STIGMA AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT

Submitted by Pamela Bretschneider to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
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Pamela Bretschneider
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This work would not have been possible without help and support of a number of people. Most important were my supervisor Prof. Michelle Ryan and my husband Uwe. However, as a social psychologist I would also like to recognise the wider social context that led the path to this thesis.

Until the age of eleven I was grown up in the former German Democratic Republic that stopped to exist twenty five years ago. In October 1989 widespread public anger resulted in demonstrations against the regime in many cities. The most powerful slogan became “Wir sind das Volk!“ ("We are the people!"), reminding the leaders that a democracy needs to be ruled by the people and not by an undemocratic party that claims to represent them. On the 9th of November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and the process of Germany's re-unification began. In the following years eastern Germany went into a deep recession resulting into a mass unemployment. Among those unemployed people were my parents – an experience that was very formative for me. However, living in a free country made it possible to study subject of my choice and to leave the country to go for further studies to the UK.

Being a student in the Social and Organisational research group at the University of Exeter has been a truly exceptional experience and was not something that I have taken for granted. In fact, it was a coincidence of fortunate circumstances.

Dresden, 9th November 2014
ABSTRACT

The unifying theme of the chapters presented in this thesis is how people who are not in paid work respond to the stigma of unemployment or the possibility of being regarded as (similar to the) unemployed. Although unemployment is a topic of continuing interdisciplinary interest, most of the extant psychological research has tended to focus on investigating those unemployed people who are officially registered as such. While such an approach is helpful, less research attention has been paid to the fact that there are many groups who are not in paid employment, such as stay-at-home mothers or students. There may be circumstances under which those people may be perceived as very similar to the unemployed. As a consequence, they may perceive a stigma of unemployment.

In this thesis we develop this idea by conceptualising people who are not in paid employment in terms of their social identities. The primary goals of this thesis are twofold: first, to demonstrate that the stigma of unemployment not only impacts on the behaviour of registered unemployed people, but also on other people who are not in paid employment. Second, to demonstrate that people not in paid work respond to perceptions of stigma and the possibility of being seen as unemployed by using psychological strategies that are based on their group memberships. Therefore, this thesis investigates how social identification processes interact with perceptions of stigma to influence possible coping behaviour and well-being.

In Chapter 1 we begin by reviewing the extant literature on unemployment and stigma. In Chapter 2 we introduce the social identity approach and illustrate how it can be applied to research on groups of people who are not in paid employment in a way
that advances both fields. In Chapter 3 we develop the rationale of this thesis and outline a concept to investigate behaviour and responses of different kinds of people not in paid work. In Chapter 4 we present a survey study of unemployed people that supports the notion that they do perceive stigma impacting on their well-being. We present two experiments with university students in Chapter 5 aimed to investigate a threat of possible future unemployment. The findings demonstrate that future job prospects may impact on social identification with other students and well-being. In Chapter 6 we present two studies with stay-at-home mothers that provide evidence that stay-at-home mothers also perceive the stigma of unemployment, but cope with it in different ways than registered unemployed people and students. An experiment with stay-at-home mothers sought to investigate how an imposed unemployed identity affects their coping strategies and well-being. Both studies found support that an alternative identity of being a mother can be a powerful coping resource that is able to protect against negative effects of perceived stigma on well-being. Finally, in Chapter 7, we review and integrate our findings, discuss limitations, and consider theoretical and practical implications. In addition, we suggest new avenues for theoretical and practical work in the research fields of unemployment, stigma, and social identity. We conclude that, overall, the findings we present in this thesis point to the powerful role that stigmatisation and social identification processes can play in determining responses of people who are not in paid work.
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CHAPTER 1

THE STIGMA OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The Value of Employment

“What do you do?” If we meet people and someone asks us this question, we are most likely to respond in terms of our profession: I am a builder, a nurse, a politician, a psychologist, and so on. Indeed, one’s job tells us a lot about an individual and what defines him or her. Hence, we expect a builder to be handy, a nurse to be warm, a politician to be eloquent, and a psychologist to be empathic.

In this way, many of us define our role in society by the work that we perform. Indeed, work serves a variety of very important functions and is directly involved in satisfying a number of individual needs (Maslow, 1954), such as income, stability, and security. In addition, work is also involved in satisfying a number of social needs. Through work we have contact with groups beyond the family, which offers opportunities to develop social skills and receive social support (Jahoda, 1982). Work allows us to achieve a sense of self-esteem and to develop a sense of purpose or usefulness. For many, having a job or a function in our society plays an important role in defining one's social status and in forming one's social identity. Hence, work is part of our self-concept and gives us a sense of who we are and where we belong.

If paid work helps to define both our individual and social needs (Jahoda, 1982),
Chapter 1

the absence of paid employment may not only have financial repercussions, it may also have psychological consequences (Breakwell, 1986). However, work is not always a paid activity. In fact, many working activities are unpaid, for example, domestic chores; education; caring for children, dependants or ageing parents; or voluntary work. However, while paid work is highly rewarding in society, this may not be the case for unpaid work (Bird, 1999). Many people not in paid work may feel that their work is not valued in the same way as paid work. In this way, individuals who are not in paid employment may find it difficult to see their function in society, establish high self-esteem, or maintain their well-being (Boye, 2009).

In the following chapter, we will first examine in more detail those groups of people who are not in employment. We will then argue that there is a clear stigma attached to being unemployed. Next, we will introduce the stereotypes and the content of the stigma of unemployment and explain where it might come from. Then, we will discuss how the stigma of unemployment impacts negatively on well-being. Based on this, we will argue that there are several characteristics of the stigma of unemployment that differ from those of other social stigmas and discuss why the stigma of unemployment may not only impact on the well-being of registered unemployed people, but also on other people who are not in paid employment. Afterwards, we will introduce several coping strategies that people may use in order to deal with a social stigma. We will close this chapter with a summary and conclusion.

Different Social Groups Who Are Not in Paid Employment

Much of the research that has investigated people who are not in paid employment has been particularly concerned with those who are formally registered as unemployed (e.g., Paul & Moser, 2009). As defined by the International Labour...
Organisation (ILO), a person is classified as unemployed if he or she is not only without work, but also actively looking for work and available to start immediately (International Labour Organisation, 2012). This definition is used to determine national statistics on the number of unemployed people and the unemployment rate. In the period from May to July 2014 the official number of unemployed people in the UK was 2.02 million, which corresponds to an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent (National Statistics Online, 2014).

However, due to this definition, official statistics are likely to underestimate how many people are not in paid work (Fryer, 2006). In addition to the number of unemployed people there are those who are considered as “economically inactive” (National Statistics Online, 2014). This group consists of people who are not seeking a job or are not available to start in the next two weeks. The main economically inactive groups are students, people looking after family and home, temporarily or long term sick and disabled, retired people, and discouraged workers (National Statistics Online, 2014). The current economic inactivity rate is 22.1 per cent (8.93 million). Hence, the absence of paid work affects many social groups, not only registered unemployed people. For such individuals, while not officially registered as unemployed, the category unemployed may be self-relevant, too.

For example, mothers who decide to stay at home and care for their children may be categorised by others as unemployed. More specifically, they may be seen as lazy, unskilled and not contributing to society (Bingham, 2013b). Indeed, mothers may feel a societal pressure not to become a homemaker (Bingham, 2013a; Harding, 2013). On the one hand, being able to decide whether to stay at home or return to work is intended to give mothers the same chances to stay in paid employment as men and is an
achievement of modern society. On the other hand, there may be negative accompaniments to this achievement. For example, a decision to stay at home caring for children may seem very out of date. Domestic and childcare work is not valued in the same way as paid employment because mothers who decide to return to work (are expected to) manage to do their home work in addition to their paid job (Bingham, 2013b).

Another group that may be affected by the category of unemployed are students. For example, others may perceive students to be idle or not contributing to society (Rushowy, 2009). As a result, they may be perceived as very similar to the unemployed. However, the category unemployed may also be relevant for students when future job prospects for them are not encouraging (Smurda, Wittig, & Gokalp, 2006). In this case, students may anticipate the future possibility of becoming unemployed (Walker, 2012; Williams, 2013).

A third group of people for whom the category unemployed may be relevant are retired people or almost retired people. According to Schoeb (2013) people with no job who have almost reached their age of retirement could stop categorising themselves as unemployed and decide to see themselves as retired. More specifically, they may distance themselves from the category of being in working age and instead define themselves as retired or as a pensioner.

While there is much research that has investigated how individuals who are officially counted as unemployed think and feel (e.g., Paul & Moser, 2009), there is little research on those who are not included in such statistics, but who are nonetheless not in the labour force. How do such individuals perceive their social world? Is their role in society (e.g. student, mother) enough to enable them to feel similarly valued as
those people who are in paid employment? Or do they feel more similar to unemployed people because they feel unvalued?

We have argued that the category of unemployed may be relevant for those people not in paid employment. However, there is also clearly a stigma attached to unemployment that displaces unemployed people to the margins of society (Goffman, 1963). Based on this, it may be the case that the stigma of unemployment not only affects registered unemployed people but also other people not in paid employment.

The Stigma of Unemployment

Content of the Stigma – Evidence that it Exists

A social stigma is defined as “... some attribute or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context” (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998, p. 505) The stigma of unemployment fits this definition because being unemployed is a social identity that is devalued in society (Goffman, 1963). Previous research has identified a number of stereotypical beliefs that characterise the stigma of unemployment (e.g., Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013; Furåker & Blomsterberg, 2003; Gallie, 1994; McFadyen, 1998). First, it has been argued that the stigma of unemployment arises, at least in part, from stereotypes about attitudes to work. For example, unemployed people may be labelled as lazy or “work-shy” or it might be thought that unemployed individuals could find a job if only they tried harder (e.g., McFadyen, 1998). Second, unemployed individuals may be assumed to possess personal shortcomings or negative attributes that caused them to be unemployed. For example, unemployed individuals may also be seen as unintelligent, incompetent, stupid, or unproductive (e.g., McFadyen, 1998). Third, it has been argued that the stigma of unemployment is connected with stereotypical beliefs about negative
consequences for society (Furåker & Blomsterberg, 2003). For example, unemployed people are criticised for wasting taxpayers’ money and resting on social benefits (“benefit scrounger”).

Those stereotypes exist not only in the UK (e.g., McFadyen, 1998). For example, a study by Furåker and Blomsterberg (2003) demonstrated that such attitudes are relatively widespread in the Swedish population. Moreover, recent sociological accounts from Germany may help to further illustrate public opinion about unemployed people (Heitmeyer, 2008). Here, almost half of the study respondents agreed with the statement that most long-term unemployed individuals are not really interested in finding a job. Moreover, almost two thirds found it outrageous that long-term unemployed individuals were able to lead a comfortable life at the expense of society. In addition, approximately one third of the respondents agreed with the statement that society could no longer afford unemployed people.

Devaluations like this may also facilitate prejudiced attitudes that may manifest in discriminatory behaviour. It is not so much explicit hostility or aggression that unemployed people may experience, rather, there seems to be discrimination against the unemployed when they are applying for jobs (Bassett, 2011; Cohen, 2011). Karren and Sherman (2012) identified two kinds of discrimination in the selection process. First, covert discrimination occurs when there is a hiring bias against the unemployed. This may happen, for example, during a job interview when the interviewer unconsciously seeks information that confirms negative attitudes (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Second, overt discrimination occurs when unemployed applicants are screened out from the onset.

Empirical evidence that of such discrimination against the unemployed exists is
relatively scarce (Karren & Sherman, 2012). However, a study by Oberholzer-Gee (2001) demonstrated that some unemployed people tend to receive fewer invitations to job interviews the longer they are unemployed. Job applicants in the United States and in Switzerland were asked to send applications to companies offering jobs in the local press. Each company received one application from an unemployed person and one application from an employed person. Oberholzer-Gee's finding was that in Switzerland a person who has been unemployed for two and a half years had a 45% lower chance of getting a job interview than a person who was employed. However, in the United States this form of discrimination was not found.

Although Oberholzer-Gee (2001) could not find signs of discrimination in the United States, more recent work by Ho, Shih, Walters, and Pittinsky (2011) did find some evidence. In their study conducted in the US, Ho and colleagues asked students to evaluate a job applicant who was either employed, unemployed because of redundancy, or unemployed because of voluntarily leaving work. The authors not only demonstrated that the stigma of unemployment exists but also that the mere status of unemployment independently from the reason of unemployment-onset led to a hiring bias against the unemployed. In a second study, Ho and colleagues found out that the stigma of unemployment can only be alleviated by providing a reason that focuses on external causation of unemployment (employer bankruptcy).

In another study Oberholzer-Gee (2008) further investigated the reasons why long-term unemployed individuals may not be invited to job interviews. He found that employers tend to believe that unemployed applicants had been interviewed previously but had not been hired, concluding that there must be a reason why unemployed individuals were not offered a job. As a consequence, employers interpret
unemployment as a negative signal and presume that an unemployed individual is not productive.

**Where Does the Stigma Come From?**

The stigma of unemployment is, like any social stigma, socially constructed (Crocker et al., 1998). Hence, the stigma of unemployment is the result of norms and expectations of the public that are related to perceptions of the relative ease with which people can find employment (Crandall, 2000). But what forms these norms and expectations? There are a number of concepts that discuss how such broader views about the unemployed are formed: Protestant work ethic, beliefs in a just world, and a tendency to attribute internal causes for other people's behaviour.

It has been argued that the stigmatisation of unemployed people goes back, at least in part, to the Protestant work ethic (Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). The Protestant work ethic is based upon the notion that work is central to society and is morally correct. Such attitudes may pose a threat to unemployed people because they are seen as lacking the Protestant work ethic. Research regarding the Protestant work ethic is mixed. On the one hand, there is evidence that strong endorsement of the Protestant work ethic is associated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed (Furnham, 1982, 1985). On the other hand, research was unable to show that unemployed people actually lack the Protestant work ethic and therefore identified it as an unfounded stereotype (Breakwell, 1986; Kelvin & Jarrett, 1985). The Protestant work ethic offers one explanation about the origins of the stigmatisation of unemployed people. However, stigmatisation of the unemployed is not only found in protestant cultures (e.g., Heitmeyer, 2008). Hence, it is reasonable to suggest that the stigma of unemployment also exists in other non-protestant cultures.
Another concept that can help explain the stigmatisation of the unemployed is the just world hypothesis (Breakwell, 1986; Lerner, 1980). Here, people believe, to varying degrees, that the world is a just place where individuals get what they deserve. Such beliefs also have consequences for the attribution of blame. Hence, for those with high levels of a belief in a just world, unemployed people are not seen as victims of difficult economical times; rather, they are themselves blamed for being out of work. In blaming unemployed people, the causes of unemployment are attributed internally to the unemployed individual and not externally to the situation. This tendency to overestimate internal causes and underestimate external causes when explaining other people's behaviour is also described in the fundamental attribution error (Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Ross, 1977). Indeed, a study by Ho and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that the stigma of unemployment is difficult to alleviate because of this tendency to attribute unemployment internally regardless of whether an unemployed individual left a job voluntarily or involuntarily. Hence, participants attributed low motivation to those voluntarily leaving a job and low ability to those who were made redundant.

However, how the stigma of unemployment is perceived and how it affects people may also depend on the social context. For example, sociological accounts have found some support that the impact of the stigma of unemployment is higher in times of low unemployment and lower in times of high unemployment (Omori, 1997). The researchers argue that this contextual variation is because an unemployed job applicant makes a worse impression when economic conditions are generally favourable compared to times when unemployment is relatively common, such as when a factory has closed. According to this argument, in good economic times an unemployed individual seems to be unwilling to work, as in such times it should not be difficult to
find a job.

However, in contrast, Oschmiansky, Kull, and Schmid (2001) argue that unemployed people are devalued more in times of economic crisis and before political elections when politicians identify unemployed people as scapegoats. They observed that German attitudes towards the unemployed became more negative when specific discourses were also present in the media, so called "laziness debates" [Faulheitsdebatten]. For example, the former Federal Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, reinforced the stereotype about lazy unemployed people by the statement: “There is no right to laziness in our society.” before an election of the German Bundestag (Hammerstein & Sauga, 2001).

Such contextual variations may influence attitudes towards the unemployed. However, psychological concepts such as protestant work ethic, beliefs in a just world, or a tendency to see internal causes for other people's behaviour give us a better understanding where the stigma of unemployment is rooted (Crandall, 2000). What unites these concepts is the argument that the stigma of unemployment has its basis in the value of employment in our meritocratic society. More specifically, the strong emphasis on individual achievement and expectations of high performance in workplace may foster stigmatisation of those who cannot conform to those expectations. That is, because employment has such an important role for our self-definition, everyone who is not in paid employment may be affected by the stigma of unemployment. For example, the stigma of unemployment may impact on the well-being of those not in paid work.

**Stigma of Unemployment and Well-Being**

**Well-Being of People Who Are Not in Paid Employment**

Well-being may be defined as a subjective evaluation of how we feel about and
experience our lives. Positive well-being is often associated with positive thoughts and feelings and good relationships, meaning, and purpose (Friedli, 2009). While academics still debate about a precise definition of ‘well-being’, most of the social psychological literature uses established measures as indicators of well-being (e.g., Latrofa, Vaes, Pastore, & Cadinu, 2009; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009), such as self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), or depression (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961).

While research investigating the well-being of economically inactive people is relatively scarce, there is a plethora of knowledge regarding the well-being and mental health of registered unemployed people. In this way, reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that unemployment is not only associated with an increase in distress symptoms and impaired mental health, but can also be a cause of such negative mental health outcomes (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009). For example, Paul and Moser concluded from their meta-analyses of 360 studies that unemployment leads to higher levels of depression and anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem and subjective well-being.

A recent survey of the Office for National Statistics in the UK revealed that the well-being of those who are economically inactive, such as students or stay-at-home mothers, is relatively high but is lower compared to those who are in paid employment (National Statistics Online, 2013). However, past research on mothers also demonstrated that being a stay-at-home mother is related to many negative mental health outcomes, such as lower life satisfaction and greater depression (Rizzo, Schiffrin, & Liss, 2013). In a similar vein, Buehler and O'Brien (2011) demonstrated that mothers who work part time have a better well-being compared to mothers who work full-time.
One possible explanation may be that mothers working full-time experience a limited work-life-balance whereas mothers who stay at home may experience that raising children and domestic work is not valued in the same way than paid work (Bird, 1999; Boye, 2009).

There are a number of psychological theories that attempt to explain the causes of impaired mental health among the unemployed. Most influential, the latent deprivation model (Jahoda, 1982) argues that employment not only provides people with manifest benefits (income) but also latent benefits (psychological needs). Jahoda lists five of these latent benefits: the need for time structure, social contact, sharing of common goals, status, and activity. She reasoned that being excluded from an institution that provides employment will lead to a deprivation of both manifest and latent benefits and therefore to impaired mental health. However, this theory has been criticised for its strong focus on environmental factors (Fryer, 1986). As an alternative, Fryer (1986) proposed the agency restriction model, which argues that it is financial hardship and the experience of poverty that leads to deteriorated mental health among unemployed people. A third influential theory that tries to explain the deteriorated mental health of unemployed people is the finances-shame model by Rantakeisu, Starrin, and Hagquist (1999). Here, the authors suggest that it is the combination of financial hardship and greater experiences of shame that contributes to negative effects on mental health. They argue that unemployed people are ashamed because of their financial situation, which makes it difficult for them to meet social expectations.

A study by Creed and Macintyre (2001) compared the impact of financial strain and a lack of latent benefits on well-being. They found the strongest correlations between financial strain and distress and between loss of status and distress. In another
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study Creed and Muller (2006) also regarded feelings of shame as a possible predictor. However, they could only replicate the finding that financial strain and the loss of status were the most important predictors of unemployed people's well-being.

In sum, a number of theories suggest different causes of diminished well-being among unemployed people: a lack of latent benefits, financial hardship, or feelings of shame. Although feelings of shame may be associated with perceptions of stigma, to our knowledge there is no empirical research to date that explicitly investigates the association between the stigma of unemployment and indicators of well-being among the unemployed and among other people who are not in paid work. There is, however, social psychological research about the association of stigma in general and well-being.

Perceived Stigma and Well-Being

Given that most research on stigma has been concerned with the ways in which stigmatised individuals are devalued, stereotyped, and discriminated against one might assume that a stigma has inevitable negative consequences for the well-being of stigmatised individuals. However, comparisons of average levels of self-esteem among stigmatised and non-stigmatised groups produce mixed results (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Major & O’Brien, 2005). Crocker and Major (1989) argue that most studies demonstrate that stigmatised individuals show the same or even higher self-esteem than non-stigmatised individuals. In addition, people from stigmatised groups seem to be generally satisfied with their lives and are able to maintain positive views of themselves and their group (Crocker et al., 1998; Diener & Diener, 1996). However, further research on perceptions of stigma demonstrates that not all stigmatised individuals are able to maintain their well-being, or are only able to do so under certain circumstances (Crocker et al., 1998; Crocker & Quinn, 2000; Major, 2006). In the
following section, we will first outline why a negative association between perceived stigma and well-being might not always be found. Then we will offer arguments why the stigma of unemployment in particular may have negative consequences on people who are not paid work.

Crocker and Quinn (2000) argue that one reason why a negative association between perceived stigma and self-esteem is not always found is that self-esteem tends to be conceptualised as a stable trait - consistent across social situations and contexts. The authors argue that self-esteem is rather state like and constructed within a particular situation. That means that self-esteem is dependent on the meaning the situation has for the self. Hence, not all situations make a certain stigma self-relevant, only those in which the stereotype could be applied to an individual (Camp, Finlay, & Lyons, 2002). In this way, there may be certain situations in which the stigma of unemployment is perceived to be self-relevant not only for unemployed people but also for other people who are not in paid work. For example, stay-at-home mothers may only be affected by the stigma of unemployment in situations in which they are led to think about not being in paid work.

In addition, there seem to be dispositional differences in the extent to which individuals are aware of or affected by stigma (Pinel, 1999). Hence, individuals who are high in stigma consciousness expect to be stigmatised by others, which may negatively impact on their self-esteem (Major, 2006). Such individual differences may also exist for people who are not in paid work. While some people may perceive a higher stigma of unemployment, others may perceive a lower stigma.

Alongside these arguments as to why perceived stigma and self-esteem are not necessarily negatively related to one another, there are also arguments as to why we can
expect that perceptions of stigma may have negative consequences on well-being. More specifically, recent reviews demonstrate that there is a negative relationship between perceived discrimination and indicators of well-being (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). In their meta-analyses, Schmitt and colleagues (2014) demonstrated a negative effect of perceived discrimination on a range of indicators of well-being, for example, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and life satisfaction. It could be argued here that perceived discrimination is not the same as perceived stigma. However, Schmitt and colleagues conceptualised perceived discrimination based on different kinds of stigmas, for example, race, gender, or disability. In addition, other researchers clearly link perceptions of stigma with perceived discrimination (e.g., Link & Phelan, 2001). Hence, it may be concluded that negative consequences of stigmatisation processes, such as the stigma of unemployment, are likely have a negative impact on well-being.

In addition, there are a number of reasons why the stigma of unemployment in particular may have negative consequences on people who are not in paid work. When investigating the stigma of unemployment it is important to note that there are specific features of the group and its stigma (Crocker et al., 1998; Jones et al., 1984). Most research regarding stigmatised groups has tended to investigate visible stigma, like gender or race (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009). Such stigmatised groups are also characterised by the fact that it is generally not possible to leave the group and that group membership is inherited. In contrast, the stigma of unemployment is characterised by a number of factors that differ from those of other stigmas: its concealability, its legitimacy, and its permeability. Importantly, those characteristics may make unemployed people vulnerable to experience low self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1998).
However, such features have not yet received much attention from social psychological research (Karren & Sherman, 2012).

First, being unemployed is not readily visible and is thus potentially *concealable*. For example, in an application process, an applicant may choose to reveal their unemployment status or disguise the fact that they are not currently working. An unemployed individual may also conceal by not telling friends or family about their own unemployment. People with a concealable stigma have the advantage that they may be able control whether, and to whom, they reveal the stigma (Quinn, 2006). In this way, concealing unemployment could be an asset through preventing negative effects of prejudice and discrimination. However, although being unemployed may be hidden from the eyes of others, unemployed people may still internalise society's negative views (Crocker & Major, 1989). Chaudoir, Earnshaw, and Andel (2013) argued that people with concealable stigmas face lower well-being than people with visible stigmas. It has been suggested that this is caused by thought suppression, rumination, or intrusive thoughts when concentrating on not to disclose (Barreto, Ellemers, & Banal, 2006; Major & Gramzow, 1999; Smart & Wegner, 1999).

Second, unemployed people belong to a very *transient* group. In contrast to other stigmatised identities, such as gender or race, it is generally possible for unemployed people to leave their group – by finding employment. Moreover, almost anybody can become unemployed, at least once in their lifetime. The permeability of the group boundaries between those who are employed and those who are not may put additional pressure to people out of employment for finding a job and may thus impact negatively on their well-being.

Third, unemployed people are characterised by the fact that they are generally
not seen as victims of circumstance. Instead they are perceived to be personally responsible for becoming and staying unemployed. Unlike other stigmatised groups, such as racial minorities, unemployed people are perceived to be in control of their stigma and are expected to remove it. If attempts to remove the stigma fail, it may have negative consequences for the well-being of such stigmatised individuals (Rodin, Price, Sanchez, & McElligot, 1989). In line with this, Crocker and colleagues (1998) argue that those stigmatised individuals who accept individualistic ideologies may be particularly at risk of developing lower self-esteem and reduced well-being. Such individualistic ideologies include perceived controllability, Protestant work ethic, or beliefs in a just world, as outlined in the previous section. They legitimate the disadvantaged position of the stigmatised and the discrimination that may be levied against them, which makes them vulnerable to experience low self-esteem. Given that the stigma of unemployment is based on such individualistic ideologies, many people not in paid work may find themselves in a situation in which they easily internalise that they are a drain on society, lazy, or incompetent (Crocker & Major, 1989).

To summarise, the combination of these factors – concealability, permeability, and legitimacy – gives us a nuanced picture of the stigma of unemployment. Having these nuances in mind is important because it enables us to better understand how people who are not in paid work experience this stigma and it helps to explain why the stigma of unemployment not only affects registered unemployed people. For example, the fact that it is generally possible to find a job may impact on stay-at-home mothers. In particular, mothers are seen to be able to choose between returning to work and staying at home. Indeed, politicians and the government strive to motivate mothers to return to work after they have given birth to their child (Bingham, 2013a) and many
mothers do decide to return to work within one year after childbirth (Barrow, 2013).

Consequently, mothers are perceived to be responsible for not being in paid work and might be seen as very similar to unemployed people: lazy and not willing to work properly (Bingham, 2013b; Harding, 2013).

The fact that it the stigma of unemployment is not readily visible may also be important for other groups of people who are not in paid employment. For example, instead of taking on negative views, students may concentrate on being a student, gaining skills and knowledge that are important for future job market. In a similar vein, mothers may concentrate on being a good mother and childcare, rather than seeing themselves as non-working. In this way, it is possible that individuals can conceal that they are not in paid employment in a socially acceptable way.

To summarise, we have argued that the stigma of unemployment not only affects the well-being of those who are registered as unemployed people but also the well-being of other people who are not in paid employment. It is important to note here that the fact that the stigma of unemployment also affects other people out of work does not mean that they are necessarily confronted with this stigma by others. Nor does it mean the stigma of unemployment impacts on them because they categorise themselves as unemployed. People like mothers or students have a role or function in society. Hence, it is unlikely that they see themselves or are seen by others as unemployed. Nonetheless, many aspects of the stereotypes and stigma – such as not contributing, being lazy, or unskilled – may impact on thoughts, feelings, and well-being of people not in paid work when they perceive it as self-relevant in a particular situation.

Overall, the processes of when and why the stigma of unemployment leads to a decline in well-being are certainly complex, involving a number of factors, such as
contextual or dispositional characteristics (Major, 2006). We argue that the characteristics of the stigma of unemployment make it likely that people not in paid work may perceive it as self relevant and are at risk of experiencing lower well-being. This leads to our first research question (RQ1).

RQ1: How does the perceived stigma of unemployment impact on the well-being of different social groups that are not in paid employment?

However, when examining how stigma affects indicators of well-being, it is also important to note that stigmatised individuals possess several strategies to protect their well-being.

**Coping with the Stigma of Unemployment**

In this section we will first review previous research on how individuals might respond to social stigma. We will introduce several coping strategies and integrate assumptions of how people who perceive a stigma of unemployment may use those strategies.

Recent work on stigma more broadly suggests that stigmatised individuals clearly do cope with the negative effects of stigma and its consequences (Laar & Levin, 2006). In this way, stigma can be conceptualised as a kind of stress, since stigma poses a unique set of demands on the individual, like prejudice or negative stereotypes (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Miller & Major, 2000). Such an approach draws attention to the ways in which people appraise the stigma and their situation. The stress and coping model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) states that there are two mechanisms involved in the process of coping.
First, the process of coping involves a cognitive appraisal that there is a stressful demand (primary appraisal). Indeed, many unemployed people are fully aware that they are judged socially by others (J. Hayes & Nutman, 1981). A study by Bourguignon, Desmette, Yzerbyt, and Herman (2007) confirmed this awareness by demonstrating that unemployed people are influenced by those negative stereotypes. The researchers activated the stigma of unemployment by asking unemployed participants to list five characteristics that they thought unemployed people possess. Afterwards, they investigated the performance of unemployed people depending on whether or not the stereotype was activated. Unemployed people performed more poorly on a reading comprehension task and reported lesser intentions to search for a job when the stereotype of unemployment was activated. Thus, we can assume that unemployed people do experience stigma, and moreover, when this stigma is made salient, for example, in a job interview, it may have the potential to exacerbate the problem.

Second, the process of coping involves an appraisal of whether or not there are coping resources that might enable the individual to deal with that demand (secondary appraisal). Hence, a stress response occurs only if stressful demands exceed the individual’s coping resources. Stigma and negative stereotypes may exceed the coping resources of individuals on personally relevant demands but also on group relevant demands (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). For example, negative stereotypes about being unemployed can be stressful to an individual out of work, because the individual perceives a self-relevant threat. An unemployed individual may also perceive a threat that is relevant to the group of unemployed people because he or she belongs to that group. The fact that unemployed people perceive the stigma of unemployment to be stressful (primary appraisal) builds the basis of possible coping strategies (secondary
Social psychological accounts of stigma discuss several ways in which individuals can cope with stigma to avoid its negative consequences (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Miller & Kaiser, 2001). There have been several suggestions on how to classify these strategies. For example, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggested that there are two types of responses to cope with a stressful event: problem-focused and emotion-focused. While problem-focused coping aims to change or eliminate the source of the stress, emotion-focused coping aims to manage negative emotions that accompany a stressful event. Coping responses can also be divided into approach and avoidance responses to stressors (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Recently, a coping model that organises several coping dimensions has been proposed by Compas and colleagues (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001; Connor-Smith, Compas, Wadsworth, Thomsen, & Saltzman, 2000) and serves as a basis to study stigma-related coping strategies (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Varni, Miller, McCuin, & Solomon, 2012). The authors distinguish approach responses, which are characterised by efforts to engage with the source of a stressor (engagement coping) from avoidance responses, which are characterised by efforts to disengage from the stressor (disengagement coping). Engagement coping can be further distinguished into strategies that aim to enhance a sense of personal control over the situation (primary control coping) and strategies that aim to adapt to the situation (secondary control coping).

One strategy that people not in paid work may employ is searching for a job. This is one example of primary control coping through which people actively try to solve the problem. Indeed, previous research on unemployment has been particularly concerned with job seeking and offered a number of insights regarding the antecedents...
of job-search behaviour (e.g., Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999) and how job search behaviour is related to well-being (e.g., Kinicki et al., 2000; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Wanberg, 1997). For example, Kanfer and colleagues (2001) found in their meta-analysis of 59 studies that job search behaviour is positively related to self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, McKee-Ryan and colleagues (2005) found negative associations between job search behaviour and mental health. Other research has found positive associations under certain circumstances, such as high situational control (Wanberg, 1997) or satisfactory re-employment (Kinicki et al., 2000). Overall, research on the antecedents and outcomes of job search behaviour is rather mixed and complex. It may be the case that searching for a job impacts negatively on mental health when a job cannot be found. However, from a stigma perspective, searching for a job may be positively related to well-being and may thus be regarded as a successful strategy in order to reduce perceived stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001).

Another strategy that may be used to cope with stigma is to restructure one's cognitions about the stigma. This is an example of secondary control coping (Crocker & Major, 1989; Miller & Kaiser, 2001) through which stigmatised people can protect their self-esteem by avoiding unfavourable comparisons with non-stigmatised people. This can be done in a number of ways. One form of cognitive reconstruction is that stigmatised people may compare with people who are similarly stigmatised (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998). For example, a stay-at-home mother may compare their financial situation with those of other full-time mothers. Another example may be that an unemployed person who fails to get a job offer after an interview may compare themselves with another unemployed person who has not received a job offer either.

A second form of cognitive reconstruction is to selectively value those
dimensions on which the one's group performs well and devalue those dimensions on which the one's group performs poorly (Crocker & Major, 1989). For example, stay-at-home mothers may downplay the importance of money and instead stress the importance of a good family life for their children's welfare.

A third form of cognitive reconstruction that has been examined is to attribute poor outcomes or performance to prejudice and discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989). For example, if an unemployed person fails to get a job, he or she may believe that this was because the interviewer discriminated against them. In this way, attributing negative outcomes to external factors, such as prejudice and discrimination, can protect self-esteem. In contrast, attributing negative outcomes to internal and stable factors, such as lack of ability or intelligence, can lead to lower self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989).

However, it has been suggested that not all stigmatised people benefit from attributing negative outcomes to discrimination. For example, Ruggiero and Taylor (1997) demonstrated that participants only perceived discrimination when they were absolutely sure that they were evaluated in a discriminatory way. The authors argue that this is because people are motivated to stay in control of their outcomes, rather than giving control away through external attribution to prejudice. In a similar vein, Crocker, Cornwell, and Major (1993) found that many people seem to be reluctant to attribute negative outcomes to prejudice and discrimination, but prefer to attribute such outcomes to personal shortcomings. It has been argued that this is especially the case for stigmas for which people are blamed (Crocker et al., 1998; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). This is an important point, because we have seen that unemployed people are often perceived to be responsible for being unemployed (Ho et al., 2011).
In this sense, denying or minimising perceived prejudice may be a more accessible strategy for unemployed people than attributing negative outcomes to prejudice. Denial of prejudice is a form of disengagement coping, a third cluster of coping strategies (Compas et al., 2001; Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Disengagement coping comprises not only denial but also strategies to avoid stigma-related stress. For example, an unemployed person who expects to be asked “what do you do?” at a party might choose not to go. Another way to avoid stigma-related stress may be to conceal not being in paid work (Quinn, 2006). For example, an unemployed individual may choose to keep their unemployment secret from friends. A third method of disengagement coping is to psychologically disconnect one's self-esteem from being a member of a stigmatised group (Crocker et al., 1998). For example, an unemployed individual may protect their self-esteem by evaluating unemployment as not relevant for their self-esteem. Instead, such people may base their self-esteem on other, less stigmatised groups to which they belong.

Overall, this review of the literature on coping with stigma has demonstrated that there are a number of strategies that stigmatised individuals can use in order to protect their self-esteem and well-being. On this basis, we outline examples of how people who are not in paid work may cope with the stigma of unemployment. Some are more pro-active (e.g., searching for a job), some are more cognitive (e.g., selectively valuing certain dimensions) or distancing (e.g., avoiding meeting employed people).

It is important to note here that individuals may use several strategies at the same time in order to cope with a stigma. More specifically, it is unlikely that there is one strategy that is effective across all situations (Miller & Major, 2000). Accordingly, the appropriate question is not: Which of the strategies works best? But rather: What
strategy works best for which person in what situation? Hence, the situation for people not in paid work who are registered as unemployed may be different from those who are not registered. For example, it may be the case that registered unemployed people are more likely to search for a job than stay-at-home mothers. In contrast, stay-at-home mothers may be more likely to reconstruct their own cognitions about not being in paid work than registered unemployed people.

However, most of these strategies are yet to be investigated in relation to the stigma of unemployment. Hence, we have only a limited understanding of whether or not these strategies are utilised by people not in paid work and their level of successful. This leads to the second research question (RQ2).

RQ2: How do different social groups that are not in paid employment respond to the perceived stigma of unemployment?

Summary & Conclusion

In this opening chapter we have outlined and drawn together the main bodies of literature and theoretical arguments that are central to the present research pertaining to the stigma of unemployment. The starting point was the assumption that the stigma of unemployment has its basis in the value of employment in our meritocratic society. As a consequence, because employment has such an important role for our self-definition, those who are not in paid employment may be affected by the stigma of unemployment. Thus far, research has tended to treat unemployment as a demographic variable and looked primarily at those unemployed people who fulfil the criteria to be considered as registered as unemployed (ILO). However, as we have seen, there are many people who
are not captured by such a definition, such as full-time mothers, students, or unemployed people who are no longer actively searching for work. Based on this, we argued that the stigma of unemployment may not only be relevant for officially registered unemployed people but also affects other people who are not in paid work.

We explored the circumstances under which people not in paid work may perceive the stigma of unemployment to be self-relevant and how it differs from other kinds of stigmas. For example, the stigma of unemployment is concealable and people not in paid work are perceived to be responsible for not being in paid work. We argued that these characteristics may make it difficult for those outside of paid work to maintain their well-being, as stigmatisation is perceived to be legitimate and unemployed individuals may easily internalise society's negative views.

We then reviewed responses to social stigma that may be very divergent; however, social psychological research clearly indicates that stigmatised people do employ coping strategies. Research about social stigma has identified a number of possible coping strategies that may help to protect self-esteem from negative effects of stigma. We applied those coping strategies to the stigma of unemployment and discussed how people who perceive a stigma of unemployment to be self-relevant may respond. For example, people out of paid work may proactively deal with their situation by searching a job. They may also deal with it by restructuring own cognitions and thus interpret the situation in a positive way.

However, the fact that the stigma of unemployment may affect different groups not in paid work leads to the question how these different group memberships affect the ways in which the stigma of unemployment is perceived. It may be the case that coping with the stigma of unemployment depends on how members interpret their different
group memberships. Hence, a group-based analysis may provide additional insight into responses to the stigma of unemployment.

Along these lines, we are concerned with how people who are not in paid work cope either personally or as a part of a social group with a perceived stigma of unemployment. We propose that the social identity approach gives us a powerful framework for examining processes through which people not in paid work understand their relationships with other people and their wider social context. In this way, social identity processes may help us understand such stigma processes and why the stigma of unemployment not only affects registered unemployed people but also affects other people who are not in paid work. In the following chapter we will review the principles of social identity theory and self-categorisation theory and then attempt to apply those principles to groups of people who are not in paid employment.
CHAPTER 2

THE STIGMA OF UNEMPLOYMENT FROM A SOCIAL IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE

As outlined in Chapter 1, the stigma of unemployment not only has negative effects for those who are registered as unemployed, but can also impact on those whose group memberships are potentially associated with the threat of unemployment. In this way, stay-at-home mothers and students may both be affected by the stereotypes, expectations, and discrimination associated with unemployment.

When someone sees themselves as a group member, their attitudes and behaviours may be influenced by group-related factors (Turner, Oakes, S. A. Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). One way to understand such group-related factors is provided by the social identity approach, comprised of social identity theory (SIT, Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation theory (SCT, Turner, 1982, 1985, 1991; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Social identity theory is concerned with group processes and intergroup relations and provides an integrated framework from which to analyse group behaviour grounded in social context. It offers a comprehensive account of how groups guide individuals’ values and behaviours and how social groups interact (S. A. Haslam, 2004). Self-categorisation theory expands on these ideas, focusing on the processes through which individuals come to identify with particular
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social groups (S. A. Haslam, 2004).

At the broadest level, the social identity approach argues that group memberships and more specifically, the social identities of group members, play a key role in determining an individual's behaviour and well-being (S. A. Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012). In this way, investigating the group memberships and social identities of people who are not in paid employment can enhance our understanding of those people's feelings and thoughts. More specifically, social identity processes may not only help us to explain the behaviour and well-being of registered unemployed people but also of other people not in paid employment. To this end, we aim to make a novel contribution by applying a social identity approach to people who are not in paid work and the stigma of unemployment.

The social identity approach contains a number of core assumptions (for reviews see S. A. Haslam, 2004). However, we will concentrate on those assumptions that are most relevant for the present purpose: investigating the role of social identification for people who are not in paid employment. These are: (a) the distinction between personal and social identity, (b) the impact of group status, (c) possible responses to low status and stigma, and (d) the importance of multiple identities.

**Personal and Social Identity**

One of the key assumptions contained of the social identity approach is that one’s self can be defined both in terms of one’s personal identity and in terms of various social identities (Turner, 1982). The notion of personal identity refers to individual's self-knowledge about their own attributes; for example, their physical appearance or intellectual qualities. In contrast, individuals derive their social identities from the groups to which they belong (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). There are
many possible social identities available to a given individual within a given context.
Tajfel (1978, p. 63) defines social identity as “that part of an individual’s self concept that derives from (...) his knowledge of (...) membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Turner and colleagues further argue that a given group membership, and the way we feel about this membership, determine our cognitions, attitudes, and behaviour (Turner et al., 1994).

We can infer that when we aim to investigate behaviour it is useful to examine individuals' reactions not only in terms of their personal identity, but also in terms of their social identities. Some groups to which we belong are given, such as our nationality or gender, while some of our group memberships are chosen, such as our profession or memberships in political organisations or sports teams (Turner, 1982). As outlined in Chapter 1, if we consider unemployed people as a group, it is a group that has a very transient membership. Individuals are not born unemployed, nor have they necessarily chosen to not be in paid work. Nevertheless, not being in paid work is not just an individual circumstance or a lack of a professional membership. Instead, being unemployed is connected with a group membership that has norms, expectations, practices, and stereotypes associated with it (Breakwell, 1986). Those norms and expectations impact on how others see people not in paid work and also how those not in paid work people see themselves. On this basis, it is reasonable to suggest that not being in paid employment and the social identities that are connected with this lack of work may impact on our self-concept.

In order to understand the processes that guide our self-concept and identification, we need to consider the cognitive principles that are outlined in SCT
(Turner, 1982, 1991; Turner et al., 1987, 1994). Turner and colleagues suggest that our self-concept occupies a movable point on a bipolar continuum with the extremes of personal identity and social identity. More specifically, when one defines oneself in ways that are closer to personal identity, then one will act more in line with one’s personal interests. However, when one’s self-concept moves closer to social identity, then one will see the world through the lens of this social identity. As a consequence, in such intergroup situations, individuals see themselves not in terms of their personal characteristics, but rather in terms of the group's characteristics. As a result, group members self-stereotype themselves as interchangeable with other group members and think and act more as prototypical group members (Hogg & Turner, 1987). This process is called “depersonalisation” (Turner, 1982). When the self is depersonalised, then group members see both ingroup and outgroup members as relatively homogenous. Thus, it is not just our personal identity that shapes our behaviour in such intergroup situations, but rather a particular social identity.

As mentioned above, there are many social identities available to each individual at any given time. However, typically one identity is seen to be dominant or salient in a given situation. The salience of a given identity is, in part, determined by the perceiver's readiness to use the category, its relative accessibility, and by the principles of fit (Oakes, 1987; Oakes, Turner, & S. A. Haslam, 1991; Turner, 1985, 1991). A social category is considered to fit or seem appropriate when it subjectively matches relevant features of reality (S. A. Haslam, 2004). There are two components of fit: comparative fit and normative fit. Comparative fit is defined by the principle of meta-contrast (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987) whereby a person will define themself in terms of a specific social category when the differences between categories salient in that context
are smaller than differences within that category (Turner, 1985). However, the
categorisation process is also determined by normative fit. In this way, a social identity
is more likely to be salient when the content of group comparisons is compatible with
existing expectations about a particular identity.

Let us illustrate the notion of salience with an example that includes the identity
‘unemployed’. Imagine that a man, Tom, who is currently unemployed, meets a former
colleague, Harry, on the train. If conversation were to turn to work matters, Tom’s status
as unemployed may become salient, highlighting the differences between Tom and
Harry. Consequently, if Tom categorises himself as unemployed he may feel similar to
other unemployed people. If the two of them meet another mutual friend, Sally, and the
conversation moves a topic that is relevant to gender, say childcare, both Tom and Harry
may stop thinking of themselves in terms of their profession and instead see themselves
more in terms of their gender. Now, if the train is suddenly delayed, the three of them
are in a similar situation and Tom may feel similar to the other passengers. In that
situation Tom is less likely to define himself as unemployed or in terms of his gender,
because this becomes less relevant in that situation. Instead, a fleeting but shared group
membership of being delayed passengers with an interest in arriving at their destination
on time becomes much more salient. Hence, while social identities have some enduring
cognitive structure, their interpretation and salience shifts depending on context

Taken together, SCT provides us with an explanation of how individuals come to
identify with particular social groups. This is essential for our understanding of the
distinction between personal and social identity. In this sense, identifying oneself as a
group member allows us to comprehend our place in a social world. However, central to
our analysis are intergroup relations and how low status groups come to respond to their social standing. Therefore, we need to have a closer look at the association between group status and well-being.

**Group Status, Social Identity, and Well-Being**

A key assumption of SIT is that people strive to achieve a positive sense of themselves. More specifically, people are motivated to perceive the self or the groups to which they belong as positively distinct from others on relevant dimensions (Tajfel, 1978). To this end, people evaluate themselves through the process of *social comparison* with others (Festinger, 1954). Hence, people can achieve a positive sense of self through comparisons with other individuals on personal domains but also through social comparisons of their groups with other groups on group relevant domains. For individuals who belong to groups that enjoy relatively high, consensually agreed upon status it is easy to derive a positive sense of self from their group membership (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). However, as Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 19) postulated, “the lower is a group's status in relation to relevant comparison groups the less is the contribution it can make to positive social identity”. One relevant comparison group for people who are not in paid employment are people who are in paid employment. If this comparison is made, it suggests that it might be difficult for them to derive a positive sense of self from their group membership. In this way, according to SIT, members of lower status groups can only achieve a positive social identity through psychological work, negotiations, or social change (e.g., Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Brown, 1978).

The low social standing of a group is often related to stereotypes and negative attitudes towards a group (Crocker et al., 1998; Goffman, 1963). Consequently,
members of lower status groups may face stigma and devaluation. In Chapter 1 we argued that there is a clear stigma attached to unemployment, making people out of paid work appear, for example, lazy or incompetent. Consequently, people who are not in paid employment may feel devalued on the basis of their group membership which may be negatively related to their well-being. Indeed, low status group members’ perceptions of being devalued has been linked to lower self-esteem (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999) and lower well-being more generally (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003; Schmitt et al., 2014).

One factor that has been shown to protect members of disadvantaged groups is identification with one's group (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009). More specifically, the social identity approach suggests that thinking of oneself in terms of a shared group identity rather than as an individual acting alone influences the ways in which individuals perceive such devaluations. Based on this, social identities that are psychologically relevant to a given stressor, such as perceived stigma, can be a lens through which the such devaluations are appraised (S. A. Haslam, 2004; S. A. Haslam, O’Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Indeed, Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey (1999) demonstrated that perceiving one’s group as discriminated against can lead to stronger identification with that group. On this basis, the authors developed the rejection-identification model, which argues that perceived discrimination is not necessarily associated with negative outcomes. In fact, it can serve as the basis for identification and group cohesion, which, in turn, may lead to collective coping strategies and better well-being. However, there are at least three reasons why the rejection-identification model may not work effectively for people out of paid work.
First, the buffering effect of social identification can only be demonstrated when
discrimination is perceived to be illegitimate, unambiguous, and pervasive
(Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Hence, the ways in
which stigma and discrimination is perceived impacts on the identification process and
its potential effectiveness. This is an important point because, as we have seen in
Chapter 1, the stigma of unemployment has some particular characteristics that may
impact on the ways it is perceived. As we have noted, people who are not in paid work
are often perceived to be responsible for their own situation. As a result, their lower
social standing may be seen as legitimate. Based on this, it seems unlikely that
perceived stigma leads to stronger identification among people who are not in paid work
(Major et al., 2002).

Second, Leach, Rodriguez-Mosquera, Vliek, and Hirt (2010) argue that it is not
perceived devaluation that leads to stronger identification. Instead, group identification
only buffers against the negative effects of devaluation when it exists prior to
devaluation. People not in paid work may not strongly identify with their group. One
reason why identification among people not in paid work is not high may be that the
stigma is concealable. More specifically, when concealing, people not in paid work may
find it hard to detect similar others or be detected by others, which is the basis for social
identification (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009). In this way, it may be the case that social
identification may not positively impact on well-being among people not in paid work.

Third, it has been demonstrated that relationship between social identification
and indicators of well-being in stigmatised groups is not necessarily positive (Crabtree,
Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010; Schaalmsma, 2011). For example, Crabtree and
colleagues demonstrated that ingroup identification can only provide a protective effect
when the group provides access to stress buffering mechanisms, such as stigma resistance and stereotype rejection. When groups do not provide such mechanisms, members of stigmatised groups may actually be worse off by identifying with their stigmatised group. This may also be important for people who are not in paid employment, because such stress buffering mechanisms may not be available for unemployed people who are often isolated and unorganised as a group (Breakwell, 1986).

Overall, there is evidence that a shared group identity can serve as a buffer against the negative effects of stigma on well-being. However, social identification can be regarded as both a source of vulnerability and resilience for stigmatised groups (Barreto & Ellemers, 2010). As we have argued, the stigma of unemployment has some characteristics that may prevent a strong identification with other people who are unemployed or who are not in paid work. As a consequence, it may be difficult for people not in paid work to establish a meaningful social identity that has a positive effect on well-being. This leads to our third research question:

RQ3: What role does social identification play for well-being in social groups that are not in paid employment?

Social Identity and Responses to Low Status

Given the arguments we have presented in the previous section, social identification with the group of unemployed people may not be the most effective response for people not in paid employment. How can people not in paid work respond to their low social standing in a different way? In the following section, we will start by
outlining the fundamentals of coping strategies. We will then describe the classic identity maintenance strategies outlined in the social identity approach and apply them to people who are not in paid work. Afterwards, we will look at the importance of alternative identities for people who are not in paid work.

Alongside with the distinction between personal and social identity, Tajfel (1978) suggested a similar bipolar continuum of *behaviour*, with extremes defined as either *interpersonal* or *intergroup*. At the interpersonal end of the continuum, individuals act as individuals with individual motives that serve people's personal identity. At the intergroup end of the continuum, individuals act in terms of their group membership with group-based motives that serve people's social identity. However, Tajfel (1978) argued that it is unlikely that behaviour is solely guided by either extreme end of the continuum. Rather, he proposed that individuals are, in a given situation, closer towards one end then the other. Hence, the way in which we interpret a given situation in terms of the bipolar continuum will have consequences for our behaviour.

SIT argues that the ways in which members of low-status groups seek to achieve a positive sense of self vary as a function of the way in which individuals interpret their social world (Tajfel, 1978). In this way, individual's belief structure impacts on how they react to low status. Tajfel (1975, 1978) proposed that alongside the interpersonal-intergroup continuum and the difference between personal and social identity, individuals hold beliefs about the nature of structural relations between groups in society and suggested an associated continuum with two extremes: social mobility or social change. The *social mobility belief system* is characterised by the belief that individuals can move freely between groups. More specifically, if individuals perceive that it is possible to attain group membership in a higher status group (social mobility
beliefs), then they are more likely to try to improve their social standing by joining a higher status group. Conversely, the social change belief system is characterised by the belief that individuals can achieve social change. More precisely, if it is not possible, or not desirable, to move between groups, then individuals are more likely to improve the social standing of the whole group collectively (social change beliefs).

According to these original formulations of social identity theory, a key determinant of people's reaction to being part of a low status group is whether they see themselves as individuals in terms of their personal identity or as group members in terms of their social identity. More specifically, when individuals define themselves in terms of their personal identity, that means when they identify weakly with a group, then they are more likely to hold social mobility beliefs. In contrast, when individuals define themselves in terms of a social identity, that means when they highly identify with a group, then they are more likely to hold social change beliefs. Together, these continua provide a basis for preferred identity maintenance strategies that map on to the interpersonal-intergroup continuum as being either individual- or group-based (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this way, individual strategies are seen to correspond to the social mobility belief system and the interpersonal end of the continuum. In contrast, collective strategies are built on the social change belief system and the intergroup end of the continuum.

SIT outlines a number of identity maintenance strategies that individuals, such as unemployed people, may use to address low status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). There is the individual based strategy of individual mobility, and there are two group-based strategies: social creativity and social competition.
Individual-based Strategies

Engaging a social mobility belief system, unemployed individuals may try to achieve a positive sense of self by adopting a strategy of individual mobility (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This strategy typically involves group members pursuing a positive personal identity rather than a positive social identity by distancing themselves from their group. This may be done practically by actually leaving a group and joining another higher-status group or psychologically by subjectively lowering their identification with a group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Such distancing leaves the intergroup relations untouched and the relative status of the group remains intact.

In the case of people who are not in paid employment, one way of distancing oneself from the group can be done by searching and finding employment. Given the argument we have presented in Chapter 1, past research on coping with unemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001; Wanberg et al., 1999) and on social stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001) was concerned with a related strategy of proactive job search.

According to SIT, a main determinant of whether individual movement between groups is possible is the extent to which group boundaries are perceived to be permeable (Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers, van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990; Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993). Permeable group boundaries suggest that a higher status can be achieved through individual mobility. More specifically, when group boundaries are perceived as permeable, such as in the case of unemployment when an individual believes that it is generally possible to find a job, he or she should be more inclined to use individual-based strategies, such as searching for a job. Indeed, a study of a sample of unemployed people, Herman and Van Ypersele (1998) demonstrated that the perceived permeability of group boundaries positively correlated with the individual
strategy of individual mobility

However, research also indicates that choosing individual strategies depends on the degree to which people identify with a group. Based on this, it has been demonstrated that people with lower levels of identification are more likely to pursue individual strategies (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). We have outlined above that social identification with other people out of work may be difficult. As a consequence, searching for a job may be a very important strategy for people not in paid work.

However, searching for a job has not always been shown to be a successful strategy in terms of increasing well-being (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). This might be particularly the case when unemployed people face difficulties in finding a job (Kinicki et al., 2000). Here, group boundaries may be perceived to be impermeable and transition into the group of employed people seems not possible. Under these circumstances, the motivation to search a job may be impeded and other group-based strategies may become more important (Tajfel, 1978).

**Group-based Strategies**

In contrast to individualistic strategies, members of low status groups can build on the social change belief system by trying to achieve a positive group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; van Knippenberg, 1989). According to SIT (Tajfel, 1978) there are two group-based strategies: social competition and social creativity. These are likely to arise when people believe that moving between groups is not seen to be possible, that is, when group boundaries are seen to be impermeable.

Under such impermeable conditions, members of low-status groups are most likely to resort to social competition when status relations are perceived to be insecure,
that is, when they perceive their low status as illegitimate and unstable (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978). Here, perceptions of an ingroup's status suggest that another social structure is conceivable and alternatives to the status quo are possible (Tajfel, 1978). In fact, when group members perceive their status to be illegitimate, it is likely that group commitment and social identification is fostered, which may lead people to pursue social competition (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997; Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999). Under these circumstances, it seems feasible for members of low status groups to improve the status of their group as a whole and challenge their subordinate position (Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers et al., 1990).

People who are not in paid work may try to change existing views collectively by, for example, protest. Recently, Spanish people demonstrated against benefit cuts and for employment (Hedgecoe, 2012). There is also a permanent British initiative “Right to work”, which is concerned with saving jobs and organising protests, such as after factory closings (Right to work campaign, 2013). However, such protests are most observable in connection with a concrete occasion (cuts to benefits) or expected unemployment (factory closing). Also, protests like this aim to bring individuals into work rather than improving the status of the group. In fact, collective action that challenges the stigma of unemployment is relatively rare. This may be due to the fact that engaging in protest might lead to conflict situations. Kieselbach (2006) argues that it may be difficult for unemployed people to assert themselves in such situations since the undermined position of unemployed people is due, at least in part, to the (financial) dependence on state institutions. Similarly, Breakwell (1986) argues that unemployed people may face difficulties in achieving an effective protest as they are typically seen as unorganised and lacking coordination.
In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the stigma of unemployed people may be perceived as legitimate, in a way that it is not the case, for example, for ethnic minorities or disabled people. As a result, protests by unemployed people might easily be labelled as illegitimate and unemployed people themselves may be treated as individuals rather than the collective they may strive to be. In turn, to the extent that people are treated as individuals they are more likely to act in terms of their own personal interests rather than those of the collective (Schmitt, Ellemers, & Branscombe, 2003).

One potentially more effective group-based strategy that unemployed people may employ is social creativity as a way to see the own group in a better light (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Members of low-status groups are most likely to resort to social creativity when status relations are perceived to be secure, in the sense that they are stable and legitimate (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978). When status relations are perceived as stable, people do not expect that they will change in the near future. Similarity, when the low status of a group is perceived to be legitimate, group members are more likely to accept existing status relations and are less likely to challenge the status quo (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978). As a consequence, low status group members may engage in social creativity in order to see their group in a more positive light through cognitive reconstructions.

Individuals who engage in social creativity remain group members but change the ways in which they compare to other groups. SIT distinguishes three different ways in which individuals can improve their social standing through social creativity (Blanz et al., 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). First, individuals can define a new dimension on which the ingroup compares favourably to the outgroup. Hence, people not in paid work
may emphasise dimensions on which they are perceived to fare better than employed people. For example, rather than comparing themselves on the dimension of money, stay-at-home mothers may compare on the dimension of time available for their children. Within this comparison they may argue that they are able to offer their children better care than mothers with a job, because they can spend more time with them.

Second, positive distinctiveness can be established by finding *other outgroups* with whom to compare. Thus, instead of comparing themselves with employed people, people who are not in paid employment might compare with homeless people or asylum seekers. A third strategy is to positively *re-evaluate values* or attributes of the ingroup. For example, stay-at-home mothers may argue that not being motivated to have a job prevents job-related stress which may positively impact on children's welfare and a good family life.

These cognitive reconstruction strategies can be seen as an extension of the literature we examined in the previous chapter in relation to coping with stigma, such as attributing poor outcomes to prejudice. However, social creativity is not simply a way to see the self in a better light, rather it is a strategy that aims to see the whole group in a positively distinct way. This is because individuals are not only motivated to feel good about themselves, but also about the groups to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Both social competition and social creativity are group-based strategies as they aim to improve the social standing of the group as a whole. They can be seen as occupying the opposite end on the behavioural spectrum from individual mobility. Indeed, there is a body of research that is concerned with how individual mobility reduces motivations to engage in collective action (Ellemers, 2001). In this way, when
only a few token members manage to join the higher status group, remaining group members tend to lose motivation to engage in collective action (Wright, 2001). This could serve as an explanation for why unemployed people do not tend to engage in group-based protest.

However, research has begun to acknowledge that social creativity and social competition are not simply similar strategies at the far end of the intergroup continuum (Becker, 2012). Both strategies differ fundamentally in their consequences for intergroup relations. Social creativity leaves status relations relatively untouched, whereas social competition challenges the status quo. As a consequence, social creativity can undermine social competition as well, because if positive distinctiveness is already established by social creativity, collective action is no longer necessary. In this way, Becker (2012) demonstrated that if unemployed individuals engaged in downward comparison (a form of social creativity) this undermined intentions to engage in collective action.

Drawing together the insights, we have outlined a number of coping strategies and described how they map on the interpersonal-intergroup continuum. At the interpersonal end of the continuum we identified individual mobility. At the intergroup end of the continuum we identified social creativity and social competition. Applied to people who are not in paid employment, we argued that individual mobility and social creativity may be important strategies that may protect the self-esteem of people who are not in paid employment. However, there is less research that has investigated these identity maintenance strategies in samples of unemployed people (Becker, 2012; Herman & Van Ypersele, 1998). Hence, we derive our next research questions:
RQ4: In what ways are coping strategies related to social identification in social groups that are not in paid employment?

RQ5: In what ways are the coping strategies of individuals who are not in paid employment related to their well-being?

Multiple Group Memberships

Multiple Group Memberships of People Who Are Not in Paid Work

According to Turner and colleagues (1987), individuals are likely to categorise themselves as group members if they perceive some kind of similarity between themselves and other group members, for example, if they share the same fate or threat or if there is proximity and social contact. While some of these aspects may lead people to categorise themselves as unemployed or as not being in paid employment, such as a shared fate, others may not, such as lacking social contact (McFadyen, 1995). However, as mentioned above, one key tenet of SIT is that individuals belong to many social groups simultaneously (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this way, someone who is not in paid employment may simultaneously be a member of other groups, such as being a parent, a member of a sports team, being a charity worker, or a student.

Research in the social identity tradition has explored the impact of multiple group-memberships on our behaviour (e.g., Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Crisp & Hewstone, 2007; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). However, independent of research into SIT, previous research has been interested in multiple group membership and multiple roles. Initial literature on multiple roles proposed that having several roles can be a source of stress, which is caused by role conflict and confusion (Marks, 1977). However, other research also argued that having multiple group memberships can protect individuals
from negative life events (Linville, 1985; Thoits, 1983). In this way, multiple group memberships can help individuals to cope in an effective way, at least when they are important and not conflicting (Brook, Garcia, & Fleming, 2008).

Similarly, research in the social identity tradition argued that having multiple identities should impact positively on well-being. More specifically, individuals with multiple identities are likely to have more identity resources available, particularly in difficult times or life transitions. There is some empirical evidence to support this view. For example, a study of stroke survivors demonstrated that belonging to multiple groups was associated with better well-being after a stroke (C. Haslam et al., 2008). Researchers have also demonstrated that having multiple group memberships can serve as buffer against negative events or life transitions (Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009).

Hence, multiple identities may also impact on how people cope with not being in paid employment. While members of these groups can be threatened by the stigma of unemployment, alternative identities and group memberships may also protect them. Indeed, past research supports this idea. For example, McFadyen (1995) argues that coping with unemployment is influenced by whether individuals categorise themselves as unemployed or whether they are able to adopt another identity, for example, in terms of their profession or previous working identity or in terms of another socially acceptable category (e.g., as stay-at-home mother, retired person, carer of elderly relative). In a similar vein, Tosti-Kharas (2012) provided evidence that continued identification with an organisation was positively related to well-being for those who were made redundant. Indirect support for this argument comes also from a study by Martella and Maass (2000), who demonstrated that people are better able to deal with
unemployment in collectivist societies. The authors argue that this is because in collectivist societies unemployed people seem to remain better integrated in the community than in individualist societies where people have to deal with their situation on their own. Hence, if unemployed people remain integrated in the community they may be able to move more easily to another social identity and may be better protected from negative effects of unemployment.

One example of an alternative identity for people not in paid work that may be invoked is that of the stay-at-home mother. Mothers are a group of people who have not received much attention by unemployment research thus far. While full-time mothers are not counted in unemployment statistics, neither are they in paid employment. It has been demonstrated that it is relatively easy for them to distance themselves from being categorised as unemployed, and instead adopt an alternative identity: being a mother (Cragg & Dawson, 1984). However, traditional gender roles may be important here, too. More specifically, men may consider themselves as the breadwinner and responsible for family income. Based on this, men may experience more difficulties by adopting a parenting-based alternative identity. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that alternative roles were more positively related to self-esteem in women than in men (Waters & Moore, 2002a).

There are other identities that may be adopted by people who are not in paid employment. For example, school leavers may stress that they are currently travelling or on a “gap year”, instead of defining themselves as unemployed. In a similar vein, graduates may justify their lack of employment with the time they still need to search for the right job (Schoeb, 2013). Older people may consider a redundancy as the right time to retire. In this way, they may leave the working age social category and redefine
themselves as a retiree (Schoeb. 2013). In addition, people not in paid work may prefer to define themselves in terms of volunteer work. They may even choose to join an alternative lifestyle community, where people drop out or withdraw from established society (‘simple living’, Kahl, 2012; Pierce, 2000). Communities like this prefer a voluntary simple lifestyle and abdicate consumption, income, and possessions. For people not in paid work, such communities may offer not only an alternative way of living, but also an alternative way of categorising themselves.

In this way, people not in paid employment may have different social identities they can focus on. As a consequence, they do not need to think of themselves of being not in paid work or unemployed. Instead, they can strategically re-categorise themselves with groups to which they simultaneously belong.

**Multiple Group Memberships and the Stigma of Unemployment**

As we have argued in Chapter 1, for individuals who are not registered as unemployed but neither in paid employment the stigma of unemployment may also be relevant, particularly in situations in which their group membership is not clear. For example, there may be situations for stay-at-home mothers in which it is salient for them that they are not in paid employment, for example, when meeting a former female friend who is now a mother with a paid job. In such a situation, full-time mothers may internalise the stereotype of the unemployed as lazy or incompetent and thus the stigma of unemployment may become self-relevant.

However, there may also be circumstances, in which the group membership of being unemployed is actively imposed by others. For example, others may categorise students as future unemployed people when job prospects are not good (Smurda et al., 2006). In this way, the identity of being unemployed may be anticipated. In a similar
vein, others may see stay-at-home mothers as unwilling to work fully and using their children as an excuse for not being in paid employment (Bingham, 2013b; Harding, 2013). This may easily result in stereotyping stay-at-home mothers or students as very similar to the unemployed: stupid, lazy, and incompetent.

Past research has demonstrated that being forcibly categorised as a member of a group by someone else may be a threatening experience (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Branscombe and colleagues argue that people may reject an imposed identity when it is from a group that is socially devalued. In a similar vein, Barreto and Ellemers (2003) argue that people's responses to the externally imposed categorisation depends on how profitable an individual perceives this group membership to be in terms of status and social value. Therefore, if others impose the category of unemployment on students or stay-at-home mothers it seems likely that they will reject being categorised as unemployed (Cragg & Dawson, 1984; Truniger, 1990).

In sum, when there is a potential threat of unemployment, for example when others impose the category unemployed, then the stigma of unemployment may become self-relevant for people who are not in paid employment. On the one hand, this may impact on how they feel and their well-being. On the other hand, it may also impact on how they cope with not being in paid work (Barbier, Dardenne, & Hansez, 2013).

However, people who are not in paid work, such as stay-at-home mothers or students, may not cope with the stigma of unemployment in the same way as registered unemployed people. There might be another strategy that may help these people to cope: They may simply seek to adopt an alternative identity. To our understanding, it is difficult to allocate this strategy to either the individual or group end of the continuum. On the one hand, it is a strategy through which people with no income can distance
themselves psychologically from being not in paid work, but without leaving the group. On the other hand, this strategy enables people to reconstruct their cognitions about not being in paid employment in a creative way, but without seeing the ingroup of unemployed people in a more positive way. In this way, adopting an alternative identity may be seen as a socially creative form of individual mobility. We explore this notion of evoking an alternative identity as an outcome of multiple group membership.

Multiple Identification as Coping Strategy

Research on multiple identification has demonstrated that identification with a group is affected not only by the status of one group, but also by the status of another group of which an individual is simultaneously a member. More specifically, when individuals are simultaneously members of a lower and a higher status group, then individuals tend to identify less with the lower status group and identify more with the higher status group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). For example, Roccas (2003) assigned students on the basis of an ostensible pretest to a low versus high status group and demonstrated that they were more likely to identify with a given ingroup (own department) if they believed that they were members of a low status group at the same time. In a similar vein, Hornsey and Hogg (2002) demonstrated that students who perceived their discipline to be low in status were more likely to self-categorise themselves as university students at a superordinate level.

It has been argued that affirming membership in a high-status group can be regarded as a coping strategy when being simultaneously a member of a lower status group (Roccas, 2003). As a consequence, individuals may disidentify with the lower status group and instead define themselves in terms of another available identity (Breakwell, 1983). In this way, they may use an alternative identity a possible source to
feel positively distinct and avoid unfavourable social comparisons (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000). Hence, by identifying highly with another available group individuals may strategically capitalise on their multiple identities in a way that it benefits their self-esteem and well-being.

This strategy may be important for people who are not in paid employment. More specifically, the fact that people not in paid work may be regarded as belonging to a low status and stigmatised group should have the potential to strengthen identification with other, higher status groups to which they simultaneously belong. Indeed, there is some research supporting this idea. For example, Truniger (1990) suggests that people not in paid work try to distance themselves from the imposed category unemployed and prefer to define themselves in terms of another identity. A survey study by Cragg and Dawson (1984) found that the majority of women who were not in paid work refused to be categorised as unemployed, interestingly, even those women who indicated that they would be looking for work in the near future.

Along these lines, Waters and Moore (2002a) argued that alternative roles, such as spouse, parent, or community worker, can be used as psychological compensations for the loss of one's role as employee. Indeed, the authors found support for their hypothesis that alternative roles were positively related to self-esteem (Waters & Moore, 2002a). Alternative roles that reduce psychological distress during unemployment may be also found in meaningful leisure activity (Waters & Moore, 2002b).

Hence, avoiding categorisation of themselves as unemployed and instead re-categorising with another available group may serve people not in paid employment in different ways. First, it may help people to avoid the stigma of unemployment. Consequently, people who can define themselves in terms of an alternative identity,
such as a mother, a student, or a retiree, are less likely to be perceived as unemployed
and thus have to face the stigma of unemployment. Second, shifting the focus to
alternative identities may help people not in paid work to cope in an adaptive way and
protect their self-esteem and well-being.

To sum up, we have outlined different strategies to deal with the stigma of
unemployment, some are individual based (individual mobility) and some are more
group-based (social creativity, social competition). Further, we have argued that people
who are not in paid employment may cope by adopting an alternative identity. SIT
research on multiple identities may help us to understand why the stigma of
unemployment not only affects registered unemployed people but also other people not
in paid work. That leads to our final research question:

RQ6: What factors impact on the effectiveness of coping strategies for the well-
being of different social groups that are not in paid employment?

**Summary & Conclusion**

Drawing together the insights from above, we have outlined the main bodies of
literature and theoretical arguments that are central to the present research. While we
have argued in Chapter 1 that the negative effects of the stigma of unemployment may
not only be restricted to those who are officially registered as unemployed, in this
chapter we have argued that an examination of these people's social identities can
enhance our understanding of how people who are not in paid employment perceive
their social world and cope with the stigma of unemployment.

This chapter began with a review of social identity theory, a theoretical
framework that is concerned with how social groups perceive and interact with each other, and self-categorisation theory, a framework that is concerned with how particular social identities become salient to individuals depending on context. We then applied these principles to the stigma of unemployment. In particular, we considered how people who are not in paid employment might cope with this stigma and reviewed potential identity responses to low status. Here, we distinguished between individual responses (individual mobility) and group-based responses (social creativity and social competition) and discussed how each of these strategies relate to one another. We then highlighted the importance of multiple group-memberships and of alternative identities.

We have chosen the social identity approach as it helps us to explain how people experience their social standing as individuals within a group. In particular, it facilitates an understanding of why the stigma of unemployment is self-relevant not only to registered unemployed people but also to other people not in paid work. While the social identity approach has been applied to a number of social groups and social contexts (e.g., S. A. Haslam, 2004), to date, relatively little research has explored the importance of social identity processes for unemployed people (see Herman & Van Ypersele, 1998) and other people not in paid employment.

The following chapter presents a rationale for the present research and outlines the content of the empirical studies that will follow. We seek to systematically investigate the processes underlying the ways in which individuals may cope with the stigma of unemployment by applying social psychological methods.
CHAPTER 3

RATIONALE AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Substantial research has been conducted to understand how people cope with the lack of paid employment. The focus of past research has been to investigate those individuals who are officially registered as unemployed, such as those receiving unemployment benefits. The research in this thesis builds on this past research and the finding that unemployment is associated with impaired well-being (e.g., Paul & Moser, 2006). However, in this thesis we not only examine individuals who are registered as unemployed but also those for whom an unemployed group membership might be not evident or for whom an unemployed group membership might be conferred on them by others, such as stay-at-home mothers and students.

This research also builds on past research that demonstrates that there is a stigma attached to being unemployed that impacts on people's self-concept and behaviour (e.g., Karren & Sherman, 2012). However, given the nature of the stigma, we argue that the stigma of unemployment not only impacts on those who are officially unemployed, but also on individuals who are not in paid employment. As a consequence, the stigma of unemployment may be applicable to other people not in paid work. More specifically, those who are not in paid employment may be easily labelled as being responsible for being out of work or having no traditional function in society. Indeed, given the
importance of money and status in our meritocratic society (Crandall, 2000), it seems reasonable to propose that the stigma of unemployment may not only restrictively effect the group of unemployed people but may also effect the behaviour and well-being of others groups.

In this thesis, we will argue that if we are to understand how individuals from these different social groups cope with the stigma of unemployment, it is important to take a group perspective. In order to investigate these group processes we propose that the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), with its focus on group membership and the implications of social identity for the self-concept and for guiding attitudes and behaviours, provides us with a powerful and useful framework. Such an approach helps us to understand how perceptions of stigma and social identity processes guide the behaviour of people who are not in paid employment.

Our overall objective for this thesis is to make a novel scientific contribution and offer a new understanding of the stigma of unemployment: who it effects and how they might cope with it. We endeavour to contribute a strong theoretical understanding of this stigma through a systematic scientific demonstration of these processes with social psychological methods and from this understanding develop some thoughts for practical solutions to an ongoing, and expanding, social problem.

In this chapter we will first review the research questions that were outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 and link them to concrete hypotheses. Then, we will introduce the participant samples used in the present studies and offer a chapter outline for the empirical chapters. Finally, we will introduce the key measures that will be used in the empirical chapters.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the following section, we will develop a series of hypotheses related to our research questions. These hypotheses will be shaped to respond to three different groups of people not in paid: registered unemployed, students, and stay-at-home mothers. These hypotheses will be elaborated upon in the empirical chapters.

Research Question 1

Our first research question is: How does the perceived stigma of unemployment impact on the well-being of social groups that are not in paid employment? The aim of this research question is to investigate the relationship between the perceived stigma of unemployment and indicators of well-being. As outlined in Chapter 1, we argue that unemployed people are likely to perceive a stigma of unemployment (Bourguignon et al., 2007). Moreover, we also argued that the stigma of unemployment has some characteristics that may impact negatively on indicators of well-being (e.g., Crocker et al., 1998). For example, people not in paid work are often perceived to be responsible for not being in paid employment. This may lead unemployed individuals to internalise the negative stereotypes associated with group membership, such as being lazy or unskilled (Crocker & Major, 1989). In this way, we propose that perceptions of a greater stigmatisation of the unemployed will be associated with reduced levels of well-being among the unemployed. In addition, we argued that other people who are not in paid employment may perceive the stigma of unemployment as self-relevant (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). Consequently, we hypothesise for students and stay-at-home mothers that perceptions of greater stigmatisation of the unemployed will be associated with lower self-esteem and lower life satisfaction, particularly when there is a threat of being seen as unemployed (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999).
Research Question 2

Our second research question is: How do social groups that are not in paid employment respond to the perceived stigma of unemployment? This research question aims to investigate the relationship between the perceived stigma of unemployed people and coping strategies used by people who are not in paid employment. As we have outlined in Chapter 1, one response to perceived stigma is to actively try to change the situation for the self as an individual, for example, by seeking a job (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). This strategy should be particularly important for registered unemployed people and students who anticipate future unemployment. Based on this, we hypothesise that perceptions of greater stigma will be associated with greater intentions to seek a job for registered unemployed people and students. Another strategy is to cognitively reconstruct one’s own cognitions in a way that helps people to see their own group or their situation in a better light. More specifically, cognitive reconstruction involves the redefinition of thoughts and attitudes in ways that are self-protective (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). This strategy should be particularly important for people for whom searching for a job may not be a desirable strategy because they actively chose not to be in paid work, for example stay-at-home mothers. However, this strategy may also be important for people who find it difficult to find a job, such as particular registered unemployed people or students at a time when graduate recruitment is slow. Based on this, we hypothesise that perceptions of greater stigma will be associated with increased cognitive restructuring of one's thoughts in different groups of people not in paid work, particularly when there is a threat of being seen as unemployed.

Research Question 3

Our third research question is: What role does social identification play in the
well-being of individuals who are not in paid employment? The aim of this research question is to investigate the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being. In Chapter 2 we argued that registered unemployed people may find it difficult to develop a strong identification with similar others, particularly, because the low social standing of the unemployed and others not in paid work is perceived to be legitimate (Breakwell, 1983; Tajfel, 1978). In addition, even if individuals do identify with other unemployed people, it might not lead to an increase in their well-being. Consequently, we do not expect a positive association between social identification with being out of paid work and indicators of well-being for registered unemployed people. In particular, we hypothesise that there will be little or a negative association between social identification with other people not in paid work and self-esteem and life satisfaction. However, we consider students' or stay-at-home mothers' levels of identification with the group unemployed is less relevant as it is unlikely that they categorise themselves as unemployed. Given that many people not in paid employment have a viable alternative identity we thus propose that social identification with an alternative valued group, such as mothers or as a student, will be associated with indicators of well-being (e.g., S. A. Haslam et al., 2009), particularly, when there is a threat of being seen as unemployed.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question is: In what ways are coping strategies related to social identification in social groups that are not in paid employment? The aim of this research question is to investigate the relationship between social identification and coping strategies. In Chapter 2 we argued that registered unemployed people are unlikely to identify highly with the group of unemployed people. We also argued that
low social identification with a group is typically associated with individual strategies (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on this, we hypothesise that for registered unemployed individuals low social identification with the group unemployed will be associated with greater intentions to seek a job. However, for students with a viable alternative identity, intentions to seek a job may be associated with higher levels of identification as a student, because students may want to see their choice of study successful. Based on this, we hypothesise that social identification with students will be associated with greater intentions to seek a job, particularly with the threat of future unemployment. For stay-at-home mothers, however, job search intentions may not be associated with their identification as a mother. Instead, their identification as a mother may be associated with stay-at-home mothers' motivations to see their motherhood in a better light. Based on this, we hypothesise that higher social identification with the group of stay-at-home mothers will be associated with increased cognitive reconstruction, particularly when there is a threat of a possible imposed unemployment.

**Research Question 5**

Our fifth research question is: In what ways are the coping strategies of individuals who are not in paid employment related to their well-being? The aim of this research question is to investigate the relationship between coping strategies and indicators of well-being, in particular, self-esteem and life satisfaction. In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that coping strategies are intended to maintain and protect self-esteem and life satisfaction (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). We also argued in relation to Research Question 2 that job search intentions should be an important strategy for registered unemployed people and students. Hence, we hypothesise that greater intentions to seek a job will be associated with higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction.
satisfaction for registered unemployed people and students. However, for stay-at-home mothers we expect that reconstructing own thoughts and attitudes will be an important strategy. Consequently, we hypothesise that higher levels self-esteem and life satisfaction will be associated with greater cognitive reconstruction, particularly when there is a threat of a possible imposed unemployment for stay-at-home mothers.

**Research Question 6**

Our sixth and final research question is: What factors impact on the effectiveness of coping strategies for the well-being of different social groups that are not in paid employment? The aim of this research question is to investigate the interaction between social identification and perceived stigma. In the hypothesis related to Research Question 1 we proposed that perceptions of greater stigma of unemployment would be associated with reduced levels of well-being. However, past research suggests that the impact of perceived stigma on well-being may depend on social identification (Crabtree et al., 2010; Schaafsma, 2011). For registered unemployed people, it may be difficult to maintain their well-being when they perceive a stigma of unemployment and have difficulties to identify with other unemployed people. Hence, in the group of registered unemployed people, well-being should be highest when stigma is perceived to be low and social identification with other unemployed people is low. In particular, we hypothesise for registered unemployed people that when social identification with unemployed people is low then low perceived stigma will be connected with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction. In contrast, when an alternative identity is available, then perceived stigmatisation of the unemployed should not be associated with lower levels on indicators of well-being. Rather, for students and mothers we hypothesise that when social identification with an
Chapter 3

alternative valued group is high then high perceived stigma will not be connected with lower self-esteem and lower life satisfaction of students, particularly when there is a threat of being seen as unemployed.

Access to an alternative identity may also impact on the coping strategies of people who are not in paid employment. In the hypothesis related to Research Question 2 we proposed that perceptions of greater stigmatisation of the unemployed would be associated with increased intentions to seek a job. However, past research suggests that engagement strategies to cope with perceived stigma, such as job search intentions, may depend on social identification (e.g., Barbier et al., 2013). Hence, in the group of registered unemployed people, job search intentions should be greatest when stigma is perceived to be high and social identification with other unemployed people is low. In particular, we hypothesise for registered unemployed people that when social identification with unemployed people is low then high perceived stigma will be connected to higher intentions to seek a job.

In contrast, identification with a viable alternative identity may play a different role in relation to perceived stigma and job search intentions. Hence, students’ motivation to search for a job should be highest when they perceive a stigma and when they highly identify with other students. Based on this, we hypothesise that when social identification with other students is high, then perceptions of stigma will be connected with higher intentions to seek a job, particularly when there is a threat of future unemployment. However, for stay-at-home mothers the interaction of perceived stigma and social identification may impact on how they think about their group and situation. Consequently, we hypothesise that when social identification with other mothers is high, then perceptions of stigma will be connected with cognitive reconstruction of own
thoughts, particularly when there is a threat of a possible imposed unemployment.

Chapter Outline

In each of the empirical chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) we aim to test the predictions we have made in the previous section with different samples of people who are not in paid employment. Throughout this thesis, we attempt to avoid extensive repetition of theory and argument. Therefore, the detailed theoretical background literature is outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. When introducing the background research literature in each of the empirical chapters only the main arguments are brought together. The discussion of the results in relation to theory and past research will take place predominately in the General Discussion (Chapter 7).

In the following empirical chapters three different groups of people who are not in paid work will be examined: officially registered unemployed people (Chapter 4), university students (Chapter 5), and stay-at-home mothers (Chapter 6).

Chapter 4 presents a sample of officially registered unemployed people, representing a traditional group of people who are not in paid employment. In this correlational study we will explore how stigma and identity processes are connected with coping strategies and well-being of the unemployed.

Chapter 5 presents two experimental studies of university students. Students are a group of people who are not registered as unemployed, but neither are they in paid employment. In these studies, we aim to demonstrate the importance of an alternative identity of being a student in the light of future unemployment. In order to do so, we aim to make a possible stigma of unemployment self-relevant by experimentally manipulating future job prospects.

Chapter 6 presents two studies of stay-at-home mothers. Stay-at-home mothers
are also a group of people who are not registered as unemployed but are not in paid employment. Here, we again aim to demonstrate the importance for individuals who are not in paid employment to have an alternative identity, this time, of being a mother, particularly when others define such individuals in terms of the fact they are not in paid work. The first study will be a correlational study to examine the associations between key variables, and the second study will be an experiment that aims to make the stigma of unemployment self-relevant by manipulating how other people see them.

In the final chapter, Chapter 7, the findings of all three empirical chapters will be summarised, evaluated against our own predictions, and integrated with previous research. Taken together, the studies and our analysis will offer a social psychological account of how people who are not in paid employment perceive their social world. We will interpret several inter-related factors in order to shed light on the underlying group-related processes by which people who are not in paid employment cope. Based on this, we will discuss theoretical and practical implications and suggest avenues for future research.

**Measures**

In this section we will introduce the measures used in the studies of this thesis. For practical reasons, the measures were adapted to the situation in which the sample was gathered. For example, we used simple measures for registered unemployed people who may come from a wide range of educational backgrounds. For practical reasons, the measures also differed in the number of items. For example, in the questionnaire for stay-at-home mothers fewer items were used in order to allow mothers to fill out the questionnaire at the same time as caring for their children.
Perceived Stigma of Unemployment

Measures of perceived stigmatisation of the unemployed were implemented in different ways across the samples. In past research perceived stigma has been shown to be strongly related to perceived discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2014). Hence, measures for both perceived stigma and perceived discrimination were included. However, students and mothers may not directly feel discriminated against themselves, we thus measured their perceptions of the stigma of unemployed people in general. It is important to understand that people with a viable alternative identity may not feel that they themselves are stigmatised because of being unemployed. Rather the focus here is whether other people not in paid work are affected by perceived stigma of (other) unemployed people in a way that becomes self-relevant.

Social Identification

Social identification was measured in different ways across the samples. In the sample of registered unemployed people, their levels of social identification with the group of unemployed people was measured. However, although the stigma of unemployment may affect mothers and students, it is not necessarily relevant to ask if they identify with the group of unemployed people, as we argued in the previous section. Consequently, in the group of students and mothers we measured social identification with their alternative group.

Coping Strategies

There are a range of strategies that individuals may employ to address the negative effects of stigma and low status (e.g., Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). In this thesis, we will investigate two coping strategies that people not in paid employment may use: intentions to seek a job and cognitive reconstruction. In all of the samples we
measure intentions to search for a job as a motivation to leave the group of people not in paid work, engage in job search, and find a job. In this way, it takes on the idea of individual mobility (Tajfel, 1978) and the idea of primary control coping (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Cognitive restructuring is a way to reframe one's thoughts or attitudes. In the social identity tradition, such cognitive strategies aim to see the whole group in a better light (Tajfel, 1978). However, people not in paid work may not only reconstruct their own cognitions in relation to their group. Depending on the sample, people not in paid work may change existing views in many creative ways in order to see their group or their situation in a better light. For example, while registered unemployed people may report particular attitudes towards leisure activities, stay-at-home mothers may report particular attitudes towards time available time for children. In this way, cognitive reconstruction has parallels to the strategy of secondary control coping (Miller & Kaiser, 2001) and social creativity (Tajfel, 1978).

**Indicators of Well-Being**

Most of the psychological literature uses a variety of established measures as indicators of well-being, for example self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), or depression (Beck et al., 1961). Past research on unemployment has documented the negative association between unemployment and well-being on a wide rage of well-being indicators, including depression, self-esteem, self efficacy, and life satisfaction (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009). Similarly, social psychological literature and literature in the social identity tradition uses a number of different established measures as indicators of well-being, for example, life satisfaction and self-esteem (e.g., Latrofa et al., 2009; Outten et al., 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014). In this thesis, we will focus on two indicators of well-being: self-
esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996) because they are consistently used in both literatures.

**Other Measures**

In the questionnaires used in this research project, data from other measures have been gathered (please see appendices for details), for example, socio-structural variables (legitimacy, stability, permeability), identity change, perceived social support, additional coping strategies (social competition, engagement coping, disengagement coping, concealment), additional indicators of well-being (optimism, self efficacy, depression) or collective well-being, emotions, and certain demographic variables (volunteer engagement). They were included in order to offer additional avenues of possible research. However, during the research process they have been excluded from further analysis for a number of reasons, for example, because they had not been collected across all studies (e.g., identity change, socio-structural variables), emerged as less relevant as originally thought (e.g., concealment, social competition), or were not able to enhance understanding of one of the research questions (e.g., collective well-being).

Hence, in this research project, we concentrate on those measures that optimally answer the research questions that have been developed on the basis of the literature review.

**Contribution of this Thesis**

In this thesis, we seek to provide a scientific, social psychological analysis of how stigma and social identity processes are related to well-being and coping of people who are not in paid employment. Based on this, this thesis aims to contribute to the current research in three ways. First, we aim to contribute to research on unemployment by widening the focus to other people not in paid work. If we know what role stigma and identity processes play for people who are not in paid work in general, we may be
better able to understand the negative relationship between unemployment and well-being. Second, the research in this thesis aims to contribute to social psychological research on stigma more generally. In particular, we aim to demonstrate that a stigma may not only be self-relevant for those who are most obviously in the group that is stigmatised, but also those for whom group membership might be conferred on them by others. However, in the case of people who are not in paid employment, such individuals may have an viable alternative identity on which they can rely. In this way, we also aim to contribute to literature on the social identity approach. In particular, we aim to contribute by providing further evidence about the roles of multiple identification and by examining a group of people that is not usually envisaged when investigating social identity processes.
CHAPTER 4

THE STIGMA OF UNEMPLOYMENT
AND SOCIAL IDENTITY
OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Theoretical Background

Over the past decades interest in investigating unemployment has increased and as a result researchers from a range of disciplines in the social and health sciences have accumulated a plethora of knowledge. Within the psychological literature, unemployment is examined mainly as a risk factor for mental health on a wide range of measures. Reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that unemployment is not only associated with an increase in distress symptoms and impaired mental health, but can also be a cause of such negative mental health outcomes (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009). For example, Paul and Moser concluded from their meta-analyses of 360 studies that unemployment leads to higher levels of depression and anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem and subjective well-being.

This thesis builds on this research, with a focus on the stigma attached to being unemployed (Goffman, 1963; Karren & Sherman, 2012). Given the importance of roles and status in our society, as well as norms and expectations of people to be employed, it
is easy to see how unemployed people may be stigmatised. Research into stigma has identified a number of possible coping strategies that may help protect individuals’ self-esteem from the negative effects of stigma. However, coping with a stigma has never (to our knowledge) been examined in the context of unemployment. We have argued in Chapter 2 that where there is a stigma attached to a group, people may cope with this stigma not only as an individual but also as a member of a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). In this way, coping with the stigma of unemployment may depend on how individuals interpret their different group memberships. In this thesis, we look at the two coping strategies of job search intentions and cognitive reconstructing.

Overall, in Study 1 we attempt to advance previous work by investigating how stigmatisation and social identity processes affect the coping strategies and well-being of those who are registered as unemployed. In the following, the main predictions are brought together and linked to former literature.

First, we are interested in the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being (RQ 1). As outlined in Chapter 1, we argue that unemployed people do perceive a stigma of unemployment (Bourguignon et al., 2007). Moreover, we also argue that the stigma of unemployment has some characteristics that potentially impact negatively on indicators of well-being (e.g., Crocker et al., 1998). For example, unemployed people may be perceived to be responsible for not being in paid work. This may lead them to internalise the negative stereotypes associated with group membership (Crocker & Major, 1989). Consequently, we propose that perceptions of greater stigma against the group of unemployed people will be associated with reduced levels of well-being. In particular, we hypothesise that:
H1: Perceptions of stigmatisation of the unemployed will be negatively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Second, we are interested in the relationship between perceived stigma and coping strategies (RQ 2). One possible response to the perceived stigmatisation of those not in paid work is for individuals to actively try to change the situation, for example, by seeking a job (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). This strategy is likely to play an important role for registered unemployed people (Kanfer et al., 2001). Thus, we propose that for these individuals, higher perceived stigma will be associated with greater intentions to seek a job, for example, by regularly looking for job opportunities or registering at job agencies. However, unemployed people may also use cognitive strategies in response to perceived stigma (Crocker & Major, 1989). In this way, they can re-construct their cognitions in a way that unfavourable comparisons with employed people are avoided. Unemployed people may, for example, selectively value those dimensions on which the own group performs well and concentrate on positive things connected with unemployment, for example, having more time for non-work related activities. Based on this, we hypothesise that:

H2a: Perceived stigmatisation of the unemployed will be positively associated with job search intentions.

H2a: Perceived stigmatisation of the unemployed will be positively associated with cognitive restructuring.
Third, we are interested in the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being (RQ 3). In Chapter 2 we argued that registered unemployed people may find it difficult to develop a strong identification with other ingroup members (Breakwell, 1983; Tajfel, 1978). Hence, it seems unlikely that unemployed people will develop a strong identification with similar others that is positively related to their self-esteem. Even if individuals do identify with other unemployed people, it might not be associated with better well-being. This may be especially the case because the low social standing of the unemployed is perceived to be legitimate by others and by the unemployed themselves. Consequently, we do not expect a positive association between social identification with being unemployed and indicators of well-being. In particular, we hypothesise that:

H3: There will be little or a negative association between social identification with the group of unemployed people and self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Fourth, we are interested in the relationships between social identification and coping strategies (RQ 4). In Chapter 2 we argued that registered unemployed people are unlikely to identify highly with the group of unemployed people. We also argued that low social identification with a group is associated with individual strategies (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on this, we hypothesise that low social identification with the group will be associated with greater intentions to seek a job. In contrast, we argued that reconstruction of cognitions and seeing one's group or situation in a better light should be particularly likely when group members identity highly with a group (Tajfel, 1978). However, we also argued that it seems unlikely that unemployed
people identify highly with other unemployed people, for example because their low social standing may be seen as legitimate. Based on this we propose that reconstructing of cognitions may not be influenced by high social identification.

H4a: Social identification with unemployed people will be negatively associated with intentions to seek a job.
H4b: Social identification with unemployed people will not be associated with cognitive reconstruction.

Fifth, we are interested in the relationships between coping strategies with indicators of well-being (RQ 5). In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that coping strategies are intended to maintain and protect self-esteem and life satisfaction (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). Hence, we hypothesise that

H5a: Greater intentions to seek a job will be associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction.
H5b: Greater cognitive reconstruction will be associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Sixth, we are interested in how social identification and perceived stigma interact to determine coping strategies and indicators of well-being (RQ 6). In Hypothesis 1 we proposed that perceptions of greater stigma will be associated with lower well-being. However, past research suggests that the impact of perceived stigma on well-being may depend on social identification (Crabtree et al., 2010; Schaafsma,
In Hypothesis 3 we proposed that there should be little or negative association between social identification and well-being. Hence, in the group of registered unemployed people, well-being should be highest when stigma is perceived to be low and social identification with other unemployed people is low. In particular, we hypothesise that

\[ H6a: \text{When social identification with unemployed people is low then low perceived stigma will be connected with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction.} \]

When social identification is high we do not expect that low perceived stigma will be related to better self-esteem or life satisfaction.

In Hypothesis 2 we proposed that higher perceptions of stigma are associated with greater intentions to seek a job. However, the effect of perceived stigma on engagement strategies such as searching for a job may be dependent on social identification (Barbier et al., 2013). In the group of registered unemployed people, job search intentions should be most prevalent when stigma is perceived to be high and social identification with unemployed people is low. However, in Hypothesis 4 we also argued that we do not expect that high social identification with other unemployed people is likely to be associated with cognitive reconstruction. Hence, we do not expect that social identification will impact on the relationship of perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction.

\[ H6b: \text{When social identification with unemployed people is low then perceived stigma will be positively associated with intentions to seek a job.} \]
When social identification is high we expect this relationship to be weaker.

H6c: Social identification with unemployed people will not impact on the relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction.

In order to examine those hypotheses, we will provide a correlational examination of a sample of registered unemployed people.

**STUDY 1**

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 130 unemployed individuals recruited in two cities in the South West of England. Participants were recruited with the assistance of government Job Centres, which offer a support service for people who are registered as unemployed. Participants were approached while waiting for a consultation and were offered chocolate bars as compensation. They were also recruited via charities, recruitment agencies, and training agencies who specialised in improving the employability of unemployed people. Data were collected over a three-month period.

The sample included 54 (41.5%) female and 76 (58.5%) male participants. The participants were between 16 and 60 years old with a mean age of 35 years. The length of participants' unemployment was between 1 month and 40 years; with a mean duration was 29.57 months.

**Procedure and Materials**

Participants were given an eight-page questionnaire which they completed individually (please see appendices for complete list of measures). They were informed that participation was voluntary, that responses were anonymous, and that they could with-
draw from the study at any time. Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements using a seven-point rating scale ranging from (1) I strongly disagree to (7) I strongly agree. Participants were also asked to rate their emotions and give demographic variables (please see appendices for details). However, within this research project it was not possible to look at all data gathered from this study. Hence, for reasons of consistency with the other studies within this thesis, we concentrate on the following variables of primary interest:

**Perceived stigma.** Items were designed to measure perceived stigma (e.g., “In general, people think that unemployed people are unwilling to work” and “In general, people think that unemployed people are lazy”) and perceived discrimination (e.g., “I have personally been confronted by discrimination because of my employment status” and “We unemployed feel unfairly treated”). In line with former research, reliability analysis revealed that they were closely related to each other (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014). Consequently, we collapsed these items to form a single measure of perceived stigma (seven items, $\alpha = .65$).

**Social identification.** Measures of identification with the group of unemployed people were partly selected and adapted on the basis of existing measures (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004) and partly designed for the present study, for example, “I identify with other unemployed people” and “I feel accepted by other unemployed people” (13 items, $\alpha = .76$).

**Coping strategies.** Measures regarding coping strategies were partly adapted and selected on the basis of existing measures (Mummendey et al., 1999) and partly designed for this study. The statements measured intentions to seek a job, for example, “I am very keen to get a job soon” and “I submit several applications a week” (eight items,
α = .76). A single item was used to measure cognitive restructuring: “Without work I have much more time for other activities”.

**Indicators of well-being.** Measures regarding indicators of well-being were selected on the basis of established measures: self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), for example, “I am a person with high self-esteem”, “I feel that I have a number of good qualities” (four items, α = .73) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), for example, “I enjoy my life”, “I am satisfied with my life” (four items, α = .82).

**Results**

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations can be found in Table 4.1. Overall, participants reported moderate levels of perceived stigma ($M = 4.39, SD = 0.94$) and relatively moderate levels of social identification ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.93$). Participants reported relatively high levels of job search intentions ($M = 5.20, SD = 1.07$) compared to moderate levels of cognitive reconstructing ($M = 4.25, SD = 1.98$). The mean of self-esteem ($M = 5.49, SD = 1.19$) was relatively high and the mean of life satisfaction ($M = 4.14, SD = 1.43$) was moderate.

Intercorrelations revealed that perceived stigma was negatively related to life satisfaction ($r = -.34, p < .001$) and self-esteem ($r = -.19, p = .04$) (H1). Perceived stigma was not related to job search intentions ($r = -.00, p = .98$) (H2a) or to cognitive reconstruction ($r = .03, p = .75$) (H2b). Social identification was negatively related to self-esteem ($r = -.24, p = .009$) and not related to life satisfaction ($r = -.13, p = .17$) (H3). Social identification was negatively related to job search intentions ($r = -.20, p = .03$) (H4a) and not related to cognitive reconstruction ($r = .12, p = .21$) (H4b). Job search intentions were positively related to self-esteem ($r = .51, p < .001$) and not related to life satisfaction ($r = -.04, p = .68$) (H5a).
Cognitive reconstruction was not related to self-esteem ($r = -.08, p = .35$) and not to life satisfaction ($r = .13, p = .17$) (H5b).

Table 4.1  *Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived stigma</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.34***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social identification</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Job search intentions</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cognitive reconstruction</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-esteem</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Life satisfaction</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

These relationships were explored in more detail using the principles of moderated regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and the PROCESS complement for SPSS by Hayes (2013). The continuous variables were mean centred prior to the analysis.

First, we tested the impact of social identification and perceived stigma on self-esteem (H6a). Analysis revealed that social identification was associated with self-esteem, $B = -.27$, $SE = .12$, $t (110) = -2.27$, $p = .02$, such that higher levels of social identification were associated with decreased self-esteem. Perceived stigma did not predict self-esteem, $B = -.19$, $SE = .12$, $t (110) = -1.64$, $p = .10$. The interaction between social identification and perceived stigma was marginally significant, $B = .23$, $SE = .12$, $t (110) = 2.27$, $p = .025$. Preliminary analyses revealed that none of the demographic variables significantly impacted on the relationships.

---

1 Preliminary analyses revealed that none of the demographic variables significantly impacted on the relationships.
Simple slopes analyses (Figure 4.1) revealed that when participants identified weakly with other unemployed people, lower levels of perceived stigma were associated with higher self esteem, \(B = -.40, SE = .16, t (110) = -2.50, p = .01\). In contrast, when participants highly identified with other unemployed people, perceived stigma was not associated with self esteem, \(B = .02, SE = .17, t (110) = 0.12, p = .90\).

Figure 4.1 Self-esteem as a function of perceived stigma and social identification

Second, we tested the impact of social identification and perceived stigma on life satisfaction (H6a). Analysis revealed that perceived stigma was associated to life satisfaction, \(B = -.48, SE = .13, t (109) = -3.58, p < .001\), such that higher levels of perceived stigma were associated to lower levels of life satisfaction. Social identification was not related to life satisfaction, \(B = -.12, SE = .13, t (109) = -0.93, p = .35\). The interaction of social identification and perceived stigma was not significant, \(B = -.09, SE = .14, t (109) = -0.61, p = .55\).
Third, we tested the impact of social identification and perceived stigma, and their interaction, on job search intentions (H6b). Analysis revealed that social identification was significantly related to job search intentions, $B = -.22$, $SE = .11$, $t (107) = -2.03$, $p = .05$, such that higher levels of social identification were associated with decreased job search intentions. Perceived stigma was not related to job search intentions, $B = .00$, $SE = .11$, $t (107) = -0.04$, $p = .96$. The interaction of social identification and perceived stigma was not significant, $B = .09$, $SE = .12$, $t (107) = 0.77$, $p = .44$.

Fourth, we tested the impact of social identification and perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction (H6c). Analysis revealed that social identification was not associated with cognitive reconstruction, $B = .26$, $SE = .20$, $t (108) = 1.30$, $p = .20$, and not with perceived stigma, $B = .10$, $SE = .20$, $t (108) = 0.49$, $p = .63$. The interaction of social identification and perceived stigma was not significant, $B = -.21$, $SE = .21$, $t (108) = -0.98$, $p = .33$.

The results of the four moderation analysis are summarised below (Table 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Cognitive reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social identification</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction I x S</td>
<td>.23†</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
Chapter 4

Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore how perceived stigma and social identity processes are associated with coping strategies and well-being of those who are registered as unemployed. We will first summarise the results, compare them with our predictions and outline how they fit into past research. Then we will address limitations of the current study and unresolved questions.

Integration of Results

The first hypothesis about the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being was confirmed. Participants who reported higher perceived stigma also reported lower levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of self-esteem. Hence, the well-being of the unemployed is associated with their perceptions what other people think of them. This finding fits with past research that demonstrated a negative association between perceived stigma and discrimination and indicators of well-being in many stigmatised groups (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014).

The second hypothesis about the relationship of perceived stigma to coping strategies cannot be confirmed. In contrast to our hypothesis, perceived stigma was neither associated with intentions to search for a job nor to cognitive reconstruction. This finding does not support former social psychological research about stigma that proposes several coping strategies in response to stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). One reason for this may be that unemployed people prefer other strategies, for example, emotional regulation. However, unemployed people indicated that they do use job search, but it did not vary with perceptions of stigma. It may be the case that the coping behaviour of unemployed people is less driven by what other people think about them, but much more driven by how they feel about being a member of the group of
unemployed people, as we examined in RQ4.

The third hypothesis about the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being can be confirmed. Participants who were less identified with the group of unemployed people reported higher levels of self-esteem. In addition, social identification was not associated with life satisfaction. One reason why social identification was stronger related to self-esteem but less to life satisfaction may be that life satisfaction is not only influenced by how we feel as a part of the group, but also by other aspects of daily life, such as support from family or friends. This finding fits into former research from SIT, which proposes that it is difficult to derive a positive self from a membership of a lower status group (Tajfel, 1978). Moreover, deriving high self-esteem may be particularly difficult for groups which low social standing is perceived to be legitimate, such as the unemployed (Breakwell, 1986).

The fourth hypotheses about the relationship between coping strategies and social identification was confirmed. The less participants identified with the group of unemployed people the more they reported intentions to search a job. In this way, the finding that low social identification enhances individual mobility, such as searching for a job, fits into former research in the social identity tradition (Blanz et al., 1998; Mummendey et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1978). In contrast, participants' identification with other unemployed people was not connected with seeing the ingroup in a better light. This finding fits with the argument that unemployed people are unlikely to highly identify with their group. As a consequence, the finding also confirms former research in the social identity tradition that proposes that reconstruction of own cognitions should be less likely when group members identity lowly with a group (Tajfel, 1978).

The fifth hypotheses about the relationship between coping strategies and
indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. Participants intentions to seek a job were positively associated with their reported self-esteem. This finding fits into past SIT research and other social psychological research about stigma that proposes that coping strategies aim to protect self-esteem (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). It also fits with research into unemployment that demonstrated that job search is positively related to self-esteem and self-efficacy (Kanfer et al., 2001) confirming research that suggests that intentions to seek a job may be regarded a successful strategy in order to reduce perceived stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). In contrast to our hypothesis, participants' intentions to search for a job were not associated with life satisfaction. One reason for this may be life satisfaction may less dependent on job search. Rather, it may be related to positive attitudes towards life in general (Diener & Diener, 1996). In addition, participants' tendencies to reconstruct their own cognitions were not related to self-esteem nor to life satisfaction. It may be the case that reconstructing one’s own cognitions and changing attitudes about being unemployed may be a less effective strategy for unemployed people in comparison to searching for a job (Kanfer et al., 2001). It may also be the case that unemployed people prefer other ways to reconstruct their cognitions than was measured in this study, for example, by comparing themselves with other groups, such as homeless people.

The sixth hypothesis about the interaction between social identification and perceived stigma can be partly confirmed. In contrast to the hypotheses, it could not be confirmed that the relationship between of perceived stigma and job search intentions is dependent on social identification. One reason for this may be that the motivation to leave the group of unemployed people and find a job comes primarily from the fact that they do not feel positive about being unemployed and do not have ties to other
unemployed people, rather than what other people think of them. In line with the predictions, the effect of perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction did not depend on social identification. This finding fits into former research that argues that social identification among unemployed people is low (McFadyen, 1995).

Moreover, in line with the hypothesis, participants who identified weakly with the group of unemployed people reported higher self-esteem when they perceived low stigma. This finding fits into former research that demonstrated that stigma and well-being are negatively related when a group does not provide identity resources (Crabtree et al., 2010). In contrast to the hypotheses, it could not be confirmed that the effect of perceived stigma on life satisfaction depends on social identification. In fact, life satisfaction was primarily influenced by perceived stigma. One reason for this outcome may be that unemployed people's life satisfaction is influenced by what other people think of them (Greeff et al., 2010). In contrast, self-esteem may not only depend on what other people think but also on how well they feel as a part of a group.

Bringing the research questions together, the most important findings concern self-esteem, perceived stigma, social identification with other unemployed people, and intentions to search for a job. More specifically, unemployed people reported lower self-esteem the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment and the more they identified with other unemployed people. Hence, the stigma of unemployment and the high identification with other unemployed people may be risk factors for the development of low self-esteem. These findings support former research arguing that it is often difficult to derive a high self-esteem from groups that are low in status (Tajfel, 1978). However, the findings also demonstrate that those unemployed people who weakly identify with other unemployed people are more motivated to search for a job. In fact, this motivation
to search for a job was related to higher self-esteem, demonstrating that those who are registered unemployed are not doomed to experience a decreased well-being.

Limitations

While this study was able to confirm many of our hypotheses and clearly shed light on the perceived stigma of unemployment, there are some important limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the present study is correlational in nature. Thus, causal interpretations should be made with caution because of potential reversed relationships. For example, there is certainly a theoretical rationale why perceptions of stigma and a lack of social identification influence self-esteem of unemployed people, as it has been argued in this study. However, from a personality perspective, one alternative explanation may be that people's self-esteem influences how they perceive stigma, how they identify with the group, and what coping strategies they prefer (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2001; Rydell & Boucher, 2010). Hence, people who are high in self-esteem may tend to perceive less stigma, report lower social identification with other unemployed people, and prefer active coping strategies, such as searching a job.

Second, the variables differ in the number of items in each scale. That means that they also differ in their reliability and thus in the influence of the degree to which they can explain variance. The internal consistency of most measures was satisfactory. However, for cognitive reconstruction a single item needed to be used. This item was chosen because it seemed most prototypical for seeing the situation in a more positive light. However, one reason why significant findings were not found for cognitive reconstruction may be the fact that only a single item could be used. As mentioned above, unemployed people may prefer other ways to reconstruct their cognitions than measured with this single item, for example, by comparing themselves with other
groups, such as homeless people. Hence, more attention is needed when developing a measure for cognitive reconstruction.

**Conclusion**

Despite some mixed findings and shortcomings, this exploratory study has given us a good basis from which to understand how those individuals not in paid employment think, feel, and perceive their social circumstances. The results of this study demonstrate that unemployed people do perceive stigma, and these perceptions are negatively related to indicators of well-being. According to this research, the coping strategies of unemployed people are not driven by perceived stigma. Instead, the findings of this study illustrate that it is a lack of identification with the group of unemployed people that is associated with greater job search intentions and higher self-esteem. Overall, this research has demonstrated the utility of a group-based analysis, which helps us to understand how perceptions of stigma and social identity processes are associated with coping strategies and well-being of unemployed people.

However, past research has argued that people who are not in paid employment but are not registered as unemployed may also be influenced by a stigma of unemployment (e.g., McFadyen, 1995). Such people may have a viable alternative identity, for example being a student or a mother. This alternative identity may help people to define a social role in society and impact on how they perceive their social world. Can an analysis of perceived stigma of unemployment and social identity processes also help to explain reactions of those not registered as unemployed? Do such people also perceive a stigma of unemployment and is it related to their well-being? Do they employ different strategies in comparison to registered unemployed people? In our next studies with students and stay-at-home mothers, these questions will be explored.
CHAPTER 5

AN ALTERNATIVE IDENTITY AND THE
THREAT OF FUTURE UNEMPLOYMENT

Theoretical Background

In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that the stigma of unemployment may not only affect those who are officially registered as unemployed but also those for whom there is a threat of being categorised as unemployed. One such group that may be threatened by the stigma of unemployment are students. Students are a group of people who are considered as “economically inactive” (National Statistics Online, 2014) and while they are not registered as unemployed neither are they in paid employment.

For this reason, the potential stigma of unemployment may impact on students’ thoughts, feelings, and well-being. In particular, there may be situations in which the stigma of unemployment may become self-relevant. For example, others may perceive students to be idle or non-contributing to society (Rushowy, 2009), stereotypes that are congruent with stereotypes of the unemployed. In other situations, such as when future job prospects for students may not be encouraging (Smurda et al., 2006) students may anticipate the future possibility of becoming unemployed (Walker, 2012; Williams, 2013). As a consequence, students may be faced with stereotypes and expectations that are associated with unemployment and thus the stigma of unemployment may impact
negatively on their well-being, just as it does for those who are unemployed.

However, students have a viable alternative identity that may help them to cope with the potential stigma of unemployment, that of being a student. Indeed, past research has demonstrated that an alternative identity may help people to cope with the stigma of unemployment (Waters & Moore, 2002a). More specifically it may help people to avoid the stigma of unemployment (McFadyen, 1998).

In this chapter, we present two studies conducted among students. With these two studies we manipulate future job prospects to investigate how the anticipated group membership of potential unemployment influences students as a group of people who are not in paid work. In the following introduction, we bring together our predictions for Studies 2 and 3, linking our research questions and past literature.

First, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being. As outlined in Chapter 1 we argue that the stigma of unemployment is not restricted to officially counted unemployed people and that the category unemployed may be applied to other groups who are not in paid employment, such as students. In such situations the stigma of unemployment may be activated and become self-relevant (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999; Crocker & Quinn, 2000), particularly when students face bleak job prospects. Consequently, the stigma of unemployment may impact on students’ self-esteem and their life satisfaction. When students are confronted with good job prospects, these associations will be weaker.

H1: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, greater perceptions of the stigmatisation of the unemployed will be associated with lower self-
Second, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the relationship between the perceived stigma of unemployment and the strategies students might use to cope with this stigma. As we have outlined in Chapter 1, one response to perceived stigma is to actively try to change the situation, for example, by searching a job (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Hence, if students see themselves as future unemployed people, they may be motivated to work hard to get a job and it may be important for them to find one. Another potential response to stigma is to reconstruct one’s own cognitions in a way that makes it easier to cope with the threat of stigma. Hence, when students are confronted with bleak job prospects, they may value time for other things and activities to concentrate on in response to perceived stigma. In this way, we propose that when students are confronted with bleak job prospects, they will be more likely to reconstruct their cognitions the more they perceive the stigmatisation of the unemployed. When students are confronted with good job prospects, these associations will be weaker.

H2a: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, perceived stigma will be positively associated with job search intentions.

H2b: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, perceived stigma will be positively associated with increased cognitive restructuring.

Third, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the relationships between social identification with being a student and indicators of well-being. As we
have outlined in Chapter 2, students are a group of people who have a viable identity in a valued group: being a student. This identity should be positively related to indicators of well-being (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009). We also argued that when individuals are simultaneously members of a lower and a higher status group, then they tend to identify less with the lower status group and more with the higher status group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). In this way, students may distance themselves from the anticipated category of unemployed and use their student identity a possible source of well-being. Hence, we propose that when students are confronted with bleak job prospects, they will tend to report higher self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they identify with being a student. We expect that these associations will be weaker when they are confronted with good job prospects.

H3: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, social identification as student will be positively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Fourth, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the relationship between social identification as a student and the strategies of coping with the stigma of unemployment. As we argued in Chapter 2, their social identification as a student may offer students a viable and valued identity (Tajfel, 1978). Typically, students decide to study in order to get a job in the future or to enhance their job prospects. In this way, their social identification as a student may be linked to their motivation to find a job in the future. More specifically, students who identify highly with being a student may be more motivated to find a job in order to see their choice of studies as successful in terms of finding a job after graduation. Hence, we propose that when students are confronted
with bleak job prospects, they will tend to report greater intentions to seek a job the
more they identify with being a student. Another way of responding to the threat of
future unemployment is to cognitively reconstruct one’s way of thinking. In fact,
students may be more motivated to see the situation in a better light the more they
identity as a student. In this way, we propose that when students are confronted with
bleak job prospects, they will be more likely to reconstruct their cognitions the more
they identify with being a student. When students are confronted with good job
prospects we expect that social identification will be less related to intentions to search
for a job and cognitive reconstruction.

H4a: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, social
identification with being a student will be positively associated with
intentions to seek a job.

H4b: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, high social
identification with being a student will be positively associated with cognitive
reconstruction.

Fifth, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the relationship
between the strategies students might use to cope with the stigma of unemployment and
indicators of well-being. In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that coping strategies are
intended to maintain self-esteem (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). Consequently,
we propose that intentions to seek a job may be related to indicators of well-being. In a
similar way, cognitive reconstruction may also be a way to deal with anticipated
unemployment. Hence, we propose that cognitive reconstruction will be associated with
higher levels self-esteem and life satisfaction. We expect that the association between coping strategies and indicators of well-being will be weaker when students are confronted with good job prospects.

H5a: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, intentions to seek a job will be positively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

H5b: When students are confronted with bleak job prospects, cognitive reconstruction will be positively associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Sixth, we are interested in the impact of future job prospects on the impact of the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on indicators of well-being and coping strategies. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 1 we proposed that perceptions of greater stigma of unemployment would be associated with reduced levels of well-being. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 3 we proposed that social identification as a student would be associated with higher levels of well-being. Indeed, past research suggests that social identification plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being (Schaafsma, 2011). Hence, when an alternative identity is available such as the identity of being a student, then perceived stigma should not be associated with lower levels on indicators of well-being. In particular, we propose that when students identify strongly with other students, then their self-esteem and life satisfaction will not be negatively related with perceptions of stigma, particularly, when they are confronted with bleak future job prospects. We also expect that there will be a negative association
between perceptions of stigma and indicators of well-being when students identify weakly with other students or when are confronted with good job prospects.

H6a: When social identification with students is high then perceptions of the stigma of unemployment will not be connected with lower self-esteem and life satisfaction of students who are confronted with bleak job prospects.

Access to an alternative identity may also impact on the coping strategies of students. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 2 we have argued that students' perceptions of the stigma of unemployment will be associated with coping strategies when they face bleak job prospects. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 4 we argued that students' identification with other students will be associated with coping strategies when they face bleak job prospects. Indeed, past research suggests coping with a stigma may depend on social identification (Barbier et al., 2013). Hence, in a group of students who are confronted with bleak job prospects, perceptions of stigma and coping strategies should be most strongly related when social identification with an alternative valued group is high. In particular, we propose that when students highly identify with other students, then their motivation to look for a job and to cognitively reconstruct their own thoughts will be associated with higher perceptions of stigma, particularly, when they are confronted with bleak future job prospects. In contrast, perceptions of stigma will be less associated with coping strategies when students weakly identify with other students or when they are confronted with good job prospects.
H6b: When social identification with students is high then perceived stigma will be positively associated with intentions to seek a job and cognitive reconstruction of students who are confronted with bleak job prospects.

To test these hypotheses we will introduce two studies with undergraduate student samples in which job prospects are manipulated. In the first study, we manipulated job prospects for students in general. In the second study, we tried to tighten the manipulation by manipulating both the job prospects for students with a specific discipline and job prospects for students of the university as a whole. With both studies we aim to enhance our understanding of how people not in paid work respond to the possibility of unemployment. In this way, the studies contribute to the overall aims of this thesis by investigating the roles of perceived stigma of unemployment and social identification in determining the well-being and coping strategies of students.

**STUDY 2**

**Method**

**Design**

The experiment had a three-group design, where future job prospects were manipulated. This was manipulated between groups as described below with participants randomly assigned to conditions.

**Participants**

Participants were 245 students of the University of Exeter who were recruited on the campus and took part voluntarily in return for a chocolate bar. Participants were aged from 18 to 47 with a mean age of 20.91 years (6 did not indicate their age). There were 136 females and 107 males (2 did not indicate their gender).
Chapter 5

Procedure & Materials

Participants read an article about future job prospects for university students in general. Participants were either told that they faced bleak job prospects after graduation arguing that the impact of the economic crises will remain for the following years and experts predict that it will be difficult for students to find a job after their degree. Alternatively, participants were told that they faced good job prospects arguing that experts predict that university students will have a very good chance to get a job after their degree. When students will be confronted with bleak job prospects they may think about a future scenario in which they may be unemployed. As a consequence, we expect that students will see themselves as future unemployed people. In contrast, when students will be confronted with good job prospects, we do not expect that they see themselves as future unemployed people. Hence, we do not expect that they will respond in light of a possible unemployment (for details see appendices). In the third (control) condition the participants did not read an article.

Dependent Measures

Following the manipulation, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing manipulation checks and dependent variables. Participants responded to all measures on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

Manipulation checks. Two items checked the manipulation about future job prospects. The items were: “It will be harder for students to find a job than it has been in previous years” and “Due to the current economic climate students will find it difficult to find a job” ($r = .77$).

Perceived stigma of unemployment. A single item was designed to measure
perceived stigma: “I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment”.

**Identification with being a student.** Measures of identification with being a university student were partly selected and adapted on the basis of existing measures (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995) and partly designed for the present study. Different measures from Study 1 with registered unemployed persons were used in order to reduce the number of items and construct a more efficient questionnaire. Participants completed three items, for example, “I identify with being a student” and “I am proud to be a university student” (three items, $\alpha = .87$).

**Coping strategies.** Participants were presented with statements regarding coping strategies. These were adapted and chosen on the basis of existing measures (Mummendey et al., 1999) and partly designed for this study. Intentions to search for a job in the future were measured with four items: “I would personally work hard to get a job” and “I am very keen to get a job in the future” ($\alpha = .77$). Cognitive reconstruction for possible future unemployment was measured with two items: “If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on” and “If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with” ($r = .75$).

**Indicators of well-being.** Measures regarding indicators of well-being were selected on the basis of established measures: self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), “I am a person with high self-esteem” and “I feel that I have a number of good qualities” (two items, $r = .62$) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), “I enjoy my life” and “I am satisfied with my life” (two items, $r = .74$).

Once participants had completed the questionnaire they were thanked for their time and they were offered a written debrief.
Results

Manipulation Checks

The effectiveness of the manipulation was checked using ANOVA. A significant effect of job prospects was found on the manipulation check, $F(2, 242) = 6.53, p = .002, \eta^2_p = .05$. Students rated job prospects to be poorer in the bleak prospects condition ($M= 6.08, SD = 0.60$) compared to the good prospects condition ($M= 5.65, SD = 0.89$) and the control condition ($M= 5.93, SD = 0.83$). Post hoc comparisons revealed that the bleak prospects condition significantly differed from the good prospects condition, $p < .001$. The control condition did not significantly differ from the bleak prospects condition, $p = .71$, and marginally from the good job prospects condition, $p = .07$. Given that the significant difference was found between the good job prospects condition and the bleak job prospects condition and the fact that the control condition did not add any further insights regarding our hypotheses, we decided to exclude the control condition from further analysis in order to present the moderation analysis in a simple way.

Impact of the Manipulation on Variables

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for each condition can be found in Table 5.1. The impact of job prospects on the dependent variables was tested using ANOVAs. There was no significant effect of job prospects on perceived stigma, $F(2, 242) = 0.49, p = .62, \eta^2_p = .00$. There was a significant effect of the manipulation on social identification as a student, $F(2, 240) = 6.96, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .06$. Students identified more with being a student when there were bleak job prospects ($M = 6.46, SD = 0.65$) than when there were good prospects ($M = 6.04, SD = 0.89$). There was no significant effect of job prospects on job search intentions, $F(2, 242) = 0.78, p = .46,$
\( \eta^2_p = .00 \), or on cognitive reconstruction, \( F(2, 240) = 0.25, p = .78, \eta^2_p = .00 \). The effect of job prospects on self-esteem was significant, \( F(2, 242) = 8.98, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .07 \).

Students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher self-esteem (\( M = 5.65, SD = 0.88 \)) than students who were confronted with good job prospects (\( M = 5.03, SD = 1.06 \)). Finally, the effect of job prospects on life satisfaction was significant, \( F(2, 240) = 12.09, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09 \). Students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of life satisfaction (\( M = 6.21, SD = 0.62 \)) than students who were confronted with good job prospects (\( M = 5.54, SD = 1.02 \)).

### Table 5.1 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<td>1. Perceived stigma</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
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<td>1.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>1.16</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.09</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Social identification</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.29**</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3. Job search intentions</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>-.45***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.40***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.14†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cognitive reconstruction</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.17†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-esteem</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
<td>-.45***</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Life satisfaction</td>
<td>Bleak</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: †p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
Bleak prospects N=93, Good prospects N=77

### Impact of Job Prospects on Key Relationships

The relationships were explored in more detail using the principles of moderated regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and the PROCESS complement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Models 1 and 3. The continuous variables were mean centred and
job prospects was dummy coded (1 = bleak prospects, 0 = good prospects) prior to the analysis.

**Perceived stigma – indicators of well-being.** First, we tested how job prospects impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and indicators of well-being, starting with self-esteem (H1). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = .31, SE = .07, t (166) = 4.14, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of self-esteem. Perceptions of stigma, $B = -.07, SE = .07, t (166) = -0.99, p = .32$, and the interaction term of job prospects and perceptions of stigma, $B = .02, SE = .07, t (166) = 0.29, p = .77$, did not significantly impact on self-esteem.

Then we tested how job prospects impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and life satisfaction (H1). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .33, SE = .06, t (166) = 5.26, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Perceptions of stigma, $B = -.03, SE = .06, t (166) = -0.56, p = .57$, did not significantly impact on life satisfaction. The interaction term was marginal, $B = .11, SE = .06, t (166) = 1.91, p = .06$. Slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and life satisfaction was not significant in the bleak job prospects condition, $B = .08, SE = .08, t (166) = 0.97, p = .34$. However, the relationship was marginal in the good job prospects condition, $B = -.14, SE = .08, t (166) = -1.72, p = .09$, such that greater perceived stigma led to lower life satisfaction (Figure 5.1).
Chapter 5

Figure 5.1 Life satisfaction as a function of perceived stigma and job prospects

**Perceived stigma – coping strategies.** Second, we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and coping strategies, starting with job search intentions (H2a). Analysis revealed that neither job prospects, $B = .08$, $SE = .06$, $t (166) = 1.27$, $p = .20$, nor perceptions of stigma impacted on job search intentions, $B = .08$, $SE = .06$, $t (166) = 1.41$, $p = .16$. In addition, the interaction term of job prospects and perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = -.03$, $SE = .06$, $t (166) = -0.58$, $p = .57$.

We then tested how job prospects impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and cognitive reconstruction (H2b). Analysis revealed that neither job prospects, $B = -.09$, $SE = .10$, $t (164) = -0.82$, $p = .41$, nor perceptions of stigma, $B = -.12$, $SE = .09$, $t (164) = -1.25$, $p = .21$, impacted on cognitive reconstruction. The interaction term of job prospects and perceptions of stigma was significant, $B = -.22$, $SE = .09$, $t (164) = -2.35$, $p = .02$. Slopes analysis revealed that the
relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction was not significant in the good job prospects condition, $B = .10$, $SE = .13$, $t (164) = 0.77$, $p = .44$. However, the relationship was significant in the bleak job prospects condition, $B = -.34$, $SE = .13$, $t (164) = -2.59$, $p = .01$, such that greater perceived stigma led to lower cognitive reconstruction (Figure 5.2).

![Figure 5.2](image_url)

**Figure 5.2** Cognitive reconstruction as a function of perceived stigma and job prospects

**Social identification – indicators of well-being.** Third, we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification as a student and indicators of well-being, starting with self-esteem (H3). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = .34$, $SE = .08$, $t (164) = 4.34$, $p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of self-esteem. Social identification did not impact on self-esteem, $B = .12$, $SE = .10$, $t (164) = -1.14$, $p = .26$, The interaction term of job prospects and social identification was not significant, $B = .01$, $SE = .10$, $t (164) = 0.09$, $p = .93$. 

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We then we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification as a student and life satisfaction (H3). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .28, SE = .07, t (164) = 4.19, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Social identification significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .23, SE = .09, t (164) = 2.75, p = .01$, such that higher social identification led to higher life satisfaction. The interaction term was not significant, $B = .02, SE = .09, t (164) = 0.22, p = .83$.

**Social identification – coping strategies.** Fourth, we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationships between social identification as a student and the coping strategies, starting with job search intentions (H4a). Analysis revealed that job prospects did not impact on job search intentions, $B = .05, SE = .06, t (164) = 0.73, p = .46$. Social identification significantly impacted on job search intentions, $B = .22, SE = .08, t (164) = 2.70, p = .01$, such that greater social identification with a student led to higher job search intentions. The interaction term of job prospects and social identification was also significant, $B = -.20, SE = .08, t (164) = -2.51, p = .01$.

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between social identification and job search intentions was not significant in the bleak job prospects condition, $B = .02, SE = .13, t (164) = 0.12, p = .90$. However, the relationship was significant in the good job prospects condition, $B = .44, SE = .10, t (164) = 4.12, p < .001$, such that greater social identification led to greater job search intentions (Figure 5.3).
Chapter 5

Figure 5.3 Job search intentions as a function of social identification and job prospects

Then we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and cognitive reconstruction (H4b). Analysis revealed that neither job prospects, $B = -.07, SE = .11, t (162) = -0.61, p = .54$, nor social identification impacted on cognitive reconstruction, $B = -.05, SE = .14, t (162) = -0.24, p = .73$. The interaction term of job prospects and social identification was not significant, $B = -.03, SE = .14, t (162) = -.18, p = .86$.

Coping strategies – well-being. Fifth, we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship of coping strategies to indicators of well-being, starting with job search intentions and self-esteem (H5a). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = .31, SE = .08, t (166) = 4.06, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of self-esteem. Job search intentions, $B = .09, SE = .09, t (166) = 0.92, p = .36$, and the interaction term of job prospects and job search intentions were not significant, $B = .02, SE = .09, t (166) = 0.19, p = .85$. 

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We then tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship of job search intentions to life satisfaction (H5a). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .35, SE = .06, t(166) = 5.56, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Job search intentions significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = -.23, SE = .08, t(166) = -2.88, p < .001$, such that greater intentions to search for a job led to lower life satisfaction. The interaction term of job prospects and job search intentions was marginal, $B = -.13, SE = .08, t(166) = -1.69, p = .09$. This effect was decomposed in order to test the hypothesis. Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between job search intentions and life satisfaction was significant for the bleak job prospects condition, $B = -.36, SE = .12, t(166) = -2.93, p < .001$, such that greater intentions to search for a job led to lower life satisfaction. The relationship was not significant in the good job prospects condition, $B = -.09, SE = .10, t(166) = -0.95, p = .34$. (Figure 5.4).

![Figure 5.4](image-url)  
*Figure 5.4* Life satisfaction as a function of job search intentions and the manipulation
Then we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and self-esteem (H5b). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = .31, \ SE = .08, t (164) = 4.09, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of self-esteem. Cognitive reconstruction did not impact on self-esteem, $B = .00, \ SE = .06, t (164) = 0.01, p = 1.00$. The interaction term of bleak prospects and cognitive reconstruction was not significant, $B = -.05, \ SE = .06, t (164) = -0.85, p = .40$.

Finally, we tested the impact of job prospects on the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and life satisfaction (H5b). Analysis revealed that job prospects significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .34, \ SE = .06, t (164) = 5.22, p < .001$, such that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Cognitive reconstruction marginally impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .09, \ SE = .05, t (164) = 1.90, p = .06$, such that greater cognitive reconstruction led to higher life satisfaction. The interaction term of bleak prospects and cognitive reconstruction was not significant, $B = -.02, \ SE = .05, t (164) = -0.34, p = .74$.

**Interaction perceived stigma – social identification.** Sixth, we tested the impact of the manipulation on the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on coping strategies and indicators of well-being. Here, we tested for a 3-way-interaction, using PROCESS Model 3. In order to present the findings in the most transparent way, only those parts of the analyses will be reported that are directly related to our hypotheses. Details can be found in Table 5.2.

We began by analysing the impact of job prospects on the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on self-esteem (H6a). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term of job prospects, social identification, and
perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = -.03, \ SE = .10, \ t (160) = -0.32, \ p = .75$.

The two-way interaction of perceived stigma and social identification as student was not significant, $B = .02, \ SE = .10, \ t (160) = 0.22, \ p = .83$ (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2  Summary of the impact of perceived stigma, social identification, and job prospects on variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social identification</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction I x S</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job prospects</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction S x P</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction I x P</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction I x S x P</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
I = Social identification, S = Perceived stigma, P = Job prospects

We then tested the impact of job prospects on the interaction of social identification as a student and perceived stigma on life satisfaction (H6a). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term of job prospects, social identification, and perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = .04, \ SE = .08, \ t (160) = 0.45, \ p = .65$. The two-way interaction of perceived stigma and social identification as student was not significant, $B = -.05, \ SE = .08, \ t (160) = -0.63, \ p = .53$.

Next, we tested the impact of job prospects on the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on job search intentions (H6b). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term of job prospects, social identification, and perceptions of stigma was significant, $B = -.18, \ SE = .08, \ t (160) = -2.28, \ p = .02$. The
two-way interaction of perceived stigma and social identification as student was marginal, $B = .15$, $SE = .08$, $t (160) = 1.89$, $p = .06$. Simple slope analyses revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions was significant only when students highly identified with other students and were confronted with good job prospects, $B = .34$, $SE = .11$, $t (160) = 3.16$, $p < .001$, such that greater perceptions of stigma led to greater intentions to search for a job. However, this relationship was not significant in all other conditions (Figure 5.5).

![Figure 5.5](image_url) Job search intentions as a function of perceived stigma, social identification as a student, and job prospects

Finally, we tested the impact of job prospects on the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction (H6b). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term of bleak job prospects, social identification, and perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = -.07$, $SE = .14$, $t (158) = -0.51$, $p = .61$. The two-way interaction of perceived stigma and social identification as student were not significant, $B = .16$, $SE = .14$, $t (158) = 1.19$, $p = .24$. 
Post-hoc Analyses

Given that social identification was directly affected by the manipulation it was tested whether social identification could also function as a mediator. Mediation analysis and moderated mediation analysis was tested using the PROCESS supplement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Models 4 and 8.

First, we tested whether social identification was a mediator of the relationship between job prospects and indicators of well-being. It could not be confirmed that social identification as a student was a mediator in the relationship of job prospects and self-esteem. However, it could be confirmed that social identification was a mediator in the relationship of job prospects and life satisfaction. In particular, job prospects significantly predicted social identification as a student, $B = .21, SE = .06, t (166) = 3.54, p < .001$. When job prospects and social identification are simultaneously regressed on life satisfaction, social identification significantly predicted life satisfaction, $B = .23, SE = .08, t (165) = 2.77, p = .006$, and job prospects significantly predicted life satisfaction, $B = .28, SE = .07, t (165) = 4.25, p < .001$. A bootstrap analysis revealed that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect excluded zero (.01, .12), fulfilling the requirements for partial mediation (Figure 5.6).

![Path diagram](image-url)

*Figure 5.6* Path diagram illustrating that social identification as a student mediates the effect of job prospects on life satisfaction, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
We also tested whether social identification as a student mediates the interaction of perceived stigma and job prospects on indicators of well-being (self-esteem and life satisfaction) and coping strategies (job search intentions and cognitive reconstruction). None of these models could be confirmed.

**Discussion**

As the analyses were very detailed and to avoid extensive repetition we will first summarise the results and compare them with our predictions. The integration of the findings will follow in the General Discussion.

The first hypothesis about the impact of the manipulation on the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being could not be confirmed. In contrast to the hypotheses, students did not report lower levels of self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment when they were confronted with bleak job prospects.

We could not confirm our second hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship of the perceived stigma and coping strategies. In contrast to the hypothesis, students did not report higher levels of intentions to search for a job or to see the situation of future unemployment in a better light the more they perceive a stigma when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Perceptions of stigma were not related to students' intentions to search for a job when confronted with bleak or good prospects. In contrast to our hypothesis, it was also found that students reported lower cognitive reconstruction the more they perceived a stigma when confronted with bleak job prospects.

The third hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the relationships between social identification and indicators of well-being cannot be confirmed. In
contrast to the hypothesis, students did not report better self-esteem the more they identified with being a student when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Although students reported higher life satisfaction the more they identified with being a student, the effect was stronger when they were confronted with bleak job prospects.

We could not confirm our fourth hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and coping strategies. In contrast to the hypotheses, students did not report higher levels of intentions to search for a job or to see the situation of future unemployment in a better light the more they identified with a student when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Students reported more intentions to search for a job the more they identified with as a student when they were confronted with good job prospects. It was also found that students' identification was not related to cognitive reconstruction when confronted with good or bleak job prospects.

In addition, the fifth hypotheses about the impact of the manipulation on the relationships of coping strategies with indicators of well-being cannot be confirmed. In contrast to the hypothesis, students did not report higher levels of self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they intended to search for a job when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. In fact, students reported lower life satisfaction the more job search intentions they reported. Neither could we confirm that students report higher levels of self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they tried to see their situation of future unemployment in a better light, when confronted with bleak job prospects. However, reconstructing own cognitions was positively associated with better life satisfaction, but not as a result of future job prospects.

We could neither confirm our sixth hypothesis about the impact of the
manipulation on the interaction of social identification and perceived stigma. It could be demonstrated that students' self-esteem and life satisfaction was not lower the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment when they highly identified with being a student and when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. However, this effect also existed when job prospects were good. We could not confirm that students report higher job search intentions or cognitive reconstruction the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment when they highly identified with being a student and when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Although students did report more intentions to search for a job the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment when they highly identified with being a student, this effect was also found when students were confronted with good job prospects.

However, one noticeable outcome of this study is that students identified more with being a student when they were confronted bleak job prospects. Hence, for students, it seemed to be important to be a student even if job prospects were bleak. The results also illustrate that their social identification as a student can explain why student's life satisfaction is higher when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Hence, we found evidence that students' social identification as a student can serve as an alternative identity which helps students to cope with bleak future job prospects.

Overall, there were many hypotheses that could not be confirmed. One reason for this may be that we gathered participants from different disciplines. However, how students rate their future job prospects may also depend on their discipline. For some disciplines it may be easier to find a job after graduation than for others. In addition, rating future job prospects may also depend on a university ranking in relation to other universities. For this reason, we designed another experiment in which we tried to make
the manipulation stronger by manipulating both the job prospects for students with a specific discipline and job prospects for students of the university as a whole. With the following Study 3, we aim to extend the previous Study 2 by investigating in more detail how the well-being of students is influenced by future job prospects. We also aim to enhance our understanding of the coping strategies that they use in response to the perceived stigma of unemployment and the role their social identification as student plays.

**STUDY 3**

**Method**

**Design**

The experiment consisted of a 2 (job prospects for psychology students: good vs. bleak) x 2 (job prospects for University of Exeter students: good vs. bleak) factorial between-participants design. We chose this design to strengthen the manipulation by making it more specific and self-relevant (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002). The same hypotheses than in Study 2 will be used. We expect that students perceive a threat of future unemployment when either job prospects for their discipline or their university or both their discipline and their university will be bleak. Participants were randomly allocated to conditions.

**Participants**

Participants were 148 undergraduate psychology students of the University of Exeter who took part voluntarily in return for course credit. Participants were aged from 18 to 50 with a mean age of 19 years (two did not indicate their age). There were 115 females and 31 males (two did not indicate their gender).
Procedure & Materials

Participants read an article that was ostensibly published in the newspaper for University of Exeter students. The article manipulated both job prospects for psychology graduates (good vs. bleak) and job prospects for graduates of the University of Exeter (good vs. bleak).

**Manipulation of job prospects for psychology graduates.** Participants were either told that as psychology students they faced good job prospects after graduation arguing that employment will grow because of increased demand for psychological services (good prospects condition) or that they face bad job prospects because of decreased demand for psychologists resulting from the economic crises (bleak prospects condition). Please see appendix for full text.

**Manipulation of job prospects for university graduates.** In one condition participants were told that they faced good prospects on the job market (good prospects condition) because the university has a good position in a university league table for employment. In the other condition, participants were told that they face bad prospects on the job market (bleak prospects condition) because the university has a lower position in a university league table for employment. Please see appendix for full text.

**Dependent Measures**

Following the manipulation, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing manipulation checks and dependent variables. Participants responded to all measures on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

**Manipulation checks.** Two items checked job prospects for psychology students. The items were: “According to the article it will be hard for psychology
graduates to find a job” and “According to the article, it should be easy for psychology graduates to find employment” (reversed) \((r = .87)\). The manipulation of job prospects for university students was also checked with two items: “According to the article it will be hard for Exeter University graduates to find a job” and “According to the article, it should be easy for Exeter University graduates to find employment” (reversed) \((r = .88)\).

**Perceived stigma of unemployment.** The same item as in Study 2 was used to measure perceived stigma: “I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in employment”.

**Identification with being a psychology student.** Similar measures were used as in Study 2. Measures of identification with being a psychology students were partly selected and adapted on the basis of existing measures (Doosje et al., 1995) and partly designed for the present study. Participants completed three items, for example, “I identify with being a psychology student” or “I am proud to be a psychology student” (three items, \(\alpha = .81\)).

**Identification with being a university student.** In a similar way, measures of identification with the university were partly selected and adapted on the basis of existing measures (Doosje et al., 1995) and partly designed for the present study. Participants completed three items for example, “I identify with being a student of the University of Exeter” or “I am proud to be student of the University of Exeter” (three items, \(\alpha = .88\)).

**Coping strategies.** Participants were presented with the same statements as in the Study 2. These were partly adapted and chosen on the basis of existing measures (Mummendey et al., 1999) and partly designed. Intentions to search for a job in the
future were measured with four items: “I would personally work hard to get a job” and “I am very keen to get a job in the future” ($\alpha = .74$). Cognitive reconstruction for possible future unemployment was measured with two items: “If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on” and “If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with” ($r = .80$).

**Indicators of well-being.** Participants were presented with the same statements as in the previous study. These measures were selected on the basis of established measures: self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965): “I am a person with high self-esteem” and “I feel that I have a number of good qualities” (two items, $r = .80$) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996): “I enjoy my life” and “I am satisfied with my life” (two items, $r = .86$).

Once participants had completed the questionnaire they were thanked for their time and they were offered a written debrief. As compensation for taking part participants were offered course credits.

**Results**

**Manipulation Checks**

The effectiveness of the two manipulations was checked using two ANOVAs. Given that one group is a subgroup of the other and the similarity of the manipulation we anticipated that one manipulation might have had an impact on the manipulation check of the other and vice versa.

A significant main effect of prospects for psychology students was found on the manipulation check of prospects for psychology students, $F (1, 143) = 184.58, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .56$. As expected, students rated job prospects to be worse in the bleak prospects for psychology students condition ($M= 5.77, SD = 0.80$) compared to the good prospects
condition \( (M=3.56, SD = 1.45) \). There was also a significant main effect for the prospects for university students on the manipulation check of prospects for psychology students, \( F (1, 143) = 19.73, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .12 \). Students rated psychology student job prospects to be worse in the bleak prospects for university students condition \( (M=4.93, SD = 1.49) \) than in the good prospects condition \( (M=4.18, SD = 1.78) \). In addition, the interaction was significant, \( F (1, 143) = 6.96, p = .009, \eta^2_p = .05 \).

Simple main effects analysis demonstrated that when prospects for psychology students were good, students in the condition with good prospects for university students rated job prospects for psychology students significantly lower \( (M=2.71, SD = 1.24) \) than in the condition with bleak prospects for university students \( (M=3.97, 1.38) \), \( F (1, 143) = 25.22, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .15 \). When job prospects for psychology students were bleak, students in the condition with good prospects for university student did not rate job prospects for psychology students significantly different from the condition with poor prospects for university students, \( F (1, 143) = 1.62, p = .21, \eta^2_p = .01 \).

Analysis of the manipulation of prospects for university students revealed a main effect on the manipulation check for prospects for university students, \( F (1, 143) = 232.90, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .62 \). As expected, students rated job prospects to be worse in the bad prospects for university students condition \( (M=5.20, SD = 1.25) \) than in the good prospects condition \( (M=2.60, SD = 1.02) \). The main effect of the prospects for psychology students on the manipulation check of prospects for university students was also significant, \( F (1, 143) = 20.45, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .13 \). Students rated university job prospects job prospects to be worse in the bad prospects for psychology students condition \( (M=4.33, SD = 1.68) \) than in the good prospects condition \( (M=3.58, SD = 1.79) \). The interaction was not significant.
Given that the effect sizes for the relevant manipulation were larger than the effect sizes for the other manipulation or any interaction effect, we concluded that the manipulations did indeed work.

**Impact of the Manipulation on Variables**

The means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for each condition can be found in Table 5.3. As a preliminary analysis we also tested whether the variables are directly influenced by job prospects using a 2 (university prospects) x 2 (psychology prospects) analysis of variance.

A 2 (university prospects) x 2 (psychology prospects) analysis of variance was carried out on perceived stigma. Analysis revealed that the main effects were not significant. However, there was a significant interaction of prospects for psychology and university students on perceived stigma, $F(1, 144) = 4.57, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Simple main effects analysis demonstrated that when prospects for psychology students were bad, students in the condition with bleak prospects for university students perceived marginally more stigma ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.32$) than in the condition with good prospects for university students ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.24$), $F(1, 144) = 3.20, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .02$. There was no effect of university prospects when there were good prospects for psychology students, $F(1, 144) = 1.77, p = .19, \eta_p^2 = .01$ (Figure 5.7).
A 2 (university prospects) x 2 (psychology prospects) analysis of variance on identification as psychology student found a marginal main effect for prospects for university students, $F(1, 143) = 3.42, p = .07, \eta^2_p = .02$. Students who had bleak university prospects reported more identification as psychology student ($M = 6.28, SD = 0.64$) compared to students who had good prospects ($M = 6.05, SD = 0.81$). The other main effect and the interaction term were not significant.

We then examined the impact of the manipulation of job prospects on identification as university student. A 2 (university prospects) x 2 (psychology prospects) analysis of variance demonstrated a significant main effect of prospects for psychology students on identification as university student, $F(1, 144) = 4.17, p = .04, \eta^2_p = .03$. Students with good prospects as psychology student reported more identification as university student ($M = 6.44, SD = 0.87$) compared to students with bleak prospects ($M = 6.12, SD = 0.97$). The other main effect and the interaction term were not significant.

**Figure 5.7** Mean perceived stigma of unemployment as a function of job prospects for psychology students and job prospects for university students
Chapter 5

were not significant.

Table 5.3  Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of variables for each condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.32†</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.31†</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPU – BPP</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BPU – GPP</td>
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<td>1.64</td>
<td>.18</td>
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<td>.28†</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.23</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.14</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>-.30†</td>
<td>.17</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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<td>1.36</td>
<td>.15†</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.19*</td>
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<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.13</td>
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<td>0.59</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>.06</td>
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<td>.17</td>
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<td>.41**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPU – GPP</td>
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<td>3. Social identification</td>
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<td>0.83</td>
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<td>.53**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>-.15†</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.27**</td>
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<td>4. Job search intentions</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.47**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BPU – GPP</td>
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<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.11</td>
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<td>GPU – GPP</td>
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<td>-.46**</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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<td>.14</td>
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<td>5. Cognitive reconstruction</td>
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<td>GPU – BPP</td>
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<td>BPU – GPP</td>
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<td>1.30</td>
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<td>.15†</td>
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<td>6. Self-esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPU – BPP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BPU – GPP</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>0.92</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.54**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPU – GPP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.61***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Life satisfaction</td>
<td>BPU – BPP</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.71***</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPU – BPP</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.88</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.40*</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>BPU – GPP</td>
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<td>0.86</td>
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<td>.54**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPU – GPP</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.60**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.61***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: †p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
BPU – BPP: Bleak job prospects for university students and bleak prospects for psychology students (N = 36), GPU – BPP: Good job prospects for university students & bleak prospects for psychology students (N = 37), BPU – GPP: Bleak job prospects for university students & good prospects for psychology students (N = 38), GPP – GPP: Good job prospects for university students & good prospects for psychology students (N = 37)
In a similar way, the impact of the manipulations on job search intentions and cognitive reconstruction was tested. Analysis revealed that neither prospects for psychology students, nor prospects for university students, or the interaction terms impacted on job search intentions or cognitive reconstruction.

Then the impact of the manipulations on self-esteem and life satisfaction was tested. Analysis revealed that prospects for psychology students significantly impacted on self-esteem, \( F(1, 142) = 7.37, p = .007, \eta^2_p = .05 \), and life satisfaction, \( F(1, 142) = 11.34, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .07 \). Students with bleak job prospects for psychology students reported lower self-esteem (\( M = 5.57, SD = 0.94 \)) and life satisfaction (\( M = 6.10, SD = 0.74 \)) than students with good job prospects (\( M = 4.96, SD = 1.27 \) for self-esteem, \( M = 5.56, SD = 1.23 \) for life satisfaction). Prospects for university students and the interaction term did not impact on self-esteem or life satisfaction.

**Impact of Job Prospects on Key Relationships**

The relationships were explored in more detail using the principles of moderated regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and the PROCESS complement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Model 3 to test for a 3-way-interaction. The continuous variables were mean centred and the manipulations were dummy coded (1 = bleak prospects, 0 = good prospects) prior to the analysis.

In the following section, the findings will be presented in a detailed way for the first analysis. In order to avoid extensive repetition, the other analyses only contain the information that is relevant in respect to the hypotheses. Detailed information can be found in Tables 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6.

**Perceived stigma – indicators of well-being.** First, we tested how the job prospects impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and
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indicators of well-being, starting with self-esteem (H1). Analysis revealed that job
prospects for psychology students did not impact on self-esteem, $B = -.50, SE = .27, t$
(138) = -1.85, $p = .07$. Perceptions of stigma, $B = .15, SE = .17, t (138) = 0.85, p = .40$,
and the interaction term of prospects for psychology students and perceptions of stigma,
$B = -.28, SE = .23, t (138) = -1.24, p = .22$, did not significantly impact on self-esteem.
In addition, neither job prospects for university students significantly impacted on self-
esteem, $B = .15, SE = .26, t (138) = 0.56, p = .57$, nor the interaction term of prospects
for university students and perceived stigma, $B = -.25, SE = .21, t (138) = -1.22, p = .22$.
The interaction of the two manipulations was not significant, $B = .04, SE = .38, t (138)$
= 0.10, $p = .92$. The 3-way-interaction term was not significant, $B = .19, SE = .29, t$
(138) = 0.66, $p = .51$.

Then we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship
between perceived stigma of unemployment and life satisfaction (H1). Analysis
revealed that interaction term of prospects for university students and perceived stigma
was marginal, $B = -.29, SE = .14, t (138) = -2.33, p = .07$ (Table 5.4).

Slope analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and life
satisfaction was significant when students were confronted with bleak prospects for
university students, $B = -.27, SE = .10, t (138) = -2.81, p = .02$, such that greater
perceived stigma led to lower life satisfaction. However, this relationship was not
significant when students were confronted with good prospects for university students,
$B = -.04, SE = .12, t (138) = -0.21, p = .78$ (see Figure 5.8).
Figure 5.8  Life satisfaction as a function of perceived stigma and job prospects for university students

Table 5.4  Summary of the impact of perceived stigma and job prospects on variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Cognitive reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects psychology</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-.57*</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects university</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction S x P</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction S x U</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-.29†</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction U x P</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction S x P x U</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: † p < .10,  * p < .05,  ** p < .01,  *** p < .001
S = Perceived stigma, P = Job prospects for psychology students, U = Job prospects for university students

Perceived stigma – coping strategies. Second, we tested how the job prospects manipulation impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment
and coping strategies, starting with job search intentions (H2a). Analysis revealed that the interaction term of prospects for psychology students and perceptions of stigma was marginal, $B = -.21$, $SE = .13$, $t (139) = -1.99$, $p = .09$ (Table 5.4).

![Figure 5.9](image.png)

*Figure 5.9* Job search intentions as a function of perceived stigma and job prospects for psychology students

Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions was significant when students were confronted with good job prospects for psychology students, $B = .33$, $SE = .09$, $t (139) = 2.88$, $p = .003$, such that greater perceived stigma led to greater job search intentions. This relationship was not significant when students were confronted with bleak prospects for psychology students, $B = .14$, $SE = .10$, $t (139) = 1.36$, $p = .21$ (see Figure 5.9).

Next, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and cognitive reconstruction (H2b). Analysis revealed that none of the predictor variables was significant (Table 5.4).

**Social identification – indicators of well-being.** Third, we tested the impact of
the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between social identification (as both psychology student and university student) and indicators of well-being. We began with analysing the relationship between identification as psychology student and self-esteem (H3). Analysis revealed that none of the relevant interactive terms significantly impacted on self-esteem (Table 5.5).

Then, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between social identification with university students and self-esteem (H3). Analysis revealed that the interaction term of job prospects for psychology students and identification as university student was significant, $B = .55$, $SE = .28$, $t(138) = 2.00$, $p = .05$ (Table 5.5).

![Figure 5.10](image)

**Figure 5.10** Self-esteem as a function of social identification with being a university student and job prospects for psychology students

Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between social identification with university students and self-esteem was significant when students were confronted with bleak prospects for psychology students, $B = .45$, $SE = .15$, $t(138) = 3.00$, $p < .
001, such that greater social identification as a university student led to greater self-esteem. When students were confronted with good prospects for psychology students, the relationship was not significant, $B = .05, SE = .19, t (138) = 0.54, p = .78$. (see Figure 5.10).

Next, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between social identification with psychology students and life satisfaction (H3). Analysis revealed that none of the relevant interactive terms significantly impacted on life satisfaction (Table 5.5).

Finally, we tested the impact of the manipulations on the relationship between social identification with university students and life satisfaction (H3). Analysis revealed that the interaction term of job prospects for psychology students and identification with university students was marginal, $B = .33, SE = .17, t (139) = 1.91, p = .09$ (Table 5.5).

**Figure 5.11** Life satisfaction as a function of social identification with being a university student and job prospects for psychology students
Slope analysis revealed that the relationship between social identification with university students and life satisfaction was significant when students were confronted with bleak prospects for psychology students, $B = .41, SE = .16, t (138) = 2.25, p = .03$, such that greater social identification led to greater life satisfaction. The relationship was not significant when students were confronted with good job prospects for psychology students, $B = .19, SE = .15, t (138) = 1.27, p = .18$ (see Figure 5.11).

**Social identification – coping strategies.** Fourth, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between social identification (with both psychology students and university students) and coping strategies. We began with analysing the relationship between identification with psychology students and job search intentions (H4a). Analysis revealed that none of the relevant interactive terms was significant (Table 5.5).

Then we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between identification as a university student and job search intentions (H4a). Analysis revealed that the interaction term of prospects for university and identification as university student was marginal, $B = .31, SE = .17, t (139) = 1.82, p = .07$ (Table 5.5).

Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between social identification with university students and job search intentions was strongest when students were confronted with bleak job prospects for university students, $B = .43, SE = .11, t (139) = 4.39, p < .001$, such that greater social identification as university student led to greater job search intentions. The relationship was marginal when students were confronted with good job prospects for university students, $B = .16, SE = .12, t (139) = 1.95, p = .08$ (see Figure 5.12).
Chapter 5

Figure 5.12 Job search intentions as a function of social identification with being a university student and prospects for university students

Then we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between identification with psychology students and cognitive reconstruction (H4b). Analysis revealed that none of the interactive terms significantly impacted on cognitive reconstruction (Table 5.5).

Finally, we tested impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between identification with university students and cognitive reconstruction (H4b). Again, analysis revealed that none of the relevant interactive terms significantly impacted on cognitive reconstruction. The results are summarised in Table 5.5.
Coping strategies – indicators of well-being. Fifth, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulation on the relationship between coping strategies and indicators of well-being. We began with the analysis of the relationship between job search intentions and self-esteem and between job search intentions and life satisfaction (H5a). Analysis revealed that none of the other relevant interactive terms was significant (Table 5.6).

Next, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and self-esteem and between cognitive reconstruction
and life satisfaction (H5a). Analysis revealed that none of the relevant relationships were significant. Table 5.6 summarises the results.

Table 5.6 Summary of the impact of coping strategies and job prospects on variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th></th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects psychology</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects university</td>
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<td>.26</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job search</strong></td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction U x P</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction JS x P</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction JS x U</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction JS x P x U</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects psychology</td>
<td>-.49†</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospects university</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive reconstruction</strong></td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction U x P</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction CR x P</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction CR x U</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction CR x P x U</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: † p < .10
JS = Job search, CR = Cognitive reconstruction, P = Job prospects for psychology students, U = Job prospects for university students

**Interaction perceived stigma – social identification.** Sixth, we tested the impact of the job prospects manipulations on the interaction between social identification as a student and perceived stigma on coping strategies and indicators of well-being. PROCESS Model 3 was used with one prospects condition as a third interaction variable and the other prospects condition as control variable. In the following, only those interactive results will be reported that are relevant for the
Chapter 5

hypothesis. Detailed information can be found in the appendices (Table 5.7).

We tested in the impact of the manipulations of job prospects on (a) the interaction between social identification with psychology students and perceived stigma on self esteem, and (b) the interaction of social identification with university students and perceived stigma on self esteem. None of these relationships were significant (H6a).

Then, we tested in the impact of the manipulations of job prospects on (a) the interaction between social identification with psychology students and perceived stigma on life satisfaction (b) the interaction of social identification with university students and perceived stigma on life satisfaction (Table 5.7). None of these relationships were significant (H6a).

Next, we tested in the impact of the manipulations of job prospects on (a) the interaction between social identification with psychology students and perceived stigma on job search intentions and (b) the interaction between social identification with university students and perceived stigma on job search intentions (H6b). The three-way interaction term of job prospects for university students, social identification as a university student, and perceptions of stigma was significant, $B = .26, SE = .10, t (138) = 2.46, p = .02$. The two-way interaction term of perceived stigma and social identification as university student was marginal, $B = -.13, SE = .07, t (138) = -1.77, p = .08$ (Table 5.7).

Simple slope analysis revealed that when students were confronted with good job prospects for university students and identified weakly as a university student, perceptions of stigma were significantly related with job search intentions, $B = .27, SE = .09, t (138) = 2.92, p < .001$, such that greater perceived stigma led to greater job search intentions. When students were confronted with good job prospects for university
students and identified highly as university student, perceptions of stigma were not related to job search intentions, \( B = .06, SE = .08, t (138) = 0.72, p = .72 \). In contrast, when students were confronted with bleak job prospects for university students and weakly identified with university students, perceptions of stigma were not related to job search intentions, \( B = -.09, SE = .10, t (138) = -0.84, p = .40 \). When students were confronted with bleak job prospects for university students and identified highly with university students, perceptions of stigma were significantly related to job search intentions, \( B = .13, SE = .06, t (138) = 2.13, p = .03 \), such that greater perceptions of stigma led to more job search intentions (Figure 5.13).

![Figure 5.13](image)

**Figure 5.13** Job search intentions as a function of the interaction of social identification with being a university student, perceptions of stigma and the manipulation

Finally, we tested in the impact of the manipulations of job prospects on (a) the interaction between social identification with psychology students and perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction, and (b) the interaction between social identification with university students and perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction (H6b). None of
these relationships were significant (Table 5.7).

**Post-hoc Analyses**

Similar than in Study 2, it was tested whether social identification as psychology student or university student might also function as a mediators. Moderated mediation analysis was tested using the PROCESS supplement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Models 8 and 10.

We tested whether social identification as a psychology student or as a university student mediated the impact of the interaction between job prospects for psychology and university students on indicators of well-being (self-esteem and life satisfaction) and coping strategies (job search intentions and cognitive reconstruction). None of these models could be confirmed. We also tested whether social identification as a psychology student or university student mediated the impact of the interaction between perceived stigma and job prospects for psychology students and university students on indicators of well-being (self-esteem and life satisfaction) and coping strategies (job search intentions and cognitive reconstruction). None of these models could be confirmed.

**Discussion**

In the following we will provide a summary of the findings in relation to our hypotheses. The integration of the findings will follow in the General Discussion.

The first hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. In contrast to the hypotheses, students did not report lower levels of self-esteem the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment when confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline or their university. However, it could be confirmed that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects for both their discipline and university
students reported lower life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment.

We could not confirm our second hypotheses about the impact job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and coping strategies. In contrast to the hypothesis, students did not report higher levels of job search intentions the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment when they had bleak job prospects. A positive association between perceptions of stigma and job search intentions was only found when job prospects were good or when job prospects for university students were bleak and job prospects for their discipline were good. In addition, we could not confirm that students report more intentions to see future unemployment in a better light the more they perceive stigma when confronted with bleak job prospects.

The third hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. We could not confirm that students report higher self-esteem the more they identified with their discipline when confronted with bleak job prospects. However, it could be demonstrated that students' identification with the university was associated with higher self-esteem when they were confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline. In contrast, it could not be confirmed that students reported better life satisfaction the more they identified with their discipline when confronted with bleak job prospects. However, in line with the hypothesis, students reported better life satisfaction the more they identified with university students when confronted with bleak job prospects.

The fourth hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and coping strategies can partly be confirmed. Students did report greater intentions to search for a job the more they identified with their discipline.
However, in contrast to the hypothesis, this association was not stronger when students were confronted with bleak job prospects. In line with the hypothesis, students reported more intentions to search for a job the more they identified with being a university student when job prospects for the university were bleak. In contrast to our hypothesis, students did not report more intentions for cognitively reconstruct own cognitions the more they identified to with their discipline or university students when confronted with bleak job prospects.

The fifth hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship of coping strategies to indicators of well-being cannot be confirmed. In contrast to the hypothesis, students' self-esteem and life satisfaction was not connected with more intentions to search for a job, when confronted with bleak job prospects for both university students and their discipline. Neither we could confirm that students report higher self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they see their situation in a better light when confronted with bleak job prospects.

The sixth hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the interaction between social identification and perceived stigma can partly be confirmed. We could confirm that students' self-esteem and life satisfaction is not lower the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment when they highly identified with being a student of their discipline or university and when they are confronted with bleak job prospects. Neither did we find evidence that job search intentions depend on an interaction of perceived stigma and social identification with their discipline. However, students reported the highest job search intentions when they perceived a stigma of unemployment and highly identified with being a university student and when they were confronted with bleak prospects for university students. In contrast to the
hypothesis, we could not demonstrate that the effect of perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction depends on social identification, when students were confronted with bleak job prospects.

**General Discussion**

The objective of Studies 2 and 3 was to explore how the perceived stigma of unemployment and social identity processes affect people who are not traditionally counted as unemployed, but who are nonetheless not in paid work. In this chapter, we presented two studies of examining students. Overall, the results were mixed and many hypotheses could not be confirmed. However, we found support for the idea that the identity of being a student is influenced by future job prospects and can serve as an alternative identity. In the following we will first summarise the results, compare them with our predictions, and outline how they fit with past research. Then we will address limitations of the current study and unresolved questions.

**Integration of Results**

The first hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. The results of Study 2 could not confirm that students report lower self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment when confronted with bleak job prospects. One reason for this may be that the manipulation, although the manipulation check worked, was not strong enough to make the stigma of unemployment self-relevant. As a consequence, perceived stigma was not related to indicators of well-being. However, the hypothesis can partly be confirmed for Study 3, but only for life satisfaction. More specifically, the results demonstrate that students who were confronted with bleak job prospects for both their discipline and their
university reported lower life satisfaction the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment. This finding fits with the argument that future job prospects can be anticipated and the stigma of unemployment may become self-relevant for students. In this way, the result also fits with research that has demonstrated that stigma may impact on people's well-being when it becomes self-relevant (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). One reason why effects were only found for life satisfaction and not for self-esteem may be that students' self-esteem is influenced by a current situation and less by future prospects. Indeed, it has been argued that self-esteem depends on the meaning of perceived stigma in a current situation (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). In contrast, life satisfaction may involve a more general evaluation of one's life including prospects of the future. This may explain why perceptions of the stigma of unemployment may be more relevant for students’ life satisfaction when they anticipate job prospects to be bleak.

The second hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between perceived stigma and coping strategies cannot be confirmed. In Study 2 we could not confirm that students report higher intentions to search for a job or to see the situation of future unemployment in a better light the more they perceive a stigma when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Similarity in Study 3 students did not report higher levels of job search intentions the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment when they had bleak job prospects. A positive association between perceptions of stigma and job search intentions was only found when job prospects were good or when job prospects for university students were bleak and job prospects for their discipline were good. One reason for this may be that when job prospects are good, students link perceptions of stigma with intentions to search for a job because they
expect this to be a successful way to cope with stigma in future. In addition, we could not confirm that students report more intentions to see future unemployment in a better light the more they perceive stigma when confronted with bleak job prospects. In fact, when confronted with bleak job prospects, students reported lower motivation to reconstruct their own thoughts. This finding does not support former social psychological research about responses to perceived stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). One reason for this may be that students prefer other ways to reconstruct their attitudes and thoughts than were measured in this study. For example, students could value the opportunity for a gap year or additional studies. It may also be the case that students prefer to identify more with being a student in response to bleak job prospects. Indeed, it may be argued that identification with an alternative identity is a creative form to reconstruct own cognitions about a group.

The third hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. More specifically, in Study 2 we could not confirm that students report higher levels of self-esteem the more they identified with being a student when confronted with bleak job prospects. This finding does not fit with past research in the social identity tradition demonstrating that social identification is related to higher self-esteem (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009; Tajfel, 1978). However, in line with the hypothesis, students reported higher life satisfaction the more they identified with being a student, although it could not be demonstrated that the effect was stronger when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Study 3 did not demonstrate that identification with their discipline is associated with higher self-esteem or life satisfaction when faced with bleak job prospects. However, it could be demonstrated that students’ identification with the
university is associated with higher self-esteem when they were confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline. In a similar way, it could be demonstrated that students reported better life satisfaction the more they identified with university students when confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline and for both their discipline and university students. These findings fit with the argument that when individuals simultaneously belong to two groups they tend to base their self-esteem on identification with the higher status or not threatened group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). In a similar way, individuals may base their life satisfaction on identification with a higher status group. In this way, these findings illustrate that individuals distance themselves from the category unemployed and concentrate on an alternative identity as a possible source to maintain their well-being (McFadyen, 1995).

The fourth hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between social identification and coping strategies can partly be confirmed. Study 2 could not confirm that students reported greater intentions to search a job the more they identified with being a student when confronted with bleak job prospects. In a similar way, in Study 3 students did not report more intentions to search for a job the more they identified with their discipline. This finding does not fit into the argument that their identification as a student is connected with future job search in order to see their studies as successful. However, in line with the hypothesis, students reported greater intentions to search for a job the more they identified with being a university student. One reason for this may be that identification with the University of Exeter is very strongly connected with successfully searching for a job in the future. In contrast to our hypothesis, neither Study 2 nor Study 3 demonstrated that when students are confronted with bleak job prospects, students reported more cognitive reconstruction when they
were highly identified as a student. This finding does not support past research that an alternative identity is connected with seeing the own situation in a better light (McFadyen, 1995). One reason for this may be that students prefer other ways to see their situation in a better light than it was measured in this study. For example, students could much more value the opportunity for a gap year or additional studies rather than time for other activities. In addition, as we argued above, it may be the case that increased social identification with being a student is a way to see their group in a better light. Hence, as we could demonstrate if confronted with bleak job prospects students' preferred strategy seems to intensify their identification with being a university student.

The fifth hypotheses about the impact of job prospects on the relationship between coping strategies to indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. In contrast to the hypothesis, in Study 2 students did not report higher self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they were motivated to search for a job, when confronted with bleak job prospects. In fact, students reported lower life satisfaction the greater job search intentions they reported when confronted with bleak job prospects. This finding does not fit into research proposing that coping strategies aim to maintain well-being (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). One reason for this finding may be that students do not see job seeking as a successful strategy when job prospects are bad in the future. However, in Study 3 students' self-esteem and life satisfaction was connected with stronger intentions to search for a job when confronted with bleak job prospects for both university students and their discipline. This findings fits with the argument that students are tempted to intensify their job search when thinking about possible future unemployment. In contrast to the hypotheses, neither Study 2 nor Study 3 demonstrated
that students report higher self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they see their situation in a better light when confronted with bleak job prospects. Although reconstructing one's cognitions was slightly positively associated with better life satisfaction in Study 2, it did not depend on future job prospects. This finding does not support former research arguing that coping strategies aim to maintain well-being (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). As we already argued, it may be the case that students use other dimensions to reconstruct their cognitions, for example they may value the opportunity for a gap year or additional studies rather than time for other activities.

The sixth hypothesis about the impact of job prospects on the interaction between social identification and perceived stigma can partly be confirmed. In line with the hypothesis, Study 2 and Study 3 demonstrated that perceptions of stigma and indicators of well-being are not negatively related when students identify highly with being a student. These findings fit with the argument that when an alternative identity is available, perceptions of stigma may not have such negative effects as when there is no alternative identity available. However, this effect also emerged when job prospects were good. One explanation for this finding may be that the manipulation did not make the stigma of unemployment self-relevant for students. It may be the case that the stigma of unemployment may be too abstract for them. However, we found evidence that their social identification as a student can explain why students' life satisfaction is higher when they were confronted with bleak job prospects. Hence, their social identification as a student may not help students to respond to perceived stigma of unemployment, but it seems to help them to cope with bleak future job prospects.

In contrast to the hypothesis, Study 2 could not confirm that the effect of
perceived stigma on intentions to seek a job does depend on social identification, when confronted with bleak job prospects. In Study 3 we could not find evidence for this interaction when we looked at social identification with their discipline. However, students reported the highest job search intentions when they perceived a stigma of unemployment and highly identified with being a university student and when they were confronted with bleak prospects for university students. This finding fits with the argument that job search intentions depend on perceptions of stigma and social identity processes. However, neither Study 2 nor Study 3 demonstrated that the effect of perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction depends on social identification when students were confronted with bleak job prospects. As already argued above, it may have been the case that cognitive reconstruction was not appropriately measured for students.

Overall, bringing the results from the research questions together, the findings illustrate that self-esteem and life satisfaction were connected with stronger intentions to search for a job, when students anticipated unemployment. These findings fit with the argument that students attempt to intensify their job search when thinking about possible future unemployment and expect that their job search will be successful. Intentions to search for a job were also related to social identification as a university student. Hence, students may link their identification with the university with successfully searching for a job in the future, particularly when conditions to search a job may be difficult. In addition, their social identification was also related to self-esteem and life satisfaction. For example, students' identification with the university was associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction when they were confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline. In sum, these relationships support the idea
that students are able to maintain their well-being despite bleak job prospects through an identification with an alternative non-threatened identity (Roccas, 2003).

**Limitations**

While these studies were able to confirm some of our hypotheses and shed light on how the perceived stigma of unemployment and identity processes impact on people who are not traditionally examined in connection with unemployment, there are some important limitations that should be mentioned.

We will begin with some shortcomings regarding the manipulation of the job prospects. One reason why there were some unexpected findings and why the findings differed in the two samples may be that there were differences in the manipulation between the two studies. In the first study, students were presented with a statement about future job prospects for university students in general. In the second study, we intended to make the manipulation stronger. Hence, students were presented with an alleged article from the university newspaper, including strong arguments why students had either good or bleak prospects. This may explain why some of the hypotheses could be confirmed in Study 3, which could not be confirmed in Study 2, for example, the finding that participants reported lower levels of life satisfaction the more they perceived stigma when confronted with bleak job prospects. However, the 2x2 design of the manipulation turned out to be complex and sometimes difficult to interpret, particularly in relation to the interaction between perceived stigma and social identification. This may lead to restrictions in the interpretation of the interaction of perceived stigma and social identification in the case of bleak job prospects.

Another reason why there may have been so many unexpected findings may be that students did not believe that they really would have poor job prospects, particularly
for students of the University of Exeter. Although the manipulation check worked, students may have found it hard to imagine that they will have difficulties to find a job. Moreover, it may also be the case that students who are confronted with bleak job prospects interpret such a situation as unfair and illegitimate, blaming the university for their bleak job prospects. As a consequence, students may have been reluctant to anticipate unemployment. This may explain some unexpected findings, for example, why students reported higher life satisfaction the less they intended to search for a job when confronted with bleak job prospects.

A third point of potential critique regarding the manipulation refers particularly to Study 3. Here students were presented with reciprocal information regarding prospects for university students (rank in league tables higher or lower). However, the information for prospects of the particular discipline were not designed clearly reciprocal. Hence, the information included the need for more psychological service (good prospects) or poor economic climate (bleak prospects). However, as the manipulation check worked, it is likely that the manipulation impacted in the desired way.

A further possible explanation why there were different results in some examined relationships may be that the two samples differed. Study 2 was carried out on the campus and students from different disciplines were recruited. Consequently, not every discipline may be threatened with bleak future job prospects in the same way as there are disciplines for which job prospects are certainly good. This may explain why most hypotheses of Study 2 could not be confirmed. In Sample 2 only first year psychology students were recruited. Although the manipulation checked worked, it may be the case that particularly first year students find it hard to put themselves in a
situation possible unemployment because they are not yet confronted with the need to find a job. This may explain why students did not perceive the stigma of unemployment as self-relevant for their self-esteem. Future researchers who are interested in the research questions of this studies may want to investigate how graduates respond to different job prospects.

**Summary & Conclusion**

In these studies, we were interested in how future job prospects impact on students' coping strategies and their well-being. In addition, we were interested in the roles of perceived stigma of unemployment and their possible alternative identity of being a student. Despite some mixed findings and shortcomings these studies demonstrated that thinking about future unemployment does affect students' feelings and thoughts. In particular, we want to highlight the following findings.

The findings demonstrate that students' life satisfaction is lower when they perceived a stigma of unemployment. We could not find evidence that students perceive the stigma of unemployment as self-relevant for their self-esteem or cognitive reconstruction in a similar way. However, we found evidence that perceptions of stigma are involved for their motivation to look for a job, particularly when they highly identify as a student.

In addition, we found evidence that their social identification as a student can be a powerful alternative identity when threatened with anticipated unemployment. Hence, the findings illustrate that students base their self-esteem and life satisfaction on identification with a university student when their job prospects for discipline was threatened. In this way, these findings illustrate that individuals distance themselves from the category unemployed and concentrate on an alternative identity a possible
source to maintain their well-being.

Moreover, we found evidence that anticipated unemployment also triggers possible coping strategies, particularly intentions to seek a job. This was especially the case when they also perceived a stigma attached to unemployment and identified highly as a student. In contrast, reconstructing cognitions in order to see this situation in a better light may not be an accessible strategy for students.

While we found evidence to confirm some of our predictions, the evidence was not found in both samples. There may be different possibilities to follow up these issues. One possible way may be to use students in their final year of studies, as outlined above. Another possible avenue may be to alter the manipulation. For example, students may be prompted to imagine future unemployment or they may read an article of an individual case of a student searching for employment. In addition, directly manipulating the stigma of unemployment may lead to additional findings regarding indicators of well-being. Another promising way may be to investigate the role of alternative identities. However, it may be difficult to manipulate the stigma of unemployment in a way that we can induce alternative identities when working with a student sample. Indeed, students' perceptions of the stigma of unemployment may be that it is abstract and less applicable to their current situation. A different way is to look at already established alternative identities. In this way, we do not need to look at how individuals deal with a scenario of possible future unemployment or induce an alternative identity. Rather we can investigate how an alternative identity can help to cope with being currently not paid employment and expectations of other people. In the next chapter, we will present two samples of people who have such an already established alternative identity: stay-at-home mothers.
CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL IDENTITY OF STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERS
AND THE THREAT OF IMPOSED UNEMPLOYMENT

Theoretical Background

Despite insights gained by past research into unemployment, we have only a limited understanding of how the stigma of unemployment might affect people who may not be working but who are also not included in official unemployment statistics. In this chapter we focus on a group of people that fits this criteria: stay-at-home mothers. The overall objective of the studies in this chapter is to investigate whether stay-at-home mothers perceive the stigma of unemployment and, if so, how it impacts on their well-being and coping strategies.

Stay-at-home mothers have a clear, and valued, role or function in society. Hence, it is unlikely that they categorise themselves as unemployed (Cragg & Dawson, 1984). Nonetheless, others may impose the category of unemployed on them. Indeed, many governments policies are in place to motivate mothers to return to work after they have given birth to their child (Bingham, 2013a). The fact that it is possible for mothers to choose between returning to work and staying at home may suggest that mothers are themselves responsible for not being in paid employment. Consequently, it is possible that some of the stereotypes of stay-at-home mothers may share some similarities with
Chapter 6

those unemployed people: lazy and not willing to work (Bingham, 2013b; Harding, 2013). In this way, there may be many daily situations in which the stigma of unemployment may become self-relevant for stay-at-home mothers.

Past research has demonstrated that being categorised as a member of a stigmatised group may be a threatening experience (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999). However, in the case of women who stay at home with their children, it has been demonstrated that it is relatively easy for them to distance themselves from being categorised as unemployed, and instead adopt an alternative identity: being a mother (e.g., Waters & Moore, 2002a). In this way, the alternative identity of being a mother may help them to maintain their well-being.

In this chapter, we attempt to build on the studies of this thesis by further demonstrating the importance of an alternative identity for people who are not in paid employment. We present two studies conducted with samples of stay-at-home mothers that builds on the samples with students. In doing so we will address the limitation raised in Chapter 5, whereby the future scenario of job prospects that was used may restrict the extent to which students may perceive potential unemployment to be as self-relevant. Thus, the studies presented in this chapter extend the student research presented in Studies 2 and 3 by focusing on a situation that is ongoing. By doing so, we also aim enhance our understanding of the role of cognitive reconstruction in relation to an alternative identity and to well-being, as this coping strategy did not play an important role for unemployed people and students.

The first study, Study 4, is a correlational study to examine the associations between key variables. The second study, Study 5, is an experiment that aims to demonstrate the importance of an alternative identity for coping with a stigmatised
identity by manipulating how other people perceive stay-at-home mothers. In particular, mothers will be given information that they are either perceived as similar to unemployed people or as similar to employed people. In general, we expect effects to be stronger when mothers are seen as similar to the unemployed by making the category unemployed salient (e.g., Turner, et al., 1987) compared to when mothers are seen as similar to employed people. As a consequence, mothers are expected respond in a way that reflects that they see themselves as potentially unemployed. In contrast, when they are seen as similar to employed people, we do not expect that they respond in light of a possible unemployment. In the following section, we bring together the main predictions for Studies 4 and 5 and link them to the literature.

First, we are interested in the relationship between the perceived stigma of unemployment and indicators of well-being and the impact of imposing the category of unemployment on these relationships. As outlined in Chapter 1, we argue that the stigma of unemployment has some characteristics that may potentially impact negatively on indicators of well-being (e.g., Crocker et al., 1998; Schmitt et al., 2014). We also argue that in situations where others impose the category of unemployed on another group, the stigma of unemployment may be activated and become self-relevant (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999; Crocker & Quinn, 2000). Consequently, the stigma of unemployment may impact on the self-esteem and life satisfaction of stay-at-home mothers. In this way, we propose that perceptions of greater stigma of unemployment will be associated with reduced levels of well-being (Bingham, 2013b), particularly when others impose the category of unemployed on mothers.
H1: Perceptions of stigma will be negatively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Second, we are interested in the relationships among the perceived stigma of unemployment and the strategies stay-at-home mothers might use to cope with this stigma, and the impact of an imposed category of unemployment on these relationships. As we have outlined in Chapter 1, one possible response to perceiving stigma is to actively try to change the situation, for example, by searching for a job (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). If stay-at-home mothers perceive the stigma of unemployment to be self-relevant, searching for a job may be an important strategy. They may, for example, look for job opportunities or register at job agencies. Another response to stigma is to reconstruct one’s own cognitions in a way that it is easier to cope with a threatening situation. For example, stay-at-home mothers may downplay the importance of money and status and instead place value on the amount of time that they can spend with their children. In this way, we propose perceptions of greater stigma of unemployment will be associated with greater intentions to search for a job and greater cognitive reconstruction, particularly when others impose the category of unemployed on mothers.

H2a: Perceived stigma will be positively associated with job search intentions.

H2b: Perceived stigma will be positively associated with cognitive restructuring.

Third, we are interested in the relationship between social identification with being a mother and indicators of well-being and the impact of an imposed category of
unemployment on these relationships. As we have outlined in Chapter 2, when individuals are simultaneously members of a lower and a higher status group, then they tend to identify less with the lower status group and identify more with the higher status group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). We also argued that those people not in paid work who have a viable alternative identity may categorise themselves in terms of this identity rather than categorising themselves as non-working (McFadyen, 1995). In this way, women who stay at home with their children may distance themselves from the imposed category unemployed and use their identity as a mother as possible resource to maintain their well-being. In this way, we propose that greater social identification as a mother will be associated with greater self-esteem and greater life satisfaction.

H3: Social identification as a mother will be positively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Fourth, we are interested in the relationship between social identification with being a mother and the strategies used to cope with the stigma of unemployment, and the impact of an imposed category of unemployment on these relationships. As outlined in Chapter 2, members of lower status groups can employ different strategies in response to their low social standing and that the usage of these strategies is influenced by identification processes (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). We also argued that women who stay at home with their children have a viable alternative identity of being seen as a mother. In this way, women who stay at home with their children who highly identify with being a mother may not be very motivated to find a job. Hence, searching
for a job may not be a desirable strategy for highly identified stay-at-home mothers. Consequently, we propose that social identification as a mother will not be associated in a positive way with intentions to seek a job. As we do not expect an effect we neither expect an effect when others impose the category unemployed to stay-at-home mothers. Another way of coping with possible unemployment is to cognitively reconstruct one's cognitions. Indeed, the very act of identifying as a mother may be a way for women who stay at home with their children to reconstruct their own thoughts and see the situation and the group in a better light (Tajfel, 1978). Hence, we propose that greater social identification as a mother will be associated with greater cognitive reconstruction, particularly when others impose the category of unemployment on mothers.

H4a: Social identification as a mother will not be or will negatively be associated with intentions to seek a job.

H4b: Social identification as a mother will be positively associated with greater cognitive reconstruction.

Fifth, we are interested in the relationship between strategies used to cope with the stigma of unemployment with indicators of well-being and the impact of an imposed category of unemployment on these relationships. In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that coping strategies are a mechanism through which self-esteem may be maintained (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). However, in Hypotheses 4 we also argued that intentions to search for a job may not be a desirable strategy for stay-at-home mothers. Consequently, we propose that intentions to seek a job will not or not positively be related to indicators of well-being. As we do not expect an effect we neither expect an
effect when others impose the category unemployed to stay-at-home mothers. In contrast, we also argued that cognitive reconstruction may be a more desirable strategy for stay-at-home mothers. Hence, we propose that cognitive reconstruction will be associated with higher levels self-esteem and life satisfaction, particularly when others impose the category of unemployment on stay-at-home mothers.

H5a: Intentions to seek a job will not or will be negatively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction among stay-at-home mothers.

H5b: Cognitive reconstruction will be positively associated with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Sixth, we are interested in the interaction between social identification with being a mother and perceived stigma of unemployment on indicators of well-being and coping strategies and the impact of an imposed category of unemployment on these relationships. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 1 we proposed that perceptions of greater stigma of unemployment will be associated with reduced levels of well-being. However, the effect of perceived stigma on indicators of well-being may be dependent on social identification (Schaafsma, 2011). When an alternative identity is available, such as the identity of being a mother, then perceived stigma should not be associated with lower levels on indicators of well-being. In particular, we propose that when social identification as a mother is high then perceptions of stigma and self-esteem and perceptions of stigma and life satisfaction will not be negatively associated. In contrast, when social identification as a mother is low then perceptions of stigma and indicators of well-being will be negatively related.
H6a: When social identification with mothers is high then perceived stigma will not be or not negatively be connected with lower self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Access to an alternative identity may also impact on coping strategies of stay-at-home mothers. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 2 we have argued that mothers' perceptions of stigma will be associated with intentions to seek a job. However in the hypothesis associated with Research Question 4 we argued that searching for a job may not be a desirable strategy for women who stay at home with their children who highly identify with other mothers. Hence, we propose that the relationship between perceptions of stigma and job search intentions will not depend on social identification as a mother. Regarding cognitive reconstruction, in the hypothesis associated with Research Question 2 we have argued that stay-at-home mothers' perceptions of stigma will be positively related to cognitive reconstruction. In the hypothesis associated with Research Question 4 we argued that social identification with a mother will be positively related to cognitive reconstruction. Consequently, we propose that cognitive reconstruction should be greatest when stay-at-home mothers perceive high stigma and identify strongly with being a mother, particularly when others see stay-at-home mothers as similar to the unemployed. We also expect that when social identification as a mother is low then perceptions of stigma will not be related to cognitive reconstruction.

H6b: Social identification with mothers will not impact on the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions.
H6c: When social identification with mothers is high then high perceived stigma will be associated with higher cognitive reconstruction.

In the following we will introduce two studies examining these hypotheses with samples of stay-at-home mothers.

**STUDY 4**

**Method**

**Participants**

One-hundred and thirty-three female participants took part in this survey. They were all mothers and were recruited in toddler groups in the south west of England. Data were collected over a three-month period. Those participants who indicated that they were employed or part-time employed were excluded from the study, reducing the sample to one-hundred and nineteen participants. Participants were between 19 and 47 years old with a mean age of 34 years. On average participants had 2.08 children (range: 1 – 4).

**Procedure and Measures**

Participants were given a two-page questionnaire, which they completed individually. It began with an introduction in which they were given information that their participation was voluntary, their responses were anonymous, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were presented a series of statements and asked to complete the questionnaire using a seven-point rating scale ranging from 1 = I strongly disagree to 7 = I strongly agree. Below the variables of primary interest are specified. When they had completed the questionnaire, participants were thanked for their time and were offered a written debrief and the chance to enter a prize draw as
compensation for taking part in the study.

**Perceived stigma of unemployment.** Two items for perceived stigma of unemployment were created for this study, e.g., “In general, people look down on those who are not in paid work” and “I feel that there is a stigma attached to net being in paid employment ($r = .64$).

**Social identification as a mother.** Measures of identification with being a mother were partly selected and adapted on the basis of existing measures (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004) and partly designed for the present study, for example, “I identify with other mothers who are caring for their children” and “Generally, I feel good as a mother caring for my children” (five items, $\alpha = .74$).

**Coping strategies.** Measures regarding coping strategies were partly adapted and selected on the basis of existing measures (Mummendey et al., 1999) and partly designed for this study. The statements measured intentions to seek a job, for example, “I wish to get paid work” and “I submit several applications a week” (four items, $\alpha = .73$) and cognitive reconstruction, for example, “With a job my children could not develop according to my values of rearing children” and “Family life suffers when a mother has a job” (three items, $\alpha = .69$).

**Indicators of well-being.** Measures regarding indicators of well-being were selected on the basis of established measures (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Gardner, Cummings, Dunham, & Pierce, 1998): self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), “I am a person with high self-esteem” (single item) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), “I enjoy my life” (single item).

**Results**

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations can be found in Table 6.1.
Overall, participants reported moderate levels of perceived stigma ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.41$) and relatively high levels of social identification as a mother ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 0.76$). Participants reported relatively low levels of job search intentions ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.24$) compared to relatively high levels of cognitive reconstructing ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.23$). They also reported relatively high levels of well-being: self-esteem ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.32$) and life satisfaction ($M = 6.15$, $SD = 1.14$).

Intercorrelations revealed that perceived stigma was negatively related to life satisfaction ($r = -.31$, $p = .001$) and self-esteem ($r = -.42$, $p < .001$) (H1). Perceived stigma was marginally related to job search intentions ($r = .17$, $p = .08$) (H2a) but not to cognitive reconstructing ($r = .06$, $p = .56$) (H2b). Social identification was not related to self-esteem ($r = .05$, $p = .59$) but was positively related to life satisfaction ($r = .25$, $p = .007$) (H3). Social identification was not related to job search intentions ($r = .12$, $p = .19$) (H4a) but positively related to cognitive reconstructing ($r = .24$, $p = .008$) (H4b). Job search intentions were not related to self-esteem ($r = -.12$, $p = .19$) and were marginally related to life satisfaction ($r = -.18$, $p = .06$) (H5a). Cognitive reconstruction was not related to self-esteem ($r = -.08$, $p = .35$) nor to life satisfaction ($r = .09$, $p = .32$) (H5b).

The hypothesised relationships were explored in more detail using the principles of moderated regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and the PROCESS complement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Model 1. The continuous variables were mean centred prior to analyses.
First, we tested the impact of social identification as a mother on the relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem (H6a). Analysis revealed that social identification was not associated with self-esteem, $B = .07, SE = .15, t(113) = 0.47, p = .64$. Perceived stigma significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = -.40, SE = .08, t(113) = -4.95, p < .001$, such that higher levels of perceived stigma were associated with lower levels of self-esteem. The interaction between social identification and perceived stigma was not significant, $B = .02, SE = .10, t(110) = 0.24, p = .81$ (Table 6.1).

Second, we tested the impact of social identification on the relationship between perceived stigma and life satisfaction (H6a). Analysis revealed that perceived stigma was associated with life satisfaction, $B = -.26, SE = .07, t(115) = -3.84, p < .001$, such that higher levels of perceived stigma were associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. Also social identification significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .30, SE = .13, t(115) = 2.27, p = .03$, such that higher levels of social identification were associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. The interaction of social identification and perceived stigma was marginally significant, $B = .17, SE = .09, t(115) = 2.00, p = .156$.

### Table 6.1 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived stigma</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.17†</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social identification</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Job search intentions</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.18†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cognitive reconstruction</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-esteem</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Life satisfaction</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: †p < .10, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
05.

Simple slopes analyses (Figure 6.1) revealed that when participants identified weakly with other mothers, perceived stigma was negatively associated with life satisfaction, \( B = -.39, SE = .10, t (115) = -3.99, p < .001 \). In contrast, when participants identified highly with other mothers, perceived stigma was not associated with life satisfaction, \( B = -.13, SE = .09, t (115) = -1.42, p = .16 \) (Table 6.1).

![Figure 6.1](image.png)

**Figure 6.1** Life satisfaction as a function of perceived stigma and social identification as a mother

Third, we tested the impact of social identification on the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions (H6b). Analysis revealed that social identification did not impact on job search intentions, \( B = -.16, SE = .16, t (113) = -1.01, p = .31 \). Perceived stigma marginally impacted on job search intentions, \( B = .15, SE = .08, t (113) = 1.85, p = .07 \), such that perceived stigma was positively associated with job search intentions. The interaction between social identification and perceived stigma
was not significant, $B = -.09, SE = .10, t(113) = -0.90, p = .37$ (Table 6.1).

Fourth, we tested the impact of social identification on the relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction (H6c). Analysis revealed that social identification was associated with cognitive reconstruction, $B = .28, SE = .14, t(114) = 2.09, p = .04$, such that higher levels of social identification were associated with higher levels of cognitive reconstruction. Perceived stigma did not impact on cognitive reconstruction, $B = .03, SE = .07, t(114) = 0.45, p = .65$. The interaction of social identification and perceived stigma was significant, $B = .20, SE = .09, t(114) = 2.20, p = .03$.

![Figure 6.2 Cognitive reconstruction as a function of perceived stigma and social identification as a mother](image)

Simple slopes analyses (Figure 6.2) revealed that when participants identified weakly with other mothers, perceived stigma was not associated with cognitive reconstruction, $B = -.12, SE = .10, t(114) = -1.15, p = .25$. In contrast, when participants identified highly with other mothers, perceived stigma was marginally associated with
cognitive reconstruction, $B = .19$, $SE = .10$, $t (114) = 1.93$, $p = .06$, such that higher perceived stigma was associated with higher cognitive reconstruction (Table 6.1).

The results of the four moderation analyses are summarised in the following table (Table 6.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Cognitive reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social identification</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
<td>-.40***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.26***</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction I x S</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.17†</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$ = .18***

Note. † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, I = Social identification, S = Perceived stigma

Discussion

In the following we will summarise the results and compare them with our predictions. The integration of the results will follow in the General Discussion.

The first hypothesis about the relationships between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being can be confirmed. In line with hypotheses, stay-at-home mothers who perceived the stigmatisation of the unemployed reported lower self-esteem and life satisfaction.

The second hypotheses about the relationships between perceived stigma and coping strategies can be partly confirmed. In line with the hypothesis, stay-at-home mothers reported slightly more motivation to search for a job the more they perceived a
stigma of unemployment. However, in contrast to the hypothesis, stay-at-home mothers did not report more intentions to reconstruct their cognitions the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment.

The third hypotheses about the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. In contrast to the hypothesis, stay-at-home mothers did not report higher self-esteem the more they identified with being a mother. However, in line with our predictions, stay-at-home mothers reported higher life satisfaction the more they identified with being a mother.

We could confirm our fourth hypotheses about the relationship between social identification and coping strategies. In line with the predictions, stay-at-home mothers did not report greater intentions to search for a job the more they identified as a mother. In addition, stay-at-home mothers did report greater cognitively reconstruction of their thoughts and attitudes the more they identified with being a mother.

The fifth hypotheses about the relationships between coping strategies and indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. In line with the hypothesis, intentions to search for a job were not related to self-esteem. In fact, stay-at-home mothers reported slightly lower life satisfaction the more they intended to look for a job. However, in contrast to our hypothesis reconstructing thoughts and attitudes did not impact on indicators of well-being.

The sixth hypothesis about the interactive effects of social identification and perceived stigma can be partly confirmed. In contrast to our hypothesis, perceptions of stigma and self-esteem were negatively related to each other despite high identification as a mother. However, it could be confirmed that perceptions of stigma and life satisfaction were not related to each other when stay-at-home mothers highly identified
with other mothers. Regarding the impact of the interaction on coping strategies, it could not be confirmed that stay-at-home mothers who perceive high stigma report greater intentions to seek a job when they lowly identify as a mother. However, it could be confirmed that stay-at-home mothers who perceive high stigma report more cognitive reconstruction when they highly identify as a mother.

Through this correlational study we could support our argument that mothers do respond to the stigma of unemployment. We also found evidence that the alternative identity of being a mother plays an important role in relation to how they value childcare and family life (cognitive reconstruction) and their well-being.

However, the impact of perceived stigma of unemployment and social identification as a mother is likely to also depend on what other people think about stay-at-home mothers. More specifically, these processes should depend on whether others see stay-at-home mothers as non-working and similar to the unemployed or as busy and providing a similar valuable contribution to society as employed people. As a consequence, with the following Study 5 we aim to extend the previous study with stay-at-home mothers by manipulating what other people think about stay-at-home mothers. We expect that the effects will be exacerbated when an identity of being similar to unemployed people is imposed. In this way, this study fits into the overall picture of this thesis by investigating social identification and perceptions of stigma in a particular situation, which is potentially threatening for stay-at-home mothers.

**STUDY 5**

In this Study 5 the same hypotheses than in Study 4 will be applied. However, we expect the effects to be stronger when the category unemployed will be imposed on mothers. In contrast, when the category unemployed will not be imposed, we expect
weaker effects.

Method

Design

The experiment had a two-group design: we manipulated whether other people see stay-at-home mothers as similar to unemployed people (imposed unemployment) or as similar to employed people (no imposed unemployment) as described below. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions.

Participants

Participants were one-hundred and seventy-nine mothers. Mothers who indicated that they worked part-time or were self-employed were removed reducing the sample size to one-hundred and thirty-nine. Participants were recruited through online fora targeted at mothers, via a link to an online study. Participants were between 18 and 55 years old with a mean age of 33 years. On average participants had 2.21 children (range: 1 – 8).

Procedure & Materials

The study was presented as an investigation into the thoughts and feelings of stay-at-home mothers. They were informed that participation was voluntary, that responses were anonymous, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Upon agreeing to participate, participants read a short alleged article about how stay-at-home mothers are perceived from an employment statistics point of view. This article acted as the framing manipulation and is described below. When they had completed the questionnaire, participants were thanked for their time and were offered a written debrief and the chance to enter a cash prize draw as compensation for taking part.

Manipulation of perceptions of stay-at-home mothers. In the `not imposed
unemployment’ condition, participants were told that mothers should be counted in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) employment statistics as working people. The article went on to argue that employment statistics are highly underestimated and that the situation of a stay-at-home mothers is very similar to people who are employed. In the ‘imposed unemployment’ condition, the article argued that stay-at-home mothers should be counted in the DWP statistics as unemployed people. Here, the article emphasised that unemployment statistics are highly underestimated and the situation of stay-at-home mothers is very similar to people who are unemployed (see appendices).

**Dependent Measures**

Following each manipulation, participants were asked to shortly summarise the main message of the article and then complete the manipulation checks. Afterwards they completed the dependent measures. Unless otherwise specified, participants responded to all measures on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”. Below only the variables of primary interest are specified.

**Measures related to manipulation check.** First, the effectiveness of the manipulation was checked by asking participants to briefly summarise the main contents of the article with a few of their own words directly after reading the text. Second, the effectiveness of the manipulation was checked using two items: “I agree that stay-at-home mothers should be counted in DWP statistics as Robert Green argues” and “I agree with the explanation given by the Department of Work and Pensions” ($r = .67$).

**Perceived stigma of unemployment.** The same items of perceived stigma than in Study 4 were used: “In general, people look down on those who are not in paid work”
and “I feel that there is a stigma attached to net being in paid employment ($r = .82$).

**Social identification as a mother.** Items of social identification with being a mother were based on Study 4, for example, “I identify with other mothers” and “Generally, I feel good as a mother” (five items, $\alpha = .74$).

**Coping strategies.** The statements measured intentions to seek a job, for example, “I wish to get paid work” and “I am actively looking for a job” (four items, $\alpha = .88$). The same items than Study 4 had been used for cognitive reconstruction, for example, “With a job my children could not develop according to my values of rearing children” and “Family life suffers when a mother has a job” (three items, $\alpha = .77$).

**Indicators of well-being.** Measures regarding indicators of well-being were selected on the basis of established measures: self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), for example, “I am a person with high self-esteem” and “I feel that I have much to be proud of” (2 items, $\alpha = .70$) and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996), for example, “I enjoy my life” and “I am satisfied with my life” (2 items, $r = .81$).

**Results**

**Measures Related to Manipulation Check**

The effectiveness of the manipulation of category imposition was not checked directly. Instead, an indirect measure was used indicating the level of agreement with the presented article, which was in line with a manipulation check. We expected that stay-at-home mothers would disagree with the imposition of the category unemployed. An independent samples t-test showed a significant effect of the manipulation, $t(136) = -10.23, p < .001$. Mothers in the 'not imposed' condition agreed more with the article ($M = 4.53, SD = 1.36$) than in the 'imposed' condition ($M = 2.21, SD = 1.31$). In addition, all the participants briefly summarised the article with their own words. It was concluded
that the manipulation was successful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived stigma</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.23**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.29*</td>
<td>-0.41**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social identification</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.36***</td>
<td>0.46***</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.38***</td>
<td>0.61***</td>
<td>0.44***</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.23†</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Job search intentions</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>-0.38***</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.20*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>-0.47**</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.40**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cognitive reconstruction</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.27*</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-esteem</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.68*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.74**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.61***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Life satisfaction</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
Unemployed N = 71, Employed N = 68

**Impact of the Manipulation on Variables**

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for each condition can be found in Table 6.3. The impact of the manipulation of category imposition on dependent variables was tested using independent samples t-tests. Analysis revealed that category imposition did not impact directly on any of the key variables of interest: on perceived stigma, \( t(137) = 0.91, p = .37 \); social identification as a mother, \( t(134) = -0.46, p = .64 \); job-search intentions, \( t(134) = -0.87, p = .39 \); cognitive reconstruction, \( t(135)=0.15, p = .88 \); self-esteem, \( t(135) = 0.09, p = .92 \), or on life satisfaction, \( t(137) = -0.45, p = .66 \).
Impact of the Manipulation on Key Relationships

The relationships were explored in more detail using the principles of moderated regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and the PROCESS complement for SPSS by Hayes (2013) using Model 1. The manipulation of category imposition was dummy coded prior to analysis (1 = imposed, 0 = not imposed) and the continuous variables were mean centred prior to the analysis. Detailed information can be found in Tables 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6.

**Perceived stigma – indicators of well-being.** First, we tested how the manipulation of category imposition impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and indicators of well-being, starting with self-esteem (H1). Analysis revealed that neither category imposition, $B = .02, SE = .09, t (133) = 0.23, p = .82$, nor perceptions of stigma impacted on self-esteem, $B = -.10, SE = .07, t (133) = -1.35, p = .18$. The interaction term of category imposition and perceptions of stigma was marginally significant, $B = .12, SE = .07, t (133) = 1.74, p = .08$ (Table 6.4).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, $B = -.22, SE = .10, t (133) = -2.27, p = .02$, such that higher perceived stigma was associated with lower self-esteem. The relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, $B = .03, SE = .11, t (133) = 0.26, p = .79$ (Figure 6.3).
Then, we tested the impact of category imposition on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and life satisfaction (H1). Analysis revealed that the manipulation did not impact on life satisfaction, \( B = -.02, SE = .09, t(135) = -0.25, p = .80 \). Perceptions of stigma significantly impacted on life satisfaction, \( B = -.21, SE = .08, t(135) = -2.64, p = .01 \), such that higher perceived stigma led to lower levels of life satisfaction. Analysis also revealed that the interaction term between category imposition and perceptions of stigma was significant, \( B = .17, SE = .08, t(135) = 2.08, p = .04 \) (Table 6.4).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and life satisfaction was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, \( B = -.38, SE = .11, t(135) = -3.48, p < .001 \), such that higher perceived stigma led to lower life satisfaction. The relationship between perceived stigma and life satisfaction was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, \( B = -.04, SE = .12, t(135) = \)
-0.38, \( p = .70 \) (Figure 6.4).

*Figure 6.4* Life satisfaction as a function of perceived stigma and the manipulation of category imposition impacted on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and coping strategies, starting with job search intentions (H2a). Analysis revealed that neither category imposition, \( B = -.12, SE = .13, t (132) = -0.90, p = .37 \), nor perceptions of stigma impacted on job search intentions, \( B = .02, SE = .11, t (132) = 0.18, p = .86 \). The interaction term of category imposition and perceptions of stigma was significant, \( B = -.28, SE = .11, t (132) = -2.63, p = .01 \).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, \( B = .30, SE = .15, t (132) = 2.07, p = .04 \), such that higher perceived stigma led to higher intentions to search for a job. The relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, \( B = -.16, SE = .
Chapter 6

16, \( t \) (132) = -1.67, \( p = .10 \) (Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5** Job search intentions as a function of perceived stigma and the manipulation

Then, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the relationship between perceived stigma of unemployment and cognitive reconstruction (H2b). Analysis revealed that neither category imposition, \( B = .01, SE = .10, t \) (133) = 0.70, \( p = .94 \), nor perceptions of stigma impacted on cognitive reconstruction, \( B = .13, SE = .09, t \) (133) = 1.74, \( p = .14 \). The interaction term of category imposition and perceptions of stigma was significant, \( B = .29, SE = .09, t \) (133) = 3.37, \( p < .001 \) (Table 6.4).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, \( B = -.16, SE = .12, t \) (133) = -1.40, \( p = .16 \). The relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, \( B = .42, SE = .13, t \) (133) = 3.30, \( p < .001 \), such that greater perceptions of stigma were
associated with more cognitive reconstruction (Figure 6.6).

![Figure 6.6 Cognitive reconstruction as a function of perceived stigma and the manipulation](image)

**Figure 6.6** Cognitive reconstruction as a function of perceived stigma and the manipulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Cognitive reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity imposition</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction M x S</td>
<td>.12†</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*R² | .04 | .08** | .06* | .09**

Note. † p <.10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
M = Manipulation “imposed unemployment” vs. “not imposed unemployment”, S = Perceived stigma

**Social identification – indicators of well-being.** Third, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being (H3). We began by analysing the relationship...
between identification as a mother and self-esteem. Analysis revealed that category imposition did not impact on self esteem, \( B = .01, SE = .08, t (130) = 0.08, p = .94 \). Identification as a mother significantly impacted on self-esteem, \( B = .55, SE = .10, t (130) = 5.35, p < .001 \). The interaction term of the manipulation and social identification was marginal, \( B = .20, SE = .10, t (130) = 1.98, p = .05 \) (Table 6.5).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between social identification as a mother and self-esteem was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, \( B = .35, SE = .16, t (130) = 2.14, p = .03 \), such that higher social identification led to higher self-esteem. The relationship between social identification as a mother and self-esteem was also significant, when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, \( B = .75, SE = .13, t (130) = 5.94, p < .001 \) (Figure 6.7).

![Figure 6.7](image.png)

*Figure 6.7* Self-esteem as a function of social identification as a mother and the manipulation

Next, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the
relationship between social identification as a mother and life satisfaction (H3).

Analysis revealed that category imposition did not impact on life satisfaction, $B = -.05$, $SE = .09$, $t (132) = -0.51$, $p = .61$. Identification as a mother significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = .49$, $SE = .12$, $t (132) = 3.93$, $p < .001$, such that higher social identification led to higher life satisfaction. The interaction term of category imposition and social identification was not significant, $B = .11$, $SE = .12$, $t (132) = 0.87$, $p = .39$ (Table 6.5).

**Social identification – coping strategies.** Fourth, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the relationship between social identification and coping strategies (H4a). We began with analysing the relationship between identification with a mother and job search intentions. Analysis revealed that category imposition did not impact on job search intentions, $B = -.13$, $SE = .13$, $t (129) = -1.01$, $p = .31$. Identification as a mother marginally impacted on job search intentions, $B = -.34$, $SE = .17$, $t (129) = -1.96$, $p = .05$, such that higher identification as a mother led to lower intentions to search for a job. The interaction term of category imposition and social identification was not significant, $B = .10$, $SE = .17$, $t (129) = 0.57$, $p = .57$ (Table 6.5).

Then we tested the impact of category imposition on the relationship between identification as a mother and cognitive reconstruction (H4b). Analysis revealed that the manipulation did not impact on cognitive reconstruction, $B = .02$, $SE = .10$, $t (130) = 0.20$, $p = .84$. Identification as a mother significantly impacted on cognitive reconstruction, $B = .58$, $SE = .14$, $t (130) = 4.36$, $p < .001$, such that higher identification as a mother led to higher cognitive reconstruction. The interaction term of category imposition and social identification was not significant, $B = .00$, $SE = .14$, $t (130) = 0.01$, $p = .99$ (Table 6.5).
Table 6.5  *Summary of the impact of social identification as a mother and the manipulation on variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Cognitive reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category imposition</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social identification</td>
<td>.55***</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction M x I</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.13***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * \( p < .05 \), *** \( p < .001 \), M = Manipulation “imposed category unemployment” vs. “not imposed category unemployment”, I = Social identification as mother

**Coping strategies – indicators of well-being.** Fifth, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the relationship between coping strategies and indicators of well-being. We began with the analysis of the relationship between job search intentions and self-esteem (H5a). Analysis revealed that neither the manipulation, \( B = -.01, SE = .09, t (131) = -0.06, p = .95 \), nor job search intentions impacted on self-esteem, \( B = -.05, SE = .06, t (131) = -0.91, p = .42 \). The interaction term of category imposition and job search intentions was not significant, \( B = .01, SE = .06, t (131) = 0.26, p = .80 \) (Table 6.6).

Then we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the relationship between job search intentions and life satisfaction (H5a). Analysis revealed that the manipulation did not impact on life satisfaction, \( B = -.07, SE = .10, t (132) = -0.70, p = .49 \). However, job search intentions significantly impacted on life satisfaction, \( B = -.16, SE = .06, t (132) = -2.55, p = .01 \), such that higher job search intentions led to lower levels of life satisfaction. The interaction term of the manipulation and job search intentions was also significant, \( B = .14, SE = .06, t (132) = 2.17, p = .03 \) (Table 6.6).
Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between job search intentions and self-esteem was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, $B = -.30$, $SE = .09$, $t (132) = 3.28$, $p < .001$, such that higher intentions to search for a job were associated with lower self-esteem. The relationship between job search intentions and self-esteem was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, $B = -.02$, $SE = .09$, $t (132) = -0.27$, $p = .78$ (Figure 6.8).

![Figure 6.8](image)

**Figure 6.8** Self-esteem as a function of job search intentions and the manipulation

Then, we tested the impact of the manipulation on the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and self esteem (H5b). Analysis revealed that the manipulation of category imposition did not impact on self-esteem, $B = .02$, $SE = .08$, $t (131) = 0.22$, $p = .82$. Cognitive reconstruction significantly impacted on self-esteem, $B = .24$, $SE = .07$, $t (131) = 3.61$, $p < .001$, such that higher cognitive reconstruction led to higher self-esteem. The interaction term of the manipulation and cognitive reconstruction was not significant, $B = .03$, $SE = .07$, $t (131) = 0.42$, $p = .68$ (Table 6.6).
Next, we tested impact of category imposition on the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and life satisfaction (H5b). Analysis revealed that the category imposition did not impact on life satisfaction, $B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.10$, $t (133) = -0.42$, $p = .67$. Cognitive reconstruction significantly impacted on life satisfaction, $B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.08$, $t (133) = 2.86$, $p < .001$, such that higher cognitive reconstruction led to higher life satisfaction. The interaction term of the manipulation and job search intentions was marginal, $B = -0.13$, $SE = 0.08$, $t (133) = -1.71$, $p = .09$ (Table 6.8).

Simple slopes analysis revealed that the relationship between cognitive reconstruction and life satisfaction was significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to employed people, $B = 0.36$, $SE = 0.12$, $t (133) = 3.03$, $p < .001$. The relationship between cognitive reconstruction and life satisfaction was not significant when stay-at-home mothers were told that they were similar to unemployed people, $B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.10$, $t (133) = 0.88$, $p = .38$ (Figure 6.9).

![Figure 6.9](image-url) **Figure 6.9** Life satisfaction as a function of cognitive reconstruction and the manipulation
Table 6.6  *Summary of the impact of coping strategies and the manipulation on indicators of well-being*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category imposition</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search intentions</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction M x JS</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive reconstruction</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction M x CR</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.13†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.10***</td>
<td>.07*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. † p <.10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, M = Manipulation “imposed category unemployment” vs. “not imposed category unemployment”, I = Social identification as mother, JS = Job search intentions, CR = Cognitive reconstruction

**Interaction perceived stigma – indicators of well-being.** Sixth, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition on the impact of the interaction between social identification as a mother and perceived stigma on coping strategies and indicators of well-being. Here, we will test for an 3-way-interaction, using PROCESS Model 3. In order to present the findings in the most transparent way, only those parts of the analyses will be reported that are directly relevant to the hypotheses. Details can be found in Table 6.7.

We start with the examination of how category imposition and identification as a mother impacts on the relationship between perceived stigma on self-esteem (H6a). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term with the manipulation of category imposition, social identification as a mother, and perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = .02, SE = .09, t (126) = 0.17, p = .86$. The two-way interaction term of perceived stigma and social identification as a mother was significant, $B = .20, SE = .09$,
Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and self-esteem was significant when stay-at-home mothers identified weakly with being a mother, $B = -.26, SE = .11, t (126) = -2.28, p = .02$, such that higher perceived stigma led to lower self-esteem. However, the relationship was not significant when stay-at-home mothers identified highly as a mother, $B = .00, SE = .08, t (126) = 0.08, p = .99$ (Figure 6.10).
Then, we tested the impact of the manipulation of category imposition and social identification as a mother and on the relationship between perceived stigma on life satisfaction (H6a). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term between category imposition, social identification as a mother, and perceptions of stigma was not significant, $B = .04, SE = .11, t (128) = 0.33, p = .74$. The two-way interaction term of perceived stigma and social identification as a mother was significant, $B = .28, SE = .11, t (128) = 2.65, p = .01$.

Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and life satisfaction was significant when stay-at-home mothers identified weakly with being a mother, $B = -.47, SE = .13, t (128) = -3.57, p < .001$, such that higher perceived stigma led to lower life satisfaction. However, the relationship was not significant when stay-at-home mothers identified highly with being a mother, $B = -.09, SE = .09, t (128)$
= 1.00, \( p = .32 \) (Figure 6.11).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6_11}
\caption{Life satisfaction as a function of perceived stigma of unemployment and social identification as a mother}
\end{figure}

We tested then the impact of category imposition social identification as a mother on the relationship between perceived stigma on job search intentions (H6b). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term of the manipulation, social identification as a mother, and perceptions of stigma was not significant, \( B = .19, SE = .15, t (125) = 1.28 p = .20 \). The two-way interaction between of perceived stigma and social identification as a mother was not significant, \( B = -.23, SE = .15, t (125) = -1.48, p = .14 \).

Finally, we tested the impact of category imposition and social identification with being a mother on the relationship between perceived stigma on cognitive reconstruction (H6c). Analysis revealed that the three-way interaction term was not significant, \( B = .05, SE = .15, t (126) = 0.43 p = .67 \). The two-way interaction between perceived stigma and social identification as a mother was marginally significant, \( B = \)
Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship between perceived stigma and cognitive reconstruction was significant when stay-at-home mothers identified weakly with being a mother, $B = .42, SE = .15, t (130) = -2.27, p = .02$, such that higher perceived stigma was associated with higher cognitive reconstruction. However, the relationship was not significant when stay-at-home mothers identified highly with being a mother, $B = .02, SE = .10, t (130) = 0.21, p = .83$ (Figure 6.12).

**Discussion**

As in the previous chapters we will summarise the results and compare them with our predictions. The integration of the findings will follow in the general discussion.

The first hypothesis about the relationships between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being could not be confirmed. The expected negative association
between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being was not found for those stay-at-home mothers who were threatened with an imposed identity of being unemployed. In contrast, it was those stay-at-home mothers who were valued as similar to employed people who reported lower self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment.

The second hypotheses about the relationship between the perceived stigma and coping strategies can be partly confirmed. In contrast to the hypothesis, stay-at-home mothers who were confronted with an imposed unemployment identity reported lower intentions to seek a job the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. In contrast, stay-at-home mothers who were valued as similar to employed people reported higher intentions to seek a job the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment. However, in line with the hypothesis, stay-at-home mothers who were confronted with an imposed unemployment reported much higher intentions to reconstruct the own cognitions in order to see their situation in a positive light.

The third hypothesis about the relationships between social identification and indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. In line with the hypothesis, social identification as a mother is closely connected to better well-being. More specifically, stay-at-home mothers reported higher self-esteem the more they identified as a mother particularly when they were confronted with an imposed category of being unemployed. Stay-at-home mothers also reported better life satisfaction the more they identified as a mother, but this effect was not stronger when they were confronted with the category unemployed.

We could not confirm our fourth hypotheses about the relationship between social identification and coping strategies as a difference between stay-at-home mothers
who were confronted with an imposed unemployment and those who were not was not
found. However, the more stay-at-home mothers identified with being a mother the
lower their intentions to search for a job and the greater their tendencies to cognitively
reconstruct their own thoughts and attitudes.

The fifth hypotheses about the relationships between coping strategies and
indicators of well-being can partly be confirmed. In line with the hypothesis, mothers'
intentions to search for a job did not positively impact on their self-esteem nor on life
satisfaction. Stay-at-home mothers did however report higher self-esteem and life
satisfaction the more they reconstructed their own cognitions to see their situation in a
better light. However, this effect was not stronger when stay-at-home mothers were
threatened with the category unemployed. In fact, stay-at-home mothers reported better
life satisfaction the more they reconstruct their cognitions when they were valued as
similar to employed people.

The sixth hypothesis about the interaction between social identification and
perceived stigma can be partly confirmed. It was found that mothers' perceptions of
stigma did not negatively impact on their self-esteem and life satisfaction when they
identified highly as a mother. Moreover, perceptions of stigma negatively impacted on
their self-esteem and life satisfaction when stay-at-home mothers identified weakly as a
mother. However, this effect was not stronger, when the category unemployment was
imposed. Regarding the hypotheses about coping strategies, it could be confirmed that
social identification with other mothers does not impact on the relationship between
perceived stigma and job search intentions. However, it could not be confirmed that
stay-at-home mothers who perceive high stigma report more cognitive reconstruction
when they highly identify as a mother and when others impose the category of
unemployment on them.

**General Discussion**

In this chapter we were interested in how the stigma of unemployment impacts on a group of people not traditionally included in unemployment statistics: stay-at-home mothers. In the following we will first summarise and integrate the results, compare them with our predictions, and finally outline how they fit into former research. Then we will address limitations of the current study and unresolved questions.

**Integration of Results**

The first hypothesis about the relationships between perceived stigma and indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. The results of Study 4 demonstrated that stay-at-home mothers who perceive the stigma of unemployment reported lower self-esteem and lower life satisfaction. This finding supports the argument that the stigma of unemployment is not only relevant for registered unemployed people. Moreover, this finding fits with past social-psychological research about the impact of perceived stigma on indicators of well-being (e.g., Schmitt et al., 2014). However, in Study 5 these negative associations were not found for those stay-at-home mothers who were threatened with an imposed identity of being unemployed. In fact, only those stay-at-home mothers who were valued as similar to employed people reported lower self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. One reason for this result may be that in this situation, when others impose the category of unemployment, mothers may engage in certain coping strategies or use their social identification as a mother that prevent a negative effect of perceived stigma (Crabtree et al., 2010), as we predicted in Hypothesis 6.

The second hypotheses about the relationship between perceived stigma and
coping strategies can be partly confirmed. In Study 4 it could be confirmed that stay-at-home mothers reported marginally higher intentions to seek a job the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. However, in contrast to the hypotheses, stay-at-home mothers did not report greater intentions to reconstruct own cognitions the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. This finding does not support past social-psychological research about responses to perceived stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). One reason for this may be that stay-at-home mothers only link perceptions of stigma with cognitive reconstruction under certain circumstances, for example when others impose a possible unemployment. Indeed, the results of Study 5 illustrate a more detailed picture. It could be confirmed that stay-at-home mothers who were confronted with an imposed unemployed identity, but not those who were not threatened with such an identity, reported much higher tendencies to reconstruct their own cognitions in order to see their motherhood in a positive light. This finding supports former social psychological research about responses to perceived stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). However, while stay-at-home mothers who were confronted with an imposed unemployment reported lower intentions to seek a job the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment, stay-at-home mothers who were valued as similar to employed people reported higher intentions to seek a job the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment. This finding contradicts our hypothesis. In fact, there were a number of cases that found the expected effect only when mothers were valued as similar to employed people. One reason for this may be that stay-at-home mothers reject the category unemployed. As a consequence, they do not behave like they think other unemployed people behave. This may explain why they are not motivated to search for a job when they perceive a stigma and others see them as similar to the unemployed. In
this way, they may also avoid negative feelings that are a consequence when other see stay-at-home mothers as unemployed. This may also explain why perceptions of stigma did not negatively impact on indicators of well-being, as it was found in Hypothesis 1.

The third hypothesis about the relationship between social identification and indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. In Study 4 women who stayed home to look after their children reported higher life satisfaction the more they identified with being a mother. This finding supports past research that demonstrated that social identification is linked to indicators of well-being, such as life satisfaction (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009). However, stay-at-home mothers did not report higher self-esteem the more they identified with being a mother. This finding does not fit with past research in the social identity tradition, which has demonstrated that higher social identification goes along with higher self-esteem (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009; Tajfel, 1978). Study 5 gave a slightly different picture. We could confirm our hypotheses that social identification as a mother is closely connected to indicators of well-being. More specifically, stay-at-home mothers reported higher self-esteem the more they identified with being a mother, particularly when they were confronted with an imposed category of being unemployed. This finding fits into previous research demonstrating that individuals simultaneously belong to two groups tend to base their self-esteem on identification with the higher status group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). In this way, the results illustrate that stay-at-home mothers may distance from the imposed category of unemployed and use their identity as mother as a possible source to maintain their well-being (McFadyen, 1995). Stay-at-home mothers also reported better life satisfaction the more they identified as a mother, similar than in Study 4, but this effect was not stronger when they others saw them as similar to the unemployed. One
reason for this may be that social identification with other mothers may be linked to self-esteem in a concrete situation of social comparison with a lower status group, such as being regarded as unemployed (Tajfel, 1978). In contrast, life satisfaction may be more connected to how people evaluate their life in general and more stable across situations.

The fourth hypotheses about the relationship between social identification and coping strategies can be partly confirmed. In Study 4, stay-at-home mothers did not report greater intentions to search for a job the more they identified as a mother. This finding confirms our hypothesis and fits with the argument that high social identification with being a mother is unlikely to go along with intentions to leave the group of stay-at-home mothers (Tajfel, 1978). Stay-at-home mothers also reported more intentions to cognitively reconstruct their own attitudes about their family life and rearing children the more they identified with being a mother. This finding confirms our hypotheses and fits with the argument that high social identification is likely to be connected with a motivation the see the situation or the group in a better light (Tajfel, 1978). Study 5 replicated these findings. However, there was no difference when stay-at-home mothers were confronted with an imposed category of unemployment or not. One explanation why an imposed category unemployed did not impact on this particular relationship may be that social identification as a mother is very closely connected to positive cognitions about the group and is therefore not easy to manipulate. Hence, mothers who highly identify with being a mother are more likely to think about their motherhood in a positive way. In this case, higher social identification with a valued group can be interpreted as a form of cognitively reconstructing thoughts in a creative way. In turn, those mothers who value childcare and family life are much more likely to
identify with being a mother. In this case, cognitively reconstruction own thoughts and attitudes may be a way of having a meaningful socially valued identity.

The fifth hypotheses about the relationships between coping strategies and indicators of well-being can be partly confirmed. In Study 4 we could confirm that intentions to search for a job were not positively connected with higher self-esteem. Moreover, stay-at-home mothers who reported greater intentions to look for a job reported lower life satisfaction. This finding fits with the argument that intentions to search for a job may not be a desirable strategy for stay-at-home mothers. It may also be the case that those stay-at-home mothers who are not satisfied with their lives are motivated to change their lives and search for a job. However, in contrast to our hypothesis cognitive reconstructing thoughts did not predict well-being. This finding does not fit with the argument that reconstructing own thoughts should be an accessible strategy for stay-at-home mothers and previous research proposing that coping strategies aim to maintain well-being (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). One explanation for this outcome may be that the reconstruction of one's cognitions and well-being are connected under certain circumstances, for example when they think about how they are seen by others. In Study 5 we could replicate that intentions to search for a job were not related to higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. Moreover, stay-at-home mothers reported higher self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they reconstructed their own cognitions and saw their situation in a better light. This finding fits with the argument that coping strategies aim to maintain well-being. However, the positive effect of reconstructing own thoughts and attitudes was not stronger when stay-at-home mothers were threatened with the category unemployed. In fact, stay-at-home mothers reported slightly better life satisfaction the more they
reconstructed their cognitions when they were valued as similar to employed people. One reason for this outcome may be that mothers are particularly likely to use the strategy of cognitive reconstruction when they feel evaluated by others, irrespective, whether this evaluation is positive (similar to employed people) or negative (similar to unemployed). Hence, noticing other people's views may actually entail that mothers think about themselves in a way that also serves their well-being.

The sixth hypothesis about the interaction between social identification and perceived stigma can be partly confirmed. In Study 4 it could be confirmed that perceptions of stigma and life satisfaction were not related to each other when women who stayed at home to look after their children identified highly with other mothers. This finding fits with the argument that the alternative identity of being a mother may compensate the negative effect of perceived stigma on indicators of well-being. However, this effect was not found for self-esteem. In Study 5 we could replicate that when stay-at-home mothers reported higher levels of identification, their perceptions of stigma did not negatively impact on their life satisfaction. In contrast, for stay-at-home mothers who identified weakly with other mothers, perceptions of stigma negatively impacted on their self-esteem and life satisfaction. In addition, this effect was also found for self-esteem. Although it could not be demonstrated that the effect is stronger when the category unemployed is imposed to mothers, this findings illustrates that mothers use their identification as a mother to cope with negative effects of perceived stigma.

Regarding the impact of the interaction between perceived stigma and social identification on coping strategies, our hypotheses could be partly confirmed. In Study 4, it could be confirmed that social identification as a mother did not impact on the
relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions. Moreover, it could be also be confirmed that stay-at-home mothers who perceived high stigma of unemployment report greater cognitive reconstruction when they highly identify as a mother. This finding fits with the argument that coping with a stigma may depend on social identification processes (Barbier et al., 2013) and a possible alternative identity (McFadyen, 1995). Hence, this finding demonstrates that stay-at-home mothers use cognitive reconstruction as a coping strategy in response to perceived stigma of unemployment, particularly when they identify highly with being a mother. In Study 5 we could replicate that social identification as a mother does not impact on the relationship between perceived stigma and job search intentions. However, it could not be replicated that stay-at-home mothers who perceive high stigma report more cognitive reconstruction when they highly identified as a mother. Rather only stay-at-home mothers who identified weakly as a mother reported more cognitive reconstruction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. This finding does not fit with the argument that social identification enhances the use of cognitive strategies when stay-at-home mothers perceive high stigma of unemployment. One reason for this outcome may be that social identification with being a mother has a dominant role in connection with the reconstruction of one's thoughts and attitudes. That means when mothers highly identified as a mother they consistently reported high levels of cognitive reconstruction and when they identified weakly as a mother, their use of cognitive strategies only rises when they perceive a stigma. It may be interpreted that their high social identification as a mother protects them that their thoughts and cognitions are influenced by perceptions of stigma.

In sum, when considering all the findings, when others applied the category
unemployed to mothers, they valued childcare and family life to a greater extent the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. Mothers were also more likely to value family life and rearing children the more they identified with being a mother. This finding fits with the argument that high social identification is likely to be connected with a motivation the see the situation or the group in a better light (Tajfel, 1978). In this way, reconstructing owns thoughts may be a way of asserting they have a meaningful and socially desirable identity and use of their time, similarly to the employed.

Their identification as a mother and cognitively reconstruction their attitudes were also connected to better well-being. In this way, mothers reported higher self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they identified with being a mother and the more they valued family life and childcare. In addition, mothers who highly identified as a mother did not report lower self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment. In contrast, mothers who identified weakly with other mothers, did report lower self esteem and life satisfaction the more they perceive a stigma of unemployment. Hence, the findings illustrate that the alternative identity of being a mother is an important coping resource closely connected to cognitive strategies, which helps mothers to cope with perceived stigma and a possible unemployment (e.g., McFadyen, 1995). In addition, the role of an alternative identity for mothers who are not in paid work illustrates the importance of multiple identities in the process of coping. In this way, the results confirm other research demonstrating that having multiple group memberships can serve as buffer against negative events (C. Haslam et al., 2005) or life transitions (Iyer et al., 2009).


Limitations

While these studies were able to shed light on how the perceived stigma of unemployment and identity processes impact on stay-at-home mothers' coping strategies and well-being, there are some important limitations that should be mentioned. In the following section we will discuss some shortcomings, such as the effectiveness of the manipulation, alternative explanations resulting from the correlative nature of the results, and restrictions in the stability of social identification as a mother.

First, there is a shortcoming regarding the manipulation check of Study 5. The items chosen only measured how much stay-at-home mothers agreed with the presented article. However, this might not be the best choice to indicate whether the manipulation was successful or not. However, directly after reading the text, the participants were asked to briefly summarise the main contents of the article by a few own words in order to ensure that they have understood the contents of the article. This open question was filled out by all participants. We counted this as an indicator that the manipulation worked.

Second, Study 4 is correlational in nature. Thus, causal interpretations should be made with caution because of potential reversed relationships. For example, while there is certainly a theoretical rationale why perceptions of stigma and a lack of social identification influence the self-esteem of stay-at-home mothers, as it has been argued in this study, one alternative explanation may be there are individual differences in self-esteem or life satisfaction that influence how stigma is perceived or how much social identification is associated with coping strategies (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2001; Rydell & Boucher, 2010). For example, stay-at-home mothers who are high in self-esteem may tend to perceive less stigma or report higher social identification as a mother. Another
example may be that those stay-at-home mothers with high life satisfaction tend to highly identify as a mother when they perceive a stigma. Also in Study 5 there are some restrictions regarding causal relationships. The fact that the manipulation impacts on a particular relationship does not mean that one variable of that relationship causes the other. For example, it may be the case that when stay-at-home mothers are confronted with an imposed unemployment, those stay-at-home mothers who are high in their self-esteem identify more as a mother. As a consequence, future research may be interested in manipulating perceptions of stigma or social identity and measure their impact on certain coping strategies and indicators of well-being.

A third limitation concerns the fact that the measures of social identification has a possible temporary nature. For example, some mothers may use their identity as temporary during their maternity leave, which may validate their current absence from the workforce before they return to work. However, other mothers may see motherhood as a relatively stable full alternative identity. As a consequence, mothers who plan to return to work may not rely on their identity as a mother to the same extent as mothers who plan to care for their child full-time. This may lead to differences in the effectiveness of the manipulation. For example, mothers who are on maternity leave may be less affected if someone imposes the category unemployed on them as they know when they will return to work. Future research may be interested to disentangle those subtle differences in identification processes.

Summary & Conclusion

In this chapter, we were interested in the roles of the perceived stigma of unemployment and the possible alternative identity of being a mother. In addition, we were interested in how an imposed identity of being unemployed impacts on stay-at-
home mothers' coping strategies and their well-being. Overall, we gained important insights about the role of an already established alternative identity in connection with being out of paid employment. More specifically, we found evidence that the stigma of unemployment impacts negatively on self-esteem and life satisfaction of stay-at-home mothers. In addition, we found evidence that perceptions of stigma triggered the use of cognitive strategies in order to see their motherhood in a positive light. These results support the notion that the stigma of unemployment not only impacts on registered unemployed people.

Moreover, the results illustrate that stay-at-home mothers use their identity as a possible resource to maintain their well-being. In particular, the results demonstrate that an alternative identity has the potential to buffer the negative effect of stigma of unemployment on well-being. In this way, the results point to the importance of multiple identities as a coping resource. In line with this, the results of these studies support the argument that coping with unemployment is influenced by whether individuals categorise themselves as unemployed or whether they are able to adopt another identity (McFadyen, 1995).

Further integration of the results and theoretical and practical implications will be discussed in the following General Discussion.
CHAPTER 7

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Reminder of the Rationale of this Thesis

The overall objective of the present programme of research has been to make a novel scientific contribution and to offer a new understanding of how stigma and social identity processes are related to the thoughts and feelings of people who are not in paid employment. The starting point of this thesis was the evidence that there is a stigma associated with unemployment that is based on the value placed on employment within our meritocratic society. As a consequence, employment has an important role for our self-definition, so anyone who is not in paid employment may be affected by the stigma of unemployment. Taking this into account, here we have extended previous investigations of unemployment by examining not only individuals who are officially registered as unemployed, but also people for whom an unemployed group membership might not be immediately evident, such as students, or those for whom the status of unemployed might be conferred upon them by others, such as stay-at-home mothers. We argued that the stigma of unemployment may be relevant for such individuals too and that social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) can help us to understand how people not in paid work may respond when they perceive a stigma of unemployment.
In Chapter 1, we argued that the category of unemployed and the stigma of unemployment (Karren & Sherman, 2012) may be relevant for many people who are out of the labour force and economically inactive, such as students or stay-at-home mothers. This consideration led us to ask the question how these different groups might respond to the stigma of unemployment.

To inform this question, a group-based analysis based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) - outlined in Chapter 2 - points to the importance of group membership and intergroup relations when examining how people not in paid work may cope with their group-based stigma. We argued that social identification and multiple identities should play an important role in understanding how different groups not in paid work may respond to the possibility of being categorised as unemployed (e.g., Roccas, 2003). On this basis, the rationale was developed in Chapter 3 where we argued that social identity processes will be related to people's coping behaviour and their well-being.

The empirical studies reported in Chapters 4 through to 6 were designed to investigate the ways in which people not in paid work perceive the stigma of unemployment and how it potentially influences their well-being. Moreover, the studies aimed to investigate the role of social identification processes and different coping strategies. Together, the findings provide support for the notion that social identity processes guide the perceptions and reactions of people who are not in paid employment.

In this final chapter of the thesis, we will evaluate how the evidence from the studies presented in this thesis help us answer the six research questions outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. We will elaborate on how they can be integrated and collectively
understood. In doing so we will explore potential explanations for inconsistent results and unexpected findings in relation to our hypotheses. Next, limitations of the current research will be discussed and theoretical implications of the findings for current research into unemployment, stigma, and the social identity tradition will be examined. The final section of this chapter will explore the practical implications and integrate avenues for future research. Finally, we will offer some concluding reflections.

**Integration of Results**

At the broadest level this thesis demonstrates that perceptions of the stigma of unemployment impacts upon the intended behaviour and well-being of people who are not in paid work. Importantly, effects were found not only for those individuals who were officially registered as unemployed, but also for other people who are not in paid employment: students and stay-at-home mothers. In this way, the research presented in this thesis extends past research by acknowledging the fact that many people deal with the stigma of unemployment although not officially registered as such. We can suppose that other non-working, but non-registered people, such as involuntarily part-time workers, individuals who attend training schemes, people who have stopped actively looking for work after a period of time, and even those who are retired, may also be affected by the stigma of unemployment. In the following sections, we will describe how perceptions of the stigma of unemployment and social identity processes influence the well-being and coping of people who are not in paid work.

**Well-Being of People Who Are Not in Paid Work**

Across the five studies presented in this thesis, perceptions of stigma and social identity processes did not have a uniform effect on all people who were not in paid work (RQs 1, 3, & 6). Registered unemployed people's well-being was primarily influenced
by perceptions of stigma. More specifically, perceptions of stigma negatively impacted on registered unemployed people's self-esteem and life satisfaction, which confirmed our predictions. This finding adds to meta-analyses that demonstrate that unemployment is a predictor of poor well-being and mental health among the unemployed (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009) by demonstrating that perceptions of stigma offer an additional explanation as to why unemployment may be associated with impaired well-being. This finding also supports research that demonstrates a negative relationship between perceived stigma and discrimination and indicators of well-being (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014).

In contrast, registered unemployed people's social identification with the group ‘unemployed’ was not positively associated with their self-esteem or life satisfaction. These findings contribute to past research from social identity theory, which proposes that it is difficult to derive a positive sense of self from membership in a lower status group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In addition, it could also be demonstrated that unemployed people reported higher self-esteem when they identified weakly with other unemployed people and when they perceived low stigma. It seems that those unemployed people who are able to distance themselves from the group of unemployed people and who feel less judged by others may manage to prevent a drop of self-esteem. This suggests, that memberships in alternative groups may influence how people out of paid work cope when they perceive a stigma of unemployment. The roles of such alternative group memberships were addressed in the studies with students and stay-at-home mothers.

For students and stay-at-home mothers we got a different picture of how perceptions of stigma and social identity influence well-being. In particular, similar to
registered unemployed people, when students' anticipate future unemployment perceptions of a greater stigmatisation of the unemployed decreased life satisfaction (but not self-esteem). Similar to what was found in the sample of registered unemployed people, students' well-being was also influenced by social identification processes. However, in contrast to unemployed people, increased identification as a student was related to better well-being. More specifically, students’ identification with their university was associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction when unemployment was anticipated for their discipline.

Similar to registered unemployed people and students, stay-at-home mothers reported lower self-esteem and life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment (Study 4). This finding adds to research that demonstrated that being a stay-at-home mother is related to poorer well-being (Buehler & O’Brien, 2011; Rizzo et al., 2013) because it offers one reason for this association, the stigma of unemployment. This finding also supports the argument that the stigma of unemployment has some characteristics that may make it self-relevant for other people not in paid work. In this way, the findings contribute to literature demonstrating that stay-at-home mothers are perceived to be self-responsible for not being in paid work (e.g., Bingham, 2013b) and that this perceived responsibility for a stigma negatively impacts on well-being (Rodin et al., 1989). Indeed, one reason why the stigma of unemployment is relevant for stay-at-home mothers' well-being may be that mothers (are made to) believe they are in control of whether or not they have a job, for example because government initiative encourage women to return to work (Bingham, 2013a).

However, this effect was not found when others see stay-at-home mothers as similar to the unemployed, that means when others impose the category unemployed to
them (Study 5). One explanation for this outcome may be that mothers use their social identity as a mother to cope when others impose the category unemployed to them, which may prevent that their well-being decreases. Indeed, when stay-at-home mothers identified highly with being a mother, their perceptions of stigma did not negatively impact on their self-esteem and life satisfaction. In contrast, for mothers who identified weakly with other mothers, perceptions of stigma negatively impacted on their self-esteem and life satisfaction.

More generally, their social identification as a mother had a positive effect on their well-being. However, this effect does not seem to be stronger when others see mothers as similar to unemployed people, particularly not for life satisfaction. One reason for this may be that self-esteem is linked to a concrete situation of social comparison, such as being regarded as unemployed (Tajfel, 1978). It has also been argued that self-esteem depends on the meaning of perceived stigma in a current situation (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). In contrast, life satisfaction may be less dependent from a particular situation, but more connected to how people evaluate their life in general. Hence, it is more stable across situations and influenced by many factors including past experiences and future prospects (Diener & Diener, 1996). This may explain, why the effect of social identification on self-esteem was stronger in the sample of stay-at-home mothers when others see them as similar to the unemployed, a situation that is perceived as concrete and meaningful by stay-at-home mothers. However, this may also explain why perceptions of the stigma of unemployment may be more relevant for students' life satisfaction when they anticipate job prospects to be bleak. Here, expectation of the future may be perceived as very abstract and hypothetical. Nonetheless, future prospects may impact on how their life satisfaction is influenced by
perceptions of stigma.

**Coping of People Who Are Not in Paid Work**

Given that the stigma of unemployment has an impact on the well-being of those not working, how can such individuals cope with the stigma? Although each of the groups studies in this thesis are not in paid employment and thus may be affected by the stigma of unemployment, they differed in the ways in which they responded to possible unemployment. According to our findings, there is not one straightforward way to maintain well-being. Instead, there are varying and dynamic relationships, which reflect how both perceived stigma and social identity processes determine the ways in which people cope.

Registered unemployed people were more motivated to search for a job the less they identified with other unemployed people. These findings echo the large body of literature in the identity tradition proposing that individuals who identify weakly with a group are more likely to pursue individual strategies (Ellemers et al., 1997; Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999). Here, when using individual strategies, unemployed people define themselves in terms of their personal identity and act in terms of their personal interests (finding a job) (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In contrast, their intentions to search for a job seem to be less influenced by perceptions of stigma. Hence, unemployed people's motivation to search for a job seems to be more influenced by negative feelings connected to their group-membership rather than by the fact that they are stigmatised.

In a similar way, the stigma of unemployment was not related to job search intentions of students, as was the case for unemployed people. However, students' intentions to search for a job were related to processes of social identification. In
contrast to registered unemployed people, students seem to link their identification as a
student with successfully searching for a job in the future, particularly when
employment conditions be difficult. More specifically, when students identified highly
as a university student, greater perceived a stigma of unemployment was associated
with a greater motivation to search for a job in the future. However, a similar effect was
not found for social identification with their discipline. One reason for this may be that
students expect that being a graduate of the University of Exeter, as a relatively highly
ranked university, provides them with better chances on the job market than their
particular discipline, which may also be studied elsewhere. Indeed, their identification
with the university may have been more useful for students in the context of bleak job
prospects. This is also reflected in the finding that students' identification with the
university is associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction when they were
confronted with bleak job prospects for their discipline. However, their identification as
a psychology students was not able to demonstrate a similar effect when prospects for
the university were bleak. Despite these mixed results, the findings contribute to past
research about categorisation threat (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999) as they
demonstrate that being threatened with future unemployment may influence how social
identity processes determine perceptions of stigma and their impact on possible coping
strategies.

Job search intentions for unemployed people and students were also linked to
their well-being. In particular, students reported higher self-esteem and better life
satisfaction the more they intended to search for a job in future, when confronted with
bleak job prospects (both for their university and their discipline). In a similar way,
unemployed people reported higher self-esteem when they indicated to search for a job.
In this way, the findings with unemployed people and students contribute to past research on stigma that proposed that pro-active coping strategies protect self-esteem (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). The findings also indirectly contribute to past research in the social identity tradition because they demonstrate that individual strategies, such as job search, help to maintain self-esteem (Ellemers et al., 1997; Tajfel, 1978). Hence, while low identification with other unemployed people and perceptions of stigma may be risk factors for the development of low self-esteem, as we described above, low identification also promoted more job search intentions among the unemployed, which was positively connected with better self-esteem. Hence, a lack of identification among the unemployed is not necessarily a unfavourable condition for unemployed people, but can be a driver to intensify job search.

In terms of cognitive reconstruction, neither unemployed people nor students reported better self-esteem or life satisfaction the more they changed their attitudes about their situation. In this way, the findings contribute to current research on coping strategies with the insight that cognitive strategies, as measured in this thesis, may not be an relevant strategy for unemployed people or students when they anticipate unemployment.

In contrast to students and unemployed people, cognitive reconstruction seems to be a more important strategy for stay-at-home mothers. However, this was less reflected by a single association between cognitive reconstruction and indicators of well-being. Rather, it is important to regard here how perceptions of stigma, social identification as a mother, cognitive reconstruction, and indicators of well-being work together. More specifically, when stay-at-home mothers perceived a stigma of unemployment and others saw them as similar to being unemployed they reported
greater intentions to see their situation in a better light by, for example, valuing family
life and better quality of child care. This finding contributes to research about stigma
that proposes that individuals who feel stigmatised may use different strategies in
response to the stigma (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). It also adds to the argument that the
category of unemployed may not only be relevant for registered unemployed people and
the stigma of unemployment restrictively impacts on them. In this way, it also supports
social psychological research about stigma, arguing that it is not stigma per se that
negatively impacts on well-being being, but rather depends on whether a stigma is
perceived as self-relevant in a certain situation (Crocker & Quinn, 2000). One reason
why such cognitive strategies might be important for stay-at-home mothers is that they
differ from unemployed people and students in the extent to which they use cognitive
strategies on a daily basis. Mothers may be more familiar with creatively adapting their
thoughts when they feel not valued by others (Bingham, 2013b).

Stay-at-home mothers also reported more cognitive reconstruction of their
attitudes about their family life and rearing children the more they identified with being
a mother. This was also important in combination with perceptions of stigma. More
specifically, we found evidence that mothers who highly identified as a mother report
relatively high levels of cognitive reconstruction whereas mothers who lowly identified
as a mother tended to report high levels of cognitive reconstruction only when they
perceived a stigma of unemployment. This finding demonstrates that their social
identification as a mother also influences the ways in which they think about themselves
when negative views of unemployed people are perceived to be self-relevant. In
particular, this finding helps us to better understand how cognitive strategies are, at least
in part, determined by perceptions of stigma and social identification. In this way, the
finding contributes to former literature in the social identity tradition (Tajfel, 1978) because it supports the argument that high social identification is likely to be connected with a motivation to see one's situation or group in a better light (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This may be particularly the case for stay-at-home mothers because their identity as a mother may be closely connected to how they think about their family and childcare. In fact, this may also be a reason why we found this association not only when stay-at-home mothers were threatened with a potential unemployment.

As we have described in the previous section, stay-at-home mothers’ identification as a mother was also associated with better well-being, and moreover, this identification seemed to protect from decreased well-being when stigma was perceived. In addition, their identification as a mother was also linked to how stay-at-home mothers valued family life and rearing children. In this way, reconstructing their thoughts may be a way for mothers to assert that they have a meaningful and socially desirable identity and use of their time in a way that is similar to those who are employed. In fact, this may also be a reason why we found that life satisfaction was associated with reconstructing their thoughts and attitudes when stay-at-home mothers were valued as similar to employed people. It may have been the case that valuing stay-at-home mothers to be similar to employed people made mothers perceive their social identity as meaningful which had a positive effect on their life satisfaction. However, as we discussed in Chapter 6, another reason why we did not get the expected effects when mothers were compared with unemployed people may have been, that they reject the category unemployed (Truniger, 1990). For example, it may have been the case that stay-at-home mothers were less motivated to search for a job when others see them as similar to the unemployed because they do not want to behave like other registered
unemployed people.

However, the fact that their identity as a mother is closely connected with indicators of well-being also illustrates that mothers capitalise on their multiple identities as a way that benefits their self-esteem and well-being (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). In this way, the findings also contribute to past research in the social identity tradition because they demonstrate that well-being is not only related to one social identity but rather to multiple identities (C. Haslam et al., 2008; Iyer et al., 2009). In additions, the findings help us to understand how possible alternative identities influence the ways in which individuals without a job cope (McFadyen, 1995).

Limitations and Future Research

So far we have outlined and integrated the key findings of this research. Although the work clearly contributes to the existing literature, the research reported in this thesis also has some limitations. Some of these limitations have already been mentioned in the Discussion sections within each empirical chapter. In this final chapter we will integrate these thoughts. We will begin with potential shortcomings regarding the quality of measures and the manipulation and will explain how practical considerations led our decisions during the research process. We will continue with limitations to make causal interpretations, limitations for using structural equation modelling, and limitations in generalising the results.

Quality of Measures

In the following section, we will outline some considerations related to the quality of the measures. In particular, they concern the use of unvalidated measures, the use of single items, the fact that measures only captured one facet out of several, possible unmeasured third variables, and relations to additional measures that were not
investigated in this thesis.

It may be argued that the quality of some of the measures may have been not ideal, because they were newly created, for example, the measures for perceived stigma. In general, we tried to adapt the questionnaires to the requirements of data collection in the field. That is, we tried to design simple, short, and practical questionnaires. For example, we expected the sample of unemployed people to be a very unhomogeneous group in respect to their educational and cultural backgrounds, including, for example, people with low educational and working class backgrounds, and those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. This made it necessary to adapt existing measures to the sample of unemployed people, as was done to measure social identification of unemployed people (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004) or create a new measure if this was not possible. However, the internal consistency of those measures had not been tested previously. As a consequence, a single item, which seemed to be most prototypical for representing the measure, had to be chosen when the internal consistency was not satisfactory. For example, a single item was used to measure perceived stigma in the samples of students. Future research may conduct pilot studies in order to ensure sufficient internal consistency.

One might also argue that using single items may not lead to valid findings. For example, we decided to use a single item for self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) in the first study with stay-at-home mothers. This was for two reasons. First, in the studies with stay-at-home mothers it was crucial to design short and practical questionnaires, because they were only willing to leave their children with little attention for a very limited time while filling out the questionnaire. Second, the predictive value of such single item measures has been demonstrated to be not lower than of multiple item
measures (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Gardner et al., 1998).

It may also be argued that the quality of some measures may be restricted because it captures only one of several components. For example, in the studies with students, we measured two ways in which individuals could cognitively reconstruct own thoughts by (a) valuing additional time for other activities or (b) having the possibility to concentrate on other important things. However, cognitive reconstructions about one's situation or group can happen in a number of other ways and it’s complexity makes it difficult to capture all of its facets. Indeed, this may be why we could not confirm our hypotheses where cognitive reconstruction was involved. Instead, students may prefer other ways to reconstruct their attitudes and thoughts than were measured. For example, students could value the opportunity for a gap year or time to seek information about possible employers (Hodgson, 2013). Hence, future research that is interested in how students may reconstruct own thoughts and attitudes when confronted with bleak job prospects may design different items that cover several nuances of cognitive reconstruction and conduct pilot research.

One may also object that certain measures are influenced by unmeasured third variables, which have not been acknowledged. For example, social identification as a stay-at-home mother may depend on how long a mother plans to stay-at-home. More specifically, some mothers may expect to return to work as soon as possible after their maternity leave. As a consequence, they may use their identity as a mother to validate only their current absence from the workforce. In contrast, other mothers may plan to stay at home with their children for a longer time. They may see motherhood their identity as enduring alternative identity. This may impact on how mothers adjust their attitudes and reconstruct their cognitions in a way that serves their identity. For
example, mothers who plan to stay-at-home may value childcare and family life to a greater extent than mothers who plan to return to work soon. However, with respect to stay-at-home mothers, the priority in this thesis was to gain sufficiently sized samples of a group of people who have not yet received much attention. Further research may be more interested in including other measures that may impact on an alternative identity and its relationship to other measures.

In this thesis, we proposed that the social identification, perceptions of sigma, coping strategies, and well-being are related to each other in different ways depending on the sample. However, there may be other factors that may be related to those measures and interesting to look at. There were some measures, which we decided to exclude from the analyses, for example, socio-structural variables, identity change, and certain indicators of well-being. They were excluded for several reasons, as discussed in Chapter 3, for example, because they were not able to enhance understanding of one of our research questions or had not been collected across all the studies. Although these variables were excluded for legitimate reasons, there would still be some value in examining them. For example, the effects of unemployment have been demonstrated on a range of well-being and mental health indicators (Paul & Moser, 2006). Hence, it may be the case that perceptions of stigma and identity processes also impact on other indicators of well-being, such as optimism or self-efficacy. It would also be interesting to integrate the findings of this research into additional ways of coping (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). For example, one finding of this research was that identity as mother was closely connected to reconstructing one's cognitions. It may be the case that a viable alternative identity is also connected to other possible ways to distance from the group of unemployed people and avoid the stigma of unemployment, such as denial of being
unemployed (Truniger, 1990), concealing (e.g., Quinn, 2006), or emotional regulation (Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Adding such factors may be an inspiration for future analyses in this field.

**Design and Manipulation**

There are some shortcomings regarding the manipulation of job prospects in the studies with students. This may explain why some of the hypotheses could be confirmed in Study 3, which could not be confirmed in Study 2, for example, the finding that participants reported lower levels of life satisfaction the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment when confronted with bleak job prospects. In particular, students in Study 2 were presented with a statement about future job prospects, which included information about students' job prospects in general which may have been too weak a manipulation. Consequently, in Study 3 students were presented with more targeted information. In particular, a sample of students of one discipline (psychology students) were presented with an alleged article from their university newspaper, including stronger arguments why they had either good or bleak job prospects. As a consequence, the manipulation in Study 3 may have worked in a better way than in Study 2. Future research may strengthen and pilot manipulations in a way that tailors the manipulation to a specific sample.

It may also be argued that the manipulation of Study 3 may have differed in effectiveness because the information that was presented was not always clearly reciprocal. In particular, for the manipulation of the job prospects for their university, students were presented with reciprocal information regarding good and bleak prospects (rank in league tables higher or lower, respectively). However, the information about job prospects for their discipline (psychology) was not clearly reciprocal and included the
need for more psychological service (good prospects) versus a poor economic climate for psychologists (bleak prospects). We tried to design the manipulation in the most meaningful and believable way. The bleak prospects condition seemed most credible when students are led to think about prospects of the current recession which was still ongoing during the time of data collection. Providing students with information about an expected economical boom seemed less credible. As a consequence, students in the good prospects condition gained information about the need for more psychological service. However, as the manipulation check seemed to have worked, it is likely that the manipulation produced its desired impact. Nonetheless, future research may fix those issues by presenting a clear reciprocal manipulation.

Overall, we tried to design the manipulations in the studies with students and stay-at-home mothers to be as authentic as possible. However, it may have been the case that the manipulation did impact on some relationships as expected but not for others. For example, it may be the case that mothers believed the information given and the fact that others may see them as unemployed. However, on particular dimensions they may have been reluctant to answer in the anticipated way in order to avoid processing negative information that might make them feel bad. This would be an alternative explanation for the finding that higher perceptions of stigma was associated with higher job search intentions when mothers were valued as employed people rather than when the category unemployed was imposed on them. However, we can conclude that overall mothers did believe that other people may impose an identity of being unemployed on them. In fact, this may be a daily experience for mothers (Bingham, 2013b).

Causal Interpretations

In general, we recruited people in the real-world (as opposed to the laboratory)
for all of our studies, concentrating on identities and scenarios that were meaningful. This has the advantage that the results gained from a natural setting have higher external validity, and thus we can be more confident about generalising the results of our studies to other situations and to other people. However, Study 1 with registered unemployed people and Study 4 with stay-at-home mothers were correlational studies. Thus, causal interpretations should be made with caution. As we argued above, there is certainly a theoretical rationale and a substantial body of evidence why perceptions of stigma (Crocker et al., 1998; Crocker & Quinn, 2000) and social identification processes (S. A. Haslam et al., 2009; Tajfel, 1978) influence the well-being of people not in paid work.

However, from a very different perspective, one could argue that those relationships can be explained by individual differences, particularly by self-esteem. Hence, people's self-esteem may influence how they perceive stigma, how they identify with a group, and what coping strategies they prefer (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2001; Rydell & Boucher, 2010). For example, the fact that the effect of perceived stigma on self-esteem depends on social identification among the unemployed could also mean that for those unemployed people who are high in self-esteem there is positive relationship between social identification and perceptions of stigma and for those who are low in self-esteem, there is a negative relationship between social identification and perceptions of stigma. Another example refers to the sample of stay-at-home mothers. From an individualistic perspective it could be argued that mothers who are high in self-esteem are less likely to perceive a stigma of unemployment. They may also more likely to more identify as mother and to reconstruct own thoughts and attitudes in an adaptive way. The same caution with causality applies to the experimental studies. The fact that a manipulation impacts on a particular relationship does not necessarily mean that one variable of that
relationship causes the other. For example, it may be the case that when students who anticipate unemployment, those who are high in self-esteem identify more with being a student.

**The Use of Structural Equation Modelling**

Another way to analyse and present the results of this thesis would have been to use structural equation modelling. However, working with real-world identities is often associated with limitations in recruiting sufficiently sized samples. While the samples were adequate to allow for regression analyses, they were not large enough to allow for structural equation modelling. Time and resource limitations of this programme of research only allowed recruiting relatively small samples. If our samples of unemployed people or stay-at-home mothers were larger, then the statistical power of our analyses would be stronger and procedures such as structural equation modelling would have been appropriate. Future research programmes that are concerned with this issue might consider recruiting a larger sample of unemployed people or stay-at-home mothers in order to conduct statistical procedures such as structural equation modelling.

**Limitations in Generalising the Results**

This study was carried out in the UK in a time of recession and welfare cuts. In this context, we have demonstrated that people perceive a stigma of unemployment in relation to their group. However, this stigma may be perceived in different ways in other societies and entail different group processes. For example, it may be the case that in more affluent societies with a stronger welfare system and higher benefits the stigma of unemployment is more closely connected with wasting taxpayers’ money and resting on

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2 Preliminary SEM-analyses could not confirm meaningful models with satisfying model fit indexes, power levels, and effect sizes. Sample size requirements of a model with at least 4 latent variables with target power level of 0.80 (by convention) and a medium size effect of 0.3 would be at least 400 participants. [http://www.danielsoper.com](http://www.danielsoper.com)
social benefits (Furäker & Blomsterberg, 2003). In poorer societies, with no social benefits at all, it may be connected with criminal activity (Gallie & Paugam, 2000; Hooghe, Vanhoutte, Hardyns, & Bircan, 2011). In addition, as already outlined in the introductory chapter, the current unemployment rate may play a role here as well. For example, there are parts of Africa where the unemployment rate is so high that it may be actually too common to be stigmatised. It would be fruitful for future research within this area to disentangle those processes and investigate more comprehensively the content of the stigma of unemployment and its association with coping and well-being in other social contexts.

Overall, despite some shortcomings and inconsistent results, we believe that the findings presented in this thesis have illustrated the utility of using the social identity perspective when investigating behaviour of people not in paid work. In the following section we will outline the implication the findings for current research into unemployment, stigma and social identity.

Implications of the Current Research

The findings presented in this thesis have some important implications, both in theoretical and practical terms. Some of these implications have been already discussed within the empirical chapters themselves. In this section we will bring these implications together for the programme of research as a whole. We will start with theoretical implications for the literature on unemployment and stigma. We will continue with implications for research in the social identity tradition followed by practical implications. In each of these sections we will discuss how future research can build on these observations and integrate a number of new research tracks and recommendations for future research.
Theoretical Implications

Implications for research into unemployment and stigma. The outcomes of this programme of research have a number of implications for research into unemployment and stigma. We will outline how these outcomes can be integrated with previous research, particularly in respect to how the stigma of unemployment can help explaining the negative association between unemployment and mental health, how perceptions of stigma impact on people who are not officially registered as unemployed, and how other kinds of stigma may become self-relevant for people even though they are not a member of the relevant stigmatised group.

In terms of the extant literature on unemployment, one important finding from this research is that different people not in paid work for different reasons do perceive a stigma of unemployment as self-relevant. As a consequence, the stigma of unemployment impacts on their own thoughts, motivations, and well-being. In this way, the findings add to a growing body of research demonstrating that unemployed people can be seen as a stigmatised group (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Previous research on the psychology of unemployment is primarily concerned with the fact that unemployment leads to impaired mental health. This association has been investigated on a wide range of measures of well-being and mental health (e.g., McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009). A number of different causes for this association have been identified; for example, a lack of psychological needs provided by the workplace (Jahoda, 1982), financial hardship (Fryer, 1986) or feelings of shame (Rantakeisu et al., 1999).

However, according to the findings of this research, it is also important to acknowledge that the stigma of unemployment impacts on the well-being of those who are not in paid work. This argument is not intended to disregard former insights. Rather, the point we
wish to make here is that acknowledging group-related processes, such as stigmatisation of the unemployed, can help us to understand why unemployed people experience impaired mental health and well-being. As a consequence, it may be beneficial for future research within the area of unemployment to acknowledge stigma and group-related factors when investigating effects of unemployment. For example, future research may examine in more detail the nature of the stigma connected with unemployment, such as the fact that the stigma is perceived to be legitimate (Crocker et al., 1998; Jones et al., 1984). One possible avenue might be to examine how the stigma of unemployment impacts on additional well-being or health-related measures, for example self-efficacy, depression, or perceived helplessness (Karren & Sherman, 2012).

Another important contribution of the present research is that it provides the first quantitative evidence that the stigma of unemployment not only impacts on registered unemployed people but also on other people not in paid work. For example, the findings of this research illustrate that mothers who perceive a greater stigma of unemployment place more value on family life when others see them as similar to being unemployed. In this way, it is important for future research on unemployment to not only study people who are officially registered in unemployment statistics but also a range of other people who are out of work and are also affected by the stigma of unemployment such as stay-at-home mothers or students - as examined in this thesis – and also part-time workers, artists, retired people, or volunteers. Insights into how these people evaluate their social context may help us to integrate findings gathered from registered unemployed people. For example, volunteer workers may respond to perceived stigma by emphasising the opportunity to learn new skills or to help others. Another example may be that retired people who if they are made to feel that they are not contributing to
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society any more may see themselves in terms of their former professional identities. In this way, they may – similar to stay-at-home mothers – concentrate on alternative identity and reconstruct their cognitions in a way that benefits their well-being.

However, it may also be beneficial to examine other strategies than those investigated in this thesis that people not in paid work may employ in order to cope with the stigma of unemployment. For example, when involuntarily part-time workers are confronted with the stigma of unemployment, they may deny that they do not contribute to society. It may also be interesting to examine under which circumstances people who anticipate unemployment may be motivated to engage in protest (Miller & Major, 2000; Urban, 1990).

The fact that the stigma of unemployment not only impacts on registered unemployed people, but also on people for whom the group membership is not evident or might be imposed may be also relevant for investigating other kinds of stigma. For example, negative attitudes towards people with a mental illness may be also relevant for people who are not or not yet properly diagnosed as mentally ill by a professional psychologist (Henderson, 2008; Link, Struening, Neese-Todd, Asmussen, & Phelan, 2001). There may be situations, for example, when people who go through life crises in which they may feel similar to those who are diagnosed as mentally ill. As a consequence, they may not mention their mental condition at their workplace in order to avoid negative consequences of stigmatisation and being categorised as mentally ill.

Another example refers to the stigma of obesity. There are people who are motivated to lose weight although not obese. In fact, one reason for this may be that there is a stigma attached to being overweight that is connected with negative attitudes, such as being ugly, undisciplined, or weak-minded (Crocker et al., 1993). Hence, future research that
is interested in these kinds of stigma may be interested in examining how a particular stigma also affects people for whom it is not clear whether the stigma is self-relevant or not.

**Implications for research in the social identity tradition.** The results of this thesis have a number of implications for researchers working in the social identity tradition. More specifically, these implications concern the interpretation of people's group memberships, the impact of conferred group-membership, the role of multiple identities, and the combination of social identity research, and the stigma of unemployment.

The social identity approach (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) proposes that people’s perceptions and behaviour are framed by their group membership, rather than being driven purely by individual factors. Perhaps the most general implication from this research for the social identity approach is that interpretations of people's group memberships are not uniform, but are rather nuanced. This means that different circumstances can lead to different coping strategies with differing levels of success. For example, both registered unemployed people and stay-at-home mothers are not in paid employment and perceive the stigma of unemployment. However, depending on how they see themselves they prefer different strategies to respond. More specifically, unemployed people were motivated to find a job. Stay-at-home mothers tend to identify more with other mothers and value childcare and family life.

In line with this, how people not in paid work interpret their group membership depends on how other people see them. More specifically, it depends on whether a group membership is clear or whether it is possible that other people confer group
membership on them. Hence, the findings of this research have also implications for research investigating the threat of an imposed group membership (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999). According to the findings of this research, imposing the category of unemployed on stay-at-home mothers can make the stigma of unemployment self-relevant to them. One response of stay-at-home mothers was that they reported much stronger intentions to reconstruct their own cognitions in order to see their motherhood in a positive light the more they perceived a stigma of unemployment, compared to stay-at-home mothers who were not threatened with the category of unemployed. While perceptions of stigma may have been less relevant for students, they nonetheless responded when they were threatened with future unemployment. In particular, they tended to identify to a greater extent with other students, which had a positive effect on their well-being, compared to other students who had not been threatened with bleak job prospects. Future research may be interested in investigating other groups of people for whom group membership is not clear; for example, those who feel mentally impaired, but are not diagnosed as mentally ill, as outlined above. It would be interesting to see whether they identify to a greater extent with an alternative identity, such as their profession when others categorise them as mentally ill.

The findings also add to a growing body of research concerning the roles of multiple identities. In particular, the findings of the studies with students and mothers demonstrated that individuals who simultaneously belong to two groups tend to base their self-esteem on identification with the higher status or not threatened group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2002; Roccas, 2003). For example, it could be demonstrated that students' identification with their university was associated with higher self-esteem and life satisfaction when they were confronted with bleak job prospects for psychology
students. In a similar way, stay-at-home mothers reported better self-esteem and greater life satisfaction the more they identified with being a mother. In this way, the findings are also in line with the argument that individuals are able to cope more successfully with being out of paid work when they are able to adopt another identity (e.g., McFadyen, 1995). In turn, this illustrates the importance of multiple identities in the process of coping. In this way, the results also add to other research demonstrating that having multiple group memberships can serve as buffer against negative events (C. Haslam et al., 2005) or life transitions (Iyer et al., 2009). Future research might be interested in investigating other alternative identities for people not in paid work, such as being a volunteer, those undergoing occupational re-training, or an (almost) retired person. In fact, people who are made redundant could also continue categorising themselves in terms of their former profession after they have stopped working (Tosti-Kharas, 2012), which may help them to cope with unemployment.

Finally, this thesis has important theoretical implications simply because it brings together the literatures on social identity, unemployment, and stigma. It is true that others have noted the value of applying social identity theory to unemployment (Herman & Van Ypersele, 1998). However, Herman and Van Ypersele were concerned primarily with how perceptions of the socio-structural context predict certain identity maintenance strategies. In this thesis, we were able to offer a scientific advancement and provide empirical evidence of the processes that are involved when people not in paid work respond to the stigma of unemployment, including multiple identities and well-being. This is one of the first programmes of research that has investigated how a social identity perspective may illuminate our understanding of how people who are not in paid work evaluate their social world. In this way, as a consequence, the work
presented in this thesis paves the way for additional research, as suggested throughout the above sections.

**Practical Implications**

We have already identified some important implications for research on unemployment, stigma, and research on social identity theory. In addition, the findings of this thesis have practical implications for interventions and policy. In particular, these concern how training schemes for people who are not in paid work might be more efficient in terms of well-being. In particular, people not in paid work who attend these courses could be made aware of the importance of alternative identities while not in paid work and taught about the negative effects of the stigma of unemployment. The potential benefits of these ideas will be outlined in the following.

Many interventions and training programmes for people not in paid work aim to reintegrate them into the job market, helping individuals acquire the “right attitude” and optimising job-search behaviour (Breakwell, 1986). This focus corresponds to a societal expectation for searching for and finding a job. The success of such programmes is then measured by the reintegration rate (Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996). However, such programmes may have a negative impact on well-being. If an individual without a job is unable to find one after attending such a training programme, he or she has their expectations disappointed and may feel personally responsible (Breakwell, 1986). In contrast, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that job search is connected with better well-being for those who are registered as unemployed, particularly in terms of self-esteem. This confirms other research that links such proactive strategies with positive outcomes (Muehlpfordt & Rothlaender, 2008; Proudfoot, Guest, Carson, Dunn, & Gray, 1997). Hence, if the success of a job search is defined in terms of well-being rather than
finding a job, then job search can be seen as successful strategy, a consideration which may be regarded for future reintegrating schemes.

As self-esteem is closely connected to other indicators of well-being, such as life satisfaction, and indicators of mental health, such as anxiety or depression (Paul & Moser, 2006), strengthening the self-esteem of those who are not in paid work may be also interesting for governmental decisions, particularly in respect to possibilities to reduce expenses of the health system (McCrone, Dhanasiri, Patel, Knapp, & Lawton-Smith, 2008). According to the findings of this research there may be several tracks to strengthen the well-being of people not in paid work.

First, interventions that help people not in paid work to identify and invest energy into establishing an alternative identity may be beneficial. As the findings of this thesis illustrate, alternative identities are able to maintain well-being during a time without a job. For example, the alternative identity of being a mother can help stay-at-home mothers to protect their well-being from negative effects of perceived stigma. Also the identity of being a student helped students to deal with bleak job prospects. Similarly, volunteering may have a positive effect on well-being (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). However, we feel that this message should be communicated with caution, as it runs the risk of being misused by companies as a way of not paying for work. Volunteering should always be regarded as a temporary way of staying connected to other people during the time of searching a job, not as a substitute for a proper paid job. When people perceive that their work is exploited, then they may be dissatisfied, which may also lead to reduced well-being (Herzberg, 1968).

There may also be other possibilities to establish alternative identities for people not in paid work. For example, community projects may provide drop-in centres or
alternative social networks (Breakwell, 1986). People not in paid work may also be integrated into a local leisure club or placed into a vocational training courses in order to stay active during their unemployment (Rothländer & Richter, 2009). This might help them to find purpose in roles such as community worker or student and to maintain self-esteem while searching for work (Waters & Moore, 2002a). Based on this, one possible avenue for research may be to design and evaluate an intervention that focuses on establishing and maintaining alternative identities and roles while not being in paid employment.

Second, another way to strengthen well-being, particularly self-esteem, is to educate attendants about the deleterious effects of the stigma of unemployment. For example, they may be taught that stereotypical beliefs are often perceived to be legitimate, also among unemployed people themselves (Breakwell, 1986). They may also be taught how the stigma of unemployment makes them perform less well (Bourguignon et al., 2007) and elaborate strategies to respond this stigma in an effective way, as it is a kind of (social) stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Indeed, Miller and Kaiser (2001) argue that when faced with a stigma, people may not have developed strategies to deal with it immediately and an ability to cope with prejudice may be a skill that needs to be developed, for example, through stress management techniques. The potential effectiveness of such a training has been demonstrated with other kinds of stigma. For example, a study by Johns, Schmader, and Martens (2005) demonstrated that women who had been taught about the negative effects of stereotype threat on their math performance performed similar to men on a math test. Similarly, teaching unemployed people about the stigma of unemployment and negative stereotypes might prevent that people out of paid work unconsciously
behave in a way that confirms stereotypical believes, for example during a job interview. In this way, teaching can act like a vaccination and may make interventions more effective. An intervention for people out of paid work may include contents about educating about stigmatisation processes and convey strategies to encounter.

A third way of strengthening the self-esteem of people not in paid work is to equip them with working skills (Rothländer & Richter, 2009). This may be also important in light of demographic trends that may lead to a shortage of certain professions. For organisations it may become more and more important to attract those groups of people they do not currently attract, such as stay-at-home mothers. Organisations that want to remain competitive need to think about developing careers for women, particularly mothers. According to the research presented in this thesis, when stay-at-home mothers feel that they are not valued and do not fit into the job market, they tend to concentrate on their alternative identity of being a (good) mother in order to maintain their well-being. In contrast, when mothers feel that their identity as a mother is valued, they may be more motivated to search for a job, because it makes them feel as though they fit into the job market. Hence, those organisations who wish to motivate stay-at-home mothers to re-enter the job market should ensure that they value their identity as a mother and make them that they feel fit into their organisation.

**Concluding Remarks**

In sum, the present thesis has advanced previous research on reactions to the stigma of unemployment. Its major novelty lies in the fact that the stigma of unemployment is combined with the social identity approach. As a result, this thesis presented quantitative evidence of how group processes and perceptions of stigma guide the thoughts, feelings, behavioural intentions, and well-being of those people who are
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not in paid work.

In conclusion, the main message is that people who are not in paid work are, for different reasons, influenced by the stigma of unemployment and by the ways that other people see them. In line with this, we developed a more detailed understanding of how these people cope successfully with potential unemployment and the stigma connected to it. Moreover, we widened our understanding of their coping behaviour by regarding the fact that there are multiple identities involved. In this way, the present thesis has advanced previous research by demonstrating how an alternative meaningful identity can help people to maintain their well-being during the times when they are not in paid work.

Overall, the findings have demonstrated that in order to understand the behaviour of people who are not in paid employment, it is important to acknowledge that their behaviour occurs in a social context. That means, first, that it is not enough to restrict reactions to being not in paid work to a registered unemployed people. Second, a consideration of the social context involves additional group memberships of those not in paid work. And, third, these group-memberships track the ways to a possible alternative roles and coping behaviour.

In this sense, the issues of unemployment and being out of paid work, poor job prospects for students, and encouraging stay-at-home mothers to return to work may be seen and discussed from a new perspective – an endeavor to which this thesis has hopefully contributed.
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Identification with unemployed people, *α = .76, 13 items*
I identity with other unemployed people.*
I don't see myself as an unemployed person.
Being unemployed is a reflection of who I am.*
I am a typical unemployed person.*
I often feel worried when I am thinking about being unemployed.
I am happy to be unemployed.*
I am frustrated being an unemployed.
The fact that I am unemployed rarely enters my mind.
The fact that I am unemployed has very little to do with how I fees about myself.
In general, being unemployed is an important part of my self image.
I share a strong sense of belonging with other unemployed people.*
I feel accepted by other unemployed people.*
When I talk about unemployed people I usually say “we” rather than “they”.*
I feel strong ties with other unemployed people.*
When someone says something bad about unemployed people, I feel almost as if they had said it about me.*
I often meet other unemployed people.*
The majority of my friends are unemployed as well.*
I rarely encounter other unemployed people.*
I try to avoid meeting friends who are employed.*

Perceived stigma, *α = .65, 7 items*
In general, unemployed people are discriminated against.*
I experience prejudice from other people because I am unemployed.*
I do not see any differences in status between unemployed and employed people.
Employed and unemployed people have equal chances getting a job.
I have personally been confronted by discrimination because of my employment status. *
We unemployed feel unfairly treated.*
In general, others respect unemployed people.
Others think that unemployed people are lazy.*
In general, people think unemployed people are unwilling to work.*
In general, others think unemployed people are unworthy.*
People think that everybody can get a job if he/she really wants to.

Job search intentions, *α = .76, 8 items*
I presume that I will get a job soon.*
I am very keen to get a job soon.*
Unemployed people should focus on their own circumstances and not those of other unemployed people.*
I wish to get paid work.*
I submit several applications a week.*
I regularly go to the Job Centre Plus for a consultation.*
Every week I look for job opportunities.*
I registered at several job agencies.*
Cognitive reconstruction, *single item
Without work I have more time for other activities.*
I know a lot of people who have less money than me.
Instead of focussing on negative things, one should concentrate on positive things connected with
unemployment.*
There are many more important things than not having a job.

Life satisfaction, *α = .82, 4 items
The conditions of my life are excellent.*
I enjoy my life.*
I am satisfied with my life.*
My life is close to ideal.*

Self-esteem, *α = .73, 4 items
I am a person with a high self-esteem.*
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.*
I am able to do things as well as most other people.*
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.*

The following measures have not been used for further analysis:

Legitimacy
I think employed and unemployed people should have equal status.
I think it is fair that employed people are more successful than unemployed.
It is justified that employed people are treated better compared to unemployed people.
People in work are entitled to be better of than unemployed people.

Stability
The things for unemployed will not change easily.
I feel the situation for unemployed people will remain stable
I think the situation for unemployed people will change in the future.

Permeability
It is easy to find a job.
If I submitted more applications I would get a job very quickly.
I think I have the right skills to find a job.
It is possible for me to find work.

Identity change
If I had a job, it would be easy for me to fit in.
I would have to change a lot if I got a job.
I can easily see myself working.

Tendencies for collective action
We unemployed people should show that we are as good as employed peole.
Our goal is to fight for the right of employment for everybody.
Unemployed people should stick together to try and change the things for the better.
If new jobs arise, we unemployed need to make sure, that these jobs will be obtained by us.
The government needs more policies to address unemployment on.
Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for unemployed people.
**Disengagement coping**
I wish employed and unemployed people would be equal.
It is simply not true that employed and unemployed people have a different status in our society.
I try to avoid thinking of my unemployed status.

**Engagement coping**
Sometimes I am afraid I will not get a job.
I feel worried, when I think about being unemployed.
Every time I receive a rejection I really feel angry.
I can't help thinking about my situation as an employed person.

**Concealment**
I would rather not tell, that I am an unemployed.
I try to hide being unemployed.
I am a person who makes excuses for being unemployed.

**Optimism**
My future will be mainly positive.
I thing things well get worse.
I am optimistic about my future.
I expect that my employment situation will develop positively.

**Self efficacy**
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

**Depression**
I don't feel particularly guilty.
I feel sad.
I get tired more easily than I used to.
I lost interest in my daily activities.
Dear participant,

Thank you very much for your willingness to complete this questionnaire and helping us gain further insight into the situation of people out of work. Through this research project we would like to investigate feelings, thoughts, and also the behaviour of people who do not work in paid employment.

This survey is for research purposes. Your responses will be entirely anonymous. Your participation is very much appreciated, but please do not feel obliged to take part, and be aware that if you do participate you will be free to withdraw from the survey at any time.

Please try to fill out the questionnaire spontaneously. It will take you about 15 minutes. If you encounter any questions that you do not want to answer, feel free to omit them.

Throughout this questionnaire we use the term ‘unemployed’. However, people who do not work in paid employment may not see themselves as unemployed people. For example, they may not do paid work outside home as they are looking after children, because they are studying, because they have seasonal work, or because they volunteer work. Please describe how you see your position in the space below:

_______________________________________________________________________

In the following questionnaire we use the term ‘unemployed people’ for all who do not work, although you may not label yourself as unemployed, please answer the questions as best you can.

This survey is made up of a series of questions. Unless otherwise instructed, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. There are seven categories ranging from 1 = I strongly disagree to 7 = I strongly agree. Please write the number that best represents your response in the free space at the end of each statement.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
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</table>
We would like to begin by asking you some questions about how you feel about yourself and other unemployed people, and your thoughts connected with unemployment.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
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<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
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</table>

I often feel worried when I think about being unemployed.
I share a strong sense of belonging with other unemployed people.
I identify with other unemployed people.
The fact that I am unemployed rarely enters my mind.
I feel accepted by other unemployed people.
I often meet other unemployed people.
If I had a job, it would be easy for me to fit in.
I am happy to be unemployed.
When I talk about unemployed people I usually say “we” rather than “they”.
I don’t see myself as an unemployed person.
The majority of my friends are unemployed as well.
I would have to change a lot if I got a job.
The fact that I am unemployed has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
I rarely encounter other unemployed people.
Being unemployed is a reflection of who I am.
In general, being unemployed is an important part of my self image.
I try to avoid meeting friends who are employed.
I am a typical unemployed person.
I feel strong ties with other unemployed people.
I am frustrated being unemployed.
I can easily see myself working.
When someone says something bad about unemployed people, I feel almost as if they had said it about me.
Unemployed people might manage their situation in different ways. Some may have the feeling that they need to cope with their situation and others not. We are now interested in your beliefs and behaviour regarding coping with unemployment.

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Without work I have more time for other activities.

I wish employed and unemployed people would be seen as equal.

It is possible for me to find work.

It is easy to find a job.

We unemployed people should show that we are as good as employed people.

I submit several job applications a week.

I would rather not tell people that I am an unemployed.

Sometimes I am afraid I will never get a job.

If new jobs arise, we unemployed people need to make sure that these jobs will be obtained by us.

It is simply not true that employed and unemployed people have a different status in our society.

If I submitted more applications I would get a job very quickly.

I presume that I will get a job soon.

I feel worried when I think about being unemployed.

I know a lot of people who have less money than me.

I try to avoid thinking about being unemployed.

Our goal is to fight for the right of employment for everybody.

I regularly go to the Job Centre Plus for a consultation.

I think I have the right skills to find a job.

I try to hide being unemployed.

Every time I receive a rejection I really feel angry.

I am very keen to get a job soon.

Unemployed people should stick together to try and change the things for the better.

Every week I look for job opportunities.

Unemployed people should focus on their own circumstances and not those of other unemployed people.
I can't help thinking about my situation as an unemployed person.  
Instead of focusing on negative things, one should concentrate on positive  
things connected with unemployment.  
I wish to get paid work.  
I am a person who makes excuses for being unemployed.  
The government needs more policies to address unemployment.  
There are many more important things than having a job.  
Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for unemployed people.  
I registered at several job agencies.  

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<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following questions are about how satisfied you are with your life in general, how you see your future, and your self esteem.  

The conditions of my life are excellent.  
I am a person with high self esteem.  
I don’t feel particularly guilty.  
My future will be mainly positive.  
I enjoy my life.  
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.  
I am satisfied with my life.  
I feel sad.  
I think things will get worse.  
My life is close to ideal.  
I get tired more easily than I used to.  
I am optimistic about my future.  
I am able to do things as well as most other people.  
I have lost interest in my daily activities.  
I expect that my employment situation will develop positively.  
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
Unemployed people may perceive prejudice or discrimination from other people. The following questions are about this issue.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, unemployed people are discriminated against.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others think that unemployed people are lazy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think employed and unemployed people should have equal status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experience prejudice from other people because I am unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The things for unemployed people will not change easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, people think unemployed people are unwilling to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is fair that employed people are more successful than unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not see any differences in status between unemployed and employed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, others respect unemployed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the situation for unemployed people will remain stable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed and unemployed people have an equal chance of getting a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is justified that employed people are treated better compared to unemployed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, others think unemployed people are unworthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think the situation for unemployed people will change in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have personally been confronted by discrimination because of my employment status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in work are entitled to be better off than unemployed people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People think that everybody can get a job if he/she really wants to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We unemployed people feel unfairly treated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When you think about the situation of unemployed people in general you may have different feelings. The following scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate, by circling the appropriate number the extent to which you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers:

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<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
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<td></td>
<td>slightly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Very slightly or not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Distressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Alert</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Attentive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Jittery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Afraid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Insecure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
People may feel quite different concerns about their employment status. Could you please specify your concerns by ticking one or more appropriate answers:

I am concerned about that: □ My financial situation will get worse
□ I will get more and more bored
□ I will loose old colleagues and friends
□ My health status will get worse
□ My social prestige will get worse
□ Other concerns: ______________________________

Please try to describe words which you would connect with “unemployment” and “employment”. Write them in the spaces below. Then describe how positive or negative you see each word. There are seven categories ranging from 1 = extremely negative to 7 = extremely positive. Again, please write the number that best represents your response in the free space at the end of each word.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely negative</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Slightly negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Slightly positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Extremely positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words I associate with UNEMPLOYMENT:
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Words I associate with EMPLOYMENT:
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

Please feel free to make some comments/suggestions:
Please indicate the following information. We will not use this information to identify you – this is only for research purposes.

How old are you? ............ years

You are  □ Female
         □ Male

What is your marital status?  □ Single
                               □ Married or living together permanently
                               □ Divorced or living apart permanently
                               □ Widowed

Do you have any children? □ Yes  How many? ........
                          □ No

What is your school leaving level?................................................................................

Have you got a profession?  □ Yes
                               □ No

If yes, what is your profession?.....................................................................................

How long have you been unemployed until now? ..................years...............months

How often have you been out of work?  □ Once
                                      □ Several times: ......... times

I am not in paid employment because:  □ I am a mother caring for children/a child
                                      □ Retired
                                      □ Disabled
                                      □ Currently because of a seasonal job
                                      □ Currently because of a temporary job(s)
                                      □ Other:..........................................................

I left work  □ Voluntarily
            □ Involuntarily.

Do you currently work as a volunteer (unpaid work)?  □ Yes
                                                  □ No

Thank you very much again for participating and your patience. If you would like any more information on the survey or its results, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following people:

Pamela Bretschneider (pb255@exeter.ac.uk) – Chief researcher
Dr Michelle Ryan (M.Ryan@exeter.ac.uk) – Supervisor
Prof Thomas Kessler (T.Kessler@exeter.ac.uk) – Second supervisor
Dr Louis Pendry (L.F.Pendry@exeter.ac.uk) – Chair of Ethics Committee
List of measures - Study 2 (Chapter 5)

**Manipulation check, *r = .77**
It will be harder for students to find a job than it has been in previous years.*
Due to the current economic climate students will find it difficult to find a job.*

**Identification with being a student, *α = .87, 3 items**
I identify with being a student.*
I am proud to be a university student.*
I see myself as a university student.*

**Perceived stigma, * single item**
In general, people look down at unemployed people.
I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment.*

**Job search intentions, *α = .77, 4 items**
I usually keep my CV up to date.
I have a clear sense of what skills and knowledge will be required in my future job.
I am very keen to get a job in the future.*
Finding a job after my degree is one of the most important things for me.*
I would personally work hard to get a job.*
Generally, it is important for me to have a job after I finished studying.*

**Cognitive reconstruction, *r = .75, 2 items**
If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on.*
If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with.*
If unemployed one should concentrate on the positive things connected to rather than on negative things.

**Life satisfaction, *r = .74, 2 items**
I enjoy my life.*
I feel satisfied with my life.*

**Self-esteem, *r = .62, 2 items**
I am a person with high self-esteem.*
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.*
The following measures have not been used for further analysis:

**Tendencies for collective action**
Unemployed people should show that they are as good as employed people.
The government needs more policies to address unemployment.
People not in paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better.
Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for themselves.

**Concealment**
If I struggled to find a job I would rather not tell others that I was unemployed.
If I were unemployed I would try to hide the fact that I don’t have a job.

**Self efficacy**
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

**Depression**
I feel sad.
I have lost interest in my daily activities.

**Optimism**
I am optimistic about my future.
My future will be mainly positive.
Good job prospects for University students

Amy Rogers

Experts predict that despite of the recession University students have a very good chance to get a job after their degree. Although the number of unemployed people is expected to soar to over 3 million, University students seem to be protected from those bleak prospects.

Charles Davis at the Centre for Economic and Business Research said that downturn would hit low-skilled jobs in certain sectors, mainly manufacturers, retailers and service industries. However, university students from all disciplines are still required and in some sectors even rare. He sees the reason for the in a kind of a unique set of skills, like working independently, excellent self management or problem solving techniques, which students have a chance to learn at the University whereas other employees need to be sent to expensive training courses by employers to gain those skills.

Continued on Page 12

Bleak prospects of UK job market for University students

Amy Rogers

Experts predict that the number of unemployed people will soar to over 3 million as Britain's manufacturers, retailers and service industries feel the full effects of the downturn. According to the British Chambers of Commerce, it is likely that the situation will be even worse than the recession of the 1990s.

Charles Davis at the Centre for Economic and Business Research said that unemployment would become "increasingly pervasive" in the UK, putting downwards pressure on growth. The institute warned that unemployment would continue to rise in 2011, taking the total number of jobs projected to be lost over the course of the recession to about 1 million. Bank of England's labour market expert David Blanchflower predicted that within 2 years even people with a University degree and outstanding results will find it difficult to find a job immediately.

Continued on Page 12
Attitudes towards employment and unemployment

This questionnaire is interested in people’s attitudes towards employment and unemployment. There are no trick questions; we are only interested in your personal views. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not need to answer any questions that you do not wish to. By returning this questionnaire, you are giving your consent to participate in the research. Remember that all responses are anonymous. Please read through the following excerpt of a recently published newspaper article. Take a minute to think about the situation.

Good job prospects for University students

Amy Rogers

Experts predict that despite of the recession University students have a very good chance to get a job after their degree. Although the number of unemployed people is expected to soar to over 3 million, University students seem to be protected from those bleak prospects.

Charles Davis at the Centre for Economic and Business Research said that downturn would hit low-skilled jobs in certain sectors, mainly manufacturers, retailers and service industries. However, university students from all disciplines are still required and in some sectors even rare. He sees the reason for the in a kind of a unique set of skills, like working independently, excellent self management or problem solving techniques, which students have a chance to learn at the University whereas other employees need to be sent to expensive training courses by employers to gain those skills.

Now, please respond to the following statements, using the scale below. Remember, there are no right or wrong responses; the first answer that comes to mind is usually the best one.

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<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOUR OPINION ABOUT FUTURE JOB MARKET

It will be harder for students to find a job than it has been in previous years.

Due to the current economic climate students will find it difficult to find a job.

YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT

In general, people look down at unemployed people.

Finding a job after my degree is one of the most important things for me.

I think it is fair that employed people are more successful than people out of paid work.

If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on.

If I struggled to find a job I would rather not tell others that I was unemployed.

Unemployed people should show that they are as good as employed people.

I am sure it will be possible for me to find a job after my degree.

I usually keep my CV up to date.

The situation for unemployed people will remain stable in the future.
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The government needs more policies to address unemployment.

I have a clear sense of what skills and knowledge will be required in my future job.

People not in paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better.

I would personally work hard to get a job.

Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for themselves.

I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment.

Generally it is important for me to have a job after I finished studying.

I am confident about getting a job after I have finished my studies.

People in paid work are entitled to do better than people not in paid work.

If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with.

The labour market will change in the future.

If I were unemployed I would try to hide the fact that I don't have a job.

I am very keen to get a job in the future.

If unemployed one should concentrate on the positive things connected to it rather than on negative things.

I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

I feel sad.

I am a person with high self esteem.

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

I am optimistic about my future.

I have lost interest in my daily activities.

I enjoy my life.

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

I am satisfied with my life.

My future will be mainly positive.

**YOUR IDENTIFICATION AS A STUDENT**

I identify with being a University student.

I am proud to be a University student.

I see myself as University student.

**YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS**

What is your age? What is your gender? □ Male □ Female
Appendices

List of measures - Study 3 (Chapter 5)

**Manipulation check for prospects for psychology students, \( r = .87 \)**
According to the article it will be hard for psychology graduates to find a job*
According to the article, it should be easy for psychology graduates to find employment*

**Manipulation check for prospects for university students, \( r = .88 \)**
According to the article it will be hard for Exeter University graduates to find a job*
According to the article, it should be easy for Exeter University graduates to find employment*

**Identification with being a psychology student, \( \alpha = .81, 3 \) items**
I identify with being a psychology student.*
I am proud to be a psychology student.*
I see myself as a psychology student.*

**Identification with being a university student, \( \alpha = .88, 3 \) items**
I identify with being a student of the University of Exeter.*
I am proud to be a student of the University of Exeter.*
I see myself as student of the University of Exeter.*

**Perceived stigma, single item**
In general, people look down at unemployed people.
I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid work.*

**Job search intentions, \( \alpha = .74, 4 \) items**
I usually keep my CV up do date.
I have a clear sense of what skills and knowledge will be required in my future job.
I am very keen to get a job in the future.*
Finding a job after my degree is one of the most important things for me.*
I would personally work hard to get a job.*
Generally, it is important for me to have a job after I finished studying.*

**Cognitive reconstruction, \( r = .80, 2 \) items**
If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on.*
If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with.*
If unemployed one should concentrate on the positive things connected to rather than on negative things.

**Life satisfaction, \( r = .86, 2 \) items**
I enjoy my life.*
I am satisfied with my life.*

**Self-esteem, \( r = .80, 2 \) items**
I am a person with high self-esteem.*
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.*
I feel that I have much to be proud of.
The following measures have not been used for further analysis:

**Tendencies for collective action**
Unemployed people should show that they are as good as employed people. The government needs more policies to address unemployment. People not in paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better. Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for themselves.

**Concealment**
If I struggled to find a job I would rather not tell others that I was unemployed. If I were unemployed I would try to hide the fact that I don't have a job.

**Identity change**
My life is very different now to how it was before I became a mother. It was easy for me to leave my job and become a mother. Before I left work, my job had been an important part of who I was.

**Group (collective) Life satisfaction of psychology students**
We (psychology students) enjoy our life. We are (psychology students) satisfied with my life.

**Group (collective) Self-esteem of psychology students**
We (psychology students) are a group with high self-esteem. We (psychology students) feel that we have a number of good qualities. We (psychology students) feel that we have much to be proud of.

**Group (collective) Life satisfaction of Exeter University students**
We (Exeter University students) enjoy our life. We are (Exeter University students) satisfied with my life.

**Group (collective) Self-esteem of Exeter University students**
We (Exeter University students) are a group with high self-esteem. We (Exeter University students) feel that we have a number of good qualities. We (Exeter University students) feel that we have much to be proud of.
INFORMATION SHEET

In this study, we are interested in attitudes about the current job market.

Participation in this study involves reading through a newspaper article and then giving your beliefs, attitudes, opinions or feelings about the issues raised. Most questions can be answered simply by circling a number that corresponds to what you think. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation. There are no trick questions; we are only interested in your personal views. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not need to answer any questions that you do not wish to. Remember that all responses are anonymous.

If you have read and understood the above, and you are happy to participate in this research please tick the box below.

☐ I have read and understood the above and I am happy to participate in this research.

Please turn the page and begin with reading through the newspaper article recently published in EXPOSÈ. Take a minute to think about the situation.
Psychology students face dark prospects after graduation

Amy Rogers
Senior Reporter

FIGURES have been released that show graduate unemployment among psychology students soared to 44%, the highest level for ten years due to the current economic crisis. Additional research has shown that low graduate employment is a trend across all disciplines at the University of Exeter.

One in four psychology students who graduated last summer were unemployed by the following January. There will be almost 11,000 psychology students graduating all over the UK in 2010. Sophie Ferrn, Chair of the Students Members Group of the British Psychological Society (BPS) said that the class of 2010 is facing the toughest recruitment conditions in almost 20 years. "We live in hope 2011 will be a better year, but it is equally possible that [the impact of the recession] will carry over for another 12 months," Sophie said. This seems to be a trend for the University of Exeter in general. In a recent survey Exeter was polled in the Sunday Times University League Table League Table as 2nd worst in the top 50 University's for graduate employment. Exeter was unsuccessfully awarded 46 out of 100 for employment, whereas Bristol and Plymouth gained over the 60 mark. Data on student employment was collected through the national DLHE survey by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Dr Rachel Baron, Careers and Employability Representative of the School of Psychology, sees that current trend for psychology and Exeter University students and adds "Despite of a unique set of skills, like excellent communication and problem solving techniques, that psychology students have a chance to acquire during their studies, some students will struggle to find a job. But the important thing is not to panic. It is crucial to have a plan, being prepared and starting to think about employment early."
Psychology students face dark prospects after graduation

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FIGURES have been released that show graduate unemployment among psychology students soared to 44%, the highest level for ten years due to the current economic crisis. In contrast, additional research has shown that low graduate employment is not a trend across other disciplines at the University of Exeter.

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Dr Rachel Baran, Careers and Employability Representative of the School of Psychology, sees that current trend for psychology and University of Exeter students and adds "Some psychology students will struggle to find a job immediately despite of a unique set of skills, like excellent communication and problem solving techniques, that psychology students have a chance to acquire during their studies. But the most important thing is not to panic. It is crucial to have a plan, being prepared and starting to think about employment early."
Good job prospects for psychology students after graduation

Amy Rogers  
Senior Reporter  

FIGURES have been released that show graduate unemployment among psychology students did not increase in the past year despite the current economic crisis. In contrast, additional research has shown that high graduate employment is not a trend across all disciplines at the University of Exeter.

There will be almost 11,000 psychology students graduating all over the UK in 2010. However, Sophie Fenn, Chair of the Students Members Group of the British Psychological Society (BPS) said that the employment of psychologists is expected to grow 20 percent from 2008 to 2018.

"Employment will grow because of increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies." However, this does not seem to be a trend for the University of Exeter. In a recent survey Exeter was polled in the Sunday Times University League Table as 2nd worst in the top 50 University's for graduate employment. Exeter was unsuccessfully awarded 46 out of 100 for employment, whereas Bristol and Plymouth gained over the 60 mark. Data on student employment is collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Dr Rachel Baron, Careers and Employability Representative of the School of Psychology, sees that current trend and adds "Some psychology students might struggle to find a job immediately. However, overall psychology students should have good prospects due to a kind of a unique set of skills, like excellent communication and problem solving techniques which students have a chance to learn during their studies whereas other graduates need to be sent to expensive training courses by employers to gain those skills."
Good job prospects for psychology students after graduation

Amy Rogers
Senior Reporter

FIGURES have been released that show graduate unemployment among psychology students did not increase in the past year despite the current economic crisis. Additional research has shown high graduate employment is a general trend across other disciplines at the University of Exeter.

There will be almost 11,000 psychology students graduating all over the UK in 2010. However, Sophie Ferrer, Chair of the Students Members Group of the British Psychological Society (BPS) said that the employment of psychologists is expected to grow 20 percent from 2008 to 2018.

"Employment will grow because of increased demand for psychological services in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, mental health centers, substance abuse treatment clinics, consulting firms, and private companies." This seems to be a trend for the University of Exeter too. In a recent survey Exeter was polled in the top 50 University’s for graduate employment. Exeter was successfully awarded 79 out of 100 for employment, whereas Bristol, Plymouth and Bath all gained under the 60 mark.

Data on student employment is collected through the national DLHE survey by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Dr Rachel Baron, Careers and Employability Representative of the School of Psychology, sees that current trend and adds: "Good prospects for psychology students are also due to a kind of a unique set of skills, like excellent communication, self management and problem solving techniques as well as experience and willingness to work with all kinds of people, which students have a chance to learn during their studies whereas other graduates need to be sent to expensive training courses by employers to gain those skills."
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ARTICLE YOU HAVE READ ABOVE. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

According to the article it will be hard for psychology graduates to find a job

<table>
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<tr>
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According to the article, it should be easy for psychology graduates to find employment

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According to the article it will be hard for Exeter University graduates to find a job

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According to the article, it should be easy for Exeter University graduates to find employment

<table>
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I agree with the explanation provided in this article

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<td></td>
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</table>
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR IDENTIFICATION AS A PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT AND AS A STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

I identify with being a psychology student
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I am proud to be a psychology student
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I see myself as psychology student
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I identify with being a student of the University of Exeter
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I am proud to be a student of the University of Exeter
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I see myself as student of the University of Exeter
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE IN GENERAL. AGAIN, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

In general, people look down at unemployed people

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

Finding a job after my degree is one of the most important things for me

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

If I were to be unemployed, there would be many other important things to concentrate on

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

If I struggled to find a job I would rather not tell others that I was unemployed

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

Unemployed people should show that they are as good as employed people

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

I usually keep my CV up to date

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

The government needs more policies to address unemployment

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree  

I have a clear sense of what skills and knowledge will be required in my future job

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  

Disagree

271
People not in paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I would personally work hard to get a job

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

Unemployed people need to fight for future investments for themselves

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

Generally it is important for me to have a job after I finished studying

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

If I will be unemployed there are a lot of other activities I could deal with

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

If I were unemployed I would try to hide the fact that I don't have a job

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I am very keen to get a job in the future

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

If unemployed one should concentrate on the positive things connected to it rather than on negative things

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree
THE NEXT SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR WELL BEING AFTER YOU HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT. TRY TO THINK ABOUT YOU AS A SINGLE PERSON.

I am a person with high self esteem  
*Strongly* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly*  
*Disagree*  

I enjoy my life  
*Strongly* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly*  
*Disagree*  

I feel that I have a number of good qualities  
*Strongly* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly*  
*Disagree*  

I am satisfied with my life  
*Strongly* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly*  
*Disagree*  

I feel that I have much to be proud of  
*Strongly* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Strongly*  
*Disagree*
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE ASKING YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR WELL BEING AS PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS. TRY TO THINK ABOUT THE GROUP, IN COMPARISON TO STUDENTS FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES.

We (psychology students) are a group with high self esteem

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

We (psychology students) enjoy our life

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

We (psychology students) feel that we have a number of good qualities

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

We (psychology students) are satisfied with our life

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree

I feel that we (psychology students) have much to be proud of

Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly
Disagree Agree
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE ASKING YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR WELL BEING AS STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER. AGAIN, TRY TO THINK ABOUT THE GROUP, IN COMPARISON TO STUDENTS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES.

We (Exeter University students) are a group with high self esteem
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Disagree

We (Exeter University students) enjoy our life
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Disagree

We (Exeter University students) feel that we have a number of good qualities
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Disagree

We (Exeter University students) are satisfied with our life
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Disagree

I feel that we (Exeter University students) have much to be proud of
Strongly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Disagree

LAST SECTION: DEMOGRAPHICS
What is your age? ________
What is your gender? ________
In what year of studying are you in? ________________
Are you a psychology student? ________________
Table 5.7  Summary of the impact of social identification as psychology student, as university student, and the job prospects manipulation on variables

<table>
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<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived stigma</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction IU x S</td>
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<td><strong>Prospects university</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction S x U</td>
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<td>Interaction IP x U</td>
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</table>

Note: † p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
IP = Social identification as psychology student, IU = Social identification as university student, P = Job prospects for psychology students, U = Job prospects for university students, S = Perceived stigma
List of measures - Study 4 (Chapter 6)

**Identification with other mothers, *α = .74, 5 items**
I see myself as a mother caring for their children
I often think about my situation of being a mother caring for (a) child(ren)
In a group of other mothers caring for their child(ren) I really feel that I belong*
I identify with other mothers who are caring for their child(ren)*
Generally, I feel good as a mother caring for their children*
I am happy to be a mother caring for their child(ren)*
The fact that I am a mother caring for (a) child(ren) rarely enters my mind
I feel strong ties to other mothers caring for their child(ren).*

**Perceived stigma, *r = .64, 2 items**
In general, people look down at those who are not in paid work*
I feel that there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment*

**Job search intentions, *α = .73, 4 items**
I am keen to return to paid employment soon*
I wish to get paid work*
I have registered at several job agencies*
I submit several applications a week*
Generally, I feel it is important to have a job

**Cognitive reconstruction, *α = .69, 3 items**
My child(ren) need me at home to care for them in a proper way*
With a job my child(ren) could not develop according to my values of rearing children*
Family life suffers when a mother has a job*
Money is less important than my child(ren)'s welfare

**Life satisfaction, single item**
I enjoy my life*

**Self-esteem, single item**
I am a person with high self-esteem*

The following measures have not been used for further analysis:

**Identification with people out of paid work**
Generally, I feel good as a person that is not in paid work.
The fact that I am not in paid work rarely enters my mind.
I identify with other people that are not in paid employment.
I feel strong ties to other people that are not in paid work.
In a group of other people out of paid work I really feel that I belong.
I often think about my situation as a person that is not in paid work.
I see myself as a person out of paid work.
I am happy not being in paid employment.
**Permeability**
It would be easy for me to find a job.
It would be possible for me to find a job.

**Stability**
The situation for people out of paid work will remain stable in the future.

**Legitimacy**
I think it is fair that employed people are more successful that people out of paid work.
People in paid work are entitled to do better than people not in paid work.

**Stigma of mothers**
In general, people look down at mothers caring for their child(ren).
I feel there is a stigma attached to being a mother caring for their child(ren).

**Identity change**
Before I left work, my job had been an important part of who I was.
I have met a lot of new friends since I became a mother.
It was easy for me to leave my job and become a mother.
When I stopped being employed, I felt as if I lost a part of myself.
My life is very different now to how it was before I became a mother.
Since becoming a mother I still have contact with my old friends and colleagues.

**Support**
I feel supported by my husband/partner.
I feel supported by other mothers.
I feel supported by my (extended) family.
I feel supported by my friends and former colleagues.

**Concealment**
I could rather not tell that I am not in paid work.
I try to hide that I am not in paid work.

**Tendencies for collective action**
People out of paid work need to fight for future investments for themselves.
People out of paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better.

**Optimism**
I am optimistic about my future.

**Self efficacy**
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

**Depression**
I feel sad.
Questionnaire for Women Caring for Children

Thank you very much for your willingness to complete this questionnaire. A lot of women choose to take a time out from their jobs after having a child. This survey is interested in how you feel about being a mother, not being in paid work, and about your life in general.

This survey is made up of a series of statements. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. There are seven categories ranging from 1 = I strongly disagree to 7 = I strongly agree. Please write the number that best represents your response in the free space at the end of each statement. There are no right or wrong responses; the first answer that comes to mind is usually the best one. It should take you about 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire and all the responses you give are anonymous.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>I disagree</td>
<td>I slightly disagree</td>
<td>I am neutral</td>
<td>I slightly agree</td>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. I see myself as a mother caring for their child(ren).
2. It would be easy for me to find a job.
3. Generally, I feel good as a person that is not in paid work.
4. The fact that I am not in paid work rarely enters my mind.
5. I identify with other people that are not in paid employment.
6. I often think about my situation of being a mother caring for (a) child(ren).
7. In a group of other mothers caring for their child(ren) I really feel that I belong.
8. In general, people look down at those who are not in paid work.
9. I am keen to return to paid employment soon.
10. I identify with other mothers who are caring for their children.
11. Generally, I feel good as a mother caring for (a) child(ren).
12. I feel strong ties to other people that are not in paid work.
13. I am happy to be a mother caring for their child(ren).
14. In a group of other people out of paid work I really feel that I belong.
15. I often think about my situation as a person that is not in paid work.
16. I see myself as a person out of paid work.
17. I feel there is a stigma attached to not being in paid employment.
18. The situation for people out of paid work will remain stable in the future.
19. In general, people look down at mothers caring for their child(ren).
20. I think it is fair that employed people are more successful than people out of paid work.
21. I wish to get paid work.
22. I have registered at several job agencies.
23. People in paid work are entitled to do better than people not in paid work.
24. I feel there is a stigma attached to being a mother caring for their child(ren).
25. The fact that I am a mother caring for (a) child(ren) rarely enters my mind.
26. I feel strong ties to other mothers caring for their child(ren).
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I am happy not being in paid employment.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>It would be possible for me to find a job.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>I submit several job applications a week.</td>
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<td>I feel supported by my husband/partner.</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>My child(ren) need/s me at home to care for them in a proper way.</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>I would rather not tell that I am not in paid work.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>I enjoy my life.</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>With a job my child(ren) could not develop according to my values of rearing children.</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>I try to hide that I am not in paid work.</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>I am optimistic about my future.</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>I feel supported by other mothers.</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Family life suffers when a mother has a job.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Before I left work, my job had been an important part of who I was.</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>I have met a lot of new friends since I became a mother.</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Money is less important than my child(ren)s welfare.</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>People out of paid work need to fight for future investments for themselves.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Generally, I feel it is important to have a job.</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>I am a person with high self esteem.</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>I feel sad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>It was easy for me to leave my job and become a mother.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>When I stopped being employed, I felt as if I lost a part of myself.</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>People out of paid work should stick together and try to change things for the better.</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>I feel supported by my (extended) family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>My life is very different now to how it was before I became a mother.</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Since becoming a mother I still have contact with my old friends and colleagues.</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>I feel supported by friends and former colleagues.</td>
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</table>

**Please indicate the following information – we will not use them to identify you.**

How old are you?...........How many children do you have?............How old is it / are they?.........................
How long have you been at home now?...................How long are you intending to stay at home?.............
Do you engage in ☐ part-time work or ☐ volunteer work?

**Prize Draw – 3 x £20 Mothercare Vouchers**

Please indicate your Email address or Telephone Number. We will not use this information to identify you.
List of measures - Study 5 (Chapter 6)

**Measures related to manipulation check, *r = .67***
I agree that stay-at-home mothers should be counted in DWP statistics as Robert Green argues*
I agree with the explanation given by the Department of Work and Pensions*

**Identification with other mothers, *a = .74, 5 items***
I identify with being a mother*
Generally, I feel good as a mother*
I am happy to be a mother*
In a group of other mothers I feel that I belong*
I feel strong ties to other mothers*
I often think about my situation of being a mother
The fact that I am a mother often enters my mind

**Perceived stigma, *r = .83, 2 items***
In general, people look down at unemployed people*
I feel there is a stigma attached to being unemployed*

**Job search intentions, *a = .88, 4 items***
I wish to get paid work*
I am very keen to get a job*
I am actively looking for a job*
I regularly check job opportunities*
Generally, I feel it is important to have a job

**Cognitive reconstruction, *a = .77, 3 items***
My child(ren) need/s me at home to care for them in a proper way*
If I had a job my child(ren) could not develop according to my values of rearing children*
Family life suffers when a mother has a job*
Money is less important than my child(ren)'s welfare

**Life satisfaction, *r = 81, 2 items***
I enjoy my life*
I am satisfied with my life*

**Self-esteem, *a = .70, 3 items***
I am a person with high self-esteem*
I feel that I have a number of good qualities*
I feel that I have much to be proud of*

The following measures have not been used for further analysis:

**Perceived stigmatisation of mothers**
In general, people look down at stay-at-home mothers.
I feel there is a stigma attached to being a stay-at-home mother.

**Tendencies for collective action**
People out of paid work should fight for future investments for themselves.
The government needs more policies to address unpaid work.
Identity change
My life is very different now to how it was before I became a mother.
It was easy for me to leave my job and become a mother.
Before I left work, my job had been an important part of who I was.

Group (collective) life satisfaction
We (mothers) enjoy our life.
We are (mothers) satisfied with my life.

Group (collective) self-esteem
We (mothers) are a group with high self-esteem.
We (mothers) feel that we have a number of good qualities.
We (mothers) feel that we have much to be proud of.
Survey among stay-at-home mothers

Thank you very much for your willingness to complete this questionnaire. This survey is interested in how you feel about being a stay-at-home mother and about your life in general. We are also interested in your attitudes about unemployment and the situation of mothers in the labour market.

Participation in this study involves reading through a newspaper article and then giving your beliefs, attitudes, opinions or feelings about the issues raised. The content of the newspaper article is independent from the opinion of the examiner. Most questions can be answered simply by clicking a number that corresponds to what you think. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation. There are no trick questions and no right or wrong responses - we are only interested in your personal views. The first answer that comes to mind is usually the best one. Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not need to answer any questions that you do not wish to. As a matter of course, all the responses you give are anonymous.

If you would like further information about the study please contact Pamela Bretschneider, School of Psychology, University of Exeter (pb255@exeter.ac.uk). This study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Exeter. If you have concerns about ethical aspects of the study, please contact the chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Committee (Dr Louise Pendry; L.Pendry@exeter.ac.uk)

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this research. To thank you, there will be a prize draw of 3 x £20 Mothercare Vouchers at the end of the questionnaire.

Please click NEXT and begin with reading through an excerpt of an article recently published in the Financial Times. Take a minute to think about the situation.
Manipulation

Stay-at-home mothers should be counted in employment statistics

The Department of Work and Pensions is rethinking the way in which employment statistics are calculated. Robert Green from DWP argues: “When it comes to employment statistics we can see that stay-at-home mothers are not counted. However, as employment statistics are highly underestimated, I would argue that they should be counted. At the moment there are 2 million full-time mothers in the UK compared to 28 million people in any employment. Also, if we compare the day to day experience of stay-at-home mothers with those of employed people we can conclude that the situation of a typical stay-at-home mother is very similar to someone who is employed. Therefore, including stay-at-home mothers in employment statistics would give a more precise picture of work which is done in the UK.”

Stay-at-home mothers should be counted in unemployment statistics

The Department of Work and Pensions is rethinking the way in which unemployment statistics are calculated. Robert Green from DWP argues: “When it comes to unemployment statistics we can see that stay-at-home mothers are not counted. However, as unemployment statistics are highly underestimated, I would argue that they should be counted. At the moment there are 2 million full-time mothers in the UK compared to 2.5 million unemployed people. Also, if we compare the day to day experience of stay-at-home mothers with those of unemployed people we can conclude that the situation of a typical stay-at-home mother is very similar to someone who is unemployed. Therefore, including mothers in unemployment statistics would give a more precise picture of the UK’s labour market situation.”
PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE ARTICLE YOU HAVE READ ABOVE.

IN A FEW WORDS PLEASE SUMMARISE WHAT ROBERT GREEN ARGUES.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE ARTICLE THAT YOU HAVE JUST READ, HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN READING IT? BELOW IS A LIST OF EMOTIONS THAT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE FELT. PLEASE INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU FELT EACH OF THEM.

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<th>Not at all</th>
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PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: THERE ARE SEVEN CATEGORIES RANGING FROM 1 = I STRONGLY DISAGREE TO 7 = I STRONGLY AGREE.

I agree that stay-at-home mothers should be counted in DWP statistics as Robert Green argues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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I agree with the explanation given by the Department of Work and Pensions

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<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING A MOTHER. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

I identify with being a mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Generally, I feel good as a mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I am happy to be a mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In a group of other mothers I feel that I belong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I feel strong ties to other mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I often think about my situation of being a mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The fact that I am a mother often enters my mind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT AND MOTHERHOOD. AGAIN, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

In general, people look down at stay-at-home mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I feel there is a stigma attached to being a stay-at-home mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In general, people look down at unemployed people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I feel there is a stigma attached to being unemployed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

THE NEXT SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR ATTITUDES WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR SITUATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET. AGAIN, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

I wish to get paid work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I am very keen to get a job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I am actively looking for a job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I regularly check job opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Generally, I feel it is important to have a job
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren) need/s me at home to care for them in a proper way</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had a job my child(ren) could not develop according to my values of rearing children</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life suffers when a mother has a job</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money is less important than my child(ren)’s welfare</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People out of paid work should fight for future investments for themselves</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government needs more policies to address unpaid work</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE INTERESTED IN ANY CHANGES YOU MIGHT HAVE EXPERIENCED AFTER THE BIRTH OF YOUR FIRST CHILD. AGAIN, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU DISAGREE OR AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

My life is very different now to how it was before I became a mother

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

It was easy for me to leave my job and become a mother

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Before I left work, my job had been an important part of who I was

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

THE NEXT SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR WELL BEING IN GENERAL.

I am a person with high self esteem

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I enjoy my life

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I feel that I have a number of good qualities

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I am satisfied with my life

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I feel that I have much to be proud of

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
IN THIS SECTION WE ARE ASKING YOU TO THINK ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF MOTHERS AS A GROUP. TRY TO THINK ABOUT THE GROUP OF MOTHERS IN COMPARISON TO OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE, E.G., WOMEN WITHOUT CHILDREN.

We (mothers) are a group with high self esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</table>

We (mothers) enjoy our life

<table>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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</table>

We (mothers) feel that we have a number of good qualities

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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
</table>

We (mothers) are satisfied with our life

<table>
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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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We feel that we (mothers) have much to be proud of

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<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

PLEASE INDICATE THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION – WE WILL NOT USE THEM TO IDENTIFY YOU.

How old are you?.......... How many children do you have?............. How old is it / are they?.......................... Are you engaging in volunteer work (e.g., for charities)? □ Yes □ No If yes, approximately, how many hours a week?..........

Are you in any paid employment? □ Yes □ No If yes, how many hours a week are you in paid employment? ................

Are you self-employed? □ Yes □ No If yes, how many hours a week are you working? ................

Are you in any further education □ Yes □ No If yes, □ full time or □ part time

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