



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

**They Think I'm A Scrounger:**

A Social-Psychological Examination of the effects of  
Stigmatisation in Unemployment

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science of  
the London School of Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, London, September 2020

*For my unborn child.*

*For my wife.*

*For those who came before, and those that will come after.*

## **Declaration**

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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## **Statement of co-authored work**

I confirm that Chapter Four was jointly co-authored with Dr Ilka Gleibs and Professor Sandra Jovchelovitch, I contributed 80% of this work.

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I confirm that Chapter Six was jointly co-authored with Dr Ilka Gleibs and Dr Simon Howard, I contributed 80% of this work.

## **Abstract**

Unemployment is an under-researched category in social psychology. Where unemployment has been studied, research often invokes individual-level antecedents and consequences of unemployment. Therefore, societal and social influences on the experience of unemployment require further exploration. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature on unemployment by taking a social-psychological approach to the study of unemployment. In particular, focusing on how unemployed people come to be stigmatised and the effects of this stigmatisation on self and other. The thesis shows how stigmatisation manifests in public discourse and affects social identification, cognitive performance and the evaluations of others. The thesis does this by using a triangulated mixed-methods approach across seven studies in three empirical chapters, which draw upon social representations theory, social identity theory, stereotype threat and the stereotype content model. The results of these studies show that negative discourses in the public sphere have risen over the last two decades. At the same time, public attitudes towards unemployed people have become harsher. Such societally held discourse affect how unemployed people identify with unemployment and perceive that they are identified, with significant ramifications for self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance. In addition, societally held representations of the unemployed affect how they are evaluated by others, negatively impacting their employment prospects. The thesis draws together several theories in social psychology to provide a more nuanced explanation of the effects of stigmatisation in permeable social groups. In particular, the thesis suggests a dialogical, rather than linear, approach to the social psychology of stigmatisation.

## **Acknowledgements**

Four years is a long time. Since I started this research, I have begun to grow grey hairs. I have also gotten married and have a child on the way. I have changed a lot and developed in ways that were not imaginable in my youth, early adulthood or even at the start of the PhD. A PhD is often seen as an individual work, but it would not have been possible without the help, support and encouragement of a range of people.

First, I must express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Ilka Gleibs, who took a chance on this project and me. Thank you for your support. From start to finish, you believed in the potential of this work, even when I was floundering. Thank you also for being a role model and standing up for what is right, even when it was unpopular or dangerous to do so.

I am indebted to Sandra Jovchelovitch for her support and supervision since I was a bewildered MSc student in social and cultural psychology. My thinking and understanding of social psychology have been greatly influenced by Sandra and her work, and I will always be grateful for her guidance as an academic and as a person.

I would also like to thank Alex Gillespie, who has influenced and supported my work and my time as a PhD student. I also owe thanks to Michael Muthukrishna, whose helpful comments early in my PhD journey forced me to learn R.

This thesis would not have been possible without my academic peers; Amena, Andy, Sandra, Nihan, Mark, Morgan, Maria-Cecilia, Geetha and Brett – you have all influenced this work in so many ways but also offered friendship, support and advice in times, and in ways, that only you could. Your openness has been invaluable, and I have learnt so much from you all, and I hope I will continue to do so. I must also thank my other PhD colleagues, Maxi, Sharon, Kash, Martin, Lars, Ryu, Alex, Laura, Sara, Luc, Lisa and Katherine for making LSE an enjoyable, thought-provoking, and often fun, place to be.

I must also thank my wife, Zoe, for being there throughout my trials and tribulations as a PhD student and for her love and kindness. This achievement is as much hers as it is mine. Through the years she has read every word I have ever written, but also

provided a welcome respite from theory and method, and reminds me always, that there are more important things in life.

To all my fam from the ends, you know what it is already.

I do not thank the coronavirus pandemic, without which, I would have finished this PhD thesis six months earlier.

Finally, I would like to show my appreciation for Professor Colin Leach and Dr Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington for agreeing to examine this thesis and engaging with this work.

Through my years as a PhD student, I would often come into the office and jokingly ask my colleagues if they had ‘finished their PhD yet’. Finally, I can answer my own question in the affirmative.

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# **Part I: Context, Theory and Method**

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1. Inspiration for the research

All British citizens are entitled to claim unemployment benefits when they are out-of-work. Such a system aims to both sustain people financially and provide support for them to get into employment. Accordingly, claiming unemployment benefits should, arguably, reduce psychological distress given that the state offers financial and employment support. Nevertheless, research has shown that there is a strong link between claiming current UK social security benefits, and increased psychological ill-health (Craig & Katikireddi, 2012; Wickham et al., 2020).

In one illustrative case, Martin Hadfield, a 20-year-old gardener in the prime of his life, after being made redundant in 2014, applied for approximately 40 jobs in three months. These applications were unsuccessful. He made a reasonable decision, to attend his local JobCentre Plus (JCP), to both help him find work and support himself financially. Hours after his first JCP appointment, Martin hanged himself (Smith, 2014). In explaining the tragic events leading up to Martin's suicide, his stepfather said:

“He got nothing off the Government and was *proud not to*. He *hated the idea of going to the jobcentre* because he had heard what so many others his age had said. Many people *go in with a sense of self-worth* – they really do want a job – *but come out feeling demoralised and put down.*” (emphasis added; Byrne, 2014)

Martin's suicide is explained first by an unwillingness to be defined as unemployed (“hated the idea of going to the jobcentre”) and how once categorised as unemployed, through his attendance at a job centre, his self-worth diminished. The question then arises; how does being categorised as part of a stigmatised group affect one's sense of self?

Having been unemployed myself, I recognise that the adverse effects of unemployment that I experienced were not just about the fact that I was not in a job but also about how others might judge me. I was concerned about being seen as worthless or a ‘scrounger’ in the eyes of others (Patrick, 2016). Social interactions become much more difficult when you know that people will ask ‘what do you do

for a living?’ and the answer is unlikely to engender any goodwill. This is because unemployed people are one of the most stigmatised groups in western society (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). That stigmatisation has effects on their lives physically and psychologically (Reeves, Basu, McKee, Marmot, & Stuckler, 2013; Wanberg, 2012). These effects have real consequences for the unemployed and may have come together in Martin’s decision to end his life rather than claim his entitlement to job seekers allowance (JSA).

My experiences, and the experiences of others, inspired a variety of questions about the social-psychological nature of stigmatised identities. How does a group come to be stigmatised in the eyes of others? How does knowing a group we belong to is stigmatised affect our sense of self? Does this stigmatisation affect how we are seen and evaluated by others? These questions have guided this thesis and the empirical work within. In doing so, the thesis speaks to the role of others in identity processes. In particular, the role of others where identities are both stigmatised and permeable. Such groups and these processes are underexplored in the literature to date. However, there is a growing focus on the importance of others in the way that identity affects both the inner world of thoughts and feelings but also everyday interaction and evaluation (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011).

Thus, the thesis draws out three implications of the role others play in identity processes. First, the meanings associated with group membership are necessarily enacted through self-other relations. Who unemployed people are is as much about what they think as it is about what others say about them. Second, whether or not one is a member of a group, is in part, a question of perspective, in some cases, others may see us as part of a group *more so* than we do ourselves. Finally, group memberships can, and are, often seen as instructive when making evaluations. Therefore, where group memberships are stigmatised, less favourable evaluations can follow regardless of actual performance or aptitude.

In the first instance, to explore these issues, I will provide an overview of the context in which the research takes place. In doing so, I provide a historical exposition of how unemployment has been understood in the UK. Followed by an overview of the welfare state as it relates to unemployment. Next, I look towards the future of employment generally, showing that it is likely that unemployment (and

underemployment) will increase in the next decades. With this information in hand, I give a rationale for the research drawing on previous conceptual and empirical work on experiences of unemployed people and highlight the specific research questions addressed by the thesis.

## **1.2. A Short History of Poverty and Welfare Provision in Britain**

Several books have been dedicated to explicating the history of welfare policy in Britain (e.g. Hill, 1993; Hills, 2017; Lowe, 1999). In this thesis, I cannot do justice to this sprawling literature; neither will I attempt to. Still, it is crucial to draw the reader to some key facts, particularly how various legislation can inform our understanding of how unemployed people in Britain are understood ontologically. In particular, how the classification and moral virtues of each class of poor people have been articulated over the last few hundred years.

Breakwell (1986), for instance, traces the development of ideas of the unemployed as far back as 1349, to the aftermath of the Black Death. At that time, Breakwell argues, there was a differentiation between ‘deserving poor’ and ‘sturdy beggar’ in legislation. The former was to receive aid while the latter was “shamed and starved back into gainful employment” (p. 56). This idea of classifying the unemployed has taken on many manifestations usually differentiating between moral and immoral modes of unemployment. In a wide-ranging exposition of this history, Golding and Middleton (1982) show in various legislation that the poor are differentiated as ‘God’s Poor and the Devil’s Poor’, ‘the Impotent and the Thriftless’, ‘the Necessary and the Voluntarily Indigent’, ‘the Independent Labourer and the Pauper’. Various other terms were used over the centuries. Their general meaning, however, seems to remain consistent.

People in poverty are ontologically bifurcated into two classes which are separated by their morality. These are most commonly referred to as the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor. Unemployed but non-disabled citizens were differentiated from deserving poor by their lack of morality (Golding & Middleton, 1982). To put it plainly, the understanding in the past (and possibly today) seemed to be that unemployment was a matter of both moral and psychological failing. As such, the essence of classification was to determine who was morally problematic and differentiate them from the morally upstanding. This principle of moral

differentiation is made explicit in the New Poor Law of 1834. As one of its chief architects put it:

“I shall consider how far a well-framed poor-law may promote the moral as well as the material welfare of the labouring classes, and ill-administered poor-law may produce moral, intellectual, and physical degradation” (Senior, 1852, p. 12 quoted in Fujimura, 2018, p 53)

Thus, in the UK, and England especially, unemployed people have long been considered an immoral class. This immorality is illustrated through two fundamental failings, indolence (i.e. laziness), and inability to be abstinent (i.e. to forego daily pleasures for long term gains). These are buttressed by fears of criminality, drug and alcohol abuse and other moral shortcomings (Golding & Middleton, 1982).

The consequences of the assumed morality of different ‘classes’ of unemployed people have led to a variety of institutional behaviours themed around ‘correcting’ their perceived vices. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, this would have included whipping and imprisonment, both at home and abroad. Many unemployed people were sent to penal colonies in North America and Australia, for instance (Golding & Middleton, 1982). In the New Poor Law, the principle of ‘less eligibility’ sought to make the conditions in workhouses (places of work and residence where unemployed, and other people, were sent if they could not sustain themselves) more severe, worse paid and more degrading than employment (Fujimura, 2018). It should be noted that ‘workhouses’ were prison-like in their conditions and the unemployed were made to work for food and housing though they could leave if they wished. Ultimately, this ontology of unemployment provided instruction as to the kind of support unemployed people should receive. Cruelty, imprisonment, drudgery, and shame have often been reserved for the so-called ‘undeserving poor’.

Overall, historically there has been a proclivity for classifying different groups of poor people. In particular, differentiating between those who were not able to work and those who were able (physically), but did not work. The latter group was seen as an immoral ‘underclass’, and their immorality justified various forms of state intervention aimed at correcting their moral shortcomings as well as providing means of subsistence via payments-in-kind. The modern welfare state carries over some of the norms developed through this time but also shows some differences.

### 1.3. The Contemporary Welfare State

The modern welfare state in the United Kingdom was established following the 1942 publication of the Beveridge Report. It was principally designed to provide a “universal safety net, which offered comprehensive rights to financial entitlements in times of need” (Dwyer & Wright, 2014). Currently, welfare provision includes, among other things, pensions for the elderly, financial support for those on low wages, unemployed people, disabled people and free access to health care.

Concerning unemployment specifically, the UK has recently moved to a new system known as Universal Credit (UC). It aims to combine an array of previously existing benefits into one (‘universal’) welfare payment. However, it also changes some rules associated with claiming these benefits by increasing the conditions under which these they can be withdrawn.

For our purposes, it is useful to concentrate on the elements of UC available to unemployed persons. A single unemployed person claiming UC receives between £251.77 - £317.82 per month depending on their age<sup>1</sup>. Couples can receive up to £498.89. Further assistance for housing costs and children can be sought, increasing the amount of benefit someone receives. However, a recently introduced ‘benefits cap’ limits the total amount that individuals and families can obtain. At the time of writing the cap sits at £20,000 for families and £13,400 for single claimants outside London. In London, the cap is £23,000 and £15,410, respectively.

To contextualise these figures, the use of food banks in the UK has increased by 73% over the last five years<sup>2</sup>, and 1.6 million parcels were given out in 2018-2019. 37% of foodbank referrals were due to changes/delays in receiving benefits, that is – reduced and delayed benefit payments as the result of the benefit cap and a five-week wait for the first payment. A further 33% were due to income, not covering living costs<sup>3</sup> because of a reduction in welfare payments. Thus, as with the New Poor Law principle of ‘less eligibility’, UC seems to be intended to make receiving welfare worse paid and more degrading than the previous benefits system.

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<sup>1</sup> Over 25s receive the higher rate while under 25s the lower rate.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/> (accessed 14/03/2020)

<sup>3</sup> Note, foodbank use is by referral only



Additionally, it should be noted that unemployed people must comply with various conditions to receive UC. The everyday reality of unemployment in the UK requires regular visits to a JobCentre Plus (JCP). The ‘claimant commitment’ regulates the relationship between JCP and the individual. It is a contract signed between the individual and the state that sets out the conditions under which benefits can be received.

These commitments are tailored to the individual claimant but what is universal, is the possibility of sanction. In the example provided (appendix 1) the claimant is directed to “apply for vacancies I’m told to apply for by my adviser” and must agree that they are available to “attend a job interview immediately”. The consequence of not complying with these, and other regulations set out is that; “If, without good reason, I don’t do all these things, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 3 years”. This part of the contract means that the person will be left with £0 ‘disposable’ income (£10.20 per day represents the unemployment element of UC).

Conditionality can also be imposed around attendance at scheduled employment support workshops such as CV (resume) building and interview skills. As well as “interventions intended to modify attitudes, beliefs and personality, notably through the imposition of positive affect” (Friedli & Stearn, 2015, p. 40). As Dwyer and Wright put it, “intensified, personalised and extended conditionality is central to how UC will operate and indeed underpins the government’s wider welfare reform agenda” (2014, p. 28).

Conditionality concerns itself with two areas. Firstly, action-orientated conditionality focused on job-seeking activity. For example, spending a predetermined number of hours applying/searching for jobs and attending interviews. Second, psychological conditionality or psycho-compulsion which Friedli and Stearn (2015) define as “the imposition of psychological explanations for unemployment, together with mandatory activities intended to modify beliefs, attitude, disposition or personality” (p. 42). These psychological explanations are often delivered through discourse around ‘job readiness’. As such, we can see parallels between historical and modern welfare provision through their focus on ‘correcting’ the behaviours of the unemployed.

As a result of this increased conditionality, it has been argued that the foundational principle of universal access to welfare for all citizens has been eroded over time. The current welfare system could be better described as a system of conditional welfare rights predicated on citizenship responsibilities (Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Wright, 2014; Fletcher, Flint, Batty, & McNeil, 2016; Friedli & Stearn, 2015; Grover, 2012). As such, welfare provision can be withdrawn under an ever-increasing number of circumstances echoing previous moral panics about ‘welfare cheats’ (Golding & Middleton, 1982).

The current welfare system then amounts to a system of control over the actions, both physical and psychological, of people who are not engaged in paid employment. The notion that unemployed people exhibit behaviours which require correction is suggestive of their stigmatisation. This context has psychological consequences for individuals and implies a variety of questions around how this stigmatisation manifests in society at large. Moreover, it is useful to understand what ramifications this will have as we move towards a future where jobs may become harder to find and maintain when technology is both cheaper and more effective than human labour.

#### **1.4. Automation and the Future of Work**

In a much-cited paper, Frey and Osborne (2017) state that the rapid development of machine learning, mobile robotics and big data are likely to mean that in the next decade or two 47% of US jobs are at high risk of automation. A further 19% are at medium risk. Many of the jobs which are at the highest risk of automation are low-skilled, low paid and in some cases complementary to high wage jobs. For instance, legal research has a high likelihood of automation (e.g. paralegals, court clerks). However, lawyers are at low risk, in part due to the social interaction and creativity required (C. B. Frey & Osborne, 2017). Further research has suggested that for each industrial robot, human employment is reduced by 3.3 workers (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2019).

Economists hotly debate the ramifications of these changes (and even its veracity); however, the pace of automation will likely outstrip our ability to find new uses for human labour at some point in the next decades. As such, we can estimate at the very least, that unemployment is likely to become an issue of vast societal

importance in the coming decades. We are already witnessing changes in the structure and nature of employment. Many people now work in the ‘gig’ economy. Gig workers are often seen as independent contractors where their employment status fluctuates between unemployed, underemployed, and employed. If more people are to become unemployed or move rapidly between employment statuses, is the current welfare system along with its associated psychological effects fit for purpose? The current coronavirus pandemic, and its impact on unemployment, provides a window to understanding the potential effectiveness of welfare provision in an economy with sustained high rates of unemployment.

The thesis explores these psychological effects in detail and offers inroads to developing welfare systems that are oriented to the human experience of unemployment. To begin this task, it is important to familiarise the reader to the existing psychological literature on unemployment before moving to the focus and research questions of the thesis itself.

### **1.5. The Psychological Effects of Unemployment**

Several meta-analyses and narrative reviews show the harmful effects of unemployment on mental health (Hanisch, 1999; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). McKee-Ryan et al. (2005), showed across 104 empirical studies that unemployment was associated with lower physical and psychological well-being compared with employed people. A more recent meta-analysis of 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies by Paul and Moser (2009), showed that unemployed people were more psychologically distressed than employed people, with an average overall effect of  $d = 0.51$ . In the UK, recent research has shown that the move to UC has increased psychological ill-health in recipients compared to the previous system (Wickham et al., 2020). The question then becomes how we account for the psychological distress that people experience when they are unemployed. We now turn our attention to these psychological explanations.

Marie Jahoda’s (1982) research on employment and unemployment sets the foundation for social psychological work in this area, especially concerning the psychological well-being of the unemployed (Warr, 2007). Jahoda sets out five key aspects of the experience of unemployment. These are: “the experience of time, the

reduction of social contacts, the lack of participation in collective purposes, the absence of an acceptable status and its consequences for personal identity, absence of regular activity” (Jahoda, 1982, p. 39). These characteristics of the experience of unemployment are described as a latent benefit model (Warr, 2007), i.e. it provides a theoretical model of the latent (as opposed to manifest) benefits of work.

In paid work, it is argued, the individual is given a purposeful structure to their daily lives, social capital is expanded through new interpersonal relationships and daily, meaningful, interdependent social interaction towards common goals. These are said to be fundamental human needs. Moreover, employment provides a context for positive social identity and status (Jahoda, 1982). More recent work which demonstrates various adverse effects of unemployment, such as physical ailments, depression and anxiety (Wanberg, 2012) can, therefore, be interpreted as arising from the negation of these human needs.

Jahoda’s work has been influential and led to numerous empirical investigations on the specific effects of various latent benefits of employment (e.g. Creed & Macintyre, 2001; Paul & Batinic, 2009; Paul, Geithner, & Moser, 2007; Waters & Moore, 2002). For example, Creed and Macintyre (2001) found that these latent benefits of employment were associated with well-being and that social status was most important to well-being. This study also considered the manifest benefits of employment (financial) and showed empirically that latent and manifest benefits taken together account for 52% of the variance in psychological well-being.

In a representative German sample, it was found that employed people have greater access to the first four latent benefits of employment than those who are not working (e.g. students); thus providing some evidence for Jahoda’s claim that employment is the best provider of these needs. However, on the status dimension, those who are not working (but are not unemployed) did not report less access to social status (Paul & Batinic, 2009). The authors argue that this “may be a specific characteristic of the unemployment situation” (p. 58).

An extension of Jahoda’s work of particular interest is the Vitamin Model (Warr, 2007). The model elaborates the five latent benefits of employment into nine and conceptualises them as affordances in the environment. These can come from outside of employment, but as with Jahoda, paid work is seen as offering ample

opportunity to experience many of these together. The affordances in the ‘Vitamin Model’ are then: the opportunity for personal control, the opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, contact with others, availability of money, physical security and valued social status (Warr, 2007). Unemployed people are argued to have limited access to all nine. The use of the Vitamin analogy indicates that, like vitamins, there is a relationship between increases in affordances and increases in well-being. However, these increases are not exponential, such that ever-increasing amounts of varied activity, for example, are associated with ever-increasing happiness (Warr, 2007).

Jahoda’s work, however, is not without critique. For instance, the way in which Jahoda and others characterise paid work as an essential characteristic of human life has come under scrutiny. Paid work is conceptualised as inherently normative, thereby making unemployment problematic at the outset. Whilst simultaneously not considering the effects of poverty, and the role of work in attaining the means of subsistence in the industrialised world.

As Cole (2007) puts it, the work of Jahoda is “undermined by its dependence on a normative assumption of the supra-economic importance of paid work” (p. 1135). Additionally, Jahoda and others make a moralistic judgement over the unemployed by characterising their out of work activities as ‘doing nothing’ when compared to in-work activity. Given that paid employment is the normative daily activity for industrialised countries, anything that is not employment (or not built around the spatial-temporal framework of employment) is seen as not having psychological or social value. Therefore, the example of unemployed people hanging around on street corners given by Jahoda is described as ‘aimlessness’, whereas Cole (2007) notes that this street corner activity, “in constituting a collective purpose – sociability as a means of dealing with the undeniably grim experience of unemployment – is obliterated by a discourse that can see collective purpose only through paid work.” (p. 1139).

Given these critiques, it is practical to set out some differences between the approach presented in this thesis and the approach of other social psychologists exploring unemployment. First, it is useful to spell out the difference between a job and work. A job is a legal contract between an employer and an employee which determines the hours, remuneration and holiday entitlements, among other things.

Work is a much broader term which can include a job but also other forms of work which do not feature a contractual agreement to sell labour. For example, volunteer work and care work within a family context is mostly unpaid and rarely seen as a ‘job’ in the same way as wage labour (Criado-Perez, 2019). Unemployment then is a state of not having a ‘job’ rather than not having ‘work’.

In light of this, wage labour is firstly a means of subsistence, which may provide one or more of the ‘needs’ that are put forward by Jahoda (1982) and Warr (2007), but these needs can be met in other ways and are not unique or particular to jobs, except that they may be the most obvious way all needs can be experienced at once. For example, in modern western societies where inequality is increasing, some very wealthy people do not have jobs in ways which are recognisable to the average person. However, there is no focus on the negative impact of unemployment on elites in terms of the five needs set out in Jahoda’s latent benefit model.

It is easy to imagine, that if these five needs are universal, then they can be met through financial and social means as well as through other kinds of work, for example, by making social contacts through existing social capital, having acceptable status as a function of wealth and being involved in communal activities through other kinds of non-wage labour group membership. These activities, however, require capital (social or economic) which unemployed welfare recipients may not have.

In general, Jahoda and Warr focus on the psychological content of jobs, i.e. the latent benefits/‘vitamins’ associated with having a job. This approach shows what is potentially lost in unemployment and broadly this is how it has been conceptualised, i.e. ‘lack of time structure, social contact’ etc. Nevertheless, it also may provide a starting point for how to build ‘structured activity’ to compensate for the risks of being without a contract. However, in effect, they do not directly study unemployment, but the absence of a job, as such unemployment is not conceptualised as a category *per se* but the negation of employment.

Such an approach lacks in its exploration of the social, i.e. how other people’s ideas about unemployed people create the unemployed persons lived reality. The meta-analyses explored earlier, show that the correlates of well-being during unemployment used in the various studies are often intrinsic to the individual such as ‘cognitive appraisal’, ‘coping strategies’ and ‘work-role centrality’ (McKee-Ryan et

al., 2005). There is much less literature, however that accounts for the social knowledge attached to unemployment, i.e. the stigmatised nature of the social category. How others influence the experience of unemployment, becomes crucial once we consider, that to be unemployed, is a social category unto itself — as exemplified through the historical representations discussed earlier. These representations have an impact on what it means to be an unemployed person in the UK, regardless of the lack of latent benefits or ‘vitamins’.

Hence, the problem of the social image of unemployment remains. As such, we could argue that the previous work has conceptualised unemployment as an individual experience such that not working reduces individual well-being in various ways. Instead, this thesis will argue that being without a job is only one element in the construction of this experience. Other people’s opinions about those that do not have jobs, government policy and rhetoric as well as mass media are also essential elements in defining the experiences of unemployed people.

In empirically exploring these issues, this thesis uses a pragmatic approach with elements of social constructionist epistemology. Theoretically, I assume that the experience of unemployment is constructed in negotiation between the individual, social groups, and the wider society, and therefore we cannot reduce experiences of unemployment only to the lack of a job. Having a job is important as it relates to subsistence, but categorisation by others and its impact on how individuals see themselves is also important and can be explored through a myriad of methods. Therefore, the relationship between self and other will be central, given that both the well-being and unemployment literature minimises the impact of other social actors and the broader societal environment in explaining the experiences of unemployed people.

This approach leads to various questions as yet unexplored in the extant literature. In particular, what is the nature of the social environment in which being unemployed is enacted? How does this environment affect processes of identity, and how does that environment inhibit or enable unemployed people to reach their own goals of meaningful employment? In the next section, we expand on these points and set out the research questions of the thesis.

## **1.6. The Research Focus: Towards a Social Psychological Understanding of Unemployment in Britain**

Unemployment is an under-research category in social psychological literature. Where unemployment has been studied, it has been done from a deficit perspective as the negation of employment. Thus, unemployed people's needs are not met because they do not partake in paid work, other approaches which quantify the decrements in well-being when in unemployment fail to consider variables which are extrinsic to the individual. Therefore, the focus of this research is to explore unemployment as a social category in and of itself.

Given what has been discussed so far, the time seems ripe, due to the recent changes to the welfare state and upcoming challenges related to the future of work for an investigation of the social-psychological effects of unemployment. This investigation is necessary because the literature on unemployment rarely considers social psychological processes of meaning-making, group membership and social identification in their analysis. Thus, the focus of this thesis is to bring to bear contemporary social psychological theory and methods on a topic of broad social importance – the psychological effects of unemployment in the modern welfare state. Notably, the thesis proposes to incorporate different theoretical traditions and methods to illuminate how stigma is constructed in the public sphere (political and media discourses) and in turn, affects an individual's sense of themselves and how they are seen and evaluated by others.

Studying unemployment in this way provides inroads to understanding several theoretical issues. For instance, in relation to social identity research, unemployment seems to be both a stigmatised and a permeable category. The vast majority of social identity literature on stigmatised groups focuses on impermeable categories such as race and gender. Thus, studying unemployment can provide new insights as to the effects of being categorised into a group which is both stigmatised and permeable offering theoretical development.

The arguments outlined thus far lead to the following overarching research questions:

1. How does a group come to be stigmatised in the eyes of others?



2. How does knowing a group we belong to is stigmatised affect our sense of self?
3. Does this stigmatisation affect how we are seen and evaluated by others?

### **1.7. Overview of thesis**

The thesis is set out to answer these research questions in the following way. First, the theoretical paradigm is elucidated in chapter two, drawing heavily on social representations theory (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Moscovici, 1988) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), whilst making linkages to the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007) and stereotype threat (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) literatures. In chapter three, the overall methodological approach of the thesis is explained with a focus on the practical use of mixed methods and triangulation (Bryman, 2006; Flick, 1992; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Munafò & Davey Smith, 2018). Together these chapters constitute part I of the thesis, focusing on the context, theory, and methodology.

In part II, three empirical chapters are presented, which taken together answer the research questions set out above. In the first paper, we look longitudinally at the social representations associated with unemployed people in the UK. We show how the prevalence of different representations correlates with public attitudes towards unemployed people.

In the second empirical chapter, we look at the effects this context has on identification and meta-identification. In turn, showing that differences between the extent one sees themselves as an unemployed person (identification) and the extent they think others see them as unemployed (meta-identification) can have effects on cognitive performance.

Finally, we show in the third empirical chapter, that the representations associated with unemployed people do affect not only unemployed people themselves but also other actors in the public sphere, including those with power over hiring. In two experiments, we show that differences between employed and unemployed candidates in their likelihood to be interviewed or hired are mediated by perceived competence.

To conclude, in part III, the theoretical, methodological and empirical ramifications of these findings for our understanding of how stigma operates both on the stigmatised and those perceiving them is discussed. Some ways of combining social representations, social identity, stereotype threat and stereotype content are discussed for a more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena — the approach recognises societal processes of knowledge production and their behavioural outcomes in context. Concluding remarks follow which speak to the possible policy ramifications of the thesis.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

As described in the introduction, it appears that unemployed people are particularly stigmatised in the United Kingdom (and beyond; Norlander, Ho, Shih, Walters, & Pittinsky, 2020; Schofield, Haslam, & Butterworth, 2019). Such stigmatisation is likely to have significant effects on the lives of those who are categorised as unemployed to the extent that their potential is limited, which in turn, perpetuates inequality (Goffman, 1963). Hence, to effectively overcome societal issues such as discrimination, inequality, and stigmatisation robust social psychological insights must be brought to bear which take account of both the broader social context and its effects on the behaviour of individuals. This thesis develops such an approach, and in doing so, makes a contribution to social psychology in this direction.

Specifically, unemployment is a complex social phenomenon that can be understood from different perspectives. On the one hand, unemployment figures are used to describe the economic characteristics of a society statically; thus we can compare nations on the ‘level of unemployment’ or the features of the ‘labour market’. Nevertheless, when we look beyond the numbers; it is clear that we attach meanings to those who are excluded from the job market, especially if they take up welfare benefits. We attach meaning to the label ‘unemployed’, and with that, we create a peculiar kind of social identity that is both stigmatised and permeable. Considering this, ‘being unemployed’ is therefore different from other stigmatised identities which are widely studied in social psychology, namely gender and race, which describe relatively impermeable social categories. Permeable and stigmatised social groups have rarely been studied in social psychology, and this thesis explores how the combination of both *permeability* and *stigmatisation* affects the social world of unemployed people.

Another feature of unemployment is that it is *concealable* in many instances and *yet observable by others in specific contexts*, especially ones where identification as unemployed may affect one’s performance and the evaluations of others (i.e. at a job interview). Consequently, through this review of relevant social psychological literature, how we might understand the complexity of this social phenomenon,

particularly concerning stigmatisation, capturing both the macro-level societal processes and their influence on individual behaviour in context is explored.

More concretely, the literature review will argue that the meanings that we attach to social groups affect the ways that group membership is experienced. This includes both how group members see themselves and how they think others see them. Importantly, how group members think others see them can affect behaviour, including performance in evaluative situations. Critically, those meanings attached to social identities also affect the way others evaluate group members. Thus, the effects of stigmatisation are not only upon the individual but also on those evaluating them. Connecting these macro meaning-making processes and micro individual-level behaviour will provide a fuller picture of the effects of stigmatisation on members of social groups.

To develop this argument, the literature review sets the theoretical underpinnings of the PhD as a whole. Specifically, it shows that Social Representations Theory (SRT) can account for the societal meaning-making processes which determine our (stigmatising) representations of who unemployed people are and what unemployed people do. More generally, social representations can account for the content of social identities. As a result, Social Representations Theory and Social Identity Theory are fundamentally connected and complementary. However, Social Identity Theory provides important insights about the processes related to, and consequences of, occupying a stigmatised social category, including those categories which are permeable.

In moving from these societal and intergroup processes to individual behaviour, the review explores how both the Stereotype Content Model and Stereotype Threat complement this theoretical perspective, focusing in particular on how they can account for the individual behaviours of both stigmatised individuals and those perceiving them, in evaluative situations. Thus, they allow us to understand better the individual effects of societally produced stigmatisation.

In the final step, the overall approach taken in this thesis and how each empirical chapter draws on the theoretical perspective put forward is summarised. Specifically, in chapter four, social representations of unemployed people in the UK are explored longitudinally along with their relation to public attitudes. In chapter

five, social identification and meta-identification in unemployment are examined showing how meta-identification affects cognitive performance (i.e. elicits stereotype threat) above and beyond identification. Finally, in chapter six, the mechanisms by which unemployed candidates are evaluated differently in recruitment practices is empirically demonstrated.

## **2.2. Social Representations Theory**

Social representations theory (SRT, Moscovici, 2008/1976) provides the overarching framework of this thesis. SRT traces the ways in which knowledge is mutually constituted between self and other in modern societies. This intersubjectively developed social knowledge underpins social reality. Social representations are world-making assumptions that define how we interact with the world around us (Elcherath et al., 2011). Importantly, SRT defines how social knowledge, including our knowledge of social groups, develops. Ultimately, that includes the stigmatising ideas associated with various groups, including unemployed people. Social representations have been defined as:

“systems of values, ideas and practices with a two-fold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history” (Moscovici, 1973, p. xiii)

Social representations are produced through processes of objectification and anchoring (Moscovici, 2000a). Anchoring is the process of naming or classifying objects. This process creates prototypical examples to which new objects are compared. Moscovici (2000b), argues that anchoring functions to confine objects to a set of behaviours or characteristics which distinguishes them from other things and embeds them in pre-existing knowledge frameworks. Unemployed people are often framed in public discourse using adjectives such as feckless and lazy (Shildrick, MacDonald, & Furlong, 2014). Thus, unemployed people are confined to a stock of well-known pre-existing meanings. Anchoring unemployed people in this way draws

on existing social knowledge that informs us about their likely behaviours, what they can do, and what they cannot do.

Objectification then is the reproduction of concepts into images or metaphors. In this way, complexity is reduced, allowing for shared communication and understanding. In modern societies, these simple images are transmitted through mass media communication such as television. For instance, a recent documentary series 'Benefits Street' (2014), provides sensationalised images of 'life on benefits' (Patrick, 2016; Shildrick et al., 2014). Thus, how the people on 'Benefits Street', 'On Benefits and Proud' and other programmes are presented, become the tangible image of 'unemployed people' in the UK. However, these images need not be concrete and can be metaphorical and thus transmitted through direct (rather than mediated) communication. For instance, George Osborne, the former Chancellor of the UK, in implementing austerity measures mainly focused on the welfare state, specified that:

“We also think it's unfair that when that person leaves their home early in the morning, they pull the door behind them, they're going off to do their job, they're looking at their next-door neighbour, the blinds are down, and that family is living a life on benefits.” (Mulholland, 2012)

This metaphorical image of people with the 'blinds down' becomes shorthand for categorisation. Particularly setting boundaries between groups, e.g. the 'hardworking' closing 'the door behind them', and those 'living a life on benefits' with the 'blinds down'.

Through these processes, social representations become the basis for shared understanding which allow for communication between groups and individuals. These meanings, specific ways of anchoring and objectifying objects in the social world, including groups, are not static. Meanings change and develop over time. Thus, social representations are both negotiated and re-negotiable (Howarth, 2006; Moscovici, 2000). Significantly, these processes of anchoring and objectification happen in dialogue across individuals and social groups, that is, with the 'Other'. As such, representations are always social.

What is more, alternative ideas, emanating from other groups and individuals in the public sphere, become integral to the ways knowledge is constructed in dialogue (Gillespie, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 1995; Markova, 2003). If no alternative way of

representing unemployed people were possible, there would be no need to communicate it. For example, when politicians and news media frame unemployed people as scroungers (see chapter four; Okoroji, Gleibs, & Jovchelovitch, 2020), they do so because alternative representations are possible and likely to be held by different groups in society. These alternative representations are borne out in literature where the attributions for unemployment are seen to differ between welfare recipients and others — for instance, differing along the lines of attributions for unemployment being located within the individual or the wider social context (Bullock, 1999; Feather, 1985; A. Lewis, Snell, & Furnham, 1987).

In this way, the act of developing knowledge about our social world, including the groups that exist within it, involves implicit, but also explicit negotiation between the self and others. What is important about the embeddedness of self-other relations in SRT is to foreground how the construction of social knowledge is dependent on relations *between* human beings, rather than developing *within* individuals alone (Elcheroth et al., 2011).

Indeed, group memberships themselves can influence which representations become accepted. Groups, in general, are socially constructed (Duveen, 2001), that is they rely on intersubjective agreement about their existence and attributes. Even those groups which are visible such as sex, age and ‘race’ have representations attached to them which can differ across cultures (Gnezzy, Leonard, & List, 2009; Löckenhoff et al., 2009). Knowledge of the meaning of our group memberships influences if, and how, new representations are accepted into the framework of pre-existing knowledge. More explicitly, categorisation itself happens simultaneously with the development of social knowledge about the meaning of the categorisation. As such, group membership itself is contingent on the development of social knowledge of what the group is, what it does and how it relates to other groups. This process then influences how new ideas become embedded within the existing stock of social knowledge.

Thus, meta-representations (what we think other people think) becomes crucial to understanding the role of social representations in stigmatisation. As we interact with others, we are operating reflexively both on our knowledge but also (what we think is) the knowledge of others (Elcheroth et al., 2011). To be a member of a

stigmatised group requires a recognition of the representations that others hold about the group. When someone is unemployed for example, the process of attending a job interview, where the identity may come to the fore, and be questioned, requires the candidate to consider the representations held by others concerning that identity. Whether or not the interviewer thinks of the candidate as lazy and feckless, knowing that such representations exist and are widely held is likely to impact the interviewee.

Overall, social representations can be considered the content of an identity, i.e. the shared knowledge of what a social group is. Thus, a good starting point for research focused on social groups is first to understand the representations attached to the group membership. That is, how the social group is understood in the public sphere. By recognising these social representations attached to groups, we gain insights into the expected psychological effects of group membership and intergroup relations. In particular, we can do this by acknowledging how and when meta-knowledge becomes important in social interactions between stigmatised group members and others. As this thesis will show, meta-knowledge has significant effects on the way that individuals experience unemployment.

However, research that seeks to understand the representations of social groups in context is often missing, in part because such research is considered ‘merely’ descriptive. Nevertheless, since representations change over time, it is important not to assume that what researchers think they know about group-based stereotypes (i.e. ‘women are bad at math’; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) remains widely held over time. For instance, in the early history of the AIDS epidemic, it was represented as a ‘Gay plague’ (Joffe, 1995). More current research shows how the idea of a ‘plague’ still exists but is positioned as an aspect of social memory rather than present conceptualisation (Gomes, Silva, & Oliveira, 2011). These changes in the prevalence of social knowledge have ramifications for the way that stigmatisation is both understood and experienced by people living with AIDS and how others understand them.

On the consequences of social knowledge, particularly stigmatising social knowledge, and its effect on group membership, Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) offers precise and testable hypotheses. SIT both explains the



importance of group memberships and the outcomes thereof. In the next section, the ways that SIT and SRT are fundamentally connected is examined.

### **2.3. Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory (SIT) as elaborated by Tajfel and Turner (1979) characterises groups as social categories which individuals *define themselves*, and can *be defined by others*, as members of. Specifically, a group is a:

“collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it.” (p. 40)

Additionally, being a member of a group requires processes of social categorisation. These processes allow individuals to understand the social world around them, but they also have a self-referential function, allowing individuals to place themselves within that social world as a member of various groups. The derivation of ‘self-image’ from group membership is known as social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971).

Social identity theory makes three specific assumptions concerning group membership. First, that individuals are concerned with maintaining and/or enhancing self-esteem predicated upon their group memberships and therefore endeavour to realise a positive social identity. Second, groups (and their members) have a positive or negative status. Therefore social identities derived from group memberships can be positive or negative. Further, these values tend to be “socially consensual, either within or across groups” (p.40). Finally, the value of a group, is subject to comparison across groups, on dimensions of social or material value. Comparisons which favour the ingroup create higher prestige, and the reverse scenario creates low prestige.

It is precisely the socially consensual knowledge, which defines the status of a group, how it is developed, transmitted, and re-negotiated over time, that can be best understood through the lens of SRT as has been described above. It is social representations (SRs) which orient human beings to the above characteristics of group membership. SRs do this by giving us an understanding of how to categorise ourselves, the meanings of our group memberships and a framework for self and

other evaluation along dimensions which are consensually shared. In using these theoretical frameworks together, we can recognise how social groups and their meanings shift over time.

Strong identification with an in-group has psychological and social effects. High levels of social identification are shown to increase perceptions of social support (Gleibs, Haslam, Haslam, & Jones, 2011), self-esteem (Cooper, Smith, & Russell, 2017) and mental health more generally (C. Haslam et al., 2019). Group membership does this by meeting our psychological needs for cooperation and belonging, possibly influenced by evolutionary pressures to collaborate (Tomasello & Vaish, 2013). Thus, identifying with groups is necessary for our psychological functioning as human beings (Correll & Park, 2005).

However, what both frameworks neglect is the role others play in identification processes. It is possible to both identify as a member of a group and be identified as such; however, the two do not always necessarily agree (Amer, 2020; Choi & Hogg, 2020; Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson, & Sammut, 2014). While SIT argues that “the individuals concerned define themselves and are *defined by others* as members of a group” (emphasis added: Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40), the predominant application of the theory tends to focus on internal dynamics around identification, mainly how the strength of identification with a group affects the psychological outcomes previously discussed, as well as processes which lead to more or less identification. Nevertheless, the notion that others perceive us as members of a social group conceptualised here as ‘meta-identification’, and the effects this has is equally crucial to consider, particularly in contexts where the social category is perceived as less desirable, such as the case of unemployment. Sociological literature has identified unemployment as a stigmatised category (Goffman, 1963). In Goffman’s (1963) formulation, stigma is an attribute that is deeply discrediting to the individual.

Moreover, unemployment itself is seen as ‘discreditable’, that is, an attribute which blemishes individual character but is not directly visible. However, it can become known in social interaction. Thus, the shame of possible association with the category is often salient. What has been missing from the literature on discrepancies between identification and meta-identification is an exploration of what happens when a person *is* identified as a member of a group that is stigmatised when they do

not wish to be. Current research has tended to focus on what happens when we are *not* identified as members of a group that we do wish to be part of (Amer, 2020; Choi & Hogg, 2020; McLemore, 2015).

Occupational identities (such as academic, electrician or cleaner) are essential to the ways that people who occupy those categories perceive themselves and are perceived by others. Such identities have been so important historically (particularly in England) that a variety of common surnames are derived from the bearer's occupation, e.g. Smith, Cooper, Mason or Taylor. Thus, the lack of an occupation, which is unemployment, is also a social identity that becomes important to those who occupy the category and others perceiving them. Particularly where forms of state-sponsored social support are predicated on both being unemployed and identifying as unemployed.

However, given the stigmatised nature of unemployment, it is useful now to describe the consequences of stigmatised social identities given that previous research finds that unemployment is associated with several negative attributes (e.g. Gibson, 2009, 2011). Broadly, three types of reaction are theorised by Tajfel and Turner (1979). First, where group boundaries are permeable the individual may try to disassociate themselves from the group and attempt to join another group (e.g., individual mobility; Akfirat, Polat, & Yetim, 2016; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). Where this is not possible, group members may engage in various forms of social creativity, the purpose of which is to change the way comparison is made, so it is more beneficial to the ingroup. A more beneficial social comparison can be accomplished by changing some dimension of comparison to be more favourable. Alternatively, the social representation of a dimension of comparison may be re-negotiated so that that which was formerly seen as negative is perceived as positive (at least from the perspective of the in-group, e.g. 'Black is Beautiful'; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This process of changing the value of a dimension of comparison is considered a form of social change. Additionally, the outgroup itself may be changed to one which has less status or where the comparison is more favourable (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish, & Hodge, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

Finally, as unemployment is a permeable category, it is essential to put forward the case made by Tajfel and Turner, (1979) around this issue precisely. They argue

that where “individual mobility implies disidentification, it will tend to loosen the cohesiveness of the subordinate group” (p.44). Disidentification could result in reduced perception of distinct interests, reduced possibility of group mobilisation, and reduced salience of conflict (Howarth, 2002). The unemployed are widely derogated and subordinate to other groups of interest, including full-time workers and, more broadly, those not claiming benefits. Thus, *individual mobility* (i.e. movement out of the group) is both possible, desired and appears to represent the path of least resistance in attaining a positive social identity.

However, in unemployment, individual mobility is particularly complicated. The permeability of the group and its stigmatisation invites disidentification. Nevertheless, even when the individual subjectively disidentifies with the group – they can be identified by others as group members (i.e. Meta-identification). Movement out of the group also largely depends on powerful others who could offer a job. However, unemployment itself is likely to limit the perceived suitability of the candidate, and longer spells of unemployment may be seen as embodying stereotypes about unemployed people such as laziness. Thus, the permeability of the group is complicated by the need for external agents to enable it.

Unemployed people may do all they can to shed association with the group, yet they are often confronted with instances when they must acknowledge that they are unemployed because others can infer it in typical social interaction (i.e. when asked, ‘what do you do for a living?’). In particular, in recurrent and significant circumstances, including when applying for jobs and when receiving social security payments from the state. In these situations, disclosure is either necessary (in the case of welfare) or expected (in job interviews). As a result, unemployed people are often moving through the world as ‘unemployed’, at least in the eyes of others. Hence, unemployed people are unlikely to identify as ‘unemployed’, even when objectively it is the case. Thus, the knowledge of others can curtail the possibility of individual mobility. Social Representations theory may provide inroads to exploring the impact of our knowledge of other people’s knowledge. This emphasis on the knowledge of others underpins the approach taken in this thesis to understanding the effects of stigmatisation in unemployment.

### **2.3.1. Connecting Social Identity with Social Representations**

As alluded to above, the combination of social identity theory and social representations theory provides the theoretical tools to understand group membership, the role of others and their effects. As Elcheroth et al. (2011, p.736) note:

“any theory of social identities which ignores the process by which representations of social categories are constructed and assimilated is in danger of becoming mechanical and realist (by presupposing the categories which will be interiorised), while any theory of social representations that ignores the role of social identification in organising our relations in the world is in danger of becoming descriptive and idealist (by ignoring how we orient to different types of knowledge and assimilate them to the self)”.

Social Identity Theory provides a clear and testable basis for studying social groups and has been particularly insightful in the study of stigmatised social groups (Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Stevenson, McNamara, & Muldoon, 2014). It does this by theoretically articulating the links between stigmatisation and behaviour (such as individual mobility or social creativity). However, there is currently a dearth of empirical evidence relating to permeable stigmatised social identities (c.f. Ellemers, Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990) and how the knowledge and behaviour of others affects them.

Still, considering these stigmatised but permeable social identities is not trivial. For unemployed people who occupy such a category, interview settings and other scenarios bring the identity to the forefront. What are the effects of a stigmatised identity in a scenario where it might be important for evaluation? The stereotype threat literature (Schmader et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2002) deals with such scenarios, and in the following section, I outline the theory and evidence, highlighting the possibility that the way (we think) others see us may have effects on performance in evaluative situations.

## **2.4. Stereotype Threat**

Stereotype threat can be broadly defined as the perceived risk of confirming stereotypes about one's social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The early research

was mainly carried out with African-Americans as a target group and in intellectual testing contexts; another well-studied group are women in the context of mathematics tests (for a review see Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). In these and other examples (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002; Kalokerinos, von Hippel, & Zacher, 2014; Martiny et al., 2015), cues about race and gender (which bring to mind representations of intellectual inferiority) hindered performance such that these groups performed worse than European American or male counterparts. When these cues were not present, performance has been shown to be equivalent between groups when controlling for other variables such as SAT scores. Based on this model, it is theorised that performance is hindered when confronted with the possibility of stereotype confirmation.

In addition, stereotype threat has been shown to affect the performance of low-SES students on intellectually diagnostic tests (Croizet & Claire, 1998) which extends the stereotype threat literature beyond non-permeable groups (e.g. Age; Abrams, Eller, & Bryant, 2006; Haslam et al., 2012; Lamont, Swift, & Abrams, 2015). Stereotype threat has also been shown when individuals hold multiple group memberships simultaneously (Martiny et al., 2015). This evidence suggests how this literature may be useful when applied to unemployment, which is a permeable category and one that can only be understood within a wider network of social knowledge.

Overall, stereotype threat is embedded within the identity threat model of stigma (Major & O'Brien, 2005). The model proposes that 'collective representations' (which can be considered as social representations to embed them in existing theory), situational cues and personal characteristics work in tandem when individuals consider a situation in terms of its possible effects on well-being. Identities are said to be threatened when "an individual appraises the demands imposed by a stigma-relevant stressor as potentially harmful to his or her social identity" (Major & O'Brien, 2005). The results of this process include both volitional (e.g. avoidance of stigmatised domains) and nonvolitional responses (such as anxiety or reduced cognitive capacity). These responses then affect outcomes within the specified domain such as poorer performance, avoidance of the domain and broader effects on self-esteem and health (Major & O'Brien, 2005).

Importantly, the model incorporates and accounts for stereotype threat, which has been defined as a “type of social identity threat that occurs when one fears being judged in terms of a group-based stereotype” (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007, p. 879). An array of research on stereotype threat provides much support for the identity threat model of stigma (e.g. Croizet & Claire, 1998; Hunger, Major, Blodorn, & Miller, 2015; Martiny et al., 2015; Schmader, Johns, & Barquissau, 2004; Steele et al., 2002). For example, Murphy, Steele, and Gross (2007) demonstrate, in a sample of highly identified female math, science and engineering undergraduate students, that situational cues are constitutive of identity threat. Identity threat occurred by signalling potentially threatening contexts, leading to increased vigilance, lower sense of belonging and decreased participation in contexts which may signal threat (such as male-dominated industries).

Research in this field has tried to elaborate the theory in four key areas; the consequences of stereotype threat, vulnerability to stereotype threat, the situations in which it occurs and the cognitive mechanisms underlying it. The consequences of stereotype threat can be long-term, in that individuals may both perform poorly in stereotyped domains and avoid those domains altogether (Von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes, 2011).

Moreover, stereotype threat has been shown to affect many groups. It is postulated to apply to *any group* and context where there is a threat of confirming some negative stereotype (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) although research that goes beyond racial and gender-based groups is sparse (c.f. Martiny, Roth, Jelenec, Steffens, & Croizet, 2012; Silverman & Cohen, 2014). This lack of wider application of the theory has led to calls for a broader view of stereotype threat beyond testing (N. A. Lewis & Sekaquaptewa, 2016)

In part, this lack of exploration of other areas where stereotype threat may occur is because it has not been embedded in a theory which can account for production and re-negotiation of social knowledge such as social representations theory. For stereotype threat effects to manifest, we must first recognise how stereotypes develop and create methods for describing contemporary widely held stereotypes. Without a theory for the development of stereotypes, research can become stymied by focusing on what researchers think are familiar stereotypes. Yet,

academics are far from representative of the views of the population. One contribution of this thesis is to develop appropriate methods for understanding widely held stereotypes.

Moving to the 'context' (situational cues), stereotype threat is most likely to occur when a) group membership is made salient and b) when negative aspects of that identity are, specifically in question. Overall, much evidence over 20 years of research has shown that "when a negative stereotype about one's group is relevant to a difficult, timed performance that is important to the person, it can undermine that performance" (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002, p. 384).

For an unemployed person, arguably the most challenging and vital timed 'performance' is experienced within recruitment processes. Job applications, assessment centres and interviews are specifically focused on the evaluation of the individual. Therefore, we can expect stereotype threat effects to occur for individuals who are unemployed when, as in recruitment processes, their status as an unemployed person is both salient and relevant.

Regarding the underlying mechanisms which drive stereotype threat, several processes have been postulated and/or empirically evaluated including reduced effort, excess effort, lowered performance expectations, anxiety, negative cognitions and reduced working memory capacity (Schmader et al., 2008). These generally follow the premise that under conditions where a stereotype may be confirmed, this leads to cognitive responses that are not present in groups who do not face the stereotype. As such, cognitive capacity is directed at the task without cognitive resources being strained by other activities.

A good example of a theoretical model that deals with underlying mechanisms is put forward by Schmader, Johns, and Forbes (2008). In their model stereotype threat is caused by a 'cognitive imbalance' whereby the individuals' self-concept, the expectation of success and social identity disagree. To give an example used by Rydell, McConnell, and Beilock, (2009, p. 950) that applies to typical stereotype threat experiments with women in maths settings; the self-concept ("I am an intelligent person"), ability domain ("I am good at math") and concept of the group ("I am a woman"), are inconsistent. This inconsistency manifests because of the stereotype that women are not good at maths, i.e., "given these propositions, one cannot be both a



female and good at math”. These incompatibilities can be seen as derived from the social representations that are shared and reproduced concerning the capabilities (or lack thereof) of women. However, as social representations, they are also subject to change over time. Therefore, the incompatibility of ‘I am a woman’ and ‘I am good at Math’ is not fixed. These temporal changes in the nature of social representations may be one reason the stereotype threat paradigm, as it relates to gendered math stereotypes, has failed to replicate in recent research (Flore, Mulder, & Wicherts, 2018).

In contrast, stereotype threat seems to remain robust with race categories in the U.S. (Howard, Hennes, & Sommers, 2020). However, failed replications in one domain do not provide evidence that the stereotype threat paradigm as a whole is invalid and indeed stereotype threat interventions have been found to be effective in a recent meta-analytic review (Liu, Liu, Wang, & Zhang, 2020). Instead, it calls for an assessment of the social knowledge that may precipitate stereotype threat effects contemporaneously.

Further, it may be relevant to understand not just what people think of themselves and their group, but what they think evaluators think. Most evaluative domains are not as clear cut as Math. In many cases, performance is subjective. Thus, if the performer believes that an evaluator holds the view that “My group is bad at this task” – then this is likely to affect the performance along the lines described earlier (e.g. reduced performance, avoidance)

Thus, although a vast array of studies has shown stereotype threat effects, it suffers from several drawbacks, e.g. overuse of student participant pools at US universities (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), concentration on testing in educational settings despite its broader relevance, and a predominant focus on testing the effects of possibly outdated gender and racial stereotypes alone. Therefore, a vital contribution of this thesis is to expand the stereotype threat literature to incorporate permeable group memberships such as unemployment while accounting for contemporary stereotypes directed at unemployed people. In doing so, we draw on the context of social representations that unemployed people face to determine how stereotype threat effects may manifest themselves in experimental conditions.

Integration of the SRT and SIT literature with stereotype threat brings together robust social psychological theories, particularly in explaining how stigmatisation is produced and its effects on social life. The benefit of this is to add to the stereotype threat literature by showing where stereotypes come from and providing tools to understand which of these are likely to be instrumental in stereotype threat effects. Without a recognition of the processes which lead to the development of stereotypes, stereotype threat scholars run the risk of reifying the very stereotypes they seek to challenge and thus contribute to the production of inequality in society (Gillespie, Howarth, & Cornish, 2012). The integration of both SRT and SIT can solve this problem as both theories provide critical insights into the production of social knowledge and the ramifications of group membership.

Thinking of stereotype threat as an extension of social identity theory, we can recognise how, in specific domains, salient stigmatised identities can reduce cognitive performance. However, building upon insights from social representations theory - stigma is not a fixed property of social groups and changes over time. A way of simplifying the insights of social representations theory in terms of the stereotypes attached to social groups is by reducing the myriad of stereotypes to their core dimensions. The stereotype content model performs this task well, and in the next section, the literature review explores its potential to capture both what we think about our social groups but also what we think we know, about what others know.

## **2.5. Stereotype Content Model**

The stereotype content model (SCM) proposes that social perception has two fundamental and universal dimensions. These are ‘warmth’ and ‘competence’ (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). Proponents of the model theorise that evolutionary pressures to determine the intentions of others quickly (i.e. warmth) and their ability to act on those intentions (i.e. competence) has led to the development of these universal dimensions of social perception. Different combinations of warmth and competence lead to distinct cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses towards different outgroups (A. J. C. Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008).

Warmth as a fundamental aspect of social perception is ‘other-orientated’. The ‘other’ orientation suggests its relation to enabling or hindering others. If someone or some group is ‘unfriendly’ this inhibits us from collaboration, whereas a

group stereotyped as 'kind' invites such a relation. These perceptions are attached to social structural relations between groups in the social milieu. Groups which are seen as competitors are judged to be less warm. For instance, 'successful' immigrant groups, such as Chinese Americans are often viewed as competent but not warm (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2008).

Competence then is related to the status of a group in the social milieu. Thus, high-status groups are perceived as more competent than low-status groups. This assumption is derived from the hypothesis that people infer that status arises from ability (although this is only true in some cases; Cuddy et al., 2008). Additionally, social perceptions of competence can become more or less important depending on the social context, for instance, when making hiring decisions. Jobs can be stereotyped as requiring high competence to fulfil the tasks of the role. For instance, CEOs would generally require high levels of competence, while nursery nurses are more likely to be stereotyped as warm. Such stereotypes may influence the kinds of individuals who are seen as highly skilled for the role (A. J. C. Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011) partially accounting for the gender differences between CEOs and nursery nurses. Following this logic, unemployed people, who are seen both as low in warmth and competence (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2009), are unlikely to fit the stereotypes for any job on that basis.

A third fundamental aspect of social perception, morality, has been proposed by Leach, Ellemers and Barreto (Leach et al., 2007). Leach et al. (2007) suggest that morality is the most crucial aspect of social perception for positive ingroup evaluation. Across five studies, they showed that morality can be distinguished from competence and warmth and that morality was more important to an individual's positive evaluation of their in-group. This finding was present in both natural and experimental ingroups. In general, other stereotype content research has conflated morality and warmth. Importantly, recent work seems to replicate the finding that perceived morality uniquely predicts ingroup identification (Moscatelli, Menegatti, Albarello, Pratto, & Rubini, 2019). As such, this is an important extension of the stereotype content model at least as it relates to perceptions of one's social groups. In particular, it fits well with the ways in which unemployed people have been described in public and legal discourses in Britain as articulated in the introduction and contemporary explanations of the underlying evolutionary mechanisms relating

to the formation of appraisals of welfare recipients (Delton, Petersen, DeScioli, & Robertson, 2018; Petersen, Sznycer, Cosmides, & Tooby, 2012)

One of the significant insights of SCM is that most groups are subject to ambivalent stereotypes. That is, groups can be warm but not competent and vice versa. Few groups are shown to be both low warmth and low competence. Unfortunately, the unemployed and welfare recipients are said to be stereotyped in this way (welfare recipients; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004, unemployed; Cuddy et al., 2008). The way that groups are stigmatised across the three dimensions of stereotype content is culturally relative, and at present, no research has been conducted in the UK, which assesses the stereotype content of unemployment. However, as this thesis will show unemployed people themselves perceive that others see them as relatively low on these dimensions (see chapter 6).

Overall, the stereotype content model neatly captures the stereotypes associated with groups in the social milieu along three dimensions. It simplifies both individual knowledge about social groups (what we know) but can also be used to capture meta-knowledge (what we think others know). The measures used in stereotype content research are often worded to elicit responses that relate to how people in society view groups of interest (i.e. “We are interested in how different groups are considered by [your society]”; Cuddy et al., 2008). Thus, stereotype content can be used to understand our knowledge, of others knowledge, about groups of which we are a member. This is particularly useful given the complexity of eliciting meta-knowledge both qualitatively and quantitatively. It should be noted, however, that recent research has shown that stereotype content differs when questions elicit ‘societies view’ vs ‘personal view’. Such that groups are evaluated more negatively in ‘societies view’ (Kotzur et al., 2020).

However, the stereotype content model cannot capture all stereotypes. For instance, the three-dimensional warmth, competence, morality triad cannot locate “the notion that Black people are ‘rhythmic’” (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2008). As such, it is essential to explore the various social representations associated with social groups which allow for an assessment of how useful stereotype content measures are in capturing the social knowledge that affects members of a group in a specified domain.

In addition to these linkages with social representations theory, evidence from SCM research has corroborated hypotheses of social identity theory. For instance, in one study, high-status national groups were shown to favour their ingroup on competence (which reflects status). In contrast, lower status nations favoured the ingroup on warmth (which is irrelevant to status), thus creating positive differentiation for the ingroup via social creativity (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2008). Thus, the stereotype content model fits within a framework that emphasises both the role of social representations and social identities in shaping social reality. In the next section, the links between the theories discussed and how they influence the overall thesis are made explicit.

## **2.6. Connecting Theoretical Insights for a more rounded Social Psychology of Stigmatisation**

At this point, the literature review has covered four major theoretical models in social psychology. It has also alluded to connections between these theories in their ability to explain stigmatisation and its effects. Specifically, SRT provides a framework for understanding the development of social knowledge at the societal level. This framework is not limited to stereotypes; all the meanings we attach to objects in the social world can be thought of as developing through meaning-making processes of SRT as have been described.

One type of social representation is of groups and group memberships. To be a member of a group requires the construction of social knowledge which categorises human beings, for example, black or white, man or woman. However, most groups do not exist beyond the categorisations that human beings intersubjectively agree upon; thus, they are socially constructed. In this way, we see how social representations and social identity theory are necessarily connected. SRT helps us to understand the societal processes whereby different social groups and contexts shape knowledge about social groups and the meanings attributed to them. At the same time, social identity theory defines how group memberships with different meanings effect which social representations become accepted by the group, how intergroup relations play out and individual behaviour in context (Breakwell, 1993).

Specifically, social identity theory suggests that the valence of group memberships, i.e. the social representations of groups (e.g. good, bad, criminal, industrious) affect the way that group members behave. This hypothesis is based on the fundamental assumption that human beings attempt to maximise self-esteem, which is derived from membership in groups. Consequently, where group memberships reduce self-esteem, individuals may attempt to leave the group, alternatively the group may engage in various forms of social creativity. Hence, social identity theory helps us to understand the effect of stigmatisation on intergroup relations and social behaviour.

In specific situations, such as evaluative ones, social identity can become salient and effect how the situation is experienced. The stereotype threat literature shows how group memberships and their associated stereotypes can impact an individual's behaviour in such circumstances. Where unemployment is concerned, clearly any interaction with the state to receive unemployment benefits brings the identity to the fore, as do attempts to gain employment. An employment interview can be considered a test of sorts. Therefore, stereotype threat effects are likely to be present in recruitment processes. Still, considering the other theoretical paradigms we have explored – it seems possible that the outcomes of stereotype threat (poorer performance) may not be limited to the individual. Ultimately, very few circumstances have fully quantifiable performance metrics. Mathematics exams are one such scenario. However, in many more circumstances, 'performance' is subjective. An unemployed person may be considered to have performed more poorly simply because they are unemployed and pre-existing stereotypes are brought to bear on the interpretation of their performance.

Thus, the knowledge of others has important ramifications for how we experience our social identities but also how these identities affect our interactions with others. Although social representations capture the diversity of social knowledge which may be attached to a group, including what we think others think – this diversity can (in some cases) be simplified to three fundamental stereotype dimensions. The stereotype content model suggests that warmth, competence, and morality are essential dimensions of both group and individual stereotypes. Thus, groups which are considered to be low on these dimensions are necessarily stigmatised. Given this, such groups members are likely to invoke the strategies

outlined by SIT, e.g. disidentification or social creativity. But additionally, others may treat members of stigmatised groups differently, including when evaluating them, based on these commonly held stereotypes.

What is gained by combining these theories, is to trace the stigmatisation from its development in the public sphere to effects on social identification, through to individual behaviour. Importantly, it contributes by unpacking the added psychological impact of stereotypes on the behaviour of *others* towards stigmatised group members, something that is rarely considered. These issues are connected when we recognise the role of others in these processes, namely that knowledge production is an inherently social phenomenon of which alternative representations (what others think) are a fundamental facet. Thus, when we identify (or are identified) as a member of a group we are recognising, both what we know and understand about the group, but also what alternative understandings exist in the social milieu. This meta-knowledge could have significant effects on social interaction and more broadly intergroup relations. For unemployed people, such scenarios are constantly salient as individuals seek jobs. Knowing that a salient identity is stigmatised by the ‘other’ is likely to affect cognitive performance due to cognitive resources being directed at the possibility of stigmatisation. However, stigmatisation affects not only the stigmatised group member but also those perceiving them. For instance, if stereotypes which designate unemployed people as incompetent prevail, it is possible then even when unemployed people perform as well as employed people, that their performance is perceived as inferior.

The theoretical linkages proposed above guide the empirical work in this thesis and can provide a more complete social psychological explanation for the experience and consequences of unemployment in Britain than has previously been attempted. This approach to understanding stigmatisation alludes to several concrete research questions.

## **2.7. Research Questions**

Following the approach discussed in this literature review, the following research questions become important in understanding the effects of stigmatisation in unemployment:

1. How does a group come to be stigmatised in the eyes of others?

2. How does knowing a group we belong to is stigmatised affect our sense of self?
3. Does this stigmatisation affect how we are seen and evaluated by others?

From these initial broad research questions, specific hypotheses are developed across three empirical chapters. In chapter four, the social representations of unemployed people are elucidated longitudinally. In an exploratory analysis, we look at how politicians frame unemployment and the unemployed. Building on this analysis, we show how negative social representations promoted by identity entrepreneurs and newspapers are related to public attitudes towards the unemployed. More concretely, we hypothesise first that, negative framing of the unemployed in news media would increase at a faster rate than other kinds of framing within the analysis period. Secondly, the negative framing of the unemployed would be positively associated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed at a national level. Thus, as the use of negative social representations increases, public attitudes become more negative.

In chapter five, we seek to understand the differences between Identification and Meta-identification. Specifically, we hypothesise that identification and meta-identification will differ significantly from each other. Specifically, that identification will be lower on average than meta-identification. We show that, as expected from a social identity perspective, unemployed people show low levels of identification with unemployment. However, meta-identification (the extent to which others see the individual as unemployed), is significantly higher. In an exploratory analysis, we show that the extent of meta-identification (and not identification) predicts lower cognitive performance on an anagram task.

Finally, in chapter six, we show that equivalent curriculum vitae from employed and unemployed candidates are assessed differently by participants with hiring experience. We hypothesised that an unemployed candidate would be less likely to be interviewed than an equivalent employed candidate; unemployed candidates would be less likely to be offered employment than an equivalent employed candidate; and that the relationship between employment status and employment outcomes would be mediated by perceived competence.



Given that the thesis combines theories which are both positivist and constructivist in nature, it is useful to spell out the methodological approaches taken across the PhD and why it is crucial to bring these different approaches together. Thus, in the next chapter, the methodological approach taken in the thesis is discussed in detail.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This chapter details the methodological approach taken in this PhD thesis. The overall research design uses mixed methods; thus, the chapter provides a rationale for such an approach. Emphasis is given to how different levels of explanation and triangulation afford more significant insights in social psychology than single method approaches. In addition, the thesis follows the principles of open science, and the chapter explains how these principles are adopted across the empirical chapters. The chapter concludes with a discussion about reflexivity and ethics in unemployment research.

### **3.1. Bringing together different levels of analysis**

Social psychology is generally defined as the “scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others” (G. W. Allport, 1954, p. 5). Though this definition is widely shared and covers the broad aspects of social psychological study, there are nuances in the focus of social psychological research in different areas. In particular, there are differences between the dominant American approach to social psychology and approaches elsewhere, particularly in Europe and the global south (Oishi, Kesebir, & Snyder, 2009).

The American approach can be summarised in Floyd Allport's (1924, p.4) appraisal that “there is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals”. As such, the ‘social’ in social psychology is the aggregation of individual psychological processes with an emphasis on the search for invariant universal laws (Markova, 2008). Conversely, European and global south approaches to social psychology generally, and sometimes explicitly, are developed from sociological and/or anthropological theorising (e.g. Moscovici, 1988). This sociological-social psychology can be summarised through Durkheim's (1897/1951, p.309) assertion that “collective tendencies have an existence of their own, *sui generis*”. Thus, in European social psychology, the ‘social’ is considered an irreducible emergent property of social interaction.

Such differences are not trivial; they impact on the methodological and philosophical approaches favoured by social psychologists in different fields. In particular, realist-positivist American social psychology favours experimentation,

particularly in the laboratory, above other methods. However, not all questions are answerable using experiments (Tajfel, 1972). As such, strict reliance on laboratory experiments has led to a narrower field of study than would have otherwise been the case and relatedly, a variety of unfortunate ‘crises’ in social psychology (Camerer et al., 2018; Gergen, 1973; John, Loewenstein, & Prelec, 2012; Open Science Collaboration, 2015).

In contrast, constructivist approaches sensitise us to the diversity of human thought and knowledge. Still, these are not a panacea to the overreliance on experimental methods, as they also have limitations (Stam, 2001), including an overemphasis on relativism (Cornish & Gillespie, 2009; Danziger, 1997). But, given that the objects of most (if not all) social psychological research are humans, it seems evident that there should be some general principles that apply across human groups.

Thus, no epistemological approach to studying human behaviour can be said to be without critique. Still, even when the approach to social psychology differs, the insights gained, if they have some validity, should not be incompatible a priori. Different lines of research taking different approaches, at different levels of analysis arriving at the same conclusions provide the best possible evidence for any hypothesis. Taking the view that each approach, because of its limitations, only offers a partial understanding of any psychological phenomena, the need for integration between so-called ‘American’ and ‘European’ social psychology becomes clear. Accounting for these differences, one of the goals of the PhD is to show how these different social psychologies and levels of analyses can be combined to improve our understanding of human beings.

Indeed, as described in the literature review, theoretically this thesis combines insights from Social Representations, Social Identity, Stereotype Threat, and the Stereotype Content Model to aid our understanding of the ways stigmatisation affects unemployed people. These theories each tend to function (in the empirical literature) at different levels of analysis (Doise, 1980). Using the typology outlined by Jaspal, Carriere and Moghaddam (2016) social representations operate at the highest level of analysis. They are societal in nature and can be used to understand societal ideologies. Social identities operate at the meso-level of intergroup relations.

While stereotype threat constitutes the micro-level of individual behaviour in context.

Micro-level processes can be most readily captured through experimental methods favoured by positivists, and as a result, social psychology has often narrowed its gaze towards individual-level analysis (Doise, 1980; Jaspal et al., 2016). However, experimental approaches have also been used at the intergroup level alongside cross-sectional survey methods. Indeed some of the most persuasive evidence for intergroup processes in social identity theory come from experimentation (Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Henri Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). At the macro level, however, experimentation becomes difficult (though not impossible).

It is rarely possible to reduce the complexity of macro-level processes to a laboratory situation. Indeed, experiments often fail to consider how macro-level processes influence their results. Thus, mixed methodologies that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches are necessary to avoid partial explanations for complex social phenomena.

### **3.2. A Mixed Methods Approach**

Mixed methods approaches combine qualitative and quantitative data either in one empirical research project or across a programme of research (Johnson et al., 2007). Such approaches increase the breadth and depth of the insights gained from the data analysis and provide strong corroboration of research findings across methodologies.

Philosophically, mixed methods approaches rely on pragmatism. Broadly defined, pragmatism provides epistemological justification for mixed methods approaches by focusing on the utility of knowledge production for action in the world (Cornish & Gillespie, 2009). Thus, methodological hierarchies (where randomised control trials are seen as a ‘gold standard’) become obsolete; each method must be evaluated along the lines of its practical utility in answering a particular research question. Put simply, the combination of methods which helps one to best answer the research question at hand is the most valuable. This approach reduces the usefulness of the so-called ‘paradigm wars’ between epistemological positions (Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Johnson et al., 2007). Tensions and divisions

between constructivist and realist approaches are limiting when we consider the practical use of any knowledge and that methods are tools. Constructivist and realist approaches overemphasise *how* science is done, rather than *what is required* to answer the research question. Some questions must be answered with quantities, but in other cases, quantities are not relevant.

The seeming development of research questions from the methodology (rather than the other way around) is particularly prevalent in psychology. In a recent survey of the methods used in prestigious psychology journals (including the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology), 93% of articles used purely quantitative methods (Alise & Teddlie, 2010). Thus, mixed-methods approaches are underutilised in social psychology, and this PhD is an attempt to incorporate mixed methods to further our understanding of the stigmatisation that unemployed people face. One of the ways in which mixed methods approaches accomplish this is through triangulation (Johnson et al., 2007).

### **3.3. Triangulation**

Triangulation has been defined as the consideration of an empirical question from at least two perspectives (Flick, 2018). More specifically, we can consider triangulation as the “strategic use of multiple approaches to address one question” (Munafò & Davey Smith, 2018, p. 400). Depending on the specific approach of the researcher, triangulation can offer greater depth and more comprehensive understanding. Greater validity is also possible when one approach confirms the finding of another.

In this thesis, triangulation functions to improve understanding of the facets of stigmatisation. In particular, it follows a principle of sequential triangulation, where each study builds upon the last using a variety of methods (see table 3.1). Triangulation can also be seen at the level of combining theories (Flick, 2018); thus, in many ways, the whole endeavour of the thesis is a form of triangulation. The thesis brings together multiple theories to increase the breadth and depth of our knowledge of stigmatisation and its effects on unemployment.

Calls for triangulation in research have become more influential in recent times; however, triangulation has not received as much attention as replication (Munafò & Davey Smith, 2018). Nevertheless, replication alone seems insufficient for robust

conclusions. If the methodology or measures used are skewed in some way, then even when results reliably replicate, they may still be spurious—triangulation guards against this by using different methods (and assumptions) to understand the same research questions. In the following sections, various methodologies used across three empirical chapters are outlined. Given that the PhD is ‘paper-based’, some of the content is necessarily repetitive and appears similarly in the papers. Thus, an overview is given here, and the specific details are contained within the empirical chapters.

### **3.4. Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.4.1 Context**

Stigmatisation develops in a cultural context and differs between them. Thus, the stigmatisation unemployed people face in the United Kingdom (UK) is likely to be different from those faced by unemployed people in other places. These differences may be explicit or subtle. Nevertheless, they differ. As a result, this thesis and the data therein is specific to the UK. Additionally, the UK represents a particularly interesting context within which to study unemployment because the UK has, in its recent history, gone through several specific changes to welfare provision which have affected the relative importance of unemployment as a national issue (for a historical overview see Chapter One).

For instance, the introduction of Job Seekers Allowance in 1996 made welfare payments conditional (rather than unconditional) on the claimant’s behaviour (Dwyer, 2004). Conditionality has further been extended following the financial crisis of 2008. It is argued that the crisis and resulting austerity precipitated changes to social security provisions such as the newly established Universal Credit (UC; which replaced and extended job seekers allowance), which is the main form of assistance available to the unemployed (Dwyer & Wright, 2014). These changes are argued to have influenced the ways unemployed people and unemployment are understood in society (Jensen, 2014, also see Chapter Four). Further, the current coronavirus pandemic has already increased unemployment dramatically, and the full extent of unemployment and the resulting policy measures are yet to be thought through, let alone comprehended.

Thus, the UK has a long history of stigma towards the unemployed and yet the narratives and policy solutions are developing and changing during the period in which the data for this thesis was collected. Unemployment will likely remain an important issue as automation continues to become more and more prevalent over time. The probable results of this will be higher levels of unemployment and more precarious employment. As such, employment itself may become more transitory, with individuals moving between jobs more often. In addition, these labour market trends are likely to put pressure on social security systems globally within the next ten years (Bloom, McKenna, & Prettnner, 2019).

These circumstances provide a particularly interesting case, and appropriate time, to develop our understanding of how stigma, formed in the public domain, affects how the unemployed create a sense of themselves and are seen and evaluated by others. In the following sections, I outline how each method was used to answer the research questions at hand. To accomplish this, the empirical chapters in this PhD use several methods and data sources (see table 3.1).

*Table 3.1 Research Methods and Design*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
1) <i>What are the social representations associated with unemployed people and unemployment in the United Kingdom?</i> a) <i>How have these changed over time</i> b) <i>What is their association with public attitudes</i>	Political Speeches (N = 43)  Newspaper Articles (N = 167,723)  Longitudinal Public Attitudes Data (N = 21/22 years)	Thematic Analysis  Content Analysis  Correlations	Chapter 4: Elite Stigmatization of the Unemployed: The Association between Framing and Public Attitudes (Published in the <i>British Journal of Psychology</i> , 2021)
2) <i>How do identification and meta-identification differ in unemployment</i>	Cross-Sectional Survey Data (N = 170)	Structural Equation Modelling	Chapter 5: Is being Identified as Important as Identification?
3) <i>Do identification and meta-identification influence cognitive performance</i>	Experimental Data (N = 140)	Regression	Modelling Meta-Stereotypes and Meta-identification effects on Self - Esteem, Well-Being and Cognitive Performance in Unemployment (To be submitted 2021)
4) <i>How do unemployed people think others stereotype them and does it differ from the way they think about their own identity?</i>			

5) <i>Where unemployed and employed people are equivalent, are they equally likely to be recruited? Are any differences between employed and unemployed people explained by differences in the perceived stereotype content of the candidates?</i>	Experimental Data (N= 461)	T-tests  Mediation Analysis  (Mini) Meta-Analysis	Chapter 6: Inferring Incompetence from Employment Status: An Audit-like Experiment (To be submitted 2021)
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### 3.4.2 Paper One: Elite Stigmatization of the Unemployed: The Association between Framing and Public Attitudes

In the first empirical chapter, we attempt to understand the social representations associated with unemployed people in the UK. We also explore how these have changed over time and how these changes are associated with public attitudes. To do this, we investigated British Political Party leader’s speeches at annual conferences from the two main parties (Labour and Conservative). Speeches at annual conferences address members of the political parties, but also the nation at large and establish key policy initiatives and their rationale. These speeches are a key site where representations related to groups or issues within society are discussed explicitly. We sampled speeches from 1996, when the current principal welfare payment for unemployed citizens seeking work (JSA) was introduced, until 2016 when the new regime of UC began to be rolled out widely ( $n = 43$  speeches).

We used thematic analysis conducted with Nvivo software. The analysis focused on politicians’ talk about unemployment broadly, including welfare benefits and unemployed people specifically. We employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for its flexibility and focused on how unemployment and unemployed people are constructed. We utilised an inductive approach to the data analysis, concentrating on the semantic content of the leader’s speeches rather than latent meaning. We moved from direct coding, which is descriptive, to summarisation involving the interpretation of the overall meaning of similar codes (themes; a codebook can be found in appendix two).

In the second step, we collated keywords/phrases related to each theme from the political leaders’ speeches into a dictionary that indicated the presence of the theme



in newspaper articles. We only used keywords which are direct quotations from leaders' speeches and thus reduce the possibility of bias in the development of the dictionary. The data show how each frame has developed over time in the top five newspapers by circulation in the UK. In addition, we added a sixth newspaper (The Guardian) so as to ensure an even selection of political orientation and reporting style.

In the final step, we correlated the use of different frames in national newspapers with national attitudes towards the unemployed and unemployment. We obtained British Social Attitude (BSA) Survey data for the period 1996-2017 for five variables related to unemployment (see Park, Bryson, Clery, Curtice, & Phillips, 2013). BSA survey is a representative cross-sectional survey consisting of approximately 3000 participants per year. The variables chosen concerned attitudes towards welfare and welfare recipients and have been collected for a large majority of the analysis period.

Together these data are used to understand the specific social representations attached to unemployed people in the UK, as they are shaped by interactions between political discourse, the mass media and public attitudes. Not only that, but we can also understand their prevalence in the public sphere and how widely such representations are shared. Thus, we can gain a deep understanding of the stigmatising knowledges that exist in the UK.

### **3.4.2 Paper Two: Is being Identified as Important as Identification? Modelling Meta-Stereotypes and Meta-identification effects on Self - Esteem, Well-Being and Cognitive Performance in Unemployment**

In two studies, currently unemployed British citizens were recruited to take part in an online survey via prolific academic ([www.prolific.ac.uk](http://www.prolific.ac.uk)). In the first study, the survey asked them to rate unemployed people on stereotype content measures of morality, competence, and sociability through a list of traits. Specifically, participants rated, on a 7-point scale, to what extent they considered unemployed people to be honest, sincere and trustworthy ( $\alpha_{\text{morality}} = .91$ ), capable, competent and intelligent ( $\alpha_{\text{competence}} = .89$ ) and friendly, kind and sociable ( $\alpha_{\text{sociability}} = .91$ ). They then answered the four-item measure of social identification (FISI; Postmes, Haslam,

& Jans, 2013), e.g. ‘I identify with unemployed people’ ( $\alpha_{\text{identification}} = .64$ ). Equivalent measures for all these scales were assessed focusing on meta-stereotypes and meta-identification ( $\alpha_{\text{meta-morality}} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-competence}} = .90$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-sociability}} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-identification}} = .78$ ). All meta-level items were prefaced with ‘Most people think’ e.g. on the sociability dimension ‘Most people think unemployed people are likeable’. These two elements of the survey were randomised to avoid order effects.

Participants were then asked about their state self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) on two dimensions, *social* - which both consisted of seven items, e.g. ‘I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure’ ( $\alpha_{\text{social}} = .94$ ) and *performance*, e.g. ‘I feel confident about my abilities’ ( $\alpha_{\text{performance}} = .79$ ). These items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale from not-at-all to extremely. In addition, they answered the five-item satisfaction with life survey (SWLS) measured on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Diener, Emmons, & Griffin, 1985), e.g. ‘In most ways, my life is close to the ideal’ ( $\alpha_{\text{SWLS}} = .87$ ).

Using t-tests, we first assessed the differences between identification and meta-identification and between stereotype content and meta-stereotype content. In a second step, we built a structural equation model showing how these variables impact on self-esteem and well-being.

In study two, 142 unemployed participants were recruited from Prolific ([www.prolific.ac](http://www.prolific.ac)). Participants were paid at a rate of £7.50 per hour. Two participants were excluded as multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $p < .001$ ), creating a final sample of 140 participants (46.43% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 31.15$ ,  $SD = 10.68$ , 80.71% White British). Sampling was based on their employment status and nationality (British and currently unemployed). The average length of unemployment was 14.62 months ( $SD = 8.54$ ), though the scale endpoint was 24 months or more. 52 participants selected this duration. As such, the true mean is likely to be higher.

After completing demographic information, including employment status, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Following Owuamalam & Zagefka (2011), participants in the positive and negative conditions were asked to:

“Please think about the positive [negative] impressions that people in this society hold about unemployed people. Please list up to four of these positive [negative] impressions in the space below.”

In the control condition, participants were asked about the last three films they watched.

After completing the prime, participants answered a one-item measure of social identity “I identify with unemployed people” (Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013) and a one item equivalent for meta-identification, i.e. “Most people think I identify with unemployed people”.

Participants then completed five anagrams, which successively increased in word length. These, in order, were SEMUO (MOUSE), DYLIE (YIELD), KEATRM (MARKET), DNCAEVA (ADVANCE). The last anagram, ORNTAAL, was impossible (Calef et al., 1992). Correct answers are summed to give a total score out of four. Finally, participants were asked about their state self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) and satisfaction with life (SWL; Diener, Emmons, & Griffin, 1985) as in study one ( $\alpha_{SWL} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{Social} = .92$ ,  $\alpha_{Performance} = .79$ ) though these are not used in the analysis. Multiple linear regression was used to estimate the differential effects of (meta) stereotyping and meta (identification) on cognitive performance. Specifically, the analysis focuses on how each variable affects performance on the solvable anagrams.

### **3.4.3 Paper Three: Inferring Incompetence from Employment Status: An Audit-like Experiment**

Finally, in the third paper participants (who were British and had hiring experience) completed an online experiment where they assessed one of two equivalent curriculum vitae. Specifically, we examined the likelihood that the candidate will be interviewed and hired. Importantly, we included stereotype content measures (Leach et al., 2007) which allow us to examine differences in morality, warmth and competence and test if employment outcomes are mediated by the stereotype content model dimensions, in particular competence. Using t-tests, we show differences between the employed and unemployed in their likelihood to be

interviewed and hired. We then use mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986) to show how these differences are mediated by stereotype content.

In study two, we perform a direct, pre-registered replication of these results. Both studies are then subject to meta-analytic procedures to determine the overall effect sizes of both the differences between employed and unemployed people and the mediated effect of stereotype content.

Thus, across these three papers, a variety of methods are used to build insights related to the development and effects of stigmatisation towards unemployed people. Each study builds on the insights of the other in a sequential process of triangulation.

### **3.5. Open Science**

Concerns about the reproducibility of psychological sciences have led to an array of structured reforms (Crüwell et al., 2019). In particular ‘open science’ has become an essential toolkit in the development of modern best practices in empirical research (Munafò et al., 2017). The overall aim of these open science practices is to increase transparency and reproducibility. However, these attributes in and of themselves do not equate to increased rigour. Nevertheless, open science practices are now standard in social psychology, and thus this thesis incorporates a range of open science procedures including open data, materials, code, pre-registration, and open access.

All data and materials that underpin the empirical work in this thesis are available through an Open Science Foundation (OSF) repository<sup>4</sup>. Making materials and data accessible promotes research transparency (Klein et al., 2018). It does this by allowing other researchers to reproduce the protocol and analysis, enabling verification of any reported results. Such practices are not entirely new, and the APA publication manual (2010) requires researchers to be willing to share raw data with journal editors and other qualified persons. However, recent developments in open science practices make the process of sharing data easier through online repositories. These online repositories increase the accessibility of data by making them easier to find, access and reuse (Klein et al., 2018). Online repositories are also useful for

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<sup>4</sup> See each empirical chapter for links to data

sharing analysis code. Analysis code for empirical chapters five and six are available from OSF. Thus, the analysis in the chapters can be reproduced by other researchers.

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in research practice is the development of pre-registration protocols for confirmatory research (Wagenmakers, Wetzels, Borsboom, van der Maas, & Kievit, 2012). Pre-registration commits researchers to a course of action, methodologically, before interacting with their data. Hypothesis and analysis methods are thus required before data collection. Such practices, in confirmatory research, help researchers avoid bias and publication pressures which encourage positive results. In chapter six, a confirmatory study is pre-registered based on an initial exploratory study.

Finally, published works in this thesis are open access (Tennant et al., 2016). Open access is important both for the global scientific community (where library access may be limited) but also for the subjects of the research. It is vital that the people and groups that social psychologists study have some opportunity to access the research written about them. Open access publishing provides such an opportunity.

### **3.6. Reflexivity and Ethics**

As previously mentioned in the introduction, unemployment could be studied in a variety of different ways. Even when thinking specifically about psychological approaches to studying unemployment, there are several different perspectives. In this thesis, I focus on social relations which create the conditions in which unemployment plays out. Thus meanings, identity and meta-knowledge are crucial.

However, I do not consider the innate predilections of unemployed people as others have done, focusing on ‘personality traits’ (Perkins, 2016), presumed evolutionary adaptations (Woodley of Menie, Sarraf, Pestow, & Fernandes, 2017) or other intransient individual differences. Thus, the thesis does not examine individual-level antecedents or consequences of unemployment. Crucially, these were not even considered.

One reason for this, beyond the theoretical justifications, set out in chapter two, may have been my own experiences as an unemployed person. As discussed in chapter one, I have personally experienced unemployment and found that the most troubling parts of my experience seemed to be my interaction with others in a

context where unemployment is a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman, 1963). Therefore, the thesis tries to understand these societal and interactional components of unemployment. Nevertheless, other perspectives were possible and were not explored at least partly because of these personal experiences.

Political orientations also play a role in the interests of scientists and the questions they ask (Duarte et al., 2015). As a politically left-leaning individual, it may be the case that the questions asked in this research are ideologically driven. In particular, because the research positions unemployment as a permeable social category whose attributes are determined extrinsically. Therefore, there can be no justification for an interpretation that locates individual attributes as a cause or correlate of unemployment. Were it the case that the whole field viewed unemployment in this way, research programs may be limited by not asking questions about individual differences. For good or ill, most research on unemployment does view the phenomenon as an individual problem, without appeal to the broader structure of knowledge that informs individual experience (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009). Thus, the individual approach is not notably lacking in the literature to date.

Still, as argued previously, describing the stigmatisation that unemployed people face, and its effects, naturalises the category and could reduce human agency. That is, in researching unemployment, especially in an uncritical manner, we reify it, and in turn, are in danger of institutionalising unemployed people's behaviour as being caused by unemployment itself. Nevertheless, the thesis is careful in making clear that social categories are intersubjectively agreed and thus do not exist beyond such agreement. Notably there are also divergent perspectives on what such categories entail, and these perspectives change over time (Gillespie et al., 2012).

Finally, at a practical level, there are several ethical considerations when engaging participants via online platforms (Gleibs, 2017). One of the most important is the issue of remuneration; this becomes even more relevant when engaging participants specifically because they are unemployed, and therefore are unlikely to have a stable income. Unemployed people may choose to participate in online research to increase their income, thus in many ways, the relationship between participant and researcher becomes one of employer and contractor. As a result of

this and other issues outlined by Gleibs (2017), participants in this research are paid at least the UK minimum wage at the time of their participation, where it was affordable we also paid a living wage for research participation.

## **Part II: Empirical Research**

## Chapter Four: Elite Stigmatisation of the Unemployed<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

This paper uses a multi-methods approach to explore the social psychological construction of stigma towards the unemployed. Study 1a uses thematic analysis to explore frames used by political elites in speeches at U.K. national conferences between 1996-2016 ( $n=43$ ), in study 1b, we track the usage of these frames in six national newspapers ( $n= 167,723$  articles) over the same period showing an increase in the use of negative frames. Study 1c shows that these are associated with national attitudes towards welfare recipients using the British Social Attitude Survey. We find the ‘Othering’ frame is correlated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed, even when controlling for the unemployment rate. This finding supports the claim that social attitudes are related to frames produced in the political and media spheres. We provide theoretical integration between social representations and framing which affords development in both domains.

**Keywords:** Framing, Stigmatisation, Unemployment, Social Representations, Attitudes

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<sup>5</sup> A published version of this paper is openly accessible here:  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/bjop.12450>





## **Elite Stigmatization of the Unemployed: The Association between Framing and Public Attitudes**

Following the financial crisis in 2008, successive UK governments have implemented austerity measures to reduce public spending which has particularly impacted the welfare state (Reeves et al., 2013). These changes coincided with a hardening of media reporting and political rhetoric associated with unemployed people receiving welfare payments (Fletcher et al., 2016). Notions such as ‘scroungers and shirkers’ have become a prevalent part of public discourse (Jensen & Tyler, 2015; Patrick, 2016). Though it is often argued that this negative rhetoric is associated with attitude changes in the population, negatively impacting welfare recipients by stigmatising them, this relationship has not been explored empirically.

Thus, this paper aims to investigate whether there is a relationship between (a) political discourse (b) newspaper reporting and (c) public attitudes towards the unemployed. Hence, we look at the association between the framing of a specific issue (unemployment) by politicians and its reproduction in national newspapers. We then test whether there is a relationship between the reproduction of political frames and negative attitudes towards the unemployed at a national level.

Specifically, we map the prevalence of discursive frames with a dictionary of words, derived from thematic analysis of political party leaders’ speeches. We use the dictionary to indicate the presence of each frame in six national newspapers over 22 years to demonstrate how the prevalence of different frames has changed over time. The time-series is then examined alongside British Social Attitude (BSA) Survey data concerning the unemployed and unemployment. We find that negative media frames used when reporting about unemployment are correlated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed in the population, even when controlling for the actual unemployment rate.

### **Framing**

Framing is a widely used concept in social psychology, political science and communication and is defined as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 104). Framing operates through communication; for example, economic discourse in the public sphere may be framed in ways that highlight certain elements (e.g. growth) and not others (e.g. average wage). Research on

framing supposes that the prevalence, or exposure, to certain frames influences attitudes of those exposed to the frame. This is known as the ‘framing effect’. Much research has explored how the “frames in the communications of elites (e.g., politicians, media outlets, interest groups) influence citizens’ frames and attitudes” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 109). Framing in the context of elite communication is said to operate by; making new information available; making information which is already known accessible (priming) and/or making certain information more important for the evaluation of a target (Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003; Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Therefore, framing can be considered a political process, often originating from political leaders (Jacoby, 2000). This conceptualisation is known in the literature as *emphasis framing*. Accordingly, public opinion or social attitudes are developed through the interaction of political elites (high profile, senior) and media, whereby politicians frame issues in ways which are beneficial to their party-political goals (Druckman, 2001). This approach may entail emphasising specific elements of an issue, such as individualised explanations for unemployment (Feather, 1985; A. Lewis et al., 1987), which, when reproduced in mass media, focus the public’s evaluation of unemployment only in those terms (Nelson, 2004).

Moreover, research has shown that influential mass media (i.e. newspapers of record such as The Daily Telegraph) are narratively reproduced by other media forms such as tabloid press and digital news outlets (X. Wang & Shoemaker, 2011). Thus, frames used by politicians are likely to be widely shared in newspaper outlets and therefore highly accessible within the social milieu of their origin.

Overall, the literature suggests that framing operates through the reproduction of narratives used by political elites in elite media, which are then co-opted by other media sources. It is important to note that this process is likely to influence, and *be influenced by*, the attitudes and frames-in-thought (an individual’s pre-existing considerations in evaluating a target) of the public in an interactive and iterative process. As such framing is not a unidirectional process, rather it informs and is informed by existing public opinion.

### **Social Psychology and Framing**

Framing is closely related to the theory of social representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Elcheroth et al., 2011; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Moscovici, 2000) that

has been directly deployed in framing research (Uzelgun & Castro, 2015). Social representations are the socially constructed, everyday knowledge that enables humans to interact with the world around them, including other humans, physical and metaphysical objects. The two theories are linked through their attention to knowledge production and common-sense making. Connecting social representations theory (SRT) and framing is empirically useful as SRT provides several concepts that offer analytical power to framing theory. For instance, SRT distinguishes between knowledge that is hegemonic (widely shared, almost universally accepted), emancipated (shared among sub-groups) and polemic (controversial notions and conflicts) (Moscovici, 1988; Mouro & Castro, 2012).

Research on framing in mass media may track the conversion of specific representations from polemic to hegemonic or vice versa. Mapping out these transformations and transitions offers an inroad to understanding how frames – and the ideas, and meanings they convey – travel and change in public spheres.

Social representations are developed in dialogue with others (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). As such representation entails the consideration of alternative ideas and other groups in their formation (Gillespie, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 1995). In any given public sphere, hegemonic, polemic and emancipated representations originating within different interest groups co-exist and come into tension

Thus, from this perspective, framing entails a negotiation between politicians, the mass media and the polity about the meaning of a specific issue. Politicians, in framing an issue, consider the expectations, beliefs and possible reactions of the electorate and media in a self-other dynamic. This pattern fits well with what we have defined earlier as the framing process, aptly describing an interaction between different interests to define an issue. Thus, social representational dynamics are likely to underpin both the efficacy of frames used by politicians and media, but also the content and form they take.

### **The present context and study**

Within the present study, it is important to note that UK welfare recipients have come to the forefront of political and media discourse in the context of austerity, following the financial crisis of 2008. It is argued that the crisis and resulting austerity precipitated changes to social security provisions including increased conditionality for out-of-work benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance

(JSA)/Universal Credit (UC), which is the main form of assistance available to the unemployed (Dwyer & Wright, 2014). These changes are argued to have influenced the ways unemployed people and unemployment are discussed in the media, leading to a rise in negative representations (Jensen, 2014) and a general assumption that stigmatisation of those receiving welfare benefits is hegemonic (Fletcher et al., 2016; Shildrick et al., 2014).

Specifically, academic and lay explanations of the rise of stigmatisation of the unemployed locate its cause with media and political elites (Shildrick et al., 2014). These elite actors have marginalised welfare recipients to provide a pretext that justifies reduced and more conditional welfare spending through the creation of an anti-welfare common sense (Jensen & Tyler, 2015).

Empirically, this relationship would entail a positive association between negative media framing of the unemployed and negative attitudes towards the unemployed in the population. However, studies have not specifically investigated the relationship between political framing, media framing and attitudes on a national level concerning unemployment. To investigate this, we conduct three related studies to understand possible framing effects on attitudes towards the unemployed in the UK.

In an exploratory analysis, we look at how politicians frame unemployment and the unemployed. Building on this analysis and based on previous literature we hypothesise:

H<sub>1</sub>: Negative framing of the unemployed in news media will increase at a faster rate than other kinds of framing within the analysis period.

H<sub>2</sub>: Negative framing of the unemployed will be positively associated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed at a national level.

## **Study 1a: Exploring Frames used by Politicians**

### *Methods*

To explore frames used by political elites we investigated British Political Party leader's speeches at annual conferences<sup>6</sup> from the two main parties (Labour

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<sup>6</sup> retrieved from [www.britishpoliticalspeech.org](http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org)

and Conservative). Speeches at annual conferences address members of the political parties, but also the nation at large and establish key policy initiatives and their rationale. These speeches are a key site where frames related to groups or issues within society are discussed explicitly.

We sampled speeches from 1996, when the current main welfare payment for unemployed citizens seeking work (JSA) was introduced, until 2016 when the new regime of UC began to be rolled out widely ( $n= 43$  speeches). During this period there were 10 party leaders (6 Conservative, 4 Labour) of which five became (or were) Prime Minister<sup>7</sup>. Previous research has used such data to explore the construction of social representations and their parameters (Gleibs, Hendricks, & Kurz, 2018; Obradović & Howarth, 2018; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996)

We used thematic analysis conducted with Nvivo software. The analysis focused on politicians' talk about unemployment broadly, including welfare benefits and unemployed people specifically. We employ thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for its flexibility and focus on how unemployment and unemployed people are constructed. We utilise an inductive approach to the data analysis, concentrating on the semantic content of leader's speeches rather than latent meaning. We move from direct coding, which is descriptive, to summarisation involving the interpretation of the overall meaning of similar codes (themes). The analysis followed an iterative process of close reading of the transcripts, followed by coding where political leaders discuss unemployment, then grouping the codes into sub-themes and finally overarching themes. These overarching themes are then taken as our frames throughout the rest of the paper (see Table 1 and appendix 2 for a full codebook).

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<sup>7</sup> Both parties have spent a relatively equal number of years in power since 1996, 13 Labour and 15 Conservative

*Table 1 Relationship between themes and frames*

	<b>Frame</b>	<b>Search Term</b>
<b>Global Theme</b>	Othering the Unemployed	
<b>Organising Theme</b>	Culture of the Unemployed	
<b>Code</b>		“Something for Nothing Culture”
<b>Example Text</b>		We will end the something for nothing culture. If you don't take a reasonable offer of a job, you lose benefits

*Results*

Overall, three prominent frames in the rhetoric of political leaders are evident. These are ‘othering the unemployed’, ‘politics of unemployment’ and ‘welfare policy’. One of these frames, ‘othering the unemployed’, is decidedly negative. The other two frames are more neutral overall, as they can be presented as positive or negative depending on the project of the speaker. We discuss each of the three frames below, drawing on sub-themes only to illustrate the different ways in which the frames manifest in political rhetoric<sup>8</sup>.

*Othering the Unemployed.*

‘Othering the unemployed’ represents a frame deployed by politicians to discuss the individual attributes of unemployed people, and more broadly to distinguish the unemployed from other citizens based on normative cultural differences. The use of the term ‘othering’ denotes the sense of defining the unemployed as intrinsically different, and subordinate to, the ‘average’ British citizen.

Almost half ( $n=21$ ) of all speeches in the data corpus refer in some way to specific cultural norms of the unemployed that are responsible for their situation. For example:

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<sup>8</sup>for a full overview of the codebook and all data in this paper see [https://osf.io/x4k25/?view\\_only=e3f4f913c20146c28a76d3fff56ccc29](https://osf.io/x4k25/?view_only=e3f4f913c20146c28a76d3fff56ccc29) - This link is anonymised for peer review

“We’re going to liberate people from the *culture of welfare dependency* with a Common Sense Revolution. It’s time to insist that those who can work, must work.” (emphasis added; William Hague, Conservative, 1999)

It is made apparent here that the unemployed are ‘choosing not to work’ and this is proposed as a cultural norm of ‘welfare dependency’ in opposition to the rest of the society. This differentiation builds separation between ‘us’ and the unemployed, partitioning them as a cultural other. This notion is similar to the individualistic mode of explanation for unemployment argued by Lewis, Snell, & Furnham (1987). However, it goes further, considering that unemployed people have a shared culture (Likki & Staerkle, 2015; Shildrick et al., 2014) and by the same token are apart from the culture of the rest of society. The speaker (Hague) references a future project based on ‘common sense’. This future project entails a society in which the culture of welfare dependency is abolished and those who practise it are realigned with the rest of society.

However, politicians do not only focus on the future project of the nation when othering the unemployed by ascribing cultural differences to them. They also appeal to the past, as a place where positive shared norms around work can be found:

*“Decades ago, when we had a universal collective culture of respect for work, a system of unconditional benefits was good and right and effective... That culture doesn't exist anymore. In fact, worse than that, the benefit system itself encourages a benefit culture ... So we will end the something for nothing culture”* (emphasis added; David Cameron, Conservative, 2008)

Here David Cameron appeals to a historical period when all citizens shared a culture of work. He argues that this culture no longer exists, having been replaced by a ‘benefit culture’, characterising it by its ‘lack of respect for work’.

Politicians draw on and attempt to create, a shared understanding of a distinct sub-culture of unemployment. This attempt is often signalled by an emphasis on state dependency and more recently a “something for nothing culture”. This notional “myth of voluntary unemployment” (MacLeavy, 2011, p. 5) is deployed as an affront to the historical national and cultural norms of British society as referenced in David



Cameron's statement that in the past - "we had a universal collective culture of respect for work".

Another strategy used by party leaders juxtaposes 'hard-working, law-abiding people' and 'ordinary, working-class' (Ian Duncan Smith, 2003; Theresa May, 2016) against the 'culture of benefits'. Here, 'hard-working' is used as a term which encapsulates British culture, clearly implying that those who do not work are excluded from the constituency of political elites. For instance:

"The Conservative Party has always stood for *hard-working, law-abiding people*. And we stand for them again today." (Ian Duncan Smith, Conservative, 2003)

In 20 speeches party leaders made direct reference to the 'hard-working', mainly defining them as the population to which their party was focusing their attention and policies. This helps to create a representation of who deserves support and who should be excluded. In some cases, the employed are directly contrasted with those who do not work:

"...hard working families who play by the rules are not going to see their opportunities blighted by those that don't." (Tony Blair, Labour, 2004)

Other research in this area has noted similar findings in the way that the unemployed are not just defined, but also compared, with employed people (Gibson, 2009). We can interpret this kind of rhetoric as identity entrepreneurship (Gleibs et al., 2018; Reicher et al., 2005), where British identity is constructed around notions of hard work, effectively excluding unemployed from belonging within the national identity.

This frame of 'Othering the Unemployed' may set in-group boundaries that are defined by engagement with the labour market. As such, those who are engaged with the labour market become part of the ingroup to whom politicians' direct rhetoric and policy, whereas those claiming welfare benefits are excluded (i.e. made as an 'other' in opposition to the ingroup norms of hard-work). The 'other' here is demonised as a threat to cultural norms and values. The unemployed are represented as responsible for their own circumstances which necessitates radical action to

eliminate the threat to the national project. This kind of rhetoric when shared widely may encourage an anti-welfare common sense (Slater, 2014) that is likely to be associated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed nationally. However, such an association is yet untested.

*Politics of Unemployment.*

The second frame is ‘politics of unemployment’. It is often deployed to either aggrandise the achievements of one’s political party or debase the record of another by referring to the rate of unemployment, job creation or other statistical measures. This frame was present in 14 speeches.

“We set out to create jobs. And we are succeeding. Unemployment is lower here than in any comparable country in Europe. In Britain it is falling. Across Europe it is not.” (John Major, Conservative, 1996)

Here John Major attests to the conservative party’s success in reducing unemployment at a faster rate than other comparable nations. This claim implies that the economy is doing well, and, by association, the Conservatives’ economic policies are succeeding.

“So what have we seen? We’ve seen recession, higher unemployment, higher borrowing. I don’t think that’s what people were promised.” (Ed Miliband, Labour, 2012)

In this quote, Miliband, rather than praising his own party, discusses the failure of the opposition (higher unemployment, higher borrowing), and questions their campaign promises. Economics are instrumental in electoral politics and the perceived economic aptitude of a party can be influential in elections. This frame generally represents how party leaders frame the economic circumstances related to the rates of unemployment. This comparison is done either by relation to previous British governments or by contrast to similar foreign nations.

The importance of this frame is to construct an account of economic and therefore political success or failure through unemployment. Notably, though, this

frame is not indicative of the kinds of people who are unemployed and therefore can be influential in creating more sympathetic attitudes to unemployment. For instance, where unemployment is high, the electorate may be more compassionate towards the unemployed, because economic circumstances are challenging. This consideration could give rise to notions that unemployment is a matter of societal conditions and not reserved for a specific sub-culture (Lewis et al., 1987). Literature that seeks to understand attitudes towards the unemployed often distinguishes between individual and structural causes for unemployment (Bullock, 1999; Feather, 1985; Piff et al., 2020). The political frame can represent a structural cause for unemployment where high rates of unemployment or related issues are foregrounded.

#### *Welfare Policy.*

Finally, in the 'welfare policy' frame ( $n = 33$  speeches), politicians use unemployment, and the dangers it poses, as a platform for supporting new initiatives. Through this analysis, we can trace the introduction of new policies and their perceived impact. For example, John Major (Conservative) in 1996 states:

“This week we Tories took a big step forward with the start of our new Job Seeker’s Allowance. We do not want to pay people to stay on the dole. We do want to help them get back into work.”

Political elites deploy the frame as a solution to the problems of either the welfare state broadly or unemployment specifically. Also, in some cases, politicians are explicit about the kinds of unemployed people who will benefit from new policies:

“We are adding today the option of self employment as part of the new deal. But they have to take one of the options on offer. We want single mothers with school age children at least to visit a job centre, not just stay at home waiting for the benefit cheque every week” (Tony Blair, Labour, 1997)

Here Tony Blair portrays an image of a single mother, conjuring the trope of the ‘welfare queen’ (Bullock, Fraser Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Chauhan & Foster,

2014; Fletcher et al., 2016). The policy solution, in this case, provides state assistance conditional on attending a jobcentre. Conditionality of welfare payments introduced during this period changed the welfare system drastically (Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Wright, 2014). More recent changes are an advancement of this idea:

“With us, if you’re out of work, you will get unemployment benefit...but only if you go to the Job Centre, update your CV, attend interviews and accept the work you’re offered.” (David Cameron, Conservative, 2014)

This more recent form of conditionality includes receiving assistance only if unemployed people ‘accept the work they’re offered’. The welfare policy frame, then, narrates the conditions upon which unemployed persons and others can receive assistance. The benefits of each initiative are outlined in terms of their impact either directly on the unemployed, or on fiscal savings (Fletcher et al., 2016).

### *Discussion*

Each frame can, and often is, deployed alongside the others. Political elites may describe unemployed people in a way that frames them as an outgroup, whilst in the same narrative discussing the economic context and offering policy solutions. However, it is useful for answering our research questions about the development of frames over time and their association with attitudes, to separate these into distinct categories. Moreover, although used in conjunction, the frames that we have identified are both internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous and refer to distinct rhetorical elements.

It is also important to note that the language used to invoke each frame has changed over time and certain phrases that were present in the early speeches are not present in later speeches, such as the notion of ‘job culture’ to denote mainly working-class unemployed young men (McDowell, 2007). This development provides support for the analysis method. By directly examining language longitudinally we can be confident that we have captured a variety of ways in which each frame is deployed and not only the current acceptable terminology.

As the goal of our analysis was to understand the different ways in which unemployed people and unemployment were represented by politicians, we did not

focus specifically on how each theme differed across political parties. However, there were some variations between parties in terms of the number of coded items across themes. Conservative leaders generally were coded more into the Othering frame (78 vs 49) and Labour leaders were coded more into the Policy frame (73 vs 47). The meaning of these variations would require further analysis since the context of leadership for each party is heterogeneous. While during the period of this analysis the Conservative party had six party leaders, Labour had only four, with two of these coming after 2010<sup>9</sup>. In addition, the heavier coding for Labour leaders into the policy frame could be explained by their longer tenure in power during the analysis period. Nevertheless, it has been argued that the rhetoric of these parties in relation to social welfare has become more aligned over time. In particular that the New Labour approach to welfare, the so-called ‘Third Way’, has extended and drawn upon conservative party policies and rhetoric (Deacon, 2002; Dwyer, 2004).

Through this analysis, we have shown that politicians do frame the unemployed in negative ways in the context of party leaders’ speeches. This understanding provides a useful first step in ascertaining whether negative frames have become more prevalent between the introduction of JSA and UC using an ecologically valid analysis of the ways the frames are deployed in naturalistic (for political elites) settings. However, this analysis does not provide us with information about how widely the frames are shared or whether the use of these frames has increased. We address this question in study 1b.

### **Study 1b: Use and Development of Frames in National Newspapers.**

#### *Methods*

As we are interested in the prevalence of frames relating to unemployment, those newspapers that are most widely circulated are assumed to be the most precipitous of framing effects for the population at large. Furthermore, national newspapers have often been considered an important medium through which ideas about unemployed people are developed and transmitted (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Bullock, 1999; Bullock et al., 2001; Chauhan & Foster, 2014; Dorey, 2010; Fraser, 1994).

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<sup>9</sup> Excluding Harriet Harman as acting leader twice who never made a speech as leader at party conference

In the UK, newspapers have a political orientation and lend support to political parties, therefore we have included a variety of newspapers with differing political orientations and reporting style. Specifically, we include; The Daily Mail (right-wing, tabloid,  $n = 16,708^{10}$ ), The Daily Telegraph (right-wing, broadsheet,  $n = 26,227^4$ ), The Mirror (left-wing, tabloid,  $n = 17,409^4$ ), The Sun (right-wing, tabloid,  $n = 18,949^4$ ) and The Daily Express<sup>11</sup> (right-wing, tabloid,  $n = 18,702^4$ ). These newspapers represent the five most widely circulated newspapers over the 22-year period of the analysis. The Guardian (left-wing, broadsheet,  $n = 40,906^4$ ) was added to the analysis to provide a full spectrum of political orientation and reporting style.

We collated keywords/phrases related to each frame from the political leaders' speeches into a dictionary that indicated the presence of the frames. We only use keywords which are direct quotations from leaders' speeches (see table 1). By only using phrases used in the elite discourse we solve issues of objectivity in researcher defined dictionaries, where word selection can be compromised by the method of selection or the researcher's hypotheses. The keywords/phrases obtained from the political speeches were used in a keyword search of the six selected major national UK newspapers over the same period (1996-2017 inclusive) through the *Factiva* digital archive. Where applicable all search terms are truncated by use of an asterisk enabling returned results for all forms of the word. The search result is the number of articles containing each search word in each year in all six newspapers ( $n= 167,723$  across all years including duplicates). A proxy for the total number of articles in each newspaper per year was obtained by using the search word 'the' and following the same process ( $n= 13,368,184$  including duplicates). We therefore ascertain what proportion of the total number of articles contain the search word in question by dividing the number of search word hits in each year by the total number of articles in each year. Thus, in the analysis, increases in the use of a search term are increases in the number of articles using that term as a proportion of the total in that year. This is summed to give a total proportion for each frame. Following Phelps et al. (2012) keywords/phrases returning less than 20 articles in the peak year, were removed leaving a total of 44 keywords/phrases to be included in the analysis (see

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<sup>10</sup> Excluding duplicates

<sup>11</sup> Analysis for this newspaper begins in 1997 because the Factiva archives' records start for this paper in that year

table 2). Readers will notice that the number of keywords/phrases used in each frame is unequal, this reflects the language used by politicians which is specific to each frame. However, the number of search words in each frame is not directly related to the number of articles retrieved (table 3).

*Table 2 Dictionary of words related to each frame*

<b>Search Terms</b>		
<b>Othering the Unemployed</b>	<b>Politics of Unemployment</b>	<b>Welfare Policy</b>
benefit claimant*	job creation	benefit* cap
benefit culture	job crisis	benefit* system
benefit fraud*	job losses	housing benefit*
broken society	mass unemployment	incapacity benefit*
claiming benefit*	unemployment figure*	income support
culture of dependency	welfare bill*	job centre*/jobcentre*
cycle of dependency	youth unemployment	job seekers allowance
hard-working famil*		means tested benefit*
hard-working majority		out-of-work benefit*
hard-working people		troubled famil*
life on the dole		unemployment benefit*
on benefit*		welfare cap
ordinary working class		welfare cut*
something for nothing culture		welfare reform
striver*		work capability assessment*
unemployment blackspot*		
welfare cheat*		
welfare claimant*		
welfare dependency		
welfare recipient*		
welfare society		
job culture		

*Table 3 Total Articles retrieved from keyword search alongside total articles published in the relevant newspapers*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Search Word Articles</b>	<b>Total Published Articles</b>
<b>1996</b>	3244	200,759
<b>1997</b>	3878	269,987
<b>1998</b>	4865	308,644
<b>1999</b>	4217	346,810
<b>2000</b>	4355	400,832
<b>2001</b>	4917	505,932
<b>2002</b>	4213	566,286
<b>2003</b>	4299	582,920
<b>2004</b>	5168	588,140
<b>2005</b>	5851	593,374
<b>2006</b>	5190	611,433
<b>2007</b>	4869	608,641
<b>2008</b>	8274	609,942
<b>2009</b>	10,470	704,802
<b>2010</b>	14,187	737,008
<b>2011</b>	11,641	742,464
<b>2012</b>	13,320	789,391
<b>2013</b>	14,154	769,183
<b>2014</b>	11,192	767,516
<b>2015</b>	13,291	879,623
<b>2016</b>	9576	923,958
<b>2017</b>	6552	860,539
<b>Total</b>	167,723	13,368,184

To understand how frame usage has changed over time in the media we employed two statistical measures. The correlation between the proportion of articles containing the search word and linear time (Pearson's  $r$ ) and the estimated mean annual change (EMAC).

The EMAC measure (Nafstad et al., 2013; Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2007, 2009; Phelps et al., 2012) is calculated using a relative linear regression slope. This is done by dividing the regression slope (number of articles predicted by the year) by the mean number of articles per year for each keyword and multiplying this figure by 100. For example, if the search word 'journal' has a slope coefficient of 0.1 and an average of 10 articles per year for 20



years, then the calculation would be  $0.1/10 \times 100$ . We would then report an EMAC of 1%, indicating an increase of usage by 1% each year over 20 years.

The EMAC accounts for factors not addressed by simple percentage calculations, including consideration for keywords that begin at different points in the time series (for a larger discussion of the EMAC see Nafstad et al., 2009). We have varied the EMAC calculation from previous research that looks directly at the number of times a word is used by basing the calculation on the mean number of articles that include each search term. This is necessary because we do not have a valid comparison with the development of a large sample of popular words over time (e.g. Nafstad et al, 2013).

### *Results*

#### *Estimated Mean Annual Change (EMAC)*

The developmental changes in the usage of the three frames we have identified are presented in table 4. We see that the Othering frame has an EMAC increase of 2.7% ( $M = .0036$ ,  $SD = .0013^{12}$ ),  $r = .49$ ,  $p = .021$   $n = 22$ . EMAC scores of 3% or more are considered high (Nafstad et al., 2013). This increase tells us that the Othering frame is becoming a more popular narrative over time, which adds further credence to the assertions of other researchers about the growing use of stigmatising language to describe unemployed people (Fletcher et al., 2016; Friedli & Stearn, 2015; Gibson, 2009).

*Table 4 Estimated Mean Annual Change Results for articles between 1996 – 2017 inclusive*

<b>Search word</b>	<b>Correlation with linear Time (Pearson's <i>r</i>)</b>	<b>EMAC (%)</b>	<b>Peak Year</b>	<b>Lowest Year</b>
<b>Othering the Unemployed</b>	.49*	2.69	2013	2002
<b>Politics of Unemployment</b>	-.24	-1.24	2009	2007
<b>Welfare Policy</b>	-.11	0.61	2010	2002

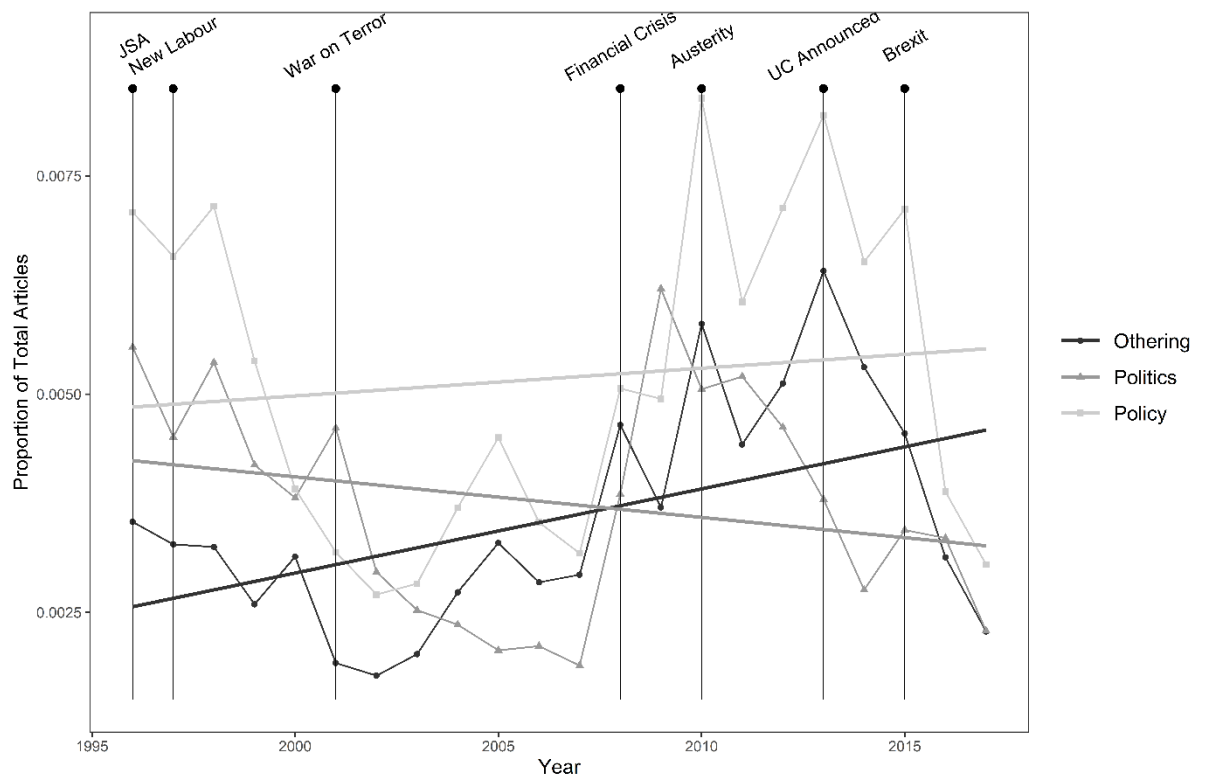
<sup>12</sup> Mean and standard deviation here refer to the number of articles in the frame as a proportion of the total number of articles

This frame's usage peaked in 2013 during the height of the conservative parties' changes to social security provision. 2013 was also the year that UC was introduced to replace a range of means-tested social security benefits (Fletcher et al., 2016). These facts may suggest that the Othering frame is deployed during times of political change relating to the provision of social security.

The politics of unemployment frame has an EMAC of -1.24% ( $M = .0038$   $SD = .0013$ ),  $r = -.24$ ,  $p = .290$   $n = 22$ ) indicating that the frames' use is slightly declining; however, given that the Pearson correlation is not significant, we conclude this is a more volatile frame that relies heavily on the context of use. It is notable that the lowest year in which this frame was present, as a proportion of all articles, was a year before the financial crisis (2007) and its peak year was after the financial crisis began (2009). This result indicates the ecological validity of the frames we have identified, given that they mirror the socio-political context at the time.

Finally, the welfare policy frame has seen a trivial increase over the analysis period of 0.61% ( $M = .0052$ ,  $SD = .0019$ ),  $r = .11$ ,  $p = .621$ ,  $n = 22$ . However, it is to be noted again that the correlation with linear time is not significant and therefore changing usage of the frame is not related to the passage of time but rather other contextual variables.

Figure 1 Scatterplot of the development of each frame over time



To summarise, the Othering frame has seen the greatest increases using the EMAC measure and is significantly correlated with linear time. As such, H<sub>1</sub> is confirmed; negative framing of the unemployed in national news media is increasing at a faster rate than other frames we have identified. Still, plotting these results against major political events shows that these changes should be contextualised within the broader political landscape (figure 1). We see falls in the use of all three frames especially following the start of the ‘war on terror’ and large increases following the financial crisis and the onset of austerity. Looking forward we see a similar decline from the start of the Brexit referendum which is likely to continue until the UK leaves the EU. Nevertheless, the upward trend of ‘othering the unemployed’ is relatively stable from 2002 until the start of UC. We also note that there was not a sustained increase in the use of the ‘politics of unemployment’ frame even during what was a sustained financial crisis.

#### *Discussion*

The results of study 1b show that negative framing of the unemployed has become more prevalent in the analysed newspapers. The change in prevalence of negative framing of the unemployed is significantly associated with linear time.

Thus, we have provided evidence to reject the null hypothesis, that negative framing of the unemployed does not increase at a faster rate than other kinds of framing. However, this study does not show whether the increased use of framing has effects on the populations’ attitudes towards unemployed people. That is, we have not shown what frames *do*. In study 1c we look at the relationship between the use of frames and attitudes at the national level to test for possible framing effects.

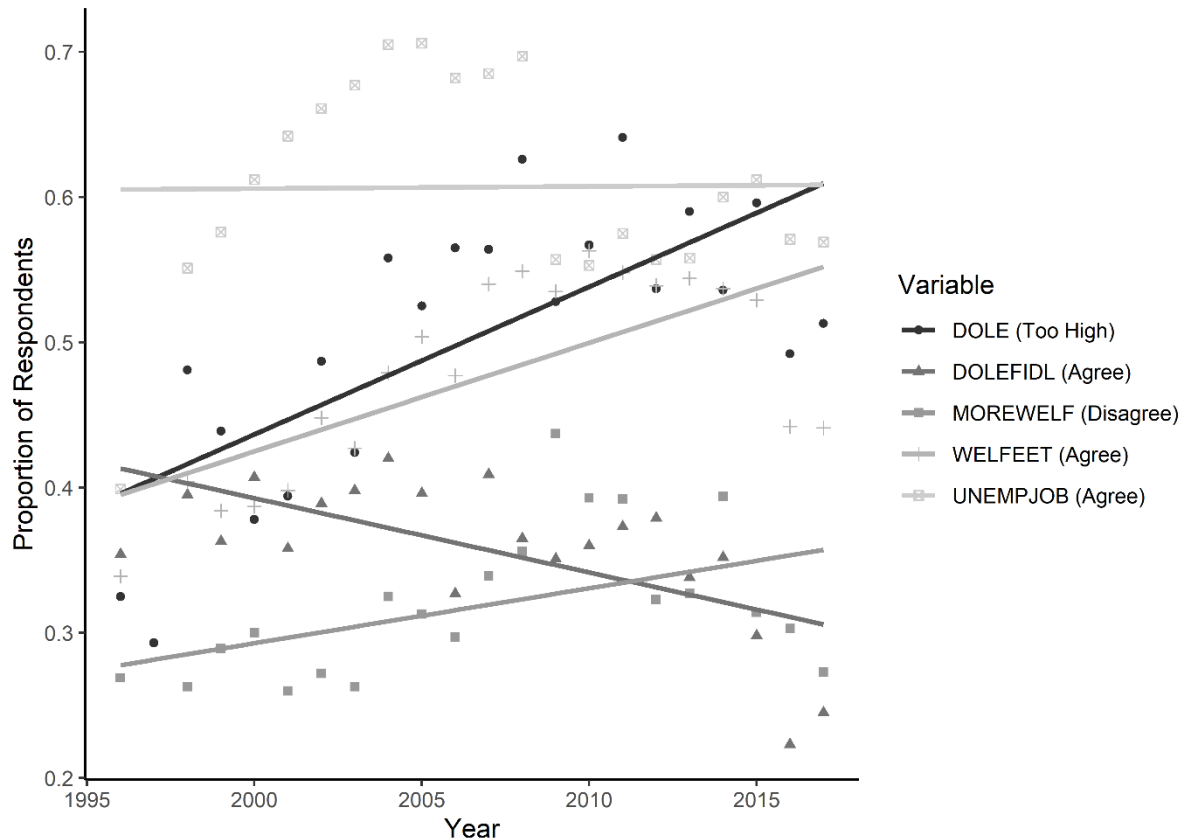
### **Study 1c: Frames and the Development of National Attitudes towards the Unemployed**

#### *Methods*

To ascertain if changes in the use of different frames have any relationship with overall national attitudes towards welfare recipients, we obtained BSA Survey data for the period 1996-2017 for five variables related to unemployment. BSA

survey is a representative cross-sectional survey consisting of approximately 3000 participants per year. The variables chosen concern attitudes towards welfare and welfare recipients and have been collected for a large majority of the analysis period. A time-series of these variables is presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 Scatterplot of British Social Attitude Survey data over time



The first variable we analysed was the proportion of respondents who disagree/strongly disagree with the item ‘the government should spend more money on welfare benefits’ (MOREWELF) on a five-point scale ( $N= 21^{13}$ ,  $M = .32$ ,  $SD = .05$ ). The second variable asks respondents to choose between two statements “benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship, OR benefits for unemployed people are too high and discourage them from finding jobs” (DOLE,  $N = 22$ ,  $M = .50$ ,  $SD = .10$ ). Here, we take the percentage of people who agree with the latter. The third variable examines the percentage of people who agree/strongly agree

<sup>13</sup> For each of these attitude variables N refers to the number of waves analysed i.e. the number of years for which we have data

with the statement “if welfare benefits weren't so generous, people would learn to stand on their own two feet” (WELFEET,  $N=21$ ,  $M=.48$ ,  $SD = .07$ ). Fourth, we investigate the proportion of people who agree/agree strongly “Most people on the dole are fiddling in one way or another” (DOLEFIDL,  $N = 21$ ,  $M = .36$ ,  $SD = .05$ ). Finally, we use the variable UNEMPJOB which asks, “How much do you agree or disagree that ... around here, most unemployed people could find a job if they really wanted one”. We take the percentage that agree or agree strongly (UNEMPJOB,  $N = 21$ ,  $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .07$ )

We also include a measure of the unemployment rate from the Eurostat database. The rate is the percentage of the working-age population in the UK who were unemployed in the reference week, available for work and actively seeking work. This rate is distinct from the number of people claiming social security support because they are unemployed, which is known as the ‘claimant count’. We also include this measure in the correlation analysis. The claimant count data was drawn from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) UK.

### *Results*

To see if there was an association between the use of the identified frames in national newspapers (Othering the Unemployed, Politics of Unemployment and Welfare Policy) and BSA measures related to unemployment we conducted a correlational analysis. Table 5 summarises the results and shows that the Othering frame is consistently associated with negative attitude measures in the population (except DOLEFIDL, which was uncorrelated with any other variables and UNEMPJOB which was negatively correlated with both Politics of Unemployment and Welfare Policy). Othering is also significantly associated with the unemployment rate ( $r = .64$ ,  $p = .001$ ), However, it is not significantly associated with the more direct measure, claimant count. This difference is of note because it suggests that the actual number of people claiming social security benefits is not an important prerequisite for heightened stigmatisation of this group. However, the unemployment rate is highly correlated with the claimant count. We may speculate that where the unemployment rate rises, UK citizens, media and politicians may be sensitized to possible future rises in the claimant count, contributing to further stigmatisation of unemployed people who claim social security benefits.

Notably, our other frames are associated with UNEMPJOB and none of the other attitude measures. This indicates that increased use of these frames reduces negative attitudes towards the unemployed concerning their ability to find work. This adds credence to our earlier assertion that highlighting structural rather than individual causes of unemployment may ameliorate negative attitudes to the unemployed in the population. Overall though, we have shown that negative framing of unemployed welfare recipients is positively associated with negative attitudes in the population, supporting H<sub>2</sub>.

Given that we intuitively may suspect the rate of unemployment is a confounding variable in the association between negative framing and negative attitudes, we conducted multiple linear regression to test the effects of the Othering frame on attitudes when controlling for the unemployment rate. This process was done with each of the attitude variables, though UNEMPJOB and DOLEFIDL are not reported here due to non-significant correlations. The regression models for each of the other variables were significant, and the Othering frame was a significant predictor of these negative attitudes even when controlling for the rate of unemployment (see table 6).

Table 5  
Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Othering	<0.01	<0.01									
2. Politics	<0.01	<0.01	.31								
			[-.13, .65]								
3. Policy	0.01	0.00	.83**	.58**							
			[.63, .93]	[.21, .80]							
4. DOLE	0.50	0.09	.49*	-.22	.12						
			[.08, .75]	[-.58, .23]	[-.32, .52]						
5. DOLEFIDL	0.36	0.05	-.07	.04	-.02	-.10					
			[-.49, .37]	[-.39, .47]	[-.45, .41]	[-.51, .35]					
6. MOREWELF	0.32	0.05	.63**	.28	.36	.61**	.06				
			[.27, .83]	[-.18, .63]	[-.08, .69]	[.24, .82]	[-.38, .48]				
7. WELFEET	0.48	0.07	.67**	-.08	.32	.90**	.02	.78**			
			[.34, .86]	[-.50, .36]	[-.12, .66]	[.76, .96]	[-.42, .44]	[.52, .91]			
8. UNEMPJOB	0.61	0.07	-.33	-.70**	-.61**	.35	.32	-.03	.28		
			[-.67, .12]	[-.87, -.38]	[-.83, -.25]	[-.10, .68]	[-.13, .66]	[-.45, .41]	[-.18, .63]		
9. Unmp Rate (%)	6.10	1.21	.64**	.74**	.74**	.06	-.02	.49*	.29	-.74**	
			[.29, .84]	[.45, .89]	[.46, .89]	[-.38, .48]	[-.46, .43]	[.06, .76]	[-.18, .65]	[-.89, -.45]	
10. Claim Count (0000's)	1181.42	355.43	.36	.78**	.65**	-.31	.09	.19	-.10	-.86**	.91**
			[-.08, .69]	[.53, .91]	[.30, .84]	[-.66, .14]	[-.37, .51]	[-.28, .58]	[-.52, .35]	[-.94, -.66]	[.78, .96]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation.

\* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

Table 6

Regression results using MOREWELF as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>r</i>	Fit
(Intercept)	0.21**	[0.11, 0.31]						
Unemployment Rate	0.01	[-0.02, 0.03]	0.16	[-0.37, 0.69]	.01	[-.07, .10]	.49*	
Othering	19.46 <sup>†</sup>	[-1.04, 39.95]	0.50	[-0.03, 1.04]	.15	[-.11, .40]	.61**	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .383* 95% CI[.01,.59]
<i>Regression results using DOLE as the criterion</i>								
(Intercept)	0.50**	[0.31, 0.69]						
Unemployment Rate	-0.03	[-0.08, 0.01]	-0.44	[-0.95, 0.07]	.11	[-.11, .34]	.06	
Othering	58.60**	[20.48, 96.72]	0.79	[0.27, 1.30]	.37	[.04, .69]	.50*	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .369* 95% CI[.02,.57]
<i>Regression results using WELFEET as the criterion</i>								
(Intercept)	0.41**	[0.28, 0.54]						
Unemployment Rate	-0.01	[-0.04, 0.01]	-0.26	[-0.75, 0.22]	.04	[-.09, .17]	.29	
Othering	44.67**	[18.95, 70.40]	0.84	[0.36, 1.33]	.41	[.08, .73]	.67**	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .487** 95% CI[.08,.66]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*<sup>2</sup> represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

<sup>†</sup> indicates *p* = .061 \* indicates *p* < .05. \*\* indicates *p* < .01.



## **General Discussion**

In study 1a we provided evidence that politicians use at least three different frames to discuss the unemployed and unemployment. One of these frames, 'Othering the Unemployed' was decidedly negative. Our first hypothesis, that negative framing of the unemployed increases at a faster rate than other frames found support using the EMAC measure. We also found support for our second hypothesis that negative framing of the unemployed would be positively correlated with negative attitudes towards the unemployed. Additional evidence was found using multiple linear regression models where we controlled for the unemployment rate, showing that over and above the effect of the unemployment rate, there is a significant relationship between the Othering frame and negative attitudes in the population.

Much of the framing literature does not unambiguously test relationships between political framing, media framing and attitudes nationally. In this paper we provide a specific test of this association between framing and attitudes towards the unemployed/unemployment in the UK, tracing their usage, through both political communication and widely shared newspaper reporting, longitudinally.

Through this methodology of tracking frames through different mediums of communication, we support assertions from framing literature that suppose the prevalence of, and exposure to, frames influence the attitudes of citizens towards the object of the frame. In this case, leading to more negative attitudes towards the unemployed in the general population. This method is consistent with conceptualisations of framing that posit it as a political phenomenon originating with political elites (Jacoby, 2000) and not necessarily based on factual information (Hopkins, Sides, & Citrin, 2016) such as the actual unemployment rate.

However, framing theory provides only a partial account of where frames originate and how they are developed in the public sphere. Here an integration of the SRT literature is useful to account for the development of frames through the interactivity of different actors in the public sphere to define the issues associated with unemployment. Social representations as we have described embed self-other relations in their constitution. That is, social representations are intersubjectively agreed social realities. When politicians seek to frame an issue, they must be aware of and consider,

the possible reactions, motives and beliefs of the polity. As such, framing *is not* a unidirectional relationship from political elites to citizens. Rather the assumed beliefs of citizens define acceptable and popular frames on issues of political import.

Different social representations of the same issue may exclude or diminish the veracity of other representations (Howarth, 2006), this can explain how the ‘Othering’ frame increases in use over time and in particular after the financial crises while other, competing frames remain stagnant. This process alludes to the development of increasing hegemony of the Othering frame to account for unemployment. The results support the theoretical hypothesis that ‘otherising’, which relies on social psychological processes of creating outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), is an effective frame in shaping social attitudes. Such a frame it appears is much more compelling than the policy or political domains which do not draw upon these social psychological processes.

The results of this study have several implications. Foremost, they support both academic and lay assertions that stigmatisation of the unemployed is related to political rhetoric and media elites. At a societal level, the ramifications of this may be the open acceptance of stigmatisation of the unemployed, making negative attitudes towards the unemployed a common-sense, natural assertion. At the interpersonal level, there are likely to be impacts on the social interactions of unemployed people. Given that anti-welfare common-sense is widespread it would be sensible for unemployed individuals to assume that that identity would be stigmatised by relevant others, thereby influencing their beliefs about others beliefs (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Finally, at the personal level, it would also be possible for unemployed people to internalise negative attitudes about unemployed people in general and apply those attitudes to themselves. These personally applied negative attitudes may partially explain the negative psychological effects associated with unemployment (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Wanberg, 2012).

Other research in this area has often suggested that negative media and political rhetoric towards marginalised groups would be associated with negative attitudes towards those groups. However, this study is the first instance (that we know of) where longitudinal data has been used to track this association over time within the context of unemployment in the UK, using ecologically valid data to ascertain how different narratives are deployed and change over time. As such, this study presents strong

evidence that the unemployed have become a more stigmatised group over time worthy of the attention of researchers in social psychology and related disciplines.

### *Limitations*

There are some limitations of this study. First, there are issues with how our dictionary was produced. Because we have used party leaders' speeches at national conferences, we may not have captured all the phrases which indicate the presence of the frames we have identified. Political speeches are a more contrived, formal mode of communication than everyday language (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). As such we may not capture the more derogatory phrases used in informal communication and therefore not fully capture all articles which invoke the frames we identified.

Secondly, this research is limited by the relatively low number of time series observations used in the analysis (BSA,  $n = 21/22$ , Newspaper,  $n = 22$ ). However, posthoc power analysis using G\*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) suggests that based on the mean correlation between negative framing (Othering) and attitudes (.59) then  $n = 22$  obtains statistical power of .85. Nevertheless, other frames may have smaller effects that we are not able to capture.

We also note the limitations of correlational studies and the inability to understand causal effects. Still, we feel that experimental data is not appropriate for this paper, as the conditions of repeated exposure to frames in the societal context cannot be reproduced satisfactorily in laboratory settings. We have additional confidence in these results because we have controlled for (in study 1c) the effects of the actual unemployment rate on attitudes and have still obtained a significant effect of the Othering frame. However, we also attempted to explore whether a lagged time-series analysis would be appropriate (following Kellstedt, 2000; Russell Neuman, Guggenheim, Mo Jang, & Bae, 2014), but the number of data points was insufficient for a reliable analysis.

### *Further Research*

Further research is needed to ascertain the generalisability of the findings of this study with other target groups. It should be possible, using the methodology described

here, to examine attitudes towards a wide array of stigmatised groups, if that stigmatisation is prevalent in public discourse.

In addition, researchers interested in this topic may look to pin down the direction of causality in the relationship between political rhetoric, media reporting and individual attitudes. Though it should be noted that our theoretical perspective (SRT) dictates that at any point in the causal chain there is at least an implicit negotiation between self and other, such that each actor, be it, politician, newspaper or individual is considering the representations, values, beliefs and identities of others when making decisions about frames to employ (Gillespie, 2008).

As we have noted, political language and mass media can change the nature of social reality by presenting new knowledge about groups and objects in the social world. This influence is, at least in part, because these actors (politicians and media) are seen as being prototypical members of British society (Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Reicher et al., 2005). As such, knowledge production and common-sense making are about what we think others think of an issue. This notion has been variously described as meta-knowledge or meta-representation (Elcheroth et al., 2011). To understand the effects of stigmatisation on the unemployed, empirical research should investigate the relationship between representations and meta-representations in the context of stigmatised identities. That is, to what extent does stigmatisation effect how unemployed people think about their own identities and how they think, others think, about their identities i.e., meta-identification?

## **Conclusion**

Nothing can be inferred from an individual's employment status about what kind of person they are. Yet, in this paper, we have shown that indeed, employment status is used to infer a variety of negative individual attributes, which designate unemployed people as a cultural other. When these modes of communication are deployed by political and media elites, they influence the attitudes of citizens towards unemployed people, often in stigmatising ways. This relationship between framing and attitudes towards the unemployed does not go away when we include the actual unemployment rate.

These results provide cause for concern around the lived experience of unemployment considering the stigmatisation that people who find themselves out of work face. Coping with a stigmatised social identity is beset with challenges and may reduce the ability of unemployed individuals to find work or seek support to do so. In this paper, we have provided evidence that this stigmatisation exists, but more work is needed to understand what its effects are on work-related outcomes. Social scientists and policy-makers would do well to turn their attention to understanding and creating systems and policies which would enable positive social identities to be sustained, even in unemployment. Such an approach would surely provide common benefit to society, as well as the individual.

## **Chapter Five: Is being Identified as Important as Identification? Modelling Meta-Stereotypes and Meta-identification effects on Self -Esteem, Well-Being and Cognitive Performance in Unemployment**

### **Abstract**

It is likely that how an individual sees themselves, differs from how they believe others perceive them. In the social identity tradition, members of a group are seen to both define themselves as group members and be defined by others as such. But what of when an individual does not see themselves as part of a group, but others do? We explore the differential effects of identification and meta-identification on self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance in two studies. In the first, we fit a path model to survey data ( $N = 170$ ) showing that meta-identification uniquely predicts well-being, whereas identification uniquely predicts performance self-esteem. In the second study ( $N = 140$ ), we experimentally manipulate meta-stereotypes, and measure both self and meta-identification, and look at their effect on cognitive performance. We show that positive meta-stereotypes increase performance over both control and negative meta-stereotype conditions. In addition, meta-identification, and not identification, significantly predicts cognitive performance, such that higher levels of meta-identification are associated with lower performance. Results are discussed in relation to meta-identification as an underexplored antecedent of stereotype threat effects.

## **Is being Identified as Important as Identification? Modelling Meta-Stereotypes and Meta-identification effects on Self -Esteem, Well-Being and Cognitive Performance in Unemployment**

It is well known that stigmatised group memberships can have detrimental psychological effects (Croizet & Claire, 1998; Paul & Moser, 2009; Steele et al., 2002; Wanberg, 2012). Therefore, stigmatised group members are unlikely to identify highly with the stigmatised group, especially where the groups' boundaries are permeable (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Tajfel, 1981). Nevertheless, they may still perceive that they are being identified as members of the stigmatised group by relevant others (meta-identification). The effect of being identified, as opposed to self-identifying (Cooley, 1902; Duveen, 2001; Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011; Finkelstein, Ryan, & King, 2013; Mead, 1934; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998), on self-esteem and well-being is not well known, though crucial for our understanding of social identities. Recent scholarship has focused on the effects of the denial of identities that group members identify with, but are not acknowledged or validated by others, i.e. the denial of ethnic minorities' national identity (J. Wang, Minervino, & Cheryan, 2013) or the (mis/non)recognition (the affirmation of an identity by others) of 'incompatible' identities, i.e. white Muslims (Amer, 2020). Still, what if we believe others recognise a group membership we wish to deny?

To explore this issue, we examine the effect of identification and meta-identification on the self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance of a stigmatised group - the unemployed. Both politicians and media have consistently marginalised unemployed people, particularly those claiming state assistance (Okoroji et al., 2021). As a result, we expect unemployed people to have low levels of identification with other unemployed people given the stereotype content of the group membership (Cuddy et al., 2008). However, it then becomes essential to investigate the effects of identification with unemployment *and*, given the likelihood of low levels of identification, the effects of meta-identification. In other words, what are the psychological effects when others see me as part of a stigmatised group that I do not want to be seen as a part of?

## **Social Identity Theory – Group Membership, Stereotype Content and Creative Strategies**

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) posits that people are motivated to achieve a positive social identity by comparing their group, and by extension themselves, to other groups. The criterion for group membership being that “the individuals concerned define themselves and are *defined by others* as members of a group” (emphasis added: Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). The focus of this paper is the second part of this definition (‘defined by others’). Most research on social identities, and indeed the methods for studying them, focus on the aspect of identity derived from defining oneself as a member of a group. One can be seen as a member of a group by others, but not want to be associated with the group or ‘objectively’ not be a member of that group. Such mismatches between identification and meta-identification are likely to occur in highly stigmatised groups, especially when boundaries are permeable (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999).

Current research suggests that unemployed people are a highly stigmatised, low-status group. For instance, research using the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) shows that the unemployed are perceived as neither competent nor warm and can be considered an extreme outgroup in some societies (Cuddy et al., 2008). However, no research that we know of has evaluated the unemployed along the moral dimension of the stereotype content model (Leach et al., 2007; Moscatelli et al., 2019). Nevertheless, much of the negative rhetoric in recent times around unemployment in the UK focuses on moral themes such as ‘benefit cheats’ (Okoroji et al., 2020). Thus, unemployed people may be seen as relatively immoral, in addition to being stigmatised as less competent and relatively cold.

In light of the stigmatised nature of unemployment, it is important to explore the consequences of occupying a stigmatised social identity. According to SIT, the valence or relative status of an identity will lead to different outcomes, for example, high or low self-esteem. When groups are of low status, several creative strategies may be employed to protect or improve self-esteem derived from the group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Two key strategies outlined by Tajfel and Turner are (i) *Individual Mobility* –



which involves leaving or otherwise disassociating from the group with a view to upward mobility. Such a strategy depends on group boundaries being permeable, leading to low levels of identification or disidentification (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Brown, 2000) and (ii) *Social Creativity* – which can be separated into three forms that can be used individually or in tandem: (a) comparing the group with other groups on a new, more favourable, dimension (b) changing the outgroup that the in-group is compared to, so as to make the comparison more favourable (c) changing the value system so that a previously negative attribute now becomes positive (i.e. social change).

We note that it is more likely that people will engage in social creativity when groups are impermeable and status hierarchies are seen as illegitimate (i.e. race, gender; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Leach, Mosquera, Vliek, & Hirt, 2010). But will choose individual mobility when the opposite is true (Reynolds, Oakes, Haslam, Nolan, & Dolnik, 2000). Put another way, in the case of unemployment, where group boundaries are permeable, and status hierarchies are seen as legitimate, the unemployed will be likely to exercise individual mobility and disassociate from the stigmatised group (i.e. show low levels of identification), to increase self-esteem and well-being.

Nevertheless, exercising an individual mobility strategy from unemployment, for example, by low identification does not affect the objective status of the individual as ‘unemployed’. Others with knowledge of the unemployed persons status may still identify them as unemployed, or, regardless of how others actually identify them, unemployed people may *perceive* they are still identified as such by others (i.e. meta-identification). The effects of such discrepancy between identification and meta-identification are under-researched in the social identity literature.

One reason for this is that current methods for examining social identity, though robust, rely on individualised responses concerning the extent to which the participant feels part of a particular social category (Leach et al., 2008; Postmes et al., 2013). That is, they focus more closely on the first part of the definition given by Tajfel and Turner above (‘define themselves’ 1979, p. 40). These have given us valuable insights into the antecedents and consequences of identification, but they are unable to provide an

assessment of the status of the identity in relation to meta-perspectives because they focus inwardly. Whether an individual is/identifies as a member of a group may depend on the perspective from which the question is asked. An individual may not see themselves as a member of a group but be aware that others do and this awareness is likely to have psychological consequences for the individual.

This paper aims to provide an empirical exploration of this argument by considering the possibility of discrepancies between identification and meta-identification. More specifically, we explore the role of being identified as a member of a stigmatised group vs self-identifying (or not) as a member of that group.

### **Meta-Representations, Meta-Stereotyping and Meta-identification**

Exploring meta-knowledge is one way to investigate the multi-perspectival structure of stereotype content and identification by investigating individuals' beliefs about others' beliefs. Since the early history of social psychology, theorists have been concerned with how humans contend with the knowledge of others. This perspective is exemplified through concepts such as the 'generalised other' put forward by Mead (1934) as the mode by which the individual understands the social expectations of others. Similarly, the looking glass self (Cooley, 1902) focuses on how our self-concepts are developed through interaction with, and evaluations of, others in the social environment. Specifically, the way that we perceive these evaluations affects how we perceive ourselves (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983).

Empirically, obtaining meta-knowledge is possible by eliciting responses from participants which correspond with their understanding of how others perceive and evaluate the groups they are a member of. Research exploring how individuals contend with the knowledge of others is far-ranging and has been developed across multiple theoretical traditions including meta-representations (Elcherth et al., 2011), meta-stereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2013; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2014; Vorauer et al., 1998a), and meta-perceptions (F. E. Frey & Tropp, 2006; Kenny & West, 2010).

We see meta-representations as an overarching concept which encompasses the other, more specific concepts. Meta-representations can be considered meta-knowledge,

the knowledge we have of what others think (Gillespie, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 2007). As Elcheroth and colleagues put it, “the critical factor in what we do is often less what we think ourselves than what we think others are thinking” (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Meta-representations include what we think others think our group memberships are, and the stereotypes they hold about those groups. For example, whether we are recognised as a member of a group to which we *do not* belong (i.e. misgendering; McLemore, 2015) or what kinds of stereotypes and interaction we will experience by being recognised as a member of a group that we *do* belong to but wish to leave (i.e. individual mobility).

Research looking specifically at meta-stereotypes—group members beliefs about the stereotypes that other groups hold about them (Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000; Vorauer et al., 1998; Yzerbyt, Provost, & Corneille, 2005)—has been a fruitful area of research. Owuamalam and Zagefka (2011) have shown, for instance, that the activation of meta-stereotypes can influence identification with the in-group such that negative meta-stereotypes reduce in-group identification.

What has not been thoroughly examined is the extent to which an individual believes that others identify them as a member of a particular group. This idea has previously been conceptualised as categorisation threat (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Categorisation threat is a form of identity threat where a person is categorised as a member of a group against their will. In the case of low identifiers of the group in question, it is theorised that the response is likely to be further disidentification and heightened personal (rather than group) identification. Branscombe et al. (1999) argue that categorisation threat is likely to be strong when the category is irrelevant or illegitimate in the current situation.

We argue, however, that categorisation threat can be strong if the category *is* relevant. For example, in any employment interview, employment history is important and yet, in the case of an unemployed applicant, is likely to lead to threat. We suggest that categorisation threat can occur when the category is particularly stigmatised in a given context, or if it is highly stigmatised (as we suggest unemployment is), across contexts.

As such, when we are considering how others categorise us, various layers of meta-knowledge come into play. For instance, we take into account the relevance of the category in the current situation, the stereotypes associated with the identity and what implications they may have for the behaviour of others. In this paper, we invoke meta-representations as an overarching framework which encompasses the societal meanings attached to what we think, others think, about who we are and its meaning. We conceptualise this as ‘meta-identification’. In unemployment, a low status and permeable group, we expect adverse effects of meta-identification on self-esteem and well-being. In addition, it has previously been suggested that categorisation threat may lead to stereotype threat effects, i.e. reduced cognitive performance (Schmader et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2002). Stereotype threat may occur where perceived group membership implies low competence. As previously explained, unemployed people are perceived as being a low-competence group; thus, stereotype threat effects may derive from inclusion in the category.

In aggregate, the literature points to an important aspect of social identification which is currently understudied, namely the effect of meta-identification as opposed to identification. As yet, these concepts have not been brought together in empirical research. We suggest that this is particularly important where stigmatised, but permeable, identities are in question because in these cases, individual mobility (via low identification) is expected. However, meta-identification may be persistent and have significant psychological effects over and above identification.

### **Research Overview and Hypotheses**

In the present study, we test the extent to which identification and meta-identification with unemployment influences self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance. Unemployed people were chosen as they represent a group that is both permeable and of low status, where we expect low identification with the group. Nevertheless, the group is widely discussed in the society at large (Okoroji et al., 2020) and are identifiable both by significant others (family, friends) and important gatekeepers such as employers and welfare institutions. As such, they may not identify as unemployed but can be identified by others as unemployed and thus are likely to perceive that others see them as unemployed. Following Branscombe et al. (1999), we

suggest that identification with unemployment will be low compared with meta-identification because unemployment is a stigmatised permeable category which invites individual mobility. Put another way; unemployed people will perceive that others see them as ‘more’ unemployed than they see themselves.

As outlined in the literature review, stereotype content is known to be associated with in-group identification. In particular, we expect that *morality* will be a significant positive predictor of identification. Other research has shown morality to be the most important predictor of identification (Leach et al., 2007; Moscatelli et al., 2019). We additionally explore the extent to which other stereotype content dimensions (competence, sociability) and their meta equivalents predict identification and meta-identification.

We then explore the predictive value of identification and meta-identification on self-esteem and well-being. In particular, we separate social self-esteem, which is other-oriented from performance self-esteem, which is focused internally (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). This approach allows for an exploration of the possible differential effects of identification and meta-identification on self-esteem focused both internally and externally. To explore these hypotheses, we conduct our first study using path analysis examining the relationships between stereotype content, identification, meta-identification, self-esteem and well-being.

In a second study, we explore how identification and meta-identification effect cognitive performance given previous theorising which suggests a link between identity threat and stereotype threat (Branscombe et al., 1999; Major & O’Brien, 2005; Schmader et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2002). These effects are explored using an anagram task administered after experimentally manipulating the salience of meta-stereotype content (i.e., after inducing threat).

## **Study 1**

Study 1 evaluated the effect of identification and meta-identification on two forms of state self-esteem: social and performance, as well as well-being. Additionally, we explored stereotype content of the unemployed identity, namely morality, sociability and

competence (and their meta equivalents) as antecedents of identification. Based on previous literature, we hypothesise:

H<sub>1</sub> – Identification and Meta-identification will differ significantly from each other. Specifically, that identification will be lower on average than meta-identification

H<sub>2</sub> – Morality will be a significant positive predictor of identification.

In addition to these hypotheses, we explore the predictive value of identification and meta-identification on social and performance self-esteem. We tentatively suggest that the effects of identification and meta-identification may differ between self-esteem related to social situations compared with that related to internal efficacy. Based on the tenets of SIT, we expect that identification with unemployment (a stigmatised group) will have negative ramifications for self-esteem, particularly the more individual performance dimension by virtue of creative strategies (individual mobility), as such the more one identifies with the group the lower self-esteem and well-being will be. Additionally, we suspect that the perception that others identify an individual as being a member of a stigmatised group (meta-identification) will have detrimental effects on social self-esteem and well-being.

### *Participants*

Participants were 173 British citizens who were unemployed at the time of participation, recruited from Prolific ([www.prolific.ac](http://www.prolific.ac)). The participants were paid £5.04 per hour. Three participants were excluded as multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $p < .001$ ). The final sample was composed of 170 participants (52% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 30.7$ ,  $SD = 10.1$ , 82.35% White). Sampling was based on their employment status and nationality (British and currently unemployed).

### *Procedure and Measures*

Participants completed an online questionnaire which asked them to rate unemployed people on stereotype content measures of morality, competence and sociability through a list of traits. Specifically, participants rated, on a 7-point scale, to

what extent they considered unemployed people to be honest, sincere and trustworthy ( $\alpha_{\text{morality}} = .91$ ), capable, competent and intelligent ( $\alpha_{\text{competence}} = .89$ ) and friendly, kind and sociable ( $\alpha_{\text{sociability}} = .91$ ). They then answered the four-item measure of social identification (FISI; Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013), e.g. ‘I identify with unemployed people’ ( $\alpha_{\text{identification}} = .64$ ). Equivalent measures for all these scales were assessed focusing on meta-stereotypes and meta-identification ( $\alpha_{\text{meta-morality}} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-competence}} = .90$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-sociability}} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-identification}} = .78$ ). All meta-level items were prefaced with ‘Most people think’ e.g. on the sociability dimension ‘Most people think unemployed people are likeable’. These two elements of the survey were randomised to avoid order effects.

Participants were then asked about their state self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) on two dimensions, social and performance, which both consisted of seven items, e.g. ‘I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure’ ( $\alpha_{\text{social}} = .94$ ) and *performance*, e.g. ‘I feel confident about my abilities’ ( $\alpha_{\text{performance}} = .79$ ). These items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale from not-at-all to extremely. In addition, they answered the five-item satisfaction with life survey (SWLS) measured on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Diener, Emmons, & Griffin, 1985), e.g. ‘In most ways, my life is close to the ideal’ ( $\alpha_{\text{SWLS}} = .87$ ).

In addition, a one-item measure of stigmatisation was collected, i.e. “Thinking about society in general to what extent do you agree with the following... Unemployed people are a stigmatised group”. Responses were on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Finally, participants were asked to share any comments on the survey in a free text box. At the end of the survey participants were fully debriefed.

Table 1

*Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. SWLS	2.76	1.28												
2. Social	2.84	1.17	.39**											
3. Performance	3.37	0.77	.31**	.52**										
4. Meta Competence	-1.15	1.09	.16*	.16*	.04									
5. Competence	0.82	0.97	.03	-.05	-.06	.29**								
6. Meta Sociability	-0.52	0.99	.10	.25**	.03	.72**	.22**							
7. Sociability	0.74	0.95	.07	-.06	-.14	.26**	.75**	.32**						
8. Meta Morality	-0.76	1.03	.14	.13	-.01	.78**	.26**	.82**	.33**					
9. Morality	0.66	0.92	.06	-.09	-.17*	.27**	.80**	.26**	.85**	.32**				
10. Meta-Identification	-0.76	1.25	-.16*	-.11	-.13	.01	.09	-.05	.00	-.05	.06			
11. Identification	-1.27	1.01	.04	.02	-.18*	.24**	.16*	.16*	.18*	.20**	.24**	.53**		
12. Age	30.70	10.11	.07	.34**	.11	.17*	.07	.06	.03	.04	.00	.04	.10	
13. Stigma	1.38	1.31	-.16*	-.23**	-.16*	-.38**	.05	-.33**	-.04	-.37**	-.01	.03	-.05	.02

*Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .



## Results

Prior to the main analysis, the mid-point of the scale for each variable was moved to zero (i.e. -3 to 3) to aid interpretation and a one sample t-test was conducted to compare identification with meta-identification. We find that identification with being unemployed was low ( $M = -1.27, SD = 1.01$ ) and significantly lower ( $t(169) = -6.592, p < .001$ ) than meta-identification ( $M = -0.76, SD = 1.25$ ). We also compared our stereotype content measures finding a similar pattern where meta variables were significantly more negative than self-reflective variables i.e. Morality ( $M = 0.66, SD = 0.91$ ) was significantly higher ( $t(169) = 20.249, p < .001$ ) than Meta-Morality ( $M = -0.76, SD = 1.03$ ), Sociability ( $M = 0.73, SD = 0.95$ ) was significantly higher ( $t(169) = 17.181, p < .001$ ) than Meta-Sociability ( $M = -0.52, SD = 0.98$ ) and Competence ( $M = 0.81, SD = 0.97$ ) was significantly higher ( $t(169) = 26.232, p < .001$ ) than Meta-Competence ( $M = -1.15, SD = 1.09$ ).

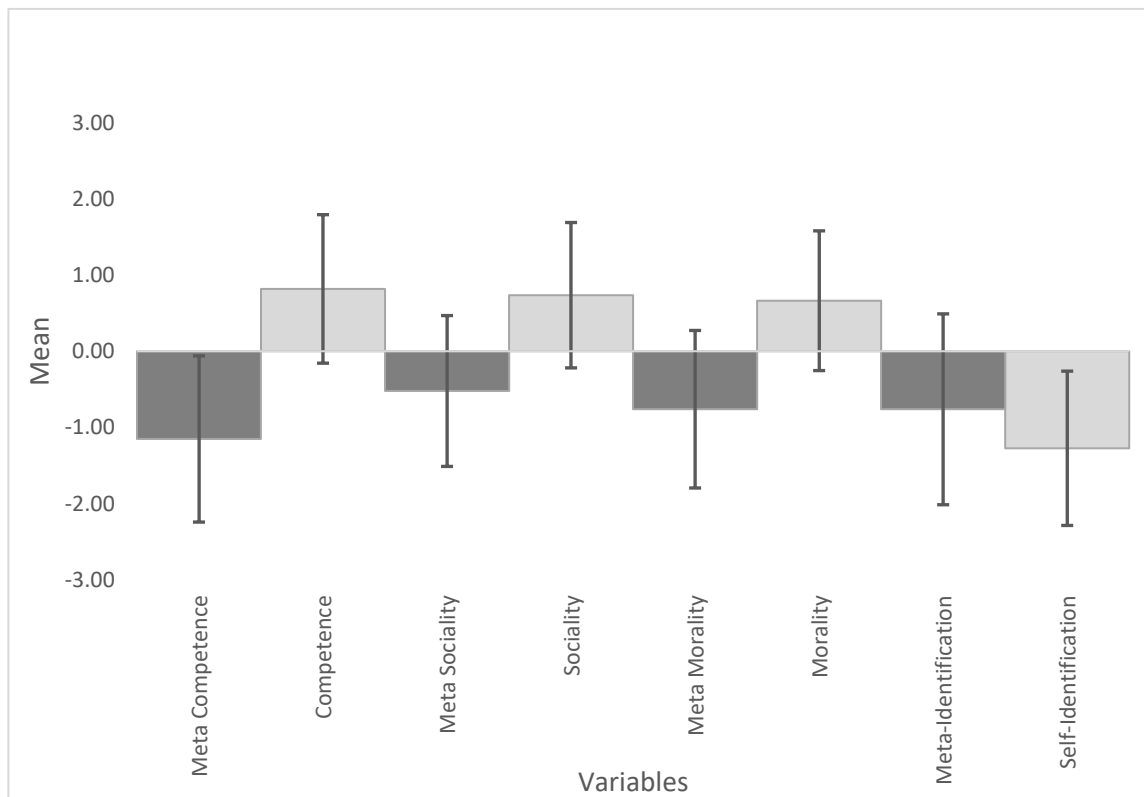


Figure 1 Mean and Confidence Intervals for (Meta) Stereotype Content and (Meta) Identification Measures

Subsequently, path analysis was conducted using the R (R Core Team, 2019) package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012). We constructed a model where stereotype content measures were regressed on identification and meta-identification and in turn, identification and meta-identification were regressed on the outcome variables – state performance and social self-esteem and SWLS. Age and Stigma are added as covariates in the model. We reasoned that a person’s Age and therefore tenure is a previous job or other activity may effect the extent to which current unemployment is a core part of the persons self-concept and extent to which a participant believes that unemployment is stigmatised in general would likely be associated with the outcome variables. Identification and meta-identification were allowed to correlate. In the first model, all parameters were free to vary; this served as a baseline model with which to compare other more parsimonious models (Vandekerckhove, Matzke, & Wagenmakers, 2014).

All models use maximum likelihood estimation. Standard errors and test statistics were calculated using 1000 bootstrapped samples. The first model with unconstrained coefficients had adequate fit ( $\chi^2 = 29.31$ ,  $df = 18$ ,  $p_{\text{bollen-stein}} = .999$ , CFI = .945, RMSEA = .061,  $p_{\text{close}} = .298$ , SRMR = .030). A total of six alternative models were tested, in these models’ non-significant paths were constrained to zero where theory permitted in a step-by-step process<sup>14</sup>. Model comparison was conducted by inspecting AIC values for each model, where lower AIC indicates a better, more parsimonious model.

In the final model, all stereotype content measures are predictors of identification and are free to vary. Identification predicts state self-esteem on the performance dimension, while meta-identification predicts the social equivalent. Both forms of identification are regressed on SWL. The final model (figure 1) has good fit to the data ( $\chi^2 = 34.27$ ,  $df = 26$ ,  $p_{\text{bollen-stein}} = .999$ , CFI = .960, RMSEA = .043[.000, .079],  $p_{\text{close}} = .582$ , SRMR .034). This model also has the lowest AICc value (2386.21).

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<sup>14</sup> All models and analysis script are available from OSF.  
[https://osf.io/wqvg5/?view\\_only=4acd527be4ab4740950bed16c058aa59](https://osf.io/wqvg5/?view_only=4acd527be4ab4740950bed16c058aa59)

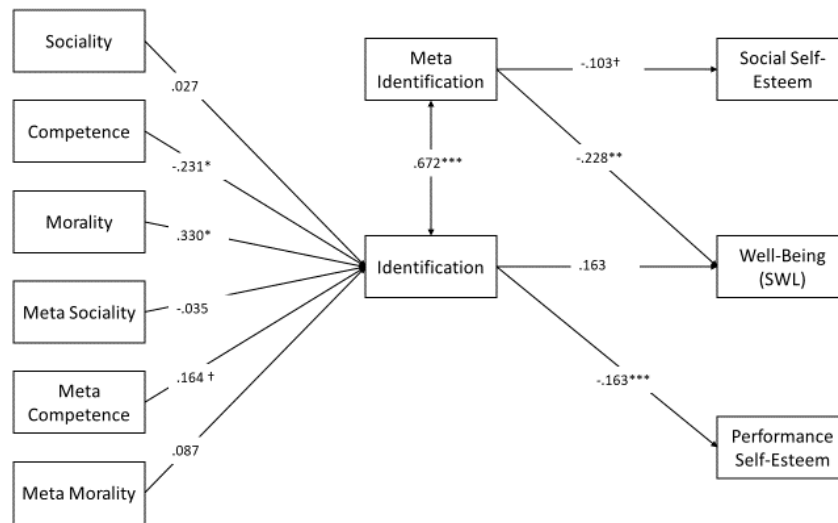


Figure 2 Path Model of (Meta) Stereotype Content, (Meta) Identification, Self-Esteem and Well-Being. † =  $p < .1$ , \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ . Note: Constrained paths and covariates are omitted from this figure. For full details of the model see appendix 4

Inspecting the path coefficients for the final model (see appendix 4) we see that identification is positively predicted by morality ( $\beta = .330[.033, .675]$ ,  $p = .051$ ) and negatively predicted by competence ( $\beta = -.231[-.466, -.005]$ ,  $p = .044$ ). No other variables significantly predicted identification. Neither stereotype content, nor meta-stereotype content predicted meta-identification. Moving to the prediction of our outcome variables – performance self-esteem is significantly and negatively predicted by identification ( $\beta = .163[.264, .058]$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Here the meta-identification path is constrained to zero. We reasoned that the performance dimension is focused internally and is more likely to be predicted by one’s internal feelings about membership in a group rather than feelings about how others perceive it. Similarly, in predicting social self-esteem, we constrained the path from identification to zero, and meta-identification was free to vary. Theoretically, it seems plausible that in social interaction, we are more concerned with meta-representations particularly how others are identifying us. This produced a marginally significant association between meta-identification and social self-esteem ( $\beta = -.103[-.217, .013]$ ,  $p = .079$ ). In predicting SWL, both identification and

meta-identification were free to vary. Only meta-identification was a significant negative predictor ( $\beta = -.228[-.383, -.072]$ ,  $p = .004$ )<sup>15</sup>.

Here it is also useful to elaborate some of the responses offered by participants in the free text boxes at the end of the survey (emphasis added) as they speak directly to the aims of the current research. For instance:

“being unemployed is a horrible time and I really do *feel judged by other people* considering the first question I get asked when out and about is what job do you do”

“Found it enlightening to answer the questions about how I feel about my unemployment and that I did not feel it has made me less confident, although a *bit anxious.*”

“Being unemployed has been very difficult for me. I've never been unemployed before and I'm now being *treated very differently to how I was before by particularly my immediate family.*”

### *Discussion*

The results of the t-tests show the expected result, namely that self-identification with unemployment is low and significantly lower than meta-identification. Thus,  $H_1$  is confirmed. From a SIT perspective, given that unemployment has low status and is permeable as a social identity, those who occupy the category should not want to identify with it and use various strategies to escape it. However, the result that meta-identification was higher than identification shows that even when an individual may not identify with a group, they may perceive that others identify them as a member of the group *more strongly* than they do themselves.

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<sup>15</sup> In addition, three alternative models were specified based on the work of Leach et al (2007). In these model's identification and meta-identification were set as predictors of stereotype content variables which in turn predicted the outcome variables. However, these models fit the data poorly. The best of these models had  $\chi^2 = 739.61$ ,  $df = 21$ ,  $p_{\text{Bollen-Stein}} < .001$ ,  $CFI = .250$ ,  $RMSEA = .449[.421-.477]$ ,  $p_{\text{close}} = < .001$ ,  $SRMR = .199$ . Other research dealing with stigmatisation and meta-knowledge has found similar results (Moscatelli et al., 2019).

We also show, in line with previous research, that morality is a significant positive predictor of identification supporting H<sub>2</sub> (Leach et al., 2007). However, the finding that competence was a negative and significant predictor of identification requires further exploration. Given that low competence is a fundamental aspect of how unemployment is represented in the UK (Okoroji et al., 2021) we may surmise that where this representation is internalised seeing unemployed people as low in competence and identifying as unemployed become related.

We had suggested that identification would be a negative and significant predictor of self-esteem (performance) and well-being. This assertion was supported, and we find a significant relationship between state self-esteem on the performance dimension and identification. These results were expected given what we know about the use of creative strategies in groups where group boundaries are permeable, and status hierarchies are seen as legitimate. We expected that unemployed people would be likely to exercise individual mobility and disassociate from the group (i.e. show low levels of identification), to increase levels of self-esteem and well-being. However, where unemployed people are not able to do so, higher levels of identification decrease self-esteem. In particular, higher degrees of identification with unemployment can be linked to a lower sense of self-esteem concerned with personal performance. However, in this study, we do not find a significant association between identification and well-being while controlling for meta-identification.

We were also concerned with what effect meta-identification has on self-esteem and well-being as compared to identification. We find that meta-identification has significant effects on well-being above and beyond identification. Specifically, meta-identification strongly and negatively predicts SWL. Hence a person's overall well-being is at least in part determined by the extent to which they believe others perceive them as members of a stigmatised group. These results are in line with the looking-glass self-conceptualisation of social identity as being derived from the evaluations of others (Cooley, 1902). Meta-identification was also a marginally significant predictor of social self-esteem. This result is as expected given that social self-esteem involved thinking about social interaction where the stigmatised identity may come to the fore.

This study provides some tentative evidence that identification is a significant predictor of self-esteem that relates to individual action. However, where self-esteem is related to social interaction – meta-identification may be a useful concept to help us understand how identities effect self-esteem and well-being in the social context. This is particularly important in the case of unemployment, where escaping the category requires confidence in social settings to persuade potential employers of one’s merits.

Previous literature has suggested that social identification is an important antecedent of stereotype threat (Major & O’Brien, 2005). However, Meta-identification (and more broadly meta-knowledge; Voyles, Finkelstein, & King, 2014) may also be an important antecedent of stereotype threat effects. In the next study, we look more closely at how salient meta-stereotypes and both forms of identification effect actual performance on cognitive tasks.

## **Study 2**

In the second study, we explore how identification and meta-identification effect actual cognitive performance on an anagram task after experimentally manipulating the salience of meta-stereotype content. To explore the effect of meta-knowledge on cognitive performance, we conducted multiple linear regression. The analysis focused on the effect of priming positive and negative meta-stereotypes on the ability of participants to complete a cognitive task of variable intensity (anagrams). Previous research has shown that making stigmatised group memberships salient can effect performance on cognitive tasks (Schmader et al., 2008; Steele & Aronson, 1995). We seek to explore here whether meta-knowledge has similar effects, as suggested in the categorisation threat literature (Branscombe et al., 1999). We do this by manipulating meta-stereotypes and measuring (meta) identification and their effects on the ability of participants to complete several anagrams.

### *Participants*

Participants were 142 British citizens who currently are unemployed, recruited from Prolific (www.prolific.ac). Participants were paid at a rate of £7.50 per hour. Two participants were excluded as multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $p < .001$ ), creating a final sample of 140 participants (46.43% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 31.15$ ,  $SD =$

10.68, 80.71% White British). Sampling was based on their employment status and nationality (British and currently unemployed). The average length of unemployment was 14.62 months (SD = 8.54), though the scale endpoint was 24 months or more. Fifty-two participants selected this duration. As such, the true mean is likely to be higher.

### *Materials and Procedure*

After completing demographic information, including employment status, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Following Owuamalam & Zagefka (2011), participants in the positive and negative conditions were asked to:

“Please think about the positive [negative] impressions that people in this society hold about unemployed people. Please list up to four of these positive [negative] impressions in the space below.”

In the control condition, participants were asked about the last three films they watched.

After completing the prime, participants answered a one-item measure of social identity “I identify with unemployed people” (Postmes et al., 2013) and a one item equivalent for meta-identification, i.e. “Most people think I identify with unemployed people”.

Participants then completed five anagrams, which successively increased in word length. These, in order, were SEMUO (MOUSE), DYLIE (YIELD), KEATRM (MARKET), DNCAEVA (ADVANCE). The last anagram, ORNTAAL, was impossible (Calef et al., 1992). Correct answers are summed to give a total score out of four. Finally, participants were asked about their state self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) and satisfaction with life (SWL; Diener, Emmons, & Griffin, 1985) as in study one ( $\alpha_{\text{SWL}} = .89$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Social}} = .92$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Performance}} = .79$ ) though these are not used in the analysis.

### *Results*

A correlation matrix of the variables used in this analysis can be found in table 2. We first assessed whether there were differences in the time taken to complete the prime in each condition (see table 3). A multiple regression model was constructed to predict the time taken to complete the prime based on Identification, Meta-identification and the

Prime. The analysis shows that allocation to the positive prime condition significantly predicted the amount of time taken to complete the prime  $\beta = 35.3$ ,  $t(135) = 2.38$ ,  $p = .019$ . Other variables in the model were not significant. The result indicates that the positive prime was more difficult for participants to complete than other primes when controlling for self and meta identification.



**Table 2**  
*Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	31.15	10.69														
2. Unemployment (Months)	14.62	8.54	.26**													
3. Identification	5.02	1.38	[.10, .41]	.18*												
4. Meta Identification	4.44	1.45	[-.19, .14]	[-.03, .18*]	.47**											
5. Anagram1 Time (Secs)	27.49	29.79	[-.17, .16]	[-.01, .16]	[.00, .32]	[.32, .59]										
6. Anagram2 Time (Secs)	51.22	38.62	[-.17, .16]	[-.17, .17]	[-.01, .31]	[-.11, .22]	[-.06, .27]	.28**								
7. Anagram3 Time (Secs)	43.17	54.80	[-.17, .16]	[-.17, .17]	[-.09, .24]	[-.18, .15]	[-.11, .22]	[.12, .43]	.41**							
8. Anagram4 Time (Secs)	55.07	54.07	[-.23, .10]	[-.23, .10]	[-.01, .31]	[.08, .40]	[.06, .38]	[.24, .52]	[.26, .54]	.41**						
9. Anagram5 Time (Secs)	88.53	102.77	[-.28, .04]	[-.28, .04]	[-.04, .28]	[-.03, .30]	[-.05, .28]	[.03, .35]	[.35, .61]	[.27, .54]	.47**					
10. Time to complete prime (Secs)	92.71	72.29	[-.12, .21]	[-.12, .21]	[-.10, .23]	[-.10, .23]	[-.11, .22]	[-.16, .17]	[.12, .43]	[.03, .35]	[.33, .59]	.34**				
11. Performance	2.76	0.45	[-.01, .32]	[-.01, .32]	[-.08, .25]	[-.07, .26]	[-.11, .22]	[.02, .34]	[-.02, .31]	[.04, .36]	[.19, .48]	[-.04, .28]	.12			
12. Social	3.29	1.09	[-.22, .11]	[-.22, .11]	[-.08, .25]	[-.08, .25]	[-.05, .28]	[-.20, .13]	[-.18, .15]	[-.18, .15]	[-.15, .18]	[-.26, .07]	[-.24, .09]	-.08		
13. SWLS	3.00	1.45	[-.27**]	[-.27**]	[-.03, .22**]	[-.03, .22**]	[-.18*]	[-.16]	[-.10]	[-.10]	[-.07]	[-.15, .18]	[-.13, .20]	.38**		
14. Anagram Average Time (Secs)	44.24	32.69	[-.41, -.10]	[-.41, -.10]	[-.19, .14]	[-.19, .14]	[.06, .38]	[.02, .34]	[-.32, .01]	[-.26, .07]	[-.17, .16]	[-.10, .23]	[-.15, .18]	[-.13, .20]	[-.29**]	-.48**
15. Correct Anagrams	2.77	1.27	[-.05, .29**]	[-.05, .29**]	[-.25**]	[-.25**]	[-.15]	[-.12]	.16	.00	.08	[-.04, .28]	[-.15, .18]	[-.13, .20]	[-.43, -.13]	[-.60, -.34]
			[-.21, .12]	[-.21, .12]	[-.40, -.09]	[-.40, -.09]	[-.31, .01]	[-.28, .05]	[-.01, .31]	[-.16, .17]	[-.09, .24]	[-.21, .12]	[-.17, .16]	[-.31, .01]	[-.31, .01]	-.01
			[-.24, .09]	[-.24, .09]	[.01, .33]	[.01, .33]	[.00, .32]	[.02, .34]	[.43, .66]	[.65, .80]	[.73, .85]	[.70, .84]	[.21, .50]	[.16, .46]	[-.18, .15]	[-.20, .13]
			.21*	.21*	-.06	-.06	-.03	-.20*	-.15	-.01	-.11	.05	.27**	.06	-.15	-.07
			[.05, .37]	[.05, .37]	[-.22, .11]	[-.22, .11]	[-.20, .13]	[-.35, -.03]	[-.30, .02]	[-.18, .15]	[-.27, .05]	[-.11, .22]	[.11, .42]	[-.11, .22]	[-.31, .02]	[-.23, .10]
																[-.12, .21]
																.09
																[-.23, .10]
																[-.07, .26]
																[-.23, .10]

*Note.* Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

Table 3

*Regression results using Time (seconds) to complete prime as the criterion*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup> 95% CI [LL, UL]	Fit
(Intercept)	61.37*	[11.11, 111.64]			
Self Identification	2.79	[-7.02, 12.60]	.00	[-.01, .02]	
Meta Identification	1.73	[-7.57, 11.02]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
Prime (Negative)	-6.36	[-35.41, 22.69]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
Prime (Positive)	35.30*	[5.99, 64.60]	.04	[-.02, .10]	
					<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .074* 95% CI[.00,.15]

*Note.* A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *sr*<sup>2</sup> represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

\* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

In the critical test, we used multiple linear regression to assess the effects of meta-stereotypes as well as self- and meta-identification on performance on the solvable anagrams. Meta-identification was a significant predictor of the anagram result  $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $t(135) = -2.38$ ,  $p = .018$ . No other variables in the model significantly predicted the anagram result (see table 3)

Table 4

*Regression results using Anagram Result as the criterion*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup> 95% CI [LL, UL]	Fit
(Intercept)	3.22**	[2.33, 4.11]			
Self Identification	0.05	[-0.12, 0.23]	.00	[-.01, .02]	
Meta Identification	-0.20*	[-0.36, -0.03]	.04	[-.02, .10]	
Prime Negative	0.13	[-0.38, 0.64]	.00	[-.01, .02]	
Prime Positive	0.36	[-0.16, 0.88]	.01	[-.02, .05]	
					<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .056 95% CI[.00,.12]

*Note.* A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *sr*<sup>2</sup> represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

\* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

We similarly assessed the effect of the prime on identification and meta-identification. We find that the prime did not significantly predict identification at conventional levels (see table 4). The same was true for meta-identification (see table 5)

Table 5

*Regression results using Identification as the criterion*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	Fit
		95% CI [LL, UL]		95% CI [LL, UL]	
(Intercept)	4.87**	[4.46, 5.27]			
Prime Negative	0.09	[-0.47, 0.66]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
Prime Positive	0.37	[-0.20, 0.94]	.01	[-.02, .05]	
					<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .013 95% CI[.00,.06]

*Note.* A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *sr*<sup>2</sup> represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

\* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

Table 6

*Regression results using Meta Identification as the criterion*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	Fit
		95% CI [LL, UL]		95% CI [LL, UL]	
(Intercept)	4.31**	[3.88, 4.74]			
Prime Negative	0.25	[-0.34, 0.85]	.01	[-.02, .03]	
Prime Positive	0.11	[-0.48, 0.71]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
					<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .005 95% CI[.00,.04]

*Note.* A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardised regression weights. *sr*<sup>2</sup> represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively.

\* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

Finally, we tested whether the valence of salient meta-stereotypes would predict persistence on the unsolvable anagram. These results were not significant at any

conventional level. Though readers should note that there was a wide variation between participants in the length of time, they took to complete the task ( $M = 88.52$  seconds,  $SD = 102.76$  seconds).

### *Discussion*

The results of the first multiple regression show that being in the positive condition increases the length of time it took to complete the prime. Therefore, negative meta-stereotypes are more easily recalled than positive meta-stereotypes in this study. In fact, negative meta-stereotypes were recalled as readily as films in the control condition. These results suggest that negative stereotypes are strongly associated with unemployment and could be considered the 'default'.

The results of the second test show the first evidence that meta-identification reduces performance for widely stigmatised groups. Meta-identification predicted reduced performance over and above identification, regardless of how participants were primed. Hence, meta-identification may be an unexplored antecedent of stereotype threat.

However, priming meta-stereotypes did not predict identification; this contrasts with previous research that shows a relationship between meta-stereotypes and identification (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011).

### **General Discussion**

In this paper, we have sought to examine the effect of identification and meta-identification on self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance in the context of high levels of stigmatisation. Following SIT, we expected that unemployed people would show low levels of identification with unemployment. We showed this in study 1 but also showed that meta-identification was significantly higher than identification. In this way, we provide evidence that identification and meta-identification can differ significantly. These results are noteworthy because they provide preliminary evidence, that individuals can think others see them as a member of a group *more so* than they do themselves.

We further investigated the antecedents of both identification and meta-identification, showing that, as predicted, morality was a positive predictor of identification with unemployment in line with previous research (Leach et al., 2007; Moscatelli et al., 2019). However, meta-stereotypes did not adequately predict identification, unlike in other research (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011), even when the salience of meta-stereotypes were experimentally manipulated (study 2).

In study 1, we were able to show that identification and meta-identification both have effects on self-esteem and well-being. Specifically, that identification with unemployment significantly and negatively predicts state self-esteem on the performance dimension but has non-significant effects on both social state self-esteem and well-being (SWL). However, meta-identification has significant negative effects on well-being and marginally significant effects on social state self-esteem.

In study 2, we showed first that negative meta-stereotypes are more easily recalled than positive meta-stereotypes for unemployed people, giving credence to our general assertion that unemployed people are a highly stigmatised group. Performance on the anagram task was also significantly and negatively predicted by meta-identification, but not by identification. However, we also note that the primes did not work as expected. We had expected the positive prime condition to potentially increase identification and/or meta-identification. It is possible that in fact both conditions induce threat because positive stereotypes are not readily available and therefore the question, draws attention to the higher availability of negative stereotypes.

We set out to explore what happens when a person does not see themselves as part of a group but perceives that others do. In the case of permeable stigmatised identities, we have shown that meta-identification can have negative effects on cognitive performance, self-esteem and well-being, above and beyond the effects of identification. This was accomplished by changing the target of pre-existing measures of identification from the individual to others in society. These measures showed good internal consistency and, in some cases, better internal consistency than existing measures ( $\alpha_{\text{identification}} = .64$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{meta-identification}} = .78$ , study 1).

We argued at the outset that based on the definition of ‘groups’ widely used in SIT research (“the individuals concerned define themselves and are *defined by others* as members of a group” emphasis added: Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40), that meta-identification, i.e. the part of ones self-definition deriving from being ‘defined by others’ as a member of a group, should have important psychological ramifications, particularly when we consider social identity as a relational concept (Amer, 2020).

We have shown that meta-identification does have important psychological effects relating to self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance. In addition, that meta-identification seems to predict performance on the cognitive task, as such meta-identification may be an underdeveloped antecedent of stereotype threat (Branscombe et al., 1999; Major & O’Brien, 2005; Schmader et al., 2008). Along with an awareness of negative stereotypes that a group faces, individual group members must recognise that they are being perceived as a member of the group, in a context where some intellectual task is being performed. Some theoretical work has already suggested that meta-knowledge may be necessary antecedent in processes of stereotype threat (Voyles et al., 2014).

### **Limitations**

The studies in this paper could be improved in several ways. First, it is important to understand the difficulty of accessing this population. Unemployment is necessarily a transient situation. People become and leave unemployment within a relatively short space of time. As such, large samples are difficult to generate. Future research should engage with third sector or governmental organisations to improve the likelihood of high-powered studies.

Concerning the issue of generating large samples, we were unable in this case to perform a fully structural equation model and thus had to rely on path analysis. Future studies with larger samples should favour fully structural equation modelling where appropriate, and sample sizes are sufficient (Wolf, Harrington, Clark, & Miller, 2013).

Additionally, study 2 uses a relatively small number of trials and future studies using this kind of methodology should increase the number of solvable trials as well as their difficulty. Online studies are limited in this sense because a higher number of trials

is likely to lead to lower completion rates and/or distraction. Laboratory settings would be ideal; however, this may make it even more challenging to access this specific population (unemployed people), especially where the pay (if any is offered) is nominal (Gleibs, 2017).

### **Future Research**

Future research in the first instance should seek to replicate and extend the findings of the current paper. Particularly, focusing on whether these results generalise to other stigmatised groups. Replication attempts should pay strict attention to the group memberships under examination, i.e. the level of stigmatisation, the perceived legitimacy of group status and permeability. Extending these results to other groups would also provide useful theoretical advancement, i.e. what are the ramifications of meta-identification in non-stigmatised and/or non-permeable groups?

Similarly, work extending this research should seek to establish possible antecedents of meta-identification. In the two studies reported here, we provide additional evidence that morality is an important antecedent of identification with a group. However, we find no significant psychological predictors of meta-identification. As such, questions remain as to what exactly drives the meta-identification. Comparisons between groups with varying levels of permeability and stigmatisation would provide evidence that it may be permeability itself which is driving the effects.

In this paper, we have not been concerned with the accuracy of meta-representations. Still, it is interesting to note that for instance, unemployed people in this study perceive that others see them as less competent than they see themselves. If these meta-stereotypes are accurate, i.e. that others do see unemployed people as relatively less competent – how might this effect the ability of unemployed people to find work? Audit studies may be a good way to understand how unemployed people may be differentially assessed compared with comparable employed candidates. Such work has already been conducted, mainly in the US, with mixed results (Farber, Herbst, Silverman, & von Wachter, 2019; Nunley, Pugh, Romero, & Seals, 2017). There is relatively less empirical work in the UK, and more broadly, such audit studies may not be able to capture possible mediating effects of perceived competence. As such,



experimental methodologies that mimic audit methodology could be appropriate (e.g. Howard & Borgella, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this research provides important practical and theoretical insights. We show how identification, often used in social identity research, can differ significantly from meta-identification and that these differences have distinct effects on self-esteem. Thus, social identity research should take into account the ways group members define themselves but also how others define them in order to further our understanding of how identities shape our social worlds. Further, at a practical level, we have shown how meta-identification with stigmatised social categories can impinge on cognitive performance. In the case of unemployment, this may be particularly damaging in recruitment processes where unemployment is likely to be salient—thus reducing the possibility of individual mobility.

## **Chapter Six: Inferring Incompetence from Employment Status: An Audit-like Experiment**

### **Abstract**

Audit studies demonstrate that unemployed people are less likely to receive a callback when they apply for a job than employed candidates; the reason for this is unclear. Across two experiments ( $N = 461$ ), we examine whether the perceived competence of unemployed candidates accounts for this disparity. In both studies, participants assessed one of two equivalent curriculum vitae's, differing only on the current employment status. We find that unemployed applicants are less likely to be offered an interview or hired. The perceived competence of the applicant mediates the relationship between the employment status of the applicant and these employment-related outcomes. We conducted a mini meta-analysis, finding that the effect size for the difference in employment outcomes was  $d = .274$  and  $d = .307$  respectively, while the estimated indirect effect was  $-.151[-.241, -.062]$ . These results offer a mechanism for the differential outcomes of job candidates by employment status.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Stereotype Content, Audit Studies, Decision Making

## **Inferring Incompetence from Employment Status: An Audit-like Experiment**

Unemployment can lead to relative, and in some cases, absolute poverty affecting housing, food consumption and leisure activities (Whelan, 1992). Consequently, either directly or indirectly, unemployment has severe psychological consequences in terms of well-being, self-esteem and cognitive performance (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Okoroji & Gleibs, 2020; Paul & Moser, 2006, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). Relatedly, unemployed persons face high-levels of stigmatisation (Okoroji, Gleibs, & Jovchelovitch, 2020).

Previous research has shown that unemployed people themselves are aware of the stereotypes that others hold about them and show low levels of identification with unemployment (Okoroji & Gleibs, 2020). However, stigmatisation affects not only the target of stigmatisation but also those perceiving the target. This stigmatisation can lead to unemployed people being assessed less favourably in the job market compared with similarly qualified employed people (Farber et al., 2019; Trzebiatowski, Wanberg, & Dossinger, 2019). What is less well understood are the mechanisms that lead to this discrimination in the job market. From earlier research, we know that unemployed people have been shown to believe that others perceive them as less competent than they see themselves (Okoroji & Gleibs, 2020). If the perception unemployed people have about others' views of their competence is accurate (Finkelstein et al., 2013), employers may be more likely to see unemployed people as less competent than equally qualified employed candidates. Hence, perceived competence may differ by employment status resulting in differential job market outcomes. In the current research, we examine whether perceptions of competence mediate the relationship between employment status and employment-related outcomes.

### **Audit Studies**

There is extant literature that has examined the effects of unemployment on job market outcomes. In general, these studies use a broadly similar methodology (i.e. an audit; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), to test whether unemployed (vs employed)

individuals face bias due to their employment status. Typically, resumes/curriculum vitae's (henceforth CVs) are created which are identical except for the employment status of the applicant and sent out to real job vacancies. Callback rates are then recorded, and bias is demonstrated when there is a significant difference in callbacks by employment status. However, although numerous audit studies have documented that unemployment reduces the likelihood of a callback and provide robust evidence for discriminatory practices (Eriksson & Rooth, 2014; Farber et al., 2019; Nunley et al., 2017; Oberholzer-Gee, 2008; Riach & Rich, 2004), what is less clear from these studies is the underlying psychological processes contributing to this bias. Although many theories have been put forth as to why unemployed people receive fewer callbacks, due to ethical concerns (Riach & Rich, 2004; Zschirnt, 2019), audit studies are limited in the extent they can answer questions about the mechanisms which contribute to bias in hiring and selection.

As such, the audit method does not allow direct assessment of the psychological processes (e.g., stereotypes) that influence recruiters' decisions. Additionally, with more hiring and selection processes moving online, another limitation of audit studies is that many organisations no longer accept CVs, and this varies systematically by industry (Zibarras & Woods, 2010). To address the limitations of the audit method, the present study uses an online 'audit-like' experiment, which mimics audit methodology and allows us an avenue to investigate mechanisms underlying biased outcomes. One such mechanism may be the perceived competence of the applicant.

### **Perceived Competence as a Mediator Between Employment Status and Employment Bias**

The stereotype content model (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2008, 2009; Fiske et al., 2002; Leach et al., 2007) suggests that three basic dimensions underpin group stereotypes. These are competence, warmth (A. J. C. Cuddy et al., 2008) and morality (Leach et al., 2007). In the context of hiring decisions, in which organisations seek to employ the most productive staff, an employer's perception of candidate competence is likely to influence their decisions about whom to interview and ultimately hire. Thus, the competence dimension of the stereotype content model offers a plausible social-psychological mediator of the poor employment outcomes that have been documented in

previous research (i.e., fewer callbacks; see Trzebiatowski et al., 2019 for a similar argument). Specifically, we hypothesise that unemployed people are seen as less competent than employed people, which contributes to the finding that unemployed people receive fewer callbacks. To our knowledge, no studies to date have directly examined the perceived stereotype content of job applicants and its relation to progression through the application process.

However, this cannot be assessed using the audit method. Thus, to further our understanding of the mechanisms which contribute to differential outcomes for unemployed applicants, we argue for online experimentation to understand the relationship between unemployment and job market outcomes.

### **The Present Study<sup>16</sup>**

In the present study, we compare an unemployed candidate to a currently employed candidate with the same experience and qualifications to assess the effects of unemployment on various employment-related outcomes. Specifically, we examine the likelihood that the candidate will be interviewed and hired. Importantly, we include stereotype content measures (Leach et al., 2007) which allow us to examine differences in morality, warmth and competence and test if employment outcomes are mediated by the stereotype content model dimensions, in particular competence.

#### *Hypotheses*

Based on the extant literature, we hypothesise that:

H<sub>1</sub> – The unemployed candidate will be less likely to be interviewed than an equivalent employed candidate.

H<sub>2</sub> - The unemployed candidate will be less likely to be offered employment than an equivalent employed candidate.

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<sup>16</sup> All data, materials and code for the studies within this paper are available from OSF ([https://osf.io/rf7hw/?view\\_only=2ad0902cf29643da959b7c2e45f42448](https://osf.io/rf7hw/?view_only=2ad0902cf29643da959b7c2e45f42448))

H<sub>3</sub> – The relationship between employment status and employment outcomes will be mediated by perceived competence.

## **Study 1**

### *Method*

#### *Participants and Design*

One hundred and eighty-seven participants completed an online experiment on prolific academic (www.prolific.ac) and were paid £7.50 per hour for their participation between 24<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Participants were pre-screened according to their nationality (British), hiring experience and experience of management/supervisory roles. Specifically, participants were asked “*Do you have any experience in making hiring decisions (i.e. have you been responsible for hiring job candidates)?*” and “*At work, do you have any supervisory responsibilities? In other words, do you have the authority to give instructions to subordinates?*”. Four participants were excluded as multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $p < .001$ ) resulting in a final sample of 183 ( $Mage = 40.96$ ,  $SD = 9.55$ ; 43.71% women).

Ethnically, 92.89% of our sample identified as White British. Educationally, 45.9% of our sample were educated to degree level, while 24.59% reported a postgraduate degree, all participants had at least completed a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). All participants reported experience of hiring and on average, reported having evaluated 26.42 CVs or job applications in the past year ( $SD = 26.16$ ). 71% were middle managers, senior managers or executives compared with 29% who held junior or entry level positions. A between-subject design was used, in which participants were randomly assigned to one of two CV conditions which varied by employment status between employed (105) and unemployed (78). We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2007) for a one-tailed t-test with  $\alpha = .05$  and power = .80 and can reliably detect effects of  $d = .373$ .

### *Materials*

#### *Cover Story*

Participants were instructed that the purpose of the study was to ‘explore evaluations of CVs and what can improve their quality’. They were told that the CV

they will see is from a real applicant applying for an assistant manager position and both the job advert and CV are anonymised to protect the anonymity of the applicant and organisation.

#### *Job advert*

Participants were presented with a real but anonymised job advert for a full-time assistant manager position in a leading fast-moving consumer goods company. The company name is anonymised throughout the advert to avoid confounding the study via associations with ‘fit’ for a known organisation.

#### *CVs*

One of two CVs were presented to participants randomly, and participants were required to view it for at least 45 seconds. The two CVs are identical apart from the dates of employment. In the Unemployed CV, the most recent employment began in March 2016 and ended in December 2017. As such, they have ostensibly been unemployed for approximately two years at the time the data was collected<sup>17</sup>.

In the employed condition, the applicants most recent work experience is stated to be March 2016-Present. To equalise the number of years of experience, both candidates have the start date of their first employment varied. In the unemployed condition, the first work experience begins in November 2000 - January 2005. Whereas in the employed condition, the date is November 2002 – January 2005. As such, both applicants have an equivalent number of years of experience.

The CVs did not include names, and therefore gender, race and other demographic variables can be excluded as possible confounds. The CVs did include the applicant’s education, work history and a summary. Of note, the applicants in both conditions are approximately 40 years old (compulsory education completed in 1998)<sup>18</sup>.

The work experience included in the CV is related to the job on offer and is focused around retail. The organisations the applicants have worked for is anonymised,

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<sup>17</sup> According to data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in the UK, 67.84% of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) have been claiming for over a year and 26.84% have been claiming for between 2-5 years, more than any other category. As such the two-year duration of unemployment mimics closely the typical scenario for those claiming unemployment benefits.

<sup>18</sup> This is in line with data from DWP showing that the typical JSA claimant is between 35-44 years old.

again to reduce the likelihood that the prestige (or lack thereof) of previous work experience would influence the participants' decision. However, the applicants' experience is not at a management level, and so the role on offer represents an upward move in terms of organisational hierarchy. The suitability of the applicant is, therefore, ambiguous. Nevertheless, both applicants are equivalent, only differing on their current employment status.

### *Measures*

#### *Employment-related outcomes*

Following Howard and Borgella (2019) and King, Mendoza, Madera, Hebl, and Knight (2006), we asked participants several employment-related questions after they had viewed the CV. All questions were on a 7-point scale from extremely unlikely to extremely likely. Specifically, we asked participants how likely they would be to offer the individual an interview (*Interview*); how likely they would be to want to work with this individual (*Colleague*); how likely they would be to hire the individual (*Hire*); how likely they would be to increase the salary of the individual in the first year (*Salary Increase*); and how likely they would be to promote the individual in the first year (*Promote*). Since the focus of this study is on how likely each candidate might be to get a job, rather than their perceived success in the job, Salary Increase and Promote are not analysed (see table 1 for descriptive statistics).

#### *Perceptions of Competence, Warmth and Morality*

Additionally, we asked participants about the stereotype content they associated with the applicant. These were measured on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We asked participants to what extent the applicant seems likeable, friendly, warm (*Sociability*,  $\alpha=.84$ ), trustworthy, sincere, honest (*Morality*,  $\alpha=.86$ ), and intelligent, competent and skilled (*Competence*,  $\alpha=.78$ ). We also measured the overall stereotype content of the applicant with a 1-item measure 'I have a positive view of the applicant'.

#### *Salary Offer*



We asked participants about the starting salary they would offer the candidate using a sliding scale ranging from £25,000 to £35,000. Participants could select values in £100 increments.

### *Attention Check*

Finally, we used an attention check to assess whether participants were aware of the applicants' employment status after viewing the CV. Participants were asked 'What is the applicants most recent employment status?'. Those who incorrectly answered this question were deemed to have failed an attention check and were not able to complete the experiment<sup>19</sup>. Additionally, we asked participants about the perceived education level of the applicant and their perceived age, though these were not used to exclude participants.

## **Results**

### *Employment-related outcomes*

Due to unequal sample sizes between groups (105 Employed CV, 78 Unemployed CV) and multiple tests, Welch correction and Holm-Bonferroni adjusted p-values are used in the following t-tests (Holm, 1979; Welch, 1938). As expected, participants were significantly less likely to want to offer an interview to the unemployed applicant ( $M = 5.49$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ) compared with the employed applicant ( $M = 5.90$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ;  $t(158.92) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .018$ ,  $d = -.33$  [-.63, -.04]).

Further there was also a significant difference between applicants on participants willingness to hire them, an applicant who was unemployed ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) was significantly less likely to be offered a job interview than an applicant who was employed ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ;  $t(164.64) = 2.58$ ,  $p = .016$ ,  $d = -.39$ [-.69, -.09]).

Additionally, employment status predicted the likelihood that participants wanted to work with the applicant (colleague); this indicates that an applicant who was

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<sup>19</sup> No data was retrieved for any participants who partially completed the study for any reason, this includes those who 'timed-out', 'returned' the survey or did not submit a completion code for any reason.

unemployed ( $M = 5.32, SD = 0.95$ ) was significantly less desirable as a colleague than an applicant who was employed ( $M = 5.66, SD = 0.93, t(164.28) = 2.40, p = .018, d = -.36[-.66,-.06]$ ). Employed and Unemployed candidates were offered significantly different salaries as such the unemployed applicant was offered a significantly lower salary than the employed applicant. The means for unemployed ( $M = £26,700, SD = £1,551$ ) and employed applicants ( $M = £27,435, SD = £2,190$ ) differed by £735;  $t(180.63) = 2.66, p = .016, d = -.38[-.68,-.08]$ .

*Table 1*

*Descriptive statistics for dependent variables as a function of CV.*

	<i>Employed</i>		<i>Unemployed</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Interview	5.90	1.21	5.49	1.31
Hire	5.36	1.19	4.90	1.21
Promote	4.42	1.19	4.14	1.31
Colleague	5.66	0.93	5.32	0.95
Salary Increase	4.78	1.04	4.36	1.26
Sociability	4.17	0.80	4.07	0.69
Competence	4.74	0.74	4.51	0.63
Morality	4.46	0.81	4.33	0.77
Salary Offer	£27,435	£2,190	£26,700	£1,551

*Note.* *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

#### *Mediation Model*

Applicants employment status was used to predict the likelihood of being interviewed, with competence expected to mediate the relationship between CV and interview likelihood. See Figure 1 for a visual diagram of the mediated relationship. First, using steps described by Baron and Kenny (1986), CV was a significant predictor of interview (the *c* pathway), as shown in Table 2. The unemployed condition showed a lower likelihood of interview than the employed condition,  $t(181) = -2.228, p = .027, \beta = -.418$ .

Second, CV was used to predict the mediator, Competence (the *a* pathway), which showed that CV was negatively related to Competence,  $t(181) = -2.18, p = .031, \beta$

= -.227. Third, the relationship between the mediator Competence and Interview was examined controlling for the CV (the *b* pathway). Competence was positively related to the likelihood of Interview,  $t(180) = 10.6, p < .001, \beta = 1.12$ . Lastly, the mediated relationship between CV and Interview was examined for a drop-in prediction when the mediator was added to the model (the *c'* pathway). Full mediation was found, showing that the relationship between CV and Interview was no longer significant after controlling for Competence,  $t(180) = -1.10, p = .273, \beta = -.164$ . We tested the significance of this indirect effect using bootstrapping procedures. Unstandardized indirect effects were computed for each of 10,000 bootstrapped samples using the mediation package in R (Tingley, Yamamoto, Hirose, Keele, & Imai, 2014). The bootstrapped unstandardized indirect effect was  $-.255 [-.496, -.03], p = .028$ .

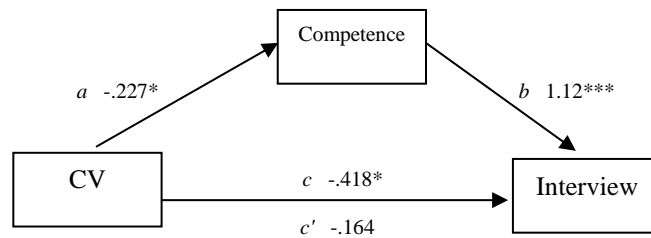


Figure 1. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between CV and Interview as mediated by Competence.

Table 2

Model Summaries for Mediation Analysis.

Interview Model	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
CV predicting Interview	(1, 181) = 4.964	.027	.027
CV predicting Competence	(1, 181) = 4.753	.031	.026
CV and Competence predicting Interview	(2, 180) = 60.15	<.001	.400
Hire Model	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
CV predicting Hire	(1, 181) = 6.685	.010	.035
CV predicting Competence	(1, 181) = 4.753	.031	.026
CV and Competence predicting Hire	(2, 180) = 76.35	<.001	.459
Colleague Model	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
CV predicting Colleague	(1, 181) = 5.786	.017	.031
CV predicting Competence	(1, 181) = 4.753	.031	.026
CV and Competence predicting Colleague	(2, 180) = 63.53	<.001	.414
Salary Model	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
CV predicting Salary	(1, 181) = 6.400	.012	.034

<b>CV predicting Competence</b>	(1, 181) = 4.753	.031	.026
<b>CV and Competence predicting Salary</b>	(2, 180) = 15.20	<.001	.144

The same model was tested on the other variables of interest showing equivalent results in each case see table 2. Thus, for Interview, Hiring, Colleague and Salary Offer the effect of employment status was fully mediated by Competence. In each case the indirect effect was significant using the bootstrapping procedures defined above (Hiring = -.259 [-.505, -.03],  $p = .027$ , Colleague = -.192 [-.376, -.01],  $p = .034$ , Salary = -214.1 [-453.1, -20.6],  $p = .032$  )

Although we expected Competence to be the mediating variable we also tested for differences in morality and sociability between CVs. Two sample t-tests show no differences between the unemployed and employed in terms of either Sociability ( $t(176.32) = 0.96, p = .294, d = -.14[-.43, .15]$ ) or Morality ( $t(170.62) = 1.05, p = .294, d = -.16[-.45, .14]$ ) as such they can both be excluded as possible mediators.

Thus overall, the study supported the three hypotheses. The unemployed candidate was less likely to be interviewed and less likely to be hired than the equivalent employed candidate. This relationship was significantly mediated by perceived competence. In study 2, we provide a preregistered direct replication of these results.

## Study 2

We attempted to replicate the results of study 1 following the same methodology. The study was pre-registered (<https://osf.io/krmbq>). The hypotheses of study 2 are the same as study 1. We thus predict:

H<sub>1</sub> – The unemployed candidate will be less likely to be interviewed than an equivalent employed candidate.

H<sub>2</sub> - The unemployed candidate will be less likely to be offered employment than an equivalent employed candidate.

H<sub>3</sub> – The relationship between employment status and employment outcomes will be mediated by perceived competence.

Since study 2 is a direct replication of study 1, the methods section only highlights the differences between the two studies.

### *Method*

### *Participants and Design*

A priori power analysis was conducted using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2007). Specifically, we calculated the required sample size (278) to detect effects of  $d = 0.3$ , for a one-tailed t-test (the difference between two independent means) with statistical power of .80. As such, 286 participants completed an online experiment on Prolific Academic (www.prolific.ac) between 12<sup>th</sup> March and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and were paid £9.30 per hour for their participation. Participants were pre-screened in the same way as study 1 and participants who took part in the original study were excluded. Eight participants were excluded as multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $p < .001$ ) resulting in a final sample of 278 ( $M_{age} = 38.35$ ,  $SD = 9.27$ ; 71.22% women)<sup>20</sup>.

Ethnically, 92.45% of our sample identified as White British. Educationally, 46.4% of our sample were educated to degree level, while 24.82% reported a postgraduate degree, only one participant had no qualifications. All participants reported experience of hiring and on average, reported having evaluated 28.43 CVs or job applications in the past year ( $SD = 26.33$ ). 58% of participants were middle managers, senior managers or executives. The design of the experiment is the same as the previous study, participants were randomly assigned to either employed (148) or unemployed (130) conditions.

### *Materials*

#### *CVs*

The two CVs are identical to those in study 1 apart from the dates of employment. These are slightly varied to maintain a 2-year gap in unemployment for the unemployed candidate. The employed candidates' dates of employment were equivalently updated.

### *Measures*

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<sup>20</sup> Readers should note that this data was collected during the height of the coronavirus pandemic lockdown in the UK. On May 17<sup>th</sup> the number of furloughed workers was 8 million compared to 1.3 million on 20<sup>th</sup> April

### *Employment-related outcomes*

As in study 1, we asked participants several employment-related questions after they had viewed the CV; however, neither Salary Increase nor Promote were not measured in this study (see table 3 for descriptive statistics).

### *Perceptions of Competence, Warmth and Morality*

All stereotype content measures are the same as in study 1 (*Sociability*,  $a=.89$ , *Morality*,  $a=.83$ , *Competence*,  $a=.84$ ).

## **Results**

### *Employment-related outcomes*

Again due to unequal sample sizes between groups (148 Employed CV, 130 Unemployed CV) and multiple tests, Welch correction and Holm-Bonferroni adjusted p-values are used in the following t-tests (Holm, 1979; Welch, 1938). As expected, participants were significantly less likely to want to offer an interview to the unemployed applicant ( $M = 5.48$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) compared with the employed applicant ( $M = 5.79$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ;  $t(260.79) = 1.95$   $p = .026$  (.035<sup>21</sup>),  $d = -.24[-.47, -.00]$ ).

Further there was also a significant difference between applicants on participants willingness to hire them, an applicant who was unemployed ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ) was significantly less likely to be offered a job interview than an applicant who was employed ( $M = 5.30$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ;  $t(265.68) = 2.11$ ,  $p = .018$  (.035<sup>5</sup>),  $d = -.26[-.49, -.02]$ ).

*Table 3*

*Descriptive statistics for dependent variables as a function of CV.*

	<i>Employed</i>		<i>Unemployed</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Interview	5.79	1.22	5.48	1.37
Hire	5.30	1.24	4.97	1.33
Colleague	5.55	1.04	5.35	1.09
Sociability	5.25	0.86	4.88	0.84

<sup>21</sup> Holm-Bonferroni corrected p-value

Competence	5.73	0.73	5.39	0.90
Morality	5.52	0.76	5.18	0.77
Salary Offer	£27,161	£2,159	£27,078	£2,221

Note. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

### Mediation Model

As in study 1, applicants employment status (employed or unemployed) was used to predict the likelihood of being interviewed, with competence expected to mediate the relationship between CV and interview likelihood. See Figure 2 for a visual diagram of the mediated relationship. CV was a marginally significant predictor of interview (the *c* pathway), as shown in Table 4. The unemployed condition showed a lower likelihood of interview than the employed condition,  $t(276) = -1.965, p = .050, \beta = -.306$ .

Second, CV was used to predict the mediator, Competence (the *a* pathway), which showed that CV was negatively related to Competence,  $t(276) = -3.495, p < .001, \beta = -.344$ . Third, the relationship between the mediator Competence and Interview was examined controlling for the CV (the *b* pathway). Competence was positively related to the likelihood of Interview,  $t(275) = 14.05, p < .001, \beta = 1.02$ . Lastly, the mediated relationship between CV and Interview was examined for a drop in prediction when the mediator was added to the model (the *c'* pathway). Full mediation was found, showing that the relationship between CV and Interview was no longer marginally significant after controlling for Competence,  $t(275) = 0.378, p = .706, \beta = -.046$ . We tested the significance of this indirect effect using bootstrapping procedures. Unstandardized indirect effects were computed for each of 10,000 bootstrapped samples using the mediation package in R (Tingley et al., 2014). The bootstrapped unstandardized indirect effect was  $-.354 [-.567, -.16], p < .001$ .

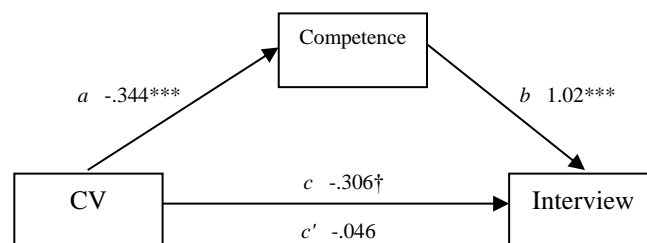


Figure 2. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between CV and Interview as mediated by Competence.

Table 4

Model Summaries for Mediation Analysis.

<b>Interview Model</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>CV predicting Interview</b>	(1, 276) = 3.861	.050	.014
<b>CV predicting Competence</b>	(1, 276) = 12.22	<.001	.042
<b>CV and Competence predicting Interview</b>	(2, 275) = 102.1	<.001	.426
<b>Hire Model</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>CV predicting Hire</b>	(1, 276) = 4.52	.034	.042
<b>CV predicting Competence</b>	(1, 276) = 12.22	<.001	.042
<b>CV and Competence predicting Hire</b>	(2, 275) = 118.1	<.001	.462

The same model was tested on Hire showing equivalent results see table 4. Thus, for Interview and Hiring the effect of employment status was fully mediated by Competence. The indirect effect was significant using the bootstrapping procedures defined above (Hiring = -.365 [-.579, -.16],  $p = <.001$ ).

### Mini-Meta Analysis of Current Studies

We conducted a mini meta-analysis of these studies following Goh, Hall and Rosenthal (2016) using fixed effects in which the mean effect size for H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> was weighted by inverse variance. Z was calculated based on the mean effect size and its standard error. Overall, the difference between employed and unemployed candidates on the interview measure was highly significant  $d = .274[.094, .459]$ ,  $Z = 2.912$ ,  $p = .002$ , one-tailed. The difference between candidates on the Hire measure was also highly significant,  $d = .307[.122, .491]$ ,  $Z = 3.253$ ,  $p <.001$ . Finally, we performed a meta-analysis of the indirect effect of competence on hiring using the metaSEM package in R (Cheung, 2015). The estimated indirect effect was statistically significant (-.151[-.241, -.062]).

### General Discussion

As discussed earlier, unemployed people are a stereotyped group in the UK (Okoroji et al., 2021) and elsewhere (Bullock, 2004; Schofield & Butterworth, 2018). They seem to be aware of these stereotypes and report that others see them as less competent than



they see themselves (Okoroji & Gleibs, 2020). As such, we hypothesized, that perceptions of job candidate's competence would differ as a function of employment status and that the difference in perceived competence would mediate the relationship between employment status and employment-related outcomes.

The present findings support our predictions. We found that perceived competence was predicted by the employment status of the applicant and that perceived competence fully mediated the relationship between the employment status of the applicant and employment-related outcomes (willingness to interview and to hire the candidate). The results were replicated in a high-powered follow-up study which represented a significantly different job market, characterised by increased job insecurity for large parts of society (i.e., through the Covid-19 pandemic). As such, all three hypotheses have been supported in two studies, and the results appear robust across economic contexts.

As such, we provide evidence that indeed, participants with hiring experience judge unemployed people to be less competent than an employed candidate with equivalent qualifications. Focusing on the role of perceptions of unemployed candidates' competence may help unpack conflicting results in previous audit studies. For instance, Nunley et al. (2017), show that unemployment status has no effect on employment outcomes for recent graduates. This result may arise because recent graduates are perceived to occupy a different social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) compared with other unemployed applicants. 'Graduates' will likely be seen as relatively competent especially where their most recent experience was as a student compared with unemployed people who are not recent graduates (i.e., whose last experience was not as a student).

Concerning audit studies more generally, we and others (e.g. Howard & Borgella, 2019) have shown that experimental audit-like methods can offer valuable insights. Data can be obtained that relates to the aims of the audit methodology through online experimental means. Given that the nature and prevalence of bias can change over time, previous audit studies soon fall behind the realities experienced by different groups. Therefore, it can be useful to provide updates about the level of discrimination that

different groups face in housing, employment and other domains through experimental means.

More broadly, the results of these studies indicate that the mere fact of being unemployed is likely to perpetuate unemployment. This paper provides evidence that knowing the dates of a candidate's employment may lead to bias. The bias against employed candidates is likely to mean the organisation are missing out on talented candidates, whom if employed, would have been shortlisted. Thus, organisations and human resource professionals, in particular, should think differently about the kinds of information that are needed to shortlist applicants. Switching to the length of tenure in each role may alleviate this, whilst still providing the information which is of most use in selecting whom to shortlist, namely the amount of experience they have.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study and its methodology are not without limitations. It could be argued that the study design does not replicate the typical recruitment scenario where hiring managers and HR professionals may view dozens of CVs in a short space of time. Under such circumstances (i.e. high cognitive load), research shows that people are more likely to rely on stereotypes (Macrae, Hewstone, & Griffiths, 1993). As such, our method might provide a more conservative test of our hypotheses and suggests that the effect of stereotyping unemployed people as less competent is likely to be greater in real-world scenarios.

Moreover, we only use two conditions in this study. Replications with further conditions with differing lengths of unemployment could provide us with an estimate as to the point at which the competence of an unemployed applicant begins to differ significantly from employed candidates.

Furthermore, it seems plausible that perceived competence is not the only factor at play – though perhaps one of the more important ones. Are the differential effects that we see in gender and race audit studies also a matter of competence (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016)? Are Black people and women seen as less competent than others? New research will have to be conducted using audit-like experiments to assess these differences.

Finally, new research should explore what practical changes can be made to CVs that would reduce the perception of incompetence. For instance, the audit studies addressing the impact of race have led to names being removed from application forms. Might it be similarly appropriate to remove dates from CVs and only include the duration of any employment alongside a description?

### **Conclusion**

The current studies provide cause for concern about how stigmatisation affects decision making in recruitment processes. Across two studies, we have shown that unemployed people are less likely to be interviewed and hired compared with an equivalent employed candidate. The reason for this seems to be that unemployed status influences participants perception of the candidates' competence. Knowledge of someone's unemployment alone is not enough to determine whether they are a competent candidate for a job. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that being unemployed does disadvantage candidates compared to an equivalent employed candidate. If society at large, and employers specifically, want to take advantage of the best available talent, then it is crucial to find ways to reduce bias against unemployed applicants.

## **Part III: Discussion and Conclusion**

## Chapter Seven: General Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with developing a social psychological explanation for stigmatisation which captures both macro-level societal processes and their influence on individual behaviour in context. Focusing on the experiences of unemployed people enabled the research to bring together several significant theories in social psychology. In doing so, the thesis shows how stigmatization of the unemployed is built through a societal process in which representations travel in the public sphere between political discourse and the media to their consolidation in public attitudes and how these representations then shape the identity and behaviour of unemployed people and others. Moreover, it has allowed for theoretical development by focusing on how the knowledge of others affects identity processes and a sharper appreciation of the dynamics of knowledge construction and stigma production in the public sphere.

Three broad questions have guided this work; 1) How does a group come to be stigmatised in the eyes of others? 2) How does knowing a group we belong to is stigmatised affect our sense of self? 3) Does this stigmatisation affect how others evaluate us? Seven empirical studies were conducted to answer these questions, reported in three papers that form the empirical chapters of the thesis. Through these chapters, I demonstrated, firstly, how societal meaning-making processes correlate with public attitudes increasing the levels of stigmatisation unemployed people are likely to face. Secondly, that these public attitudes towards unemployment are embedded in the ways that unemployed people see themselves and their identity. Specifically, that unemployed people show low levels of identification with unemployment but feel that others see them as *more* unemployed than they see themselves. The perception that others categorised participants as unemployed then predicted self-esteem and cognitive performance beyond identification itself. Finally, it was shown experimentally, that societally held stereotypes negatively impact on the employment prospects of unemployed people even where their qualifications and experience are equivalent to a currently employed candidate.

In the final chapter of this thesis, the results of this empirical work are summarised and drawn together to show the theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions

they provide. The discussion establishes the role the knowledge of others plays in the experience of social identity. The thesis is concluded by revisiting the main research questions and summarising the contribution this thesis has made to answering them, as well as potential policy implications of this work.

### **7.1. Social Representations of Groups and their Members**

In the first empirical chapter, we investigated meaning-making processes in the public sphere, seeking to understand the genesis of social representations of unemployed people and the prevalence of different kinds of representation over time (Okoroji et al., 2021). The paper traced meaning-making processes in three social domains: politicians' speeches, the press and public attitudes; capturing the formation of social representations in the public sphere. It shows first that politicians represent unemployed people in at least three different ways. One of those ways, 'othering', mirrors the stigmatising knowledge of unemployed people described in the introduction and other empirical research (Gibson, 2009, 2011; Norlander et al., 2020; Schofield et al., 2019). However, we extend this literature by showing how stigmatising representations of unemployed people in the UK are formulated around cultural narratives. That is, unemployed people are represented as having a distinct culture when compared with the rest of society and particularly, 'hardworking' people. This feature is similar to, but different from, past attribution literature which focuses on individualistic modes of explanation for unemployment (Bullock, 1999; Feather, 1985; A. Lewis et al., 1987). Rather than simplistic appeals to 'laziness', social representations of unemployed people in contemporary public discourse focus on a shared culture of 'welfare dependency' to explain their circumstances.

Drawing on previous research which maps ideological societal shifts through newspaper reporting, we were able to track the prevalence of social representations over time in mass media (Nafstad et al., 2007, 2009; Phelps et al., 2012). We show that stigmatising ways of representing unemployed people have become more prevalent over the last two decades. Specifically, representations of unemployed people as 'other' have become more ubiquitous, while other representations of unemployment have remained static.

We then argued that if othering representations are widely shared in mass media, and representations affect the thoughts, feelings, and common-sense knowledge of the public, then public attitudes would likely shift negatively in relation to unemployment and unemployed people. This hypothesis was confirmed in the third study, where we correlated public attitudes with the prevalence of negative representations in mass media.

However, from a theoretical standpoint, we do not argue that the building of social representations proceeds from politicians to the public, through mass media in a direct line of transmission. Instead, as argued in the literature review, alternative ideas and the knowledge of others becomes integral to the ways that knowledge is constructed. Thus, it is because of the long history of stigmatisation directed towards the unemployed, which makes ‘othering’ an accessible and easily deployed representation that politicians can re-present towards their political ends. Group memberships themselves also impact upon which representations are accepted into the systems of knowledge which guide everyday interaction (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Thus, newspapers, in acknowledging the representations that their readership already holds, report in ways which are likely to support their pre-existing knowledge.

Each of these processes mutually reinforces the veracity of particular social representations of unemployed people. Politicians draw on a shared history of pre-existing representations of unemployed in ways designed to create an ingroup of ‘hardworking people’. At the same time, newspapers draw on the arguments which are in line with what they perceive their readers will easily assimilate.

Thus, we see how particular representations of unemployed people become widely shared at a societal level. Dynamic meaning formation in the public sphere, through the interaction of representations of politicians, the press and the public influences how unemployment and unemployed people are understood. The stigma that unemployed people face is constructed in this interactive process. Such processes of meaning formation is a step forward in our understanding of the ways in which social groups come to be stigmatised in a society.

However, unemployed people are also a part of society and are cognizant of the negative representations of their status as unemployed. Unemployed people are likely to recognise how widely shared negative representations about their ‘culture of welfare dependency’ are. Understanding the meaning of group membership is one part of the experience of unemployment. However, it is also vital to acknowledge how the knowledge we ascribe to others, impacts the ways unemployed people experience their group memberships.

## **7.2. The Knowledge of Others in Social Identity**

Building on the first empirical chapter and drawing on the theoretical insights of social identity theory, the second empirical chapter sought to understand how stigmatising representations, established in chapter four, impact on unemployed people. Specifically, recognising that the early formulations of social identity theory include scope for categorisation by others as a crucial element in social identity processes.

The paper differentiated between identification and meta-identification in order to explore the role of others in social identification. It did this by orienting widely used social identity measures away from what the individual thinks about themselves, towards what they think others think. The results of differentiating these forms of social identification are that we show differences between the ways individuals perceive their identities and the way they think others do.

Specifically, we showed, in line with the predictions of social identity theory, that unemployed people show low levels of identification with unemployment. This identity management strategy is expected given what we found in the first empirical chapter, namely that unemployment is widely stigmatised. However, unemployed respondents perceived that others identified them more with unemployment than they did themselves.

This evidence contributes to theorising in the social identity tradition. It suggests that research, particularly with permeable stigmatised groups, must take more account of the ways that meta-identification impacts psychological outcomes. To date, comparatively little research has explored the role of others in social identification.



Chapter five of this thesis provides one example of the effects meta-identification can have.

In the chapter, we showed that for unemployed people, meta-identification was a strong negative predictor of well-being beyond identification. Additionally, identification and meta-identification predicted different forms of self-esteem, with meta-identification predicting social self-esteem negatively and identification predicting performance self-esteem in the same direction. These results enable us to unpick the differential impacts of meta-identification and identification. In particular, it shows how meta-identification, which is oriented to social interaction affects self-esteem in social situations, while identification, which is oriented inward affects more individualised forms of self-esteem related to personal performance.

In addition, we showed how meta-identification predicts cognitive performance above and beyond identification. Thus, meta-identification may play an essential role in stereotype threat. Previous research has suggested that high levels of identification may precipitate stereotype threat (Murphy et al., 2007). However, chapter five shows that higher levels of meta-identification with a stigmatised group may also be an important antecedent of stereotype threat.

Combining the insights from chapter four and five, we have shown that where a permeable group such as the unemployed are highly stigmatised, it follows that they will not identify strongly with the group. Nevertheless, they may perceive that they are identified as a member of the group by others. Hence the importance of the knowledge of others in social identification which has been underexplored in the extant literature. I have demonstrated that discrepancies between identification and meta-identification have the potential to precipitate stereotype threat effects, potentially through ‘cognitive imbalance’ (Schmader et al., 2008), anxiety or reduced working memory capacity (Major & O’Brien, 2005).

Nevertheless, in many instances, performance is judged externally, and few scenarios provide an objective measurement of that performance. Thus, it becomes crucial to understand how widely shared stereotypes may inform judgements about performance, aptitude, or suitability.

### **7.3. Stigmatisation and its Effects on Evaluation**

Research on unemployment has often failed to consider how the stigmatisation associated with unemployment affects those who are not unemployed (c.f. Norlander et al., 2020; Trzebiatowski, Wanberg, & Dossinger, 2019), concentrating instead on unemployment's individual effects. In the third empirical chapter, we aimed to understand how the widely held stigmatising representations established in chapter four, manifest in the evaluations of recruiters. Indeed, there were significant negative differences in the ways that unemployed people were evaluated compared with employed people.

That unemployed people are evaluated negatively in recruitment is relatively well established (Farber et al., 2019; Galarza & Yamada, 2014; Nunley et al., 2017). However, the mechanisms by which unemployed people are disadvantaged in recruitment are less well known. Thus, we have added to the empirical literature by offering a plausible mediator of differential employment outcomes. We do this by showing empirically that the perceived competence of unemployed people mediates differences between employed and unemployed candidates. These results connect the 'othering' representations established in the first empirical chapter with the ways in which others judge unemployed people in evaluative contexts.

Moreover, we have shown how group memberships can, and are, instructive when making evaluations. We can extrapolate this finding to other groups and thus, where group memberships are stigmatised, less favourable evaluations can follow regardless of actual performance or aptitude (Norlander et al., 2020). In this way, unemployed people experience inequality, whereby they are less likely to gain employment because they are members of a stigmatised group rather than being less capable. Put another way, being unemployed is likely to perpetuate unemployment, making it more challenging to exercise individual mobility.

These findings allude to theoretical advancements in stereotype threat related to the processes which contribute to performance decrements, in particular avoidance of stigmatised domains (Silverman & Cohen, 2014). Applying for a job is itself a stigmatised domain, several rejections (especially without feedback) are likely to

negatively impact the extent to which unemployed people continue actively seeking jobs. Thus, the stigmatisation unemployed people face in the job market can reduce the likelihood that unemployed people will engage in job-seeking behaviours.

#### **7.4. Theoretical, Methodological and Empirical Contributions**

Each empirical chapter (and when taken together) makes contributions to social psychology and our understanding of, and methods for, studying stigmatisation. As this thesis draws to a close, it is useful now to spell out the theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions of this PhD thesis in more detail.

##### **7.4.1 Theoretical Contributions**

Research exploring stigmatisation has been stymied by the lack of integration between different traditions. A focus of this thesis has been to integrate the disparate literature on stigmatisation and offer potential connections between them and more nuanced understanding of how stigmatisation functions for societies, societies groups and individuals. In this way, the thesis contributes to theory development by first, showing how contemporary understandings of the stigmatisation is necessary for robust empirical insights. Second, it recognises how macro and micro-level processes are related to one another through meta-knowledge.

Social representations provide a way to understand the development of social knowledge. Indeed, group formation, including their associated stereotypes, requires the development of such knowledge. In chapter four, I demonstrated how such knowledge travels in the public sphere and importantly how it can, and does, change over time.

One of the problems of research on stigmatisation is that it does not account for such changes in the manifestation of stereotypes. This problem is one of the reasons why the stereotype threat literature has come under increased scrutiny (Flore et al., 2018; Flore & Wicherts, 2015). However, once we recognise that stereotypes are not static, the reasons why some results are not replicated presently becomes clearer.

It is plausible, that in many instances, social representations of formerly stigmatised groups have shifted. Women may be no longer seen to be ‘bad at math’. In

which case, no stereotype threat would be expected to occur. This insight does not suppose that other stereotypes are not prevalent. Rather, that stereotyping and associated inequalities can, and do, shift temporally. Thus, the first step in understanding the potential effects of stigmatisation, is to establish, contemporaneously, whether the stereotype is, in fact, widely held.

Having demonstrated this in relation to unemployment in the UK, we have a basis upon which to conclude that there are potential psychological effects on individuals. However, it is also necessary to bridge the gap between social representations which circulate in society and behavioural outcomes for individuals. I do this by examining meta-knowledge – the knowledge we have of what other people think.

It has been crucial in this thesis to develop an understanding of the relationship between self and other in identity processes. This theoretical approach is necessary because both the well-being and unemployment literature minimises the impact of other social actors and the broader societal environment in explaining the experiences of unemployed people. I accomplish this by explicitly recognising that the meaning of a group membership, and group membership itself, is determined intersubjectively. It matters both what the individual thinks of their group and what they think others think. In this way, I articulate the role of others in processes of social identification and its effects.

Though the role of others as important actors in processes of identification was theorised early on, it is often neglected in social identity research (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It seems clear, logically, that one can both be a member of a group and not identify as a member of that group and vice versa. Such differences are likely to be prevalent in groups which are both permeable and stigmatised, including but not limited to, unemployment. Thus, in chapter five, we sought to examine how identification, using typical social identity measures, and meta-identification, the extent that we perceive others see us as a member of a group, might differ. The results of these studies have already been discussed, and it is not useful to rehash them here. However, it is crucial to think through how this leads to development in social identity theorising.

It becomes essential to examine the characteristics of the groups we study (i.e. their permeability and status in the social milieu) and instances in which meta-

identification may become important psychologically. As shown in this thesis, knowledge of social groups develops in the public sphere and may be widely shared. Stigmatising representations invite low levels of identification with a group, but low levels of identification alone are not always enough for the group memberships psychological meaning to completely erode.

Indeed, leaving a group as an identity management strategy (Ellemers et al., 1990) also depends on the perspectives that others take and relationships of power between individuals and groups. Knowing that others see us as a member of a stigmatised group makes that group psychologically meaningful for the individual. What is more, when the 'other' also has the power to make decisions for, or about, the self – simply denying the group becomes untenable.

We have shown here that in a low-status, highly stigmatised permeable group, meta-identification has adverse effects. Nevertheless, other effects are likely in groups with different characteristics. As Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1999) have shown, a typology of identity threat reactions derive from the extent to which group members identify with the group and the class of threat. In particular, the nature of the threat (categorisation, distinctiveness, value, acceptance) and extent of identification (high vs low) impacts the type of response expected.

However, the level of meta-identification can also become informative to the possible outcomes of identity threat. Specifically, meta-identification is an important variable to consider in determining the expected response to identity threats that have previously been underexplored. High or low meta-identification then may provide value in offering a more nuanced explanation of differing social identity dynamics, including threat.

In particular, it may help to predict circumstances in which stereotype threat is likely to occur. Stereotype threat is said to operate when there is a perceived risk of confirming some stereotype associated with group membership. However, the strength of identification with the stigmatised group has previously been explored and shown to be a significant predictor of stereotype threat (Murphy et al., 2007). This thesis is the

first example where meta-identification has been shown to predict stereotype threat effects.

It seems highly plausible that the perception that others, particularly evaluators, see us as a member of a stigmatised group would inhibit cognitive performance. Indeed, other literature has already suggested that stereotype threat theory could be enhanced by the inclusion of meta-perspectives (Voyles et al., 2014). Voyles and colleagues note that for stereotype threat to take place, the individual must first experience a cognition that another person or group holds a stereotype about them. An additional prerequisite, which has not been discussed in the extant literature, is that they must also perceive that those holding the stereotype, view the individual as a member of the stigmatised group. Without this step, no threat occurs. This step is necessary because the stereotype only becomes relevant where it is related to an identity we hold or, an identity that we perceive that others perceive us to hold.

Importantly then, I have shown that meta-identification is an antecedent of stereotype threat above and beyond identification itself. Thus, theoretically, meta-identification may be an important, perhaps necessary precursor to both stereotype threat but also ‘stereotype empowerment’ (i.e. where positive stereotypes increase psychological resources/performance, Voyles et al., 2014). Thus, I suggest that in addition to the antecedents of identity threat outlined by Major and O’Brien (2005; social representations, situational cues and personal characteristics) both identification and meta-identification are essential for individual appraisals of possible threats to identity. In parallel, they provide additional information about the personal relevance of the stereotype, i.e. whether the individual perceives themselves to be a member of the relevant group and the extent to which others perceive them as a group member.

Drawing on Major and O’Brien (2005) in this way, we can begin to trace the more substantial conceptual contribution of this PhD thesis. Bringing together the theoretical and methodological insights of social representations theory, social identity theory, stereotype threat and the stereotype content model, we can understand how social knowledge becomes identity threat and its consequences for self and other (figure 3).

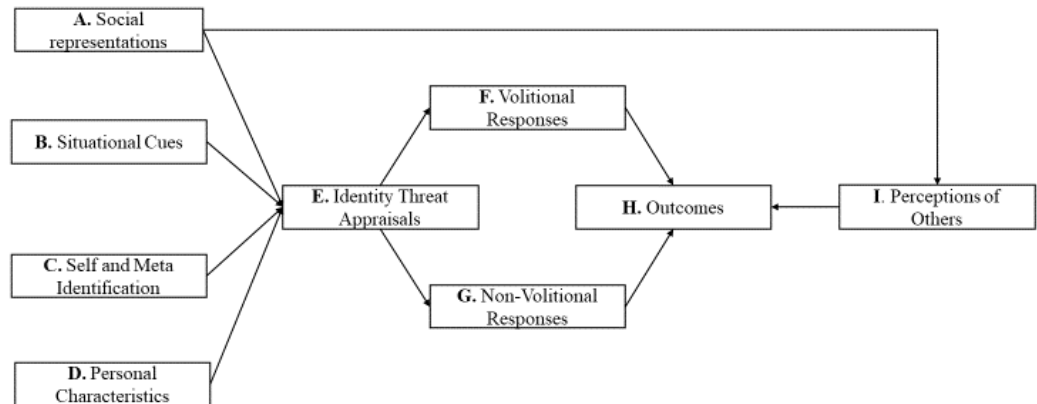


Figure 3 An Identity Threat Model of Stigma

Figure 3 presents an extended model of stigmatisations and its effects drawing on the work of Major and O'Brien (2005). It shows how social representations (A), situational cues (B), identification (C) and personal characteristics (D) influences appraisals of identity threat. Where identity threat does occur (E) both volitional (F; creative strategies) and non-volitional (G; anxiety, increased working memory load) responses are possible. These responses result in differential outcomes, such as lower self-esteem and performance decrements (H). However, where outcomes are externally determined through the appraisals of others, the perceptions of others (H), influenced by social representations (A) impact these outcomes.

First, what has been added to the model is the integration of social representations theory, thus embedding the model in the existing literature on the development of social knowledge in the public sphere. The model now explicitly accounts for the knowledge of others in processes of identity threat. As previously mentioned, not all outcomes are (particularly around performance) are objective. Thus, social representations of the stigmatised group can, and do, influence how others judge performance. Furthermore, we add insights about the antecedents that inform appraisals of identity threat. Namely, perceived levels of self/meta-identification.

Where a particular context signals the potential of identity threat, i.e. risk of being negatively stereotyped, individuals must both perceive that a negative stereotype related to their group membership is relevant and that others are identifying them with the stigmatised group. Both of these processes are essential for the identity threat to take place, and although ‘group identification’ was previously included in the model as a personal characteristic, we add meta-identification and increase their importance to the model overall. As has been shown in this thesis (chapter 5), identity threat can then lead to decrements in self-esteem and cognitive performance predicated on meta-identification. Thus, the thesis extends previous literature and develops our understanding of the processes which lead to identity threat and the ability of others to shape outcomes for stigmatised groups. Considering for the first time, variables which are extrinsic to the individual but impact on performance in stigmatised domains.

This model also recognises for the first time that stigmatisation is a non-linear. It does not proceed only from the individual to their own response to stigmatisation, but also from external agents who have the power to dictate potential outcomes. In this way, the model is dialogical (Markova, 2008). The strength and veracity of a stigmatising representation is dependent on an intersubjectively agreed reality. Which in turn may modify the potential for identification and meta-identification and the potential for threat to occur. However, these processes affect others too and the way they interact with, and ultimately, evaluate unemployed people and other stigmatised groups.

These insights provide new avenues for investigation. For instance, we can reinterpret existing literature which focuses on the psychological distress that people experience when they are unemployed (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009) as stemming from responses to identity threats. Thus, where social representations of the unemployed are stigmatising, and identification and meta-identification disagree, decrements in well-being and self-esteem follow. Additionally, unemployed people must also cope with, and respond to, lower perceptions of their capabilities and performance in recruitment processes, which reinforce feelings of low self-esteem.

Responding to the work of Jahoda and others, we find that indeed, the lack of an acceptable status would seem to be most relevant to the experience of unemployment.



Though the other factors outlined by Jahoda (1982) and Warr (2007) such as lack of structure may also be important, they do not directly derive from unemployment itself. As already discussed, these other latent benefits can be accrued without a job. It is instead the particular societal understandings of unemployment, the effects of holding a spoiled identity, and the reactions of others in one's social world which create poor psychological health among unemployed people (Wickham et al., 2020) beyond material poverty. These insights are gained by directly studying unemployment and its meanings rather than the absence of a job.

Overall, the theoretical insights of this PhD are to suggest combining social representations, social identity, stereotype threat and stereotype content within the identity threat model of stigma. This combination of insights provides a more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena (stigmatisation), and its effects, by recognising societal processes of knowledge production and their behavioural outcomes in context.

#### **7.4.2. Methodological Contributions**

In addition to these empirical and theoretical insights, the thesis also provides methodological advances in three areas. First, we show a different way to study the prevalence of social representations at a societal level longitudinally. Second, we introduce the first measures (that we know of) to account for meta-identification. Third, we problematise and provide solutions to the issue of audit methods in field research related to employment.

Taking these in turn, one contribution of this thesis is to develop appropriate methods for understanding widely held stereotypes. A method was developed in chapter four (Okoroji et al., 2021) by introducing a subtle change to the methodology used by Nafstad, Phelps et al. (2013). Rather than using words which we presume are relevant to a particular representation, we used words that are used by politicians in developing these representations. This approach solves issues around researcher bias in the development of keyword dictionaries used to search for specific frames within newspapers. Keywords which are subjectively determined by the researcher, no matter

how well intentioned, are likely to be biased. By using phrases that are used by politicians, our choice of phrases becomes more clearly open to scrutiny by other researchers. It also becomes reproducible, such that if other researchers utilise the same data they are able, potentially, to draw the same conclusions about words and phrases which are likely to indicate the presence of a frame.

Through this method, we show how social representations can be tracked over time by first analysing the rhetoric of politicians, or other figures who help to generate representations, and then tracking the use of indicative phrases in other media. This method is widely applicable to an array of research interests including other social groups, technology (Bauer, Gylstorff, Madsen, & Mejlgaard, 2019), legal advances (Mouro & Castro, 2012) and climate change (Uzelgun & Castro, 2015). Ultimately, where there is a public discourse around a specific issue, and the leaders of that discourse are easily identifiable, then the methods utilised in chapter four can be applied to understand how widely the representation is distributed. Importantly this can be done longitudinally.

Chapter five provides methodological advances specifically on the measurement of meta-identification. The study is the first, that we know of, which has differentiated identification with a group from meta-identification. This differentiation was accomplished by changing the target of widely used measures of social identification (Postmes et al., 2013) from the individual to the wider society. In this way, we have shown how identification and meta-identification can have different outcomes for self-esteem and well-being. However, such measures do require further validation and issues of multicollinearity need to be resolved (see section 7.5).

In chapter six, we highlight a significant risk to audit methods that aim to explore differences in recruitment practices. Namely, that the increasing use of application forms, as opposed to CVs (resumes), social media screening and standardised recruitment processes, make the possibility of a valid contemporary audit study doubtful. Thus, we provide a methodology that can be utilised to study differences between candidates using an online experiment, where participants have hiring experience. This method provides a way for researchers to ascertain levels of

discrimination that groups face in the job market without the substantial resources needed to make thousands of applications to real jobs successfully, especially if the applicants are to appear to be real people (by having an online presence through social media accounts). Our method, extending Howard and Borgella (2019), provides a believable cover story for assessment of anonymous curriculum vitae's. Which allows for the evaluation of variables of interest without confounding the study via needing to provide realistic work history, leading to associations between companies a candidate has previously worked for and organisational fit for a new role. Through this method, it is possible to recruit participants with hiring experience and focus solely on the differences in evaluation derived from unemployment status. The audit-like method outlined in chapter six can be used to study other areas of interest such as race, gender or age.

### **7.4.3 Empirical Contributions**

The thesis has provided several new insights concerning the experience of unemployment which were previously not known. In the first empirical chapter, contemporary social representations of the unemployed in the UK are elucidated empirically for the first time. The chapter shows how social representations of the unemployed have focused primarily on defining the unemployed as a cultural other. Specifically, by focusing in on, and framing, unemployment in terms of a 'culture of welfare dependency'. The chapter also shows how these narratives are re-presented in widely shared national newspapers and influence public attitudes towards the unemployed.

Through this analysis, we concretely defined the social knowledge attached to the unemployed and set out precisely the meaning of the social category. In doing so, we showed how meanings associated with the group membership have been developed in the public sphere over time.. Such research provides a useful starting point for further investigation of the effects of unemployment. Without such data, empirical investigation runs the risk of reifying researcher perspectives on the meanings that others place on unemployment.

In sum, the first empirical chapter is the first research to examine contemporary social representations of the unemployed longitudinally. This research is vital for enabling future research, which is embedded in contemporary social knowledge, which influences the experiences of unemployed people both personally and interpersonally. Thus, in answering the first research question of this thesis (how does a group come to be stigmatised in the eyes of others?) the thesis provides new knowledge not only about the forms that social representations take but also the actors involved in enabling and generating these representations.

Building on these results, chapter four explores the second overarching research question of the thesis, namely, how the social representations of unemployed people affect their sense of self. In examining these issues, the thesis shows for the first time how unemployed people rate their group on stereotype content measures. We find that unemployed people, rate unemployed people, as being relatively high (above the scale mid-point) on Morality, Competence and Warmth. However, in line with the social representations discussed in chapter four, they perceive that most other people would rate unemployed people as relatively low (below the mid-point of the scale) on all of these measures.

Additionally, we have empirically demonstrated that identification and meta-identification differ and that they have differing ramifications for self-esteem, well-being and performance. These insights suggest modifications in the emphasis of research in the social identity tradition.

In the final empirical chapter, we contribute to the knowledge of the mechanisms by which unemployed people face differential outcomes in the job market. We confirm the hypothesised relationship between unemployment, competence and hiring decisions (Trzebiatowski et al., 2019) using an audit-like methodology. Specifically, across two experiments (one during the height of the coronavirus lockdown) that unemployed people with equivalent experience and education to an employed candidate are less likely to be interviewed or hired by participants with hiring experience. The perceived competence of the candidate fully mediated that relationship. This study is the first

example where the mechanism by which differential employment outcomes has been explored in relation to unemployed candidates.

Thus, we have shown how perceived group memberships can be instructive when making evaluations. This process is predicated upon the social representation of unemployed people examined in chapter four. Indeed, we have shown how the targets of stigmatisation (chapter five) and those who interact with the target (chapter six) are effected by stigmatising knowledge.

Overall, the empirical contribution of the PhD can be summarised in the following way. Contemporary social representations of the unemployed often focus on cultural differentiation, such that the unemployed have different and subordinate cultural norms when compared with the rest of society. These representations affect how unemployed people experience and respond to inclusion within the stigmatised category.

Unemployed people's perception of the stereotype content related to unemployed people differs markedly (more positively) from the ways they perceive that others would stereotype the group. Thus, who unemployed people are is as much about what they think as it is about what others say about them. Accounting for these perspectives extends to perceptions of group membership itself, whether or not one is a member of a group, is in part, a question of perspective. Unemployed people perceive that others see them as unemployed more so than they do themselves, which speaks to the potential difficulties in individual mobility strategies to deal with stigmatisation.

Finally, unemployment has been shown to be instructive when making evaluations through its association with lower competence. Therefore, where group memberships are stigmatised, less favourable evaluations can follow regardless of objective differences in suitability. These results have significant ramifications for theorising across social representations, social identity and stereotype threat.

## **7.5. Future Directions**

This PhD thesis provides scope for a variety of future research directions. One of these is validating measures of meta-identification. Although a measure was used to explore meta-identification based on widely used measures of identification, it is crucial

to validate the construct validity of the measure (or new measures) when used to explore meta-identification. Future research should look to determine measures of meta-identification which show discriminant validity in relation to measures of identification.

As has been shown with identification, meta-identification may not be a unitary construct (Leach et al., 2008). Meta-identification, like identification, may be made up of several components such as meta-satisfaction (the extent to which others think one feels glad to be a member of the group) or meta-centrality (the extent to which the individual thinks the others think that they see the group as central to them). The development of a validated method for exploring meta-identification was not the focus of this thesis and indeed other measures which more closely reflect how others categorise the individual may be useful in exploring the themes of this PhD. However, construct validity is vital to the progression of this line of research.

Similarly, issues of multicollinearity must also be resolved in relation to meta-perceptions of identity and stereotypes. In this research, stereotype content and meta-stereotype content were highly correlated both across dimensions, and within dimensions. However, this is not necessarily an indication of redundancy. Rather it is likely that, given high levels of stigmatisation faced by unemployed people and its wide sharing in society, perceptions of unemployed people are indeed unambiguous. These variables correlate not because they are the same but because unemployed people are perceived and perceive, that they have low levels of Morality, Competence and Warmth. This multicollinearity issue would effect other highly stigmatised and highly regarded groups where the stereotypes associated with the group are not ambivalent. Nevertheless, statistical models and their robustness are effected by multicollinearity and as such future research would need to guard against this possibility. A typical approach would be to use some form of transformation which retains the meaning of the variables such as centring or the calculation of difference scores. Ultimately, the approach taken in this thesis in relation to self and other is about congruence. One contemporary approach to congruence hypotheses is response surface analysis (Barranti, Carlson, & Côté, 2017; Humberg, Nestler, & Back, 2019). Such analysis does not by itself solve issues of multicollinearity but can provide a way to analyse such data while

avoiding potential problems with other methods such as the calculation of difference scores.

With such measures and analysis techniques in place, it then becomes possible to explore a second line of research. Namely, the ramifications of mismatches between identification and meta-identification concerning different classes of identities, i.e., permeable, stigmatised, high power/low power. The effect of meta-identification would likely differ concerning different social identities, and unemployment is only one example of a stigmatised, permeable group. In non-stigmatised, impermeable groups, the effect of meta-identification is likely to be positive and increase self-esteem and well-being. However, without further research, the veracity of these claims cannot be established.

Similarly, the identity threat model of stigmatisation requires systematic validation. Although a variety of research supports the general tenants of the model (for a review see Major & O'Brien, 2005), more research is needed to specifically test multiplicity of responses to stigmatisation that could occur predicated on the type of identity that is at stake. When, and under what circumstances, are volitional and non-volitional reactions expected. Importantly when might we expect both kinds of responses? For instance, we know that race-based identity threat leads to both non-volitional responses (e.g. anxiety) but also activism. These volitional responses take place even in the domains most associated with stereotype threat such as higher education.

Finally, this PhD has been focused intently on the UK. Although these results are likely to be applicable across western, late-capitalist economies, particularly former UK colonies such as the United States and Australia, cultural variation in the treatment and experiences of unemployed people is unexplored. In predicting differences in the potential levels of stigmatisation that unemployed people face, a social dominance perspective has the potential to offer valuable insights. Social Dominance Theory (Ho et al., 2012; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006) suggests that arbitrary set group-based hierarchies are determined by social distinctions that are meaningfully related to power.

Clearly, in a capitalist framework, wealth and wage labour are essential aspects of the relations of power between individuals.

In maintaining these hierarchies, cultures develop legitimising myths which are consensually shared ideologies (i.e. social representations), that provide intellectual justification for inequality. That is, they are used to legitimate the status quo. In the UK context, much of these legitimising myths focus on defeating a ‘culture of dependency’ (Okoroji et al., 2020), with similar rhetoric in Australia (Schofield & Butterworth, 2018). These myths, which focus on the unwillingness of unemployed people to find jobs, justify harsh welfare policies.

From a Social Dominance Theory perspective, it could be argued that in societies where wealth is an essential vector of power differentials (i.e. in more laissez-faire capitalist systems), unemployed people are more likely to face harsh or stigmatising conditions. This appraisal is consistent with the notion that social dominance orientation (SDO) would be higher when competition for resources is endemic. Indeed, the very basis of capitalism is free-market competition. Levels of wealth inequality across nations could be used to predict political and institutional policy responses to unemployed people to test this hypothesis, where we would expect more conditional, harsher welfare systems in countries with more significant wealth inequalities and higher levels of SDO. However, recent research has found income inequality to be unrelated to SDO cross-nationally (Fischer, Hanke, & Sibley, 2012). The study, however, did not control for the incomes of respondents, and social dominance theory suggests that it is dominant groups who are likely to support hierarchies from which they benefit, more so than non-dominant groups (Kunst, Fischer, Sidanius, & Thomsen, 2017). In a society where wealth is very unequally distributed, relatively few people benefit, but those few have a relatively strong influence over institutions. Thus, it could be hypothesised that in highly unequal societies, welfare policies and welfare institutions are more hierarchy enhancing than in societies with lower income inequalities. Such an approach would go some way to explaining cross-cultural differences in stigmatisation towards the unemployed.



## **7.6. Conclusion**

This thesis has aimed to explore the effects of stigmatisation. Specifically, to explore stigmatisation in relation to a permeable and stigmatised group – the unemployed. The thesis has shown that stigmatisation develops in the public sphere and has effects on self-esteem, well-being and cognitive performance of unemployed people. Importantly these effects are predicated not just on social identification alone, but also by meta-identification. Furthermore, the thesis examines the effects of stigmatisation on those who perceive stigmatised targets, in this case, how recruiters evaluate unemployed people. Our analysis shows that when perceiving unemployed people, recruiters unduly evaluate unemployed people as less competent than equivalent applicants. Thus, the stigmatisation unemployed people face makes it less likely that they will gain employment when compared to equally qualified employed applicants.

In theoretically exploring these issues, the thesis has brought together several major theories in social psychology. The thesis has argued that social representations theory and social identity theory are fundamentally connected. Social representations account for the content of identity, i.e. the meaning of the identity, its attributes and status in the social milieu. This identity content may be summarised in some cases via the stereotype content model. Social identity theory then informs the processes related to, and consequences of, occupying a social category, including those categories which are permeable. Indeed, adding insights from stereotype threat, the thesis shows the consequences of occupying a stigmatised identity in specific scenarios, i.e. evaluative scenarios. Connecting these four theories provides links between important theoretical paradigms in social psychology which are compatible in explaining the effects of stigmatisation in unemployment.

Combining these theories, however, has required methodological plurality across studies in this thesis and an emphasis on different levels of analysis. The mixed-methods triangulation approach taken supports a more complex and nuanced understanding of unemployment. It has allowed for assessment of the societal, intergroup and individual processes which contribute to stigmatisation in the public sphere and its effects.

However, this method could also be said to detract from a more targeted approach. Indeed, the need for the development of measures of meta-identification cannot be understated. Meta-identification has been a centrepiece of this thesis and requires further development, particularly concerning its validity to become an empirically useful concept.

The new insights gained from this thesis provide inroads to developing welfare systems that are oriented to the human experience of unemployment. First, we can recognise how political actors play a role in the development of outgroups; however, if the welfare state aims to ensure that unemployed people ultimately find jobs. Stigmatising unemployed people is likely to be ineffective. We can see this in the evaluations that others make about them. Thus it is essential that identity entrepreneurs (S. A. Haslam & Reicher, 2007) champion the skills and competence of unemployed people. Such an approach becomes more evident in the context of a global pandemic with severe effects on the unemployment rate. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that even outside of the current crisis – nothing can be inferred from employment status that would indicate the quality of a potential employee.

Secondly, given the stigmatisation associated with unemployment and its effects on self-esteem and well-being, it becomes crucial to organise employment support around other identities, in particular identities which would lend themselves to higher self-esteem. For example, rather than organising welfare support around an individual's current status as unemployed, they could be organised around potential or previous occupational identities. Thus, the former mechanic, who seeks to become a computer engineer could engage with employment support, training and skills development as a trainee computer engineer. Such an approach changes the interpersonal dynamics between individuals by providing an acceptable status in the eyes of others.

More radically, it is possible to essentially abolish unemployment as a consequential social category by introducing a universal basic income. A universal basic income model would do away with potentially hierarchy enhancing institutions of the state concerned with the controlling or 'correcting' the behaviour of unemployed people and provide an unconditional means of subsistence. With such a policy in place, the lack

of an occupational identity may become less critical to the evaluation of candidates in recruitment processes. At the least universal basic income has been shown not to disincentivise paid employment and thus is worth further exploration as an alternative to current conditional welfare systems (Kangas, Jauhiainen, Simanainen, & Ylikännö, 2019).

In conclusion, the social-psychological approach offered in this thesis to understanding the stigmatisation of the unemployed explains how stigmatisation develops and affects unemployed people and others. It does this by exploring the social representations of unemployed people in Britain and showing how this affects social identification. Indeed, the thesis shows that unemployed people, in trying to exercise individual mobility, perceive that others see them as more unemployed than they see themselves. This meta-identification has adverse effects on self-esteem and cognitive performance. However, stigmatisation also affects the evaluations that other people make about unemployed people, particularly in recruitment processes. Taking these insights together, the thesis shows the usefulness of understanding the role that others, and in particular, the knowledge of others, play in our social world.

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# Appendix 1 – Claimant Commitment



Annex 1

## Claimant Commitment

**Joanne Brown**

**National Insurance number: AB123456C**

### 1. My commitment

I'll do everything I can to get paid work, and will receive Universal Credit payments to support me in this. The things I'll do are set out in this Claimant Commitment.

### 2. Finding and taking work

I'll look for and take any work I'm able to do, that:

- pays £6.19 an hour or more
- is within 90 minutes' travel from my home

I'm available for work for 40 hours each week. I can work on any day at any time.

#### **I will:**

- **apply for vacancies I'm told to apply for by my adviser**
- **attend and take part fully in job interviews I'm offered**
- **take up offers of paid work that I'm able to do**

If, without good reason, I don't do all these things, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 3 years.

#### **I will be available to:**

- **attend a job interview immediately**
- **start work immediately**

If, without good reason, I'm not available as described, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 91 days.

### 3. My actions for getting into work

My work search and preparation plan lists the things I'll do to give me the best chance of finding work quickly. This means I will normally spend 35 hours each week looking and preparing for work.

#### **I will:**

- **complete all the activities in Section 1 of my work search and preparation plan**
- **provide evidence that I've done my regular work search activities when required**

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If, without good reason, I don't do all these things, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 91 days.

**I will also:**

- **complete all the actions and activities in Section 2 of my work search and preparation plan**
- **attend and take part in appointments with my adviser when required**

If, without good reason, I don't do all these things, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 for each day until I:

- complete each action or another activity I've been told to do instead by my adviser; or
- arrange a new appointment

Once I've done this, my payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for a further period of up to 28 days.

If, without good reason, I don't apply for any specific jobs my adviser has told me to, as listed in Section 2 of my work search and preparation plan, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 3 years.

I understand that Universal Credit may ask employers for feedback on:

- my applications for jobs
- job interviews I'm invited to.

#### 4. Changes in my circumstances

I'll tell Universal Credit immediately about **any** changes in my circumstances that could affect my claim.

**If I'm in paid work at any time, I'll tell Universal Credit if my job ends, within 5 days of leaving. I must make sure all my earnings are reported to Universal Credit, either by me or by my employer.**

If, without good reason, I leave paid work or lose pay, either by choice or because of misconduct, my Universal Credit payments could be cut by £10.20 a day for up to 3 years.

If, without good reason, I don't tell Universal Credit within 5 working days that I've left a job, my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 for each further day that I don't tell Universal Credit I've left that job. Once I've done this, my payments will be cut by £10.20 a day for a further period of up to 28 days.

**If I also have earnings from self-employment at any time, I'll tell Universal Credit the details of my self-employed income and expenses.** I'll do this each month through the Universal Credit phone service. I'll be told what date I have to do this by each month, and I won't get my Universal Credit payments until I've done it. If I still haven't reported my self-employed income and expenses one month after this deadline, my Universal Credit claim will be stopped.

I must give Universal Credit information that I believe is correct and complete. I understand that if I don't report any changes that affect my Universal Credit claim as soon as possible, I may be prosecuted or other action may be taken against me. I also understand that I may have to pay a £50 penalty if there is an overpayment of Universal Credit to me and it was my fault.

#### 5. Meeting my commitment

Jobcentre Plus will give me help and advice to support me in doing the things set out in my Claimant Commitment. I know how to contact Jobcentre Plus.

I'll phone Universal Credit in advance on 0845 600 0723 if I can't attend an appointment when I should.

If I don't meet all the requirements set out in my Claimant Commitment, I understand that my Universal Credit payments will be cut. The number of days they're cut for will depend on:

- how many times I haven't met my requirements in the previous 12 months
- which requirements I haven't met

I understand that the sanction rates for Universal Credit may change from time to time. The current rates at any given time will automatically apply to this Claimant Commitment. If there is any doubt about my claim it will be reviewed, which could lead to my Universal Credit payments being reduced or stopped. If a decision is made to reduce or stop my payments, this will be explained to me. If I disagree with the decision, I have the right to have it reconsidered or to appeal against it.

Signature.....Date.....



My work search and preparation plan

I'll spend 35 hours each week looking and preparing for work. This will include all the activities and actions in this plan.

Section 1: Regular work search activities:	How often
• Check the Nottingham Post on a Wednesday and Saturday and apply for any suitable jobs	2 times a week
• Check the "Fish for Jobs" website and apply for suitable jobs	2 times a week
• Cold call employers located within 90 minutes travelling distance of my home by visiting, telephoning and sending speculative written applications/CVs	4 times a week
• Following the creation of the Check Universal Jobmatch account, check the Universal Jobmatch account and apply for all suitable matched jobs	2 times a week

Section 2: Specific actions I will take:	By	Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the 2 day interview skills/CV workshop @ Training 4U, Bath Lane, Anton - 30/31 Jan 2013</li> </ul> <p>If I fail to do this without good reason my Universal Credit payments will be cut by £10.20 for every day until I contact my adviser to discuss attending another workshop, and then for up to a further 28 days.</p>	30/01/2013	06/02/2013
• Register with RetailChoice Employment Agency	01/02/2013	06/02/2013
• Attend the Library or Jobcentre to create a Universal Jobmatch account	16/01/2013	06/02/2013
• Produce 3 variations to the CV covering Customer Service, Office work, Hotel / hospitality	01/02/2013	06/02/2013

## Appendix 2 – Codebook from Chapter Four

Name	Description	Sources	References
Economy of Unemployment	References to falling/rising unemployment and other statistics	14	24
Unemployment Stats		14	23
Othering the Unemployed	Derogatory comments about the unemployed focusing on their individual failing or collective cultural norms	34	127
Antithesis of the Employed	Comparing and contrasting the unemployed and employed	20	38
Cheats	References to welfare cheats	9	9
Disability Specific	Specific references to unduly claiming disability benefits	1	1
Culture	Describing or referring to the culture of the unemployed	21	51
Laziness	References to unemployed peoples laziness	7	7
Local context	Arguments in relation to communities where unemployment is high e.g. estates etc	2	2
Long-term Unemployed	References to the long-term unemployed	3	4
Receiving benefit		9	12
Single parents	References to single parent families	1	1
Youth	References to young people	3	3
Welfare Policy	Rhetoric related to policies implemented by govt in relation to the welfare state	33	121
Jobseekers Allowance		5	5
Job centre		3	3

Name	Description	Sources	References
Other	Other policies not captured elsewhere (incapacity benefit etc)	28	49
Welfare State		26	67
Benefit Changes		18	28
Welfare reform	Talk about welfare reforms over time including Universal Credit	12	18

#### Coded References By Party Affiliation

	Labour	Tory
1 : Economy of Unemployment	14	9
2 : Othering the Unemployed	49	78
3 : Welfare Policy	73	47

## Appendix 3 – Chapter Five, Study 1 Materials

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Q1

### Thinking about Others, Thinking about Me

**Celestin Okoroji** Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, LSE

**Information for participants** Thank you for considering participating in this study. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part. The aim of the project is to understand how you feel about certain groups you belong to and how you think others feel about these groups. This information will be collected via one short questionnaire after which you will be debriefed. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part, we will ask you to click 'Yes' at the end of the page.

**How do I withdraw from the study?** You can withdraw at any point of the study, without having to give a reason, by exiting the survey. If any questions during the questionnaire make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them, and you can withdraw from the survey at any time for any reason, by exiting the page. However, because data collected becomes anonymous upon completion of the questionnaire, it will not be possible to locate and delete a participant's data once you have returned your completed questionnaire to us.

**What will my information be used for?** We will use the collected information for a research project which may lead to publication in academic journals.

**Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?** The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to the files. Your data is anonymised – your name is not recorded and will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

**What if I have a question or complaint?** If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, Celestin Okoroji (c.okoroji@lse.ac.uk)

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**Q2 Do you agree to take part in this study?**

Yes

No



**Q3 If you have a Prolific I.D. please write it below, if not click next:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 Please read the following questions carefully and try to answer each question as best you can.** Most questions are concerned with your opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. There are no trick questions.

**Q5 How would you describe your gender?**

**I am a...**

Man

Woman

Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q6 Please tell us your age**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q7 What is your ethnic group?**

- White/White British
  - Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
  - Asian/Asian British
  - Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
  - Other ethnic group
- 

**Q37 Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?**

- Employed, working 40 or more hours per week
- Employed, working 1-39 hours per week
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, NOT looking for work
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work

**Q9 Thinking about society in general, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Unemployed people are a stigmatised group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10 The following questions are about **what you think about your in-group (unemployed people)**. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about **unemployed people**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Unemployed people are honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are likeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployed people are skilled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a positive view of Unemployed people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Page Break

Q34 The following questions aim to assess the extent to which you see yourself as unemployed. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I identify with unemployed people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel committed to unemployed people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am glad to be an unemployed person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being unemployed is an important part of how I see myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11: The following questions are about what you think **most people in society think about your in-group (unemployed people)**. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about what people in society think about **unemployed people**



<b>Most people.....</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...think unemployed people are honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are likeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think unemployed people are skilled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have a positive view of unemployed people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 The following questions aim to assess the extent to which most people identify you as unemployed. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Most people...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...think I identify with the unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think I feel committed to the unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think I am glad to be unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...think being unemployed is an important part of how I see myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 This is a questionnaire designed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of

yourself at the moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you **RIGHT NOW**.

	Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremely
I feel confident about my abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel frustrated or rattled about my performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I am having trouble understanding things that I read	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident that I understand things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I'm not doing well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel as smart as others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 This is a questionnaire designed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of

yourself at the moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you **RIGHT NOW**.

	Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremely
I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel self-conscious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel displeased with myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am worried about what other people think of me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel inferior to others at this moment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel concerned about the impression I am making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am worried about looking foolish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting the appropriate response. Please be open and honest in your responses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
In most ways my life is close to my ideal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The conditions of my life are excellent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q38 Are you currently receiving any welfare benefits e.g. JSA, Universal Credit, ESA etc

Yes

No

Not Sure

**Q21 Thank you for taking part in this survey. If you have any comments on the survey please enter them below.**

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## Appendix 4 – SEM output from Chapter Five

	Estimate	Model Std. Err.	z	p
	<u>Regression Slopes</u>			
<u>Identification</u>				
Morality	0.33	0.17	1.95	.051
Sociability	0.03	0.14	0.19	.852
Competence	-0.23	0.11	-2.02	.044
Meta Morality	0.09	0.12	0.74	.460
Meta Sociability	-0.03	0.13	-0.27	.786
Meta Competence	0.16	0.09	1.73	.085
Age	0.01	0.01	1.03	.301
Stigma	0.04	0.07	0.63	.530
<u>Meta Identification</u>				
Meta Morality	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Sociability	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Competence	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Competence	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Age	0.00	0.01	0.51	.611
Stigma	0.03	0.09	0.33	.741
<u>Performance</u>				
Identification	-0.16	0.05	-3.22	.001
Meta Identification	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Age	0.01	0.01	1.81	.070
Stigma	-0.10	0.04	-2.50	.012
<u>Social</u>				
Identification	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Identification	-0.10	0.06	-1.75	.079
Age	0.04	0.01	5.17	.000
Stigma	-0.21	0.06	-3.35	.001
<u>SWLS</u>				
Identification	0.16	0.11	1.43	.153
Meta Identification	-0.23	0.08	-2.87	.004
Age	0.01	0.01	1.05	.296

Stigma	-0.15	0.08	-1.93	.054
		<u>Residual Variances</u>		
Identification	0.92	0.08	11.25	.000
Meta Identification	1.55	0.14	11.10	.000
Performance	0.54	0.07	8.31	.000
Social	1.10	0.10	10.58	.000
SWLS	1.52	0.14	10.68	.000
Morality	0.84 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability	0.90 <sup>+</sup>			
Competence	0.94 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Morality	1.06 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Sociability	0.97 <sup>+</sup>			
Meta Competence	1.18 <sup>+</sup>			
Age	101.54 <sup>+</sup>			
Stigma	1.71 <sup>+</sup>			
		<u>Residual Covariances</u>		
Identification w/Meta Identification	0.67	0.09	7.16	.000
Performance w/Social	0.39	0.06	6.23	.000
Performance w/SWLS	0.27	0.07	3.89	.000
Social w/SWLS	0.45	0.11	4.08	.000
Morality w/Sociability	0.74 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Competence	0.71 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Meta Morality	0.30 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Meta Sociability	0.23 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Meta Competence	0.27 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Age	0.00 <sup>+</sup>			
Morality w/Stigma	-0.01 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Competence	0.70 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Meta Morality	0.32 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Meta Sociability	0.30 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Meta Competence	0.27 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Age	0.26 <sup>+</sup>			
Sociability w/Stigma	-0.05 <sup>+</sup>			
Competence w/Meta Morality	0.26 <sup>+</sup>			



Competence w/Meta Sociability	0.21 <sup>+</sup>
Competence w/Meta Competence	0.30 <sup>+</sup>
Competence w/Age	0.72 <sup>+</sup>
Competence w/Stigma	0.06 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Morality w/Meta Sociability	0.83 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Morality w/Meta Competence	0.87 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Morality w/Age	0.46 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Morality w/Stigma	-0.50 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Sociability w/Meta Competence	0.77 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Sociability w/Age	0.63 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Sociability w/Stigma	-0.43 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Competence w/Age	1.88 <sup>+</sup>
Meta Competence w/Stigma	-0.53 <sup>+</sup>
Age w/Stigma	0.24 <sup>+</sup>

Fit Indices

$\chi^2$	34.27	
DF	26.00	
CFI	0.96	
RMSEA	0.04	
RMSEA.CI.LOWER	0.00	
RMSEA.CI.UPPER	0.08	
RMSEA.PVALUE	0.58	
SRMR	0.03	
Scaled $\chi^2$	34.27(26)	.999

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<sup>+</sup>Fixed parameter

## Appendix 5 – Example Curriculum Vitae from Chapter Six

Anonymized  
Anonymized Email  
Anonymized Phone number  
Anonymized Address

### PROFILE

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With several years of experience in customer-facing roles in leading UK retail organisations; I am able to provide outstanding service within any environment and deal with a broad range of customer needs from initial enquiries through to sales, transactions and complaint handling. I am looking for my next role in retail at a supervisory/assistant manager level.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- Customer Service
- Transaction Processing
- Complaint Handling
- Retail Environments
- Computer proficiency
- Training

### EXPERIENCE

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#### Customer Service Advisor

July 2016 – April 2018

*Retail Phone Shop*

*Outline*

Branch-based, customer-facing role with leading global telecoms brand, providing a range of advisory and sales services to customers both face-to-face and over the telephone

- Dealing with a large number of customers on a daily basis ensuring complete satisfaction
- Processing Sales
- Handling Customer enquiries
- Handling customer complaints
- Balancing tills, managing end of day
- Dealing with external parties such as delivery providers
- Managing customer details database and making amendments on customer records
- Working to sales targets

Key Achievements

- Resolving 100% customer complaints withing guideline time of 48 hours
- Meeting sales targets

#### Sales Executive

October 2010 – June 2016

*Retail High Street Clothing*

*Outline*

*Customer-facing role, dealing with a high volume of enquiries, transactions and complaints for leading high street retailer*

- Greeting customers, managing face-to-face enquiries and managing returns
- Personal Shopping
- Training new staff to use till systems
- Assisting customers pro-actively

**Customer Assistant**

**June 2005 – September 2010**

*Retail Clothing Shop*

*Outline*

Working with reputable clothing brand within busy London store, responsibilities include; opening and closing of the store, greeting customers, complaint handling, transaction processing, cashing up, visual merchandising, managing fitting rooms and advising on products

**Replenishment Assistant**

**March 2001 – April 2005**

*Supermarket Chain*

## **EDUCATION**

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Brunel University

**September 1998 – June 2001**

***Business Studies B.A.***

Haydon School

**September 1992-June 1998**

**10 GCSEs - including Math's, English and Science**

**3 A-levels – Media Studies, Business, Psychology**

## **OTHER SKILLS**

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- Proficient with MS Office Suite
- Visual Merchandising
- Supervision and Training

