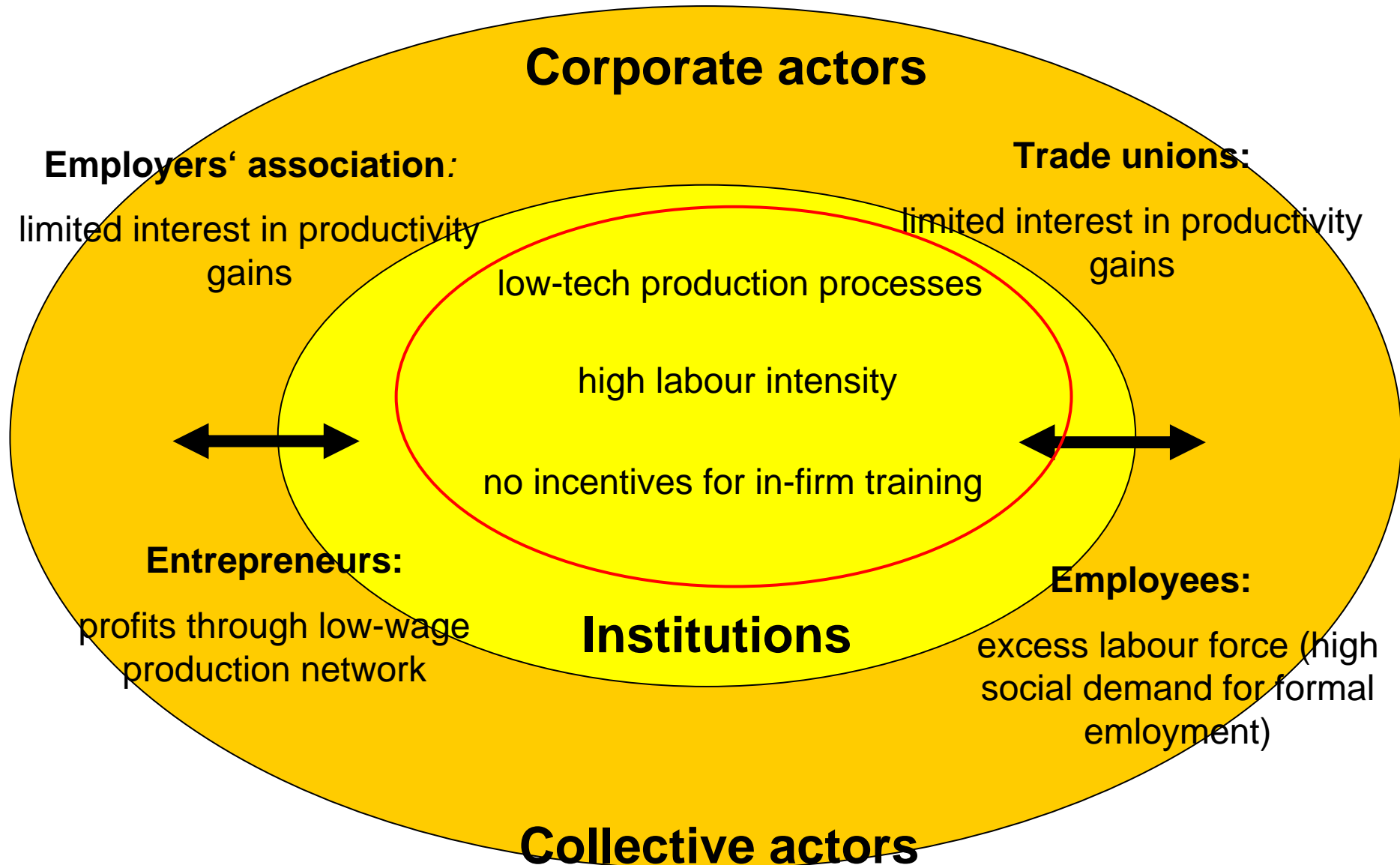


4 The garment production regimes of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

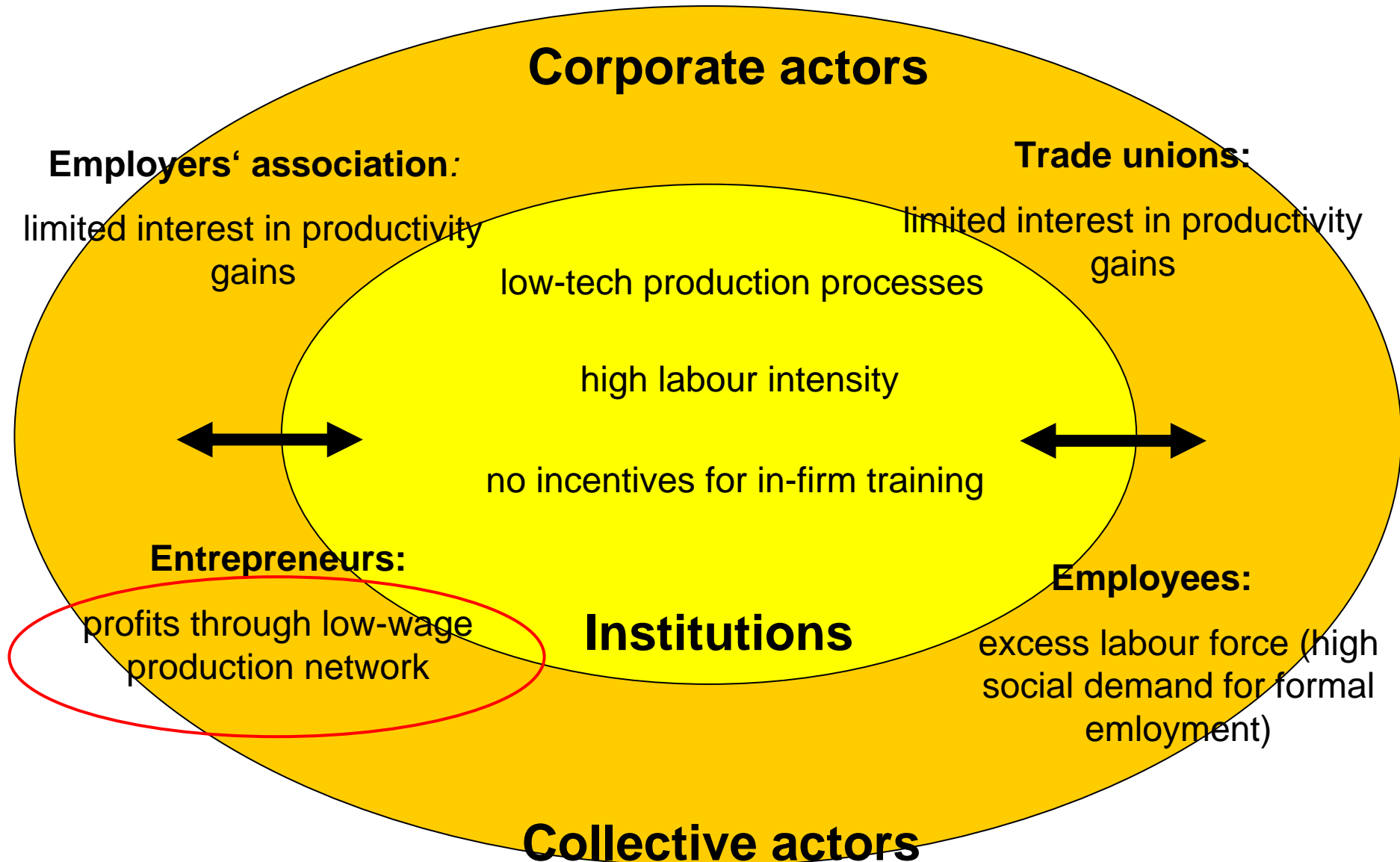
Production regime: Bangladesh



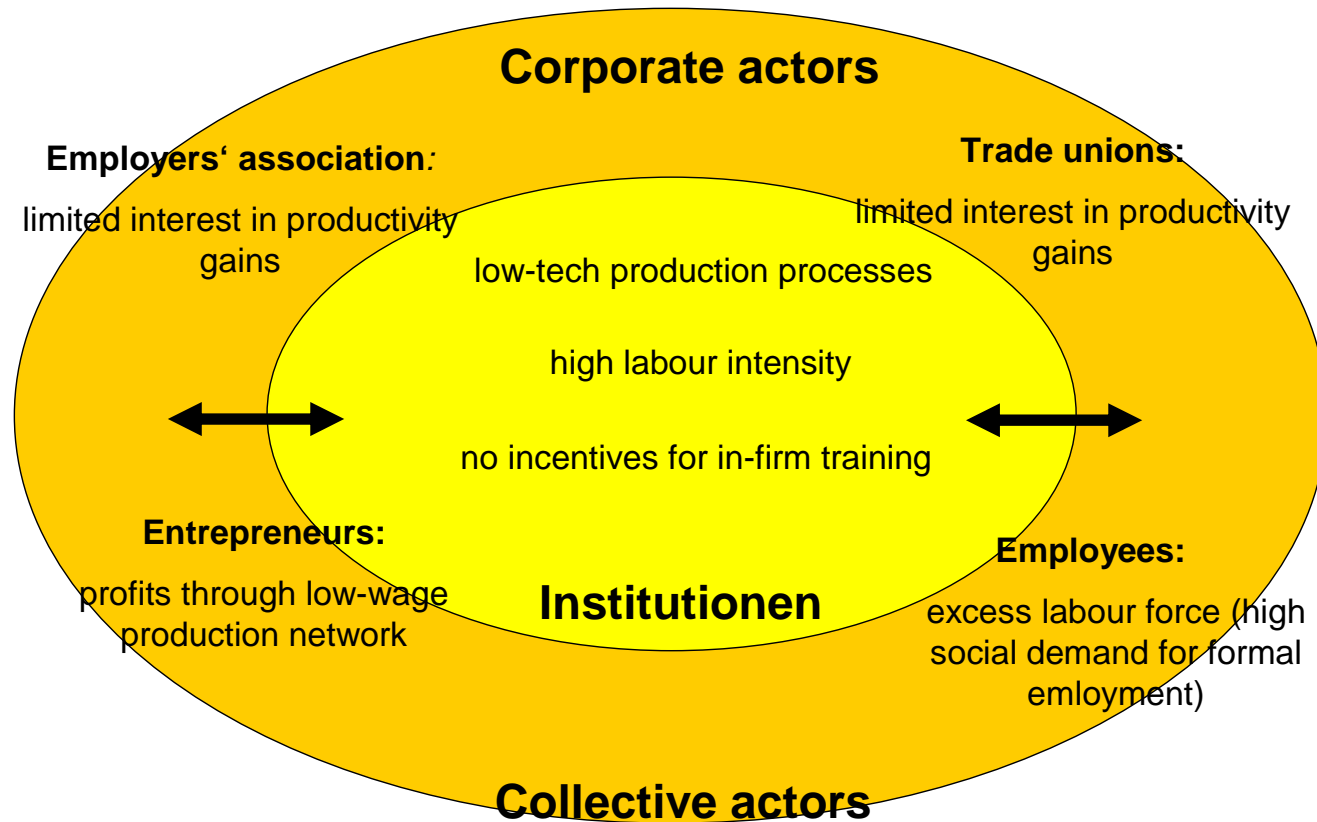
Production regime: Bangladesh



Production regime: Bangladesh



Production regime: Bangladesh



Limited demand for a formally trained labour force

Production manager (42 / m)

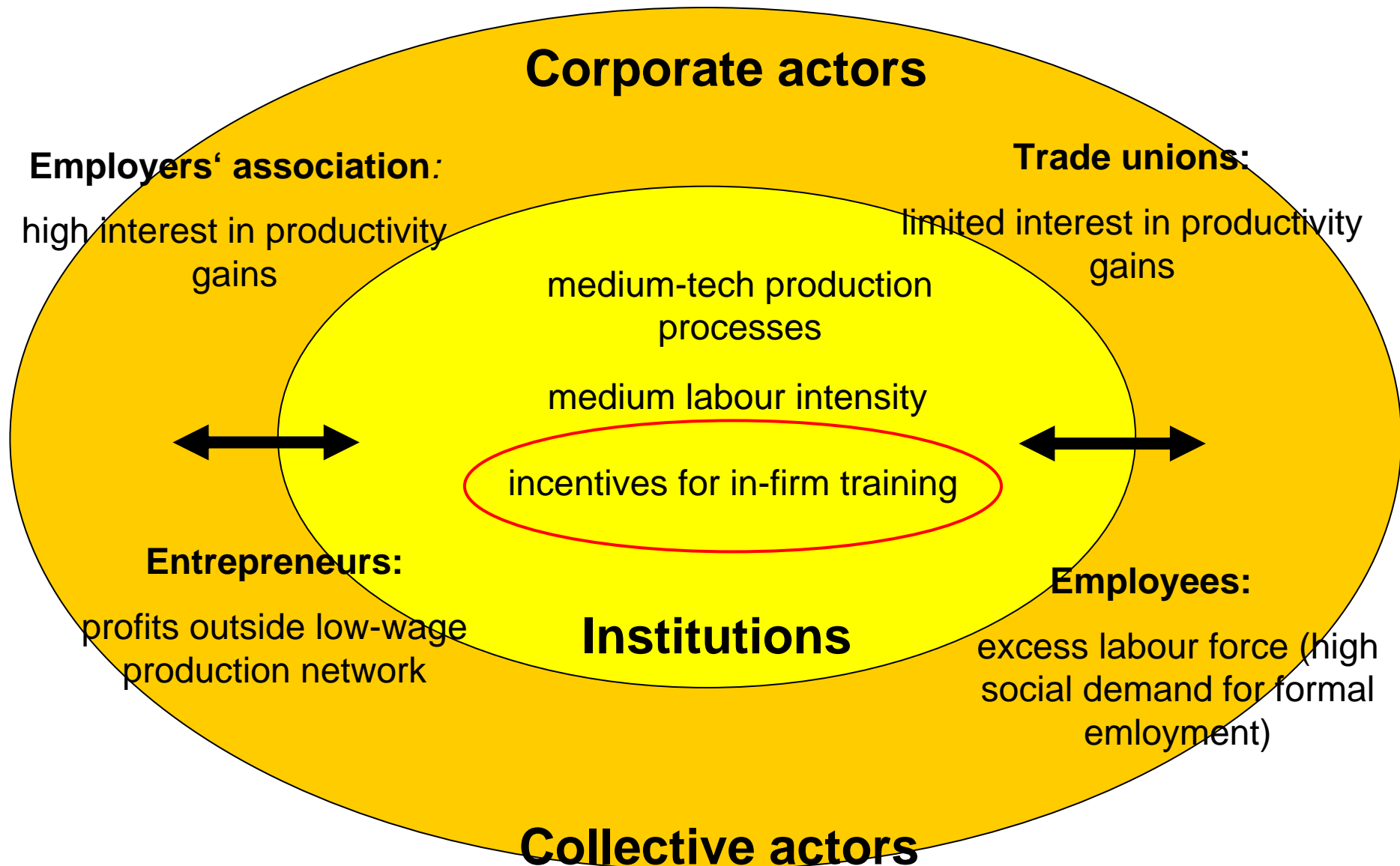
- **Educational background:**

- 1986 secondary-school certificate (=GCSE) (Dhaka)

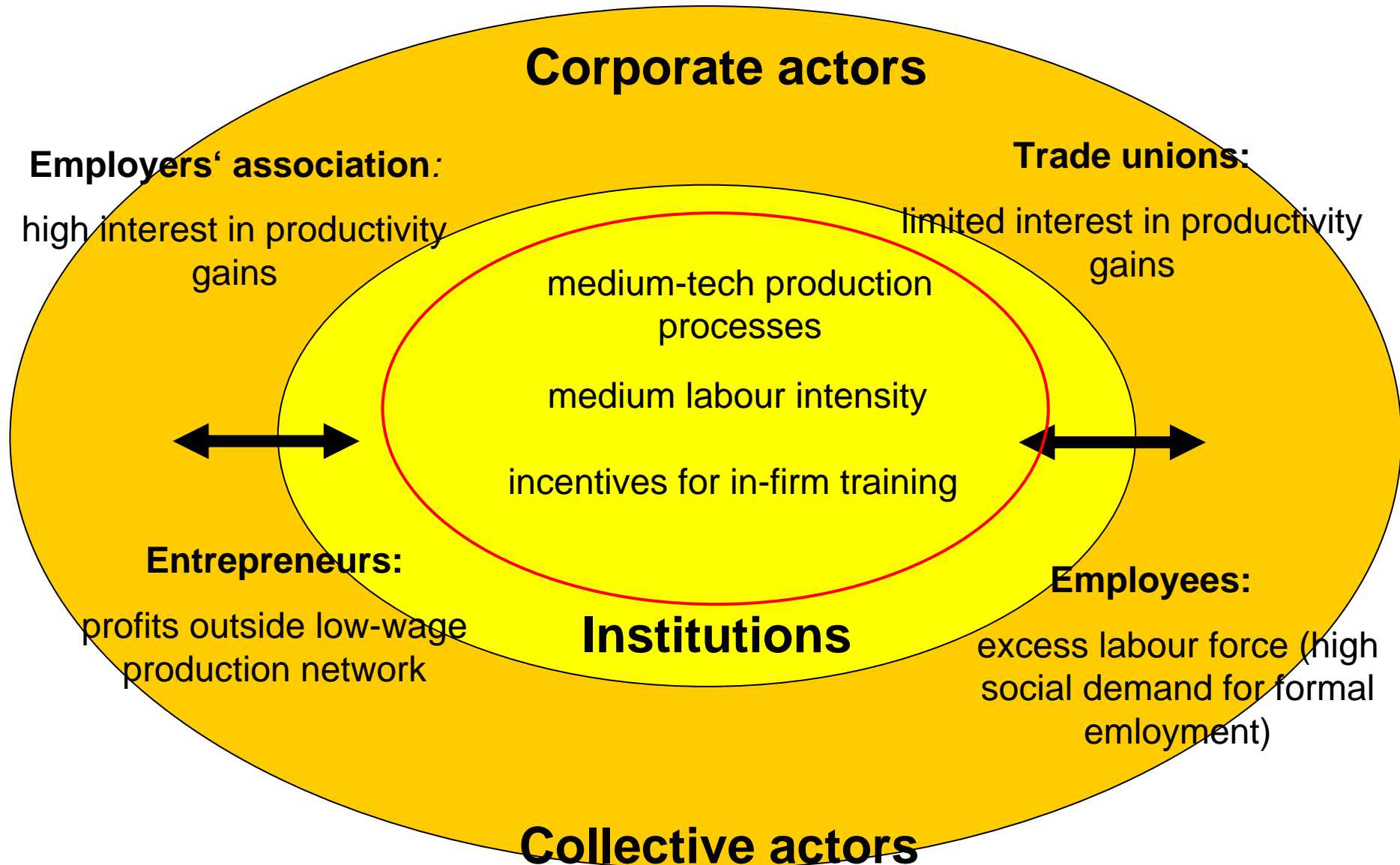
- **Professional career**

- 1986 sewing machine operator factory y
- 1987 assistant supervisor factory x
- 1987 supervisor factory x
- 1990 supervisor in-charge factory x
- 1992 floor in-charge factory x
- 2000 assistant production manager factory x
- 2003 production manager factory x

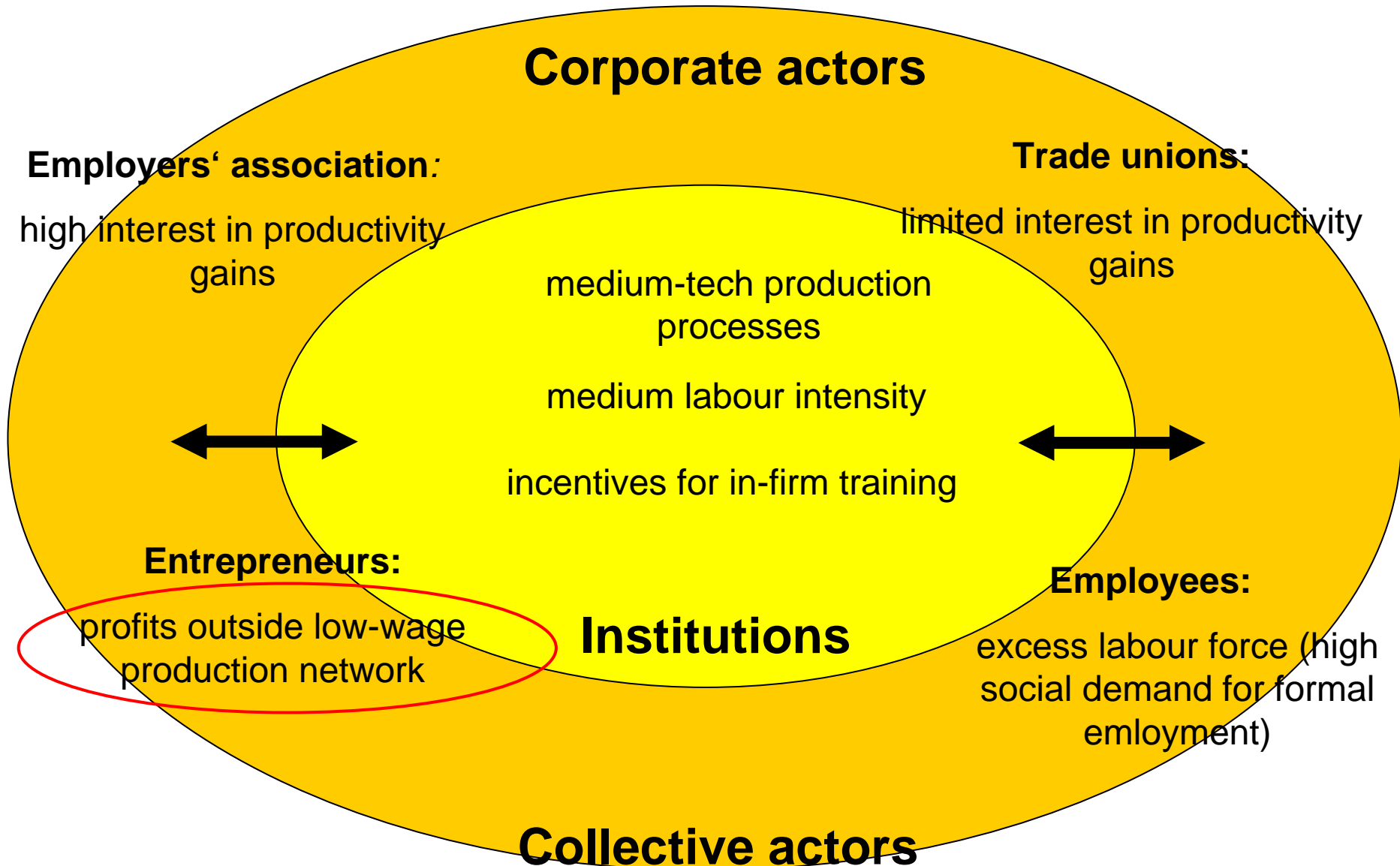
Production regime: Sri Lanka



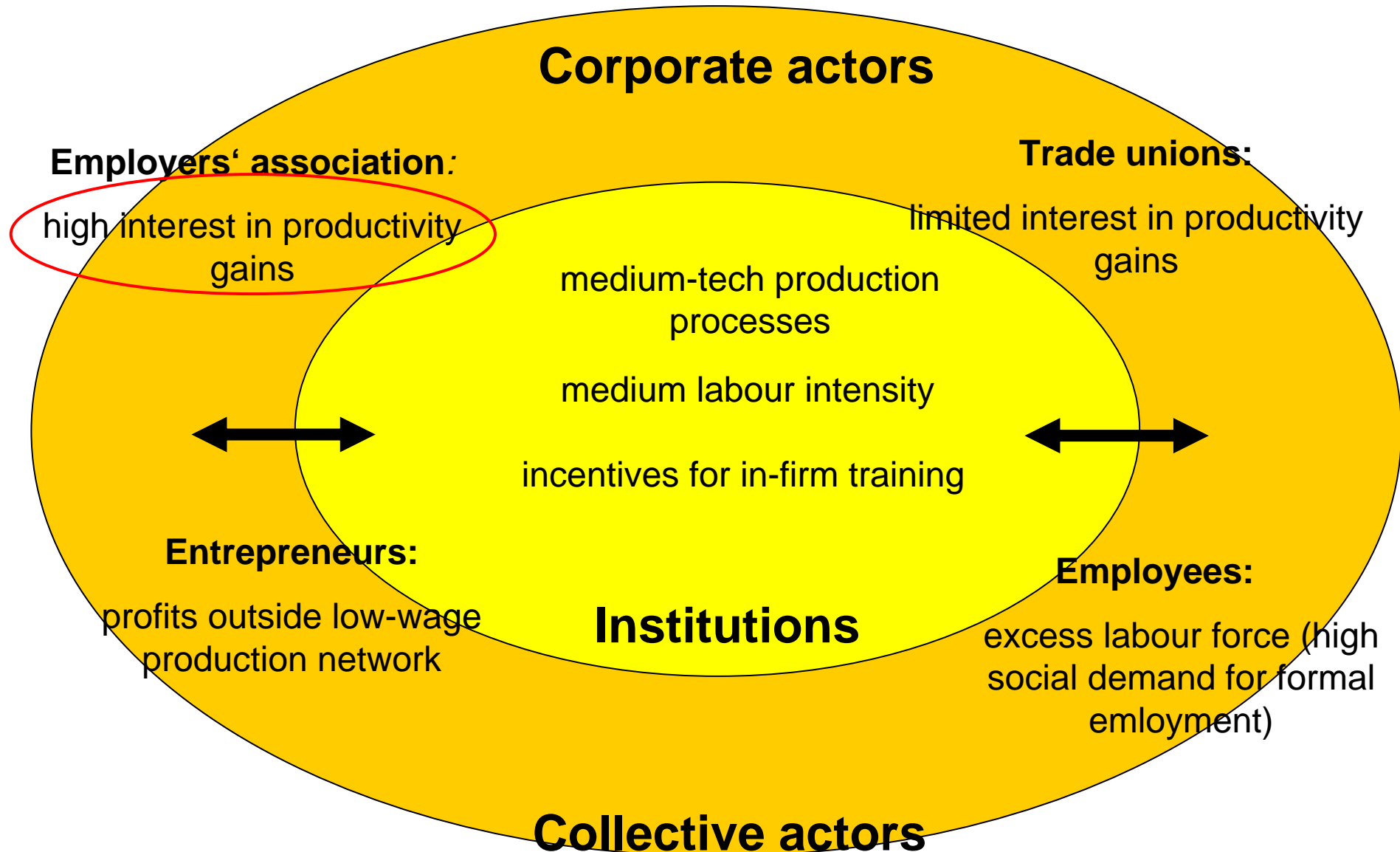
Production regime: Sri Lanka



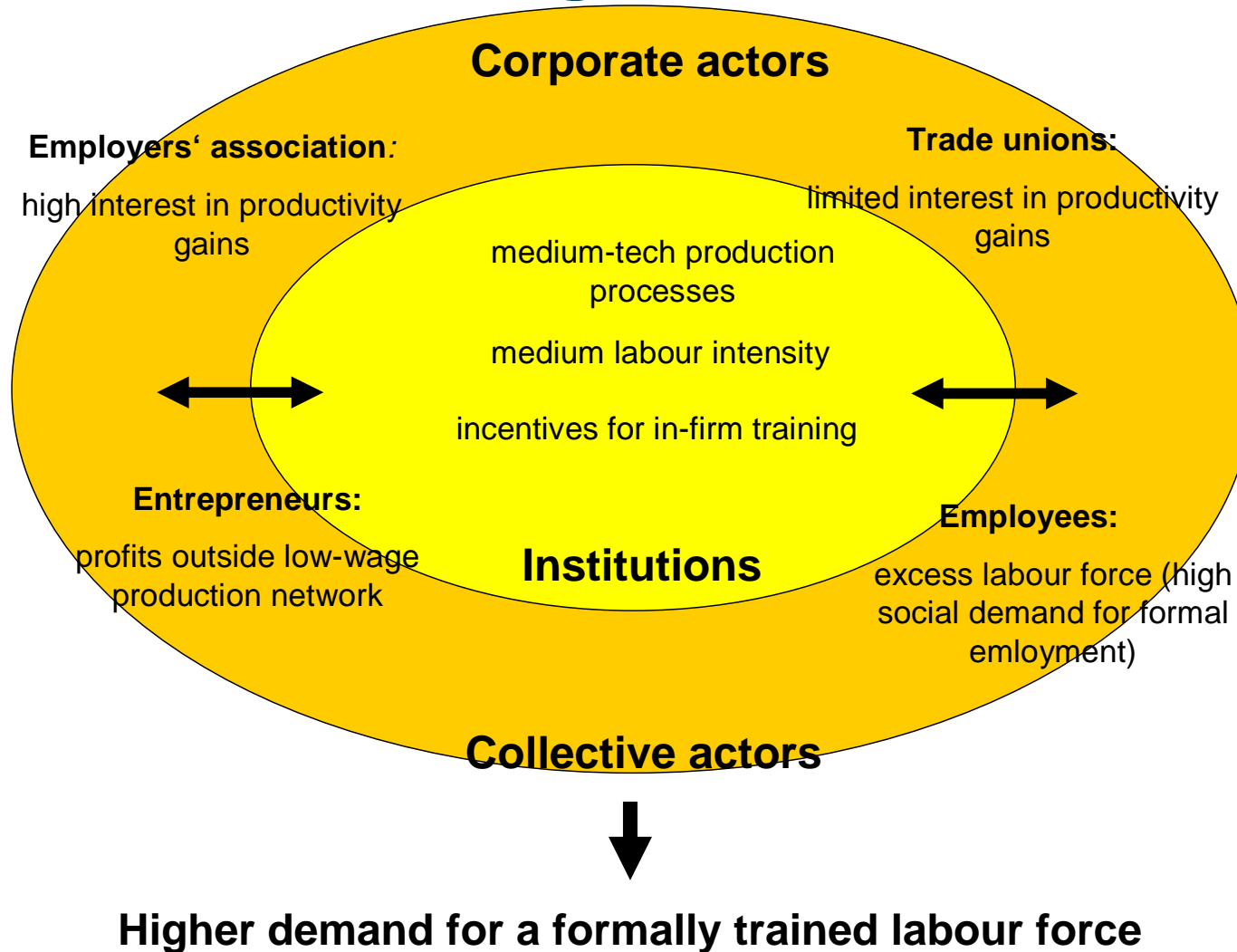
Production regime: Sri Lanka



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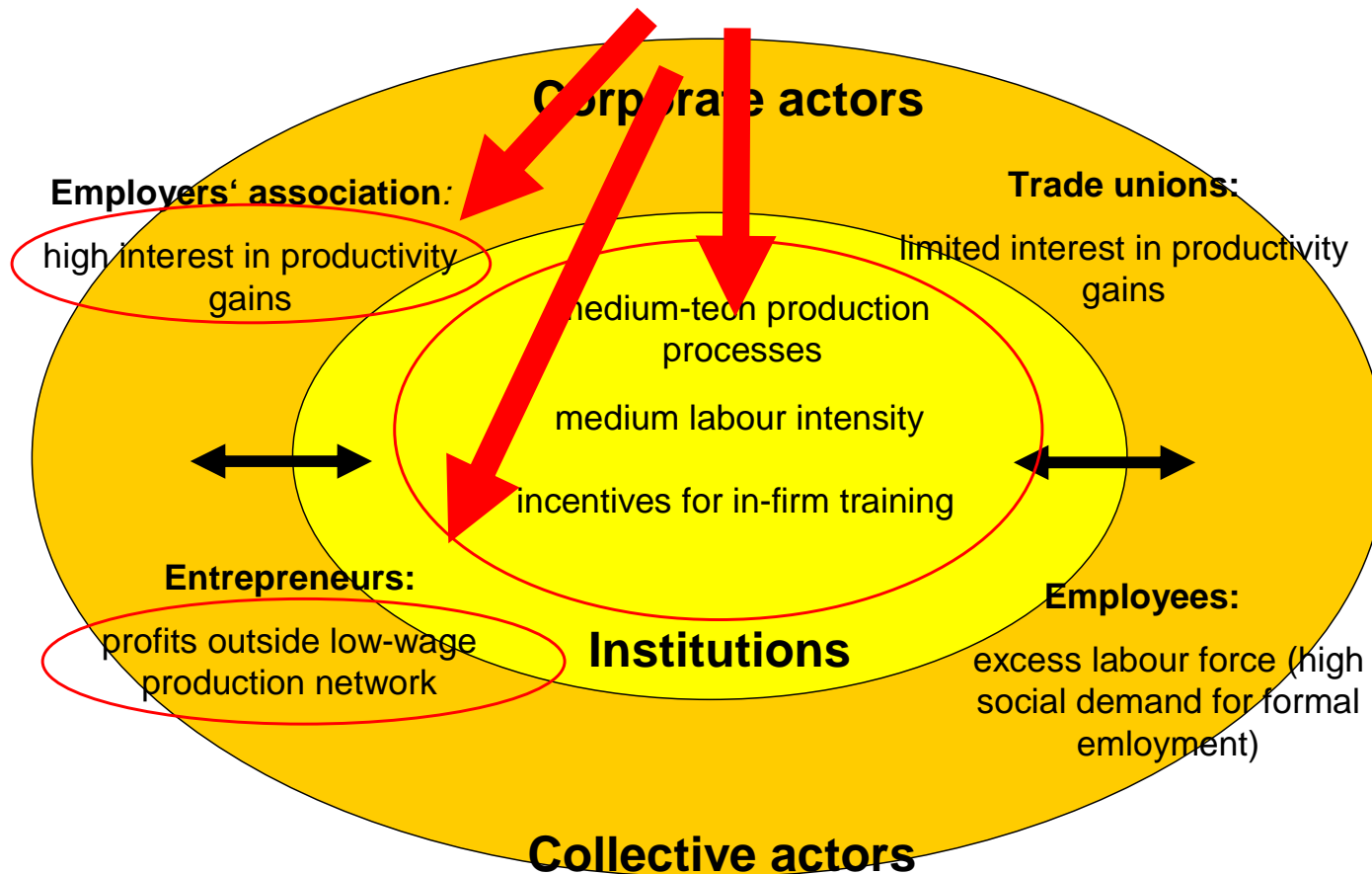


Production regime: Sri Lanka



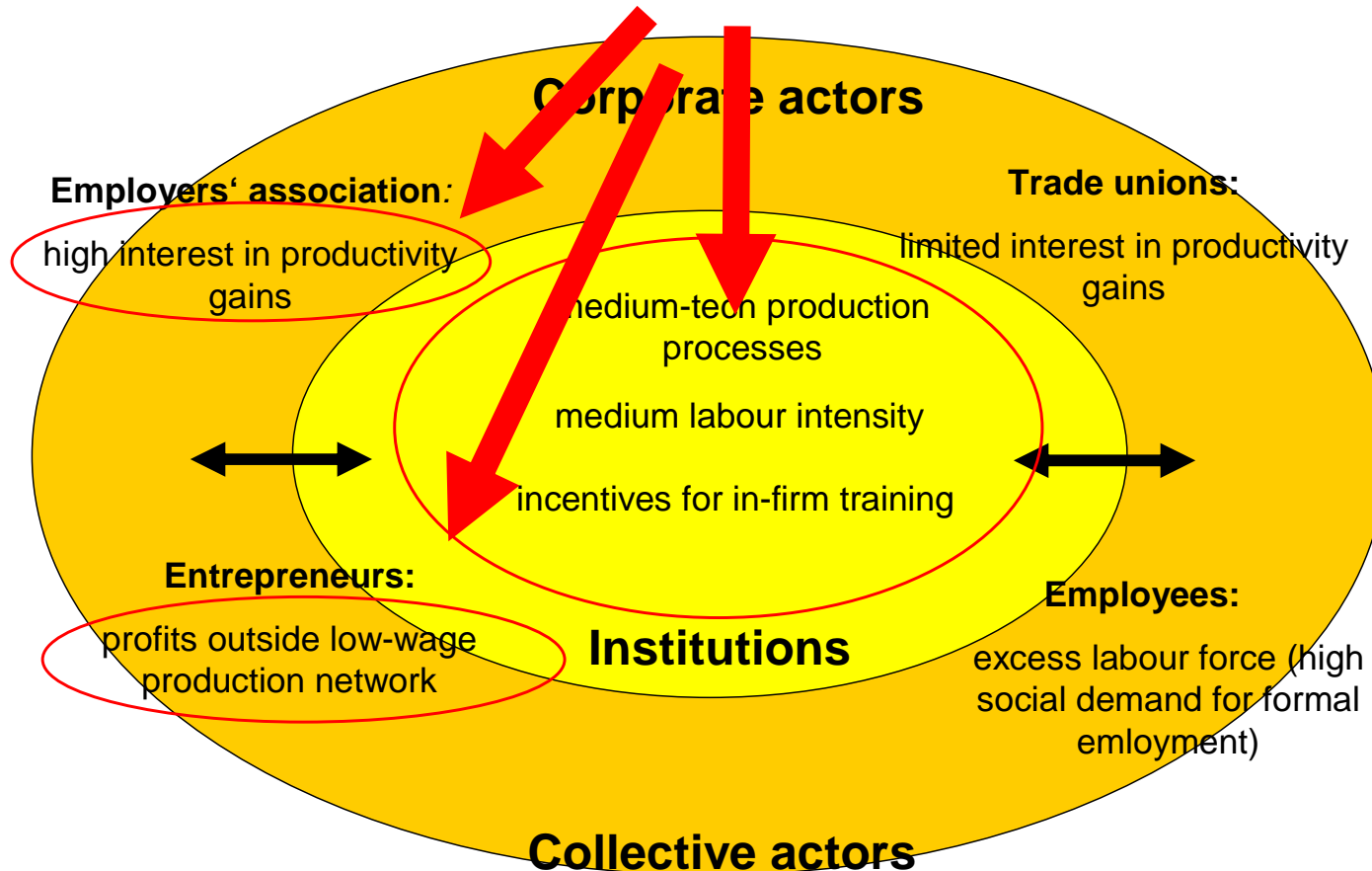
Production regime: Sri Lanka

Critical juncture 2:
High amount of foreign direct investment after 1977



Production regime: Sri Lanka

Critical juncture 3:
Small group of experienced local producers of
Indian origin before 1977



4 Conclusion

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- The mismatch between supply of and demand for formally trained skills results from...

... critical junctures within the educational regime.

... critical junctures within the production regime.

4 Conclusion

- The mismatch with regard to formal skill-training programmes for the garment industry is path-dependent ...
 - ... from the respective effects of nation-building on educational expansion.
 - ... from the respective initial position of the first garment entrepreneurs within the global garment production regime.