

Master Thesis

How do underemployment and unemployment take an impact on the
psychological well-being of highly educated immigrants
in Denmark and Germany?
A comparative analysis.



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Abstract

This master's thesis investigates the research question "How do underemployment and unemployment take an impact on the psychological well-being of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany?" To find an answer on it, qualitative interviews have been conducted in both countries.

Migration itself already is considered as a life event, which entails many stress factors. The given thesis investigates, how the additional stress of underemployment, respectively, unemployment affects the target group's psychological well-being. Furthermore, it reveals, how joblessness and underemployment lead to changes in the individual's personalities and their social relationships as well. The informants represent their own strategies of coping with unsuccessfulness on the labour market of their target countries.

Significant results have been, that both phenomena are as influential when it comes to the individual's well-being. Furthermore, partners play an important role in overcoming this episode, with emotional support as well as with supporting their spouses in writing cover letters for instance. To establish a better well-being, most of the participants emphasised, that doing sports has been a helpful method.

Further recommended research would be a comparative analysis of both, the highly educated immigrants and the highly educated native population, to be able to make distinctions.

Keywords: immigration, higher education, underemployment, underemployment, well-being

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1. Introduction

Migration by itself can be a stressful episode in the lives of those choosing voluntarily to leave their country of origin, seeking for a better life in the target country. Besides being confronted with a different culture, they need to integrate (and become integrated) into an entirely new societal and political system. In their research, Berry et al. emphasise that integration entails the adaptation to a new cultural order. This, furthermore, might create a new cultural and ethnic identity. Not succeeding in this process of integration could eventually lead to acculturative stress (ISI 2014). This shows the broad impact migration and integration might take on an individual's subjective well-being. While migration itself already represents a stressor in an individual's life, epidemiological studies reveal that there additionally seems to be a connection between social problems and anxiety as well as a comparatively higher stress level (Schouler-Ocak et al. 2015). A social problem, for instance, can be a life event such as unemployment or underemployment. There are several studies showing that unemployment causes a decrease in the affected individual's well-being, which is an element of the human being's health and "[r]esearchers have examined a wide variety of psychological [...] and physical [...] health variables in their examinations of the effects of job loss" (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005:54). Dooley (2003) mentions an existing linkage of unemployment and depression and according to Paul and Moser (2009), Jahoda (1981, 1982) concluded, that work entails five functions, which "correspond to important psychological needs" (Paul and Moser 2009:265) of the human being: "time structure, social contact, collective purpose, and activity" (Paul and Moser 2009:265). The researchers point out that work is the only determinant able to provide individuals with these elements, which is "why unemployment leads to a state of deprivation, resulting in distress" (Paul and Moser 2009:265). Dooley (2003) emphasises that two inquiries on inadequate employment conducted in the 1990's revealed that there are similar depressive issues in underemployed individuals and those who are unemployed. However, regarding underemployment, only a few studies exist, which is why the given research also focuses on whether there are differences in the effect both phenomena obtain. The given inquiry links the life events: migration and underemployment, respectively unemployment and shows the impact taken on academic immigrants.

Statistics reveal, that in all European countries, academics are the group least to be unemployed. According to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) (2013), that conducted an

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants analysis of European labour markets, the European unemployment rate average is at 5,4%, while those in Denmark (4,7%) and Germany (2,2%) are comparatively lower (see KAS 2012:8). Looking at the numbers, expectations like not experiencing unemployment as an academic, are build up. Regarding underemployment, eurostats (2015) only represents statistics focusing on underemployment by the hours. Here, the European average is at 4,7%, the Danish rate at 3,8% and the German at 2,3%.

The given inquiry aims to investigate the impact both phenomena, underemployment and unemployment, take on the individuals' well-being and mental health. Obtaining an ill well-being as the consequence of unsuccessfulness might lead to take a negative impact on the social relationships of the individuals affected by it. This might reinforce the negative impact on the well-being even more and influence the mental health. On the contrary, social relationships, such as couple relationships might contribute to a positive turn in someone's well-being. Additionally, the inquiry will reveal coping strategies the interviewees established to come through their negatively affecting life event.

The given thesis has been conducted under a hermeneutical approach, thus, all topics occurring are interrelated with each other and although the chapters are read in a linear way, it shall be considered that the conduction took place in an iterative process.

Research area

As represented above, unemployment could affect an individual's well-being. The research area on this thesis will only focus on the Danish and German setting, to offer a compressed and comparative research. The Danish and the German setting on the one hand entail the both country's labour markets. On the other hand, the daily environment the informants live in and are confronted with, plays a significant role as well.

Research focusing on all the determinants (immigration, underemployment/unemployment and well-being) has not been conducted before. Finding answers, however, could lead to improving the situations of the target group. This can also be an advantage for the state, considering a decrease of social benefits or maybe even benefits when individuals are on sick-leave (caused by unsuccessfulness on the labour market), unable to work.

Problem formulation

Which impact do underemployment and unemployment take on the well-being of highly educated immigrants?

Delimitations

To narrow down the thesis' topic, only the experiences of highly educated immigrants have been summed up in this paper. The native population's perspectives are not put into consideration, as this inquiry solely aims to represent the impact both phenomena take on the target group in Denmark and Germany. It might lead to the establishment of concepts focused on improving the well-being of those affected. Furthermore, it is the goal of this thesis to contribute to the tenuous research and literature based on it, in both countries.

Structure of the thesis

As the inquiry is based on empiric research, the given thesis begins with an insight of the methodological standpoint of the researcher. In the same chapter (2), the research strategy used to conduct the research, is represented. Additionally, a brief overview about the informants is revealed. The third chapter consists of frameworks. 3.1. entails the concepts serving as the foundation of the inquiry and 3.2. constitutes of a theoretical framework, entailing the Theory of Recognition by Honneth (2011) and theories about identity and the non-verification of it, compiled by Stets (2013). The 4th chapter, which starts off with an in-depth introduction of the informants, is equipped with a formal part of the analysis, focusing on the jobcentres (4.2.) and with a part focusing on social relationships and their impact in the progress of the chapter (4.3.). Within chapter 4.3., further sub-sections can be found: the interviews will be analysed after the informants' perspectives on education (4.3.2.), their experiences with underemployment and unemployment (4.3.3.) and their couple relationships (4.3.4.) and own established coping strategies (4.3.5.). After the conclusion (5), chapter 6 represents the perspectives and suggestions of further research.

2. Methodology and Methods

Concerning the point of departure for this research to be based on theoretical concepts (Flick 2007), the research can be considered as taken from a top-down perspective. To find an answer on the research question of how underemployment and unemployment influences the subjective well-being of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany, the given research has been established based on a comparative case study design. This allowed me comparing different cases with each other, which in this thesis on the one hand means a comparison of the experiences of the target group in Denmark in Germany, on the other hand, what kind of experiences men and women of different heritage made.

Qualitative research, moreover, can be conducted in various ways. Kvale (2007) emphasized the importance of interaction between researchers and their respondents. Through this direct interaction, “we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings and hopes and the world they live in” (Kvale 2007:3). The aim of the given research is to investigate the immigrants’ feelings of their experiences of underemployment and unemployment in a country they voluntarily chose to live in. Only by direct interaction, it is possible to understand the individuals’ emotions on a sensitive topic. Kvale suggests that interviewing those affected leads them on a pathway to how they view the world, and furthermore how they experience their social life.

2.1. Hermeneutical approach

To find answers on the given research question it was necessary to understand the informants, and to see the world from their perspective in order to find a convenient theoretical frame for the given research. To establish it, to conduct the interviews, to interpret and to later on analyse these, a hermeneutical way of thinking about the parts and units individuals as well as societies consist of, was required. It was of extraordinary importance to understand the situation of the individuals experiencing underemployment or unemployment in a foreign country and also to understand the feelings originated by this experience.

2.2. Research design

The research method for the given inquiry has been of qualitative nature as represented in 2.5.. Research strategies, however, can be “associated with different kinds of research designs” (Bryman 2012:45). The research design serves as the frame of a research and its data collection and analysis (Bryman 2012).

Comparative case study design

Case studies can be used as a possible design for qualitative research. According to Creswell, “[c]ases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell 2014:14). Case studies offer the “detailed and intensive analysis of a single case” (Bryman 2012: 66). This design allows the researcher to put his or her focus solely on a given case they aim to investigate. The different cases will be compared and analysed later on, which makes the design of the given research design a comparative case study design. In comparative case studies, the researcher gets an in-depth perspective into two or more different cases while investigating those with “more or less identical methods” (Bryman 2012:72). In the given inquiry, the interview guide for the participants in Denmark and Germany has been the same. Only this way, a comparative analysis can be established later on.

2.3. Methodological approach

A methodological approach describes “the relationship between theory and research” (Bryman 2012: 19). It is possible that a theory grounds a new research (deductive) or that a theory grows out of an already conducted research (inductive). A third option, which in its point of departure seems to be similar to inductive reasoning, is the abductive reasoning. According to Bryman (2012), abduction “grounds a theoretical understanding of the contexts and people [the researcher] is studying in the language, meanings, and perspectives that form their worldview” (p. 401). This includes that the researcher aims towards describing the world from the perspectives of those participating in the research (Bryman 2012). To differentiate more precisely: the distinction between inductive and abductive reasoning is that with abduction “the theoretical account is grounded in the worldview of those one researches” (Bryman 2012, 401). The given research is based on abductive reasoning, as my participants’ worldview serve as the basis the research is built upon. Without their perspectives and

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants feelings mentioned towards me, I could not have gained any insight into this social phenomenon.

2.4. Philosophical Worldview

According to Creswell (2014), a research' standpoint can be called 'paradigm' or 'worldview'; it states the basis for an inquiry and explains how the social world is seen by the researcher. It addresses "the philosophical dimensions of social sciences" (Wahyuni 2012:69). The philosophical worldview/paradigm serves as one of the three components of a research. According to Creswell (2014), explaining the philosophical worldview helps the reader to understand why a certain research design is chosen, for instance.

2.4.1 Social Constructivism

Creswell (2014) and Wahyuni (2012) emphasize that social constructivism equals interpretivism, which believes "that reality is constructed by social actors and people's perception of it" (Wahyuni 2012:71). Since I aim to investigate and understand the (subjective) "real meanings of a [the] social phenomenon" (Wahyuni 2012:71), I take the stance of the social constructivist. I want to investigate psychosocial and psychological consequences of underemployment and unemployment of highly educated immigrants who chose Denmark or Germany as their target country. I aim to understand their opinion about their experiences and also figure out whether they observed a change of feelings in themselves, which led to further changes in their social lives. In my view, individuals create social reality with their achievements. They establish subjective opinions of the things they experience in life (Creswell 2014). Wahyuni emphasises that through the mentioned subjectivity of the individual's perspectives, "social reality may change and can have multiple perspectives" (Wahyuni 2012:71). That means that in different life stages, individuals might view experiences differently on the one hand and furthermore, social reality may be felt differently by social actors, which is a result of the subjectivity entailed. Individuals are shaped by their background. My inquiry pays attention on the biography and cultural settings of the individuals. That means that the background of the informants, which shapes their meanings, is always considered. The mentioned subjective meanings are furthermore formed "through interaction with others [...] and through historical and cultural norms" (Creswell 2014:8) the individuals construct and internalise in interaction with others. To conduct the

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants research, I decided for qualitative interviewing as this research method offers the opportunity to directly interact on the one hand and to precisely ask about people's history and cultural backgrounds and their opinions on certain topics for instance. I constructed the interview guide (appendix I) in a way that allowed me to understand the phenomenon of underemployment respective unemployment (reality) from the perspective of the highly educated immigrants (social actors).

2.4.2. Ontological Views

Ontological approaches recognize individuals in diverse social contexts and the world's nature they belong to (Bryman 2012). According to Blaikie (2000) "ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality" (p. 8) and Wahyuni defines ontology clearly as "the view of how one perceives reality" (Wahyuni 2012:69). Looking closer into Wahyuni's (2012) definition of (social) constructivism/interpretivism, the ontology is supposed to be socially constructed as well as subjective and it is changeable and multiple, just as mentioned above. In case of the given research the participants' perceptions of social reality are drawn, however, it is given, that the perceptions vary from individual to individual and may change through new experiences gathered over time. The representations shall purely rely on the participants' thoughts and emotions revealed to me throughout the interviews. However, also the researcher constructs a meaning based on the words transmitted by the interviewee, adapted from his or her own background and the interaction taking place during the interview.

2.4.3. Epistemological Views

Epistemology describes paths "of gaining knowledge of social reality whatever it is understood to be" (Blaikie 2000:8) and therefore, whether a phenomenon or an issue can be studied. According to Wahyuni (2012), under the constructivist worldview, the acceptable knowledge is constituted by subjective meanings and social phenomena. A research focuses on "the details of [a] situation, the reality behind these details, subjective meanings and motivating actions" (Wahyuni 2012:70). In practice, this means, that the social phenomenon (unemployment and underemployment of immigrants in two different countries) is being looked at in-depth on the one hand. On the other hand, those affected by the mentioned phenomena were being asked by me about their opinions and feelings about their experiences

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants gained with the social phenomenon. Their representations could never have been objective because of the participants' self-affectedness. Also for the epistemological perspective, it is of importance to recognise the position of the researcher and the fact, that he or she form opinions based on the words of the participant and based on the whole interaction during the interview (2.4.2.).

2.5. Research Strategy

Having presented a closer look into my own worldview, the following subchapters will represent the research strategy I chose to conduct my research. Social research can be conducted through quantitative, qualitative or multiple (or mixed) methods. For inquiries conducted from a social constructivist worldview, qualitative research methods can be an equivalent tool to determine answers on the research question. Bryman (2012) states that “[q]ualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman 2012:380). That means that oppositely to quantitative research, qualitative research does not only use numbers, but texts, which in case of the given research is necessary to represent the participant's meanings perspectives in a best possible way (Flick 2007). Bryman (2012) states three important features, qualitative research entails:

- a) the research could be inductive or abductive (2.3.)
- b) the epistemological standpoint that understanding of the social world is undergone through the world seen by the inquiries participants (2.4.3.)
- c) the ontological standpoint is that social constructions exist through the individual's interaction (REF) (Bryman 2012:380).

Several research methods can be used to conduct qualitative research: Ethnography, focus groups, qualitative analysis of documents or qualitative interviewing, to mention the main research methods according to Bryman (2012).

Qualitative Interviewing

To find answers on how underemployment and unemployment affect the psychological health and the psychosocial well-being of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany, I conducted qualitative interviews. The interviews took place in March 2015 in Denmark and in March and April 2015 in Germany. According to May (2011), “[i]nterviews yield rich

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings" (May 2011:131). And Kvale (2007) considers the conduction of interviews not only as a form of interaction but also as a place, "where knowledge is constructed" (Kvale 2007:3) when the interviewer asks about "experiences, feelings and hopes and the world they [the interviewees] live in" (Kvale 2007:3). There are several different types of interviews. In qualitative interviewing, there can be unstructured or semi-structured interviews, which can be sub-categorised. I decided on using a semi-structured interview guide (appendix I), which usually contains specified questions. It allowed me to ask general questions in a standardised format (Bryman 2012) to begin with. Asking general questions is important to draw comparisons later when analysing the interviews. However, the semi-structured interview guide furthermore allowed me to ask the participants for further elaboration on their answers on open questions (following after the general questions) when I thought this was required (May 2011). Using semi-structured interviews rather than focused or unstructured interviews gave my interviewees the opportunity to answer as freely as possible despite a rather structured frame (May 2011).

The interview guide (appendix I) used to conduct the research. It is divided in four parts:

- Part A (questions 01-06.1) contains general questions about age, country of origin, reasons for moving, relationship and employment status. It has been constructed to provide me with understanding of their reasons to migrate (love, studies, work etc.).
- Section B contains questions 07-10. It asks about the participants' educational background. During the conduction of the interviews, I realised that one of my participants does not match this category, as her highest tertiary education is a bachelor's degree, while the requirement has been a master's degree as a minimum. The last question in this section ("*What does your education mean to you?*") has been asked, as I wanted to represent that identification with the studies and future field of employment already takes place at the university, according to Jacob and Mugimu (2013) (3.1.1.).
- The 3rd part (C) of the interview guide deals with the employment experiences gathered (in the target country). With questions 11-15, I asked the interviewees about their experiences of underemployment and unemployment in the target country in

particular. I ended each question with the sub-question “*How did that make you feel?*” to understand whether the gathered experience took an impact on the psychological health of my interview partner. As conducting a job as well as a work place and the colleagues interacted with can be considered as a source of identity-shaping (3.1.3.). I asked “*What does work mean to you (apart from being a source of money)?*”. I wanted to understand the participants’ concept of “work” and I wanted to see how it is placed in their everyday lives and routines.

- The last section, D (questions 16-19.1), states the main and most sensitive part of the interview questions. Having gathered information about the backgrounds and experiences of the informants, it now was of relevance to me to understand the outcome of the experiences. Part D has been filled with rather sensitive questions, which for my interviewees seem to have been difficult responding to. The questions deal with changes in the participants’ personalities due to their experiences and also about how the environment and life structures changed relationship-wise.

Of course, the interview guide has been constructed before the interviews took place. While undertaking the interviews, however, one question always occurred to me “*How did you cope with your situation?*”. This is why I decided to ask my interview partners in most of the interviews about their coping strategies. Asking this question allowed me to investigate whether the social network played an important role for instance or if there have been other strategies helping them to overcome difficult episodes regarding their (unhappiness about their) work situation and, finally, to see if there are any patterns.

2.6. The Informants (sampling)

In this subsection, the informants will briefly be introduced. Furthermore, the requirements of participating in the research and the recruitment of the respondents will be represented. Table 1 reveals that there have been five interviewees in each country. There is no structure in gender (seven women, three men) or country of origin. However, it is obvious that except Jasmin and Amid, all informants are of European origin.

All informants are between 26 and 46 years old. It is significant, however, that except Jasmin from Iran, all participants have been in a relationship when they moved and they stated that the relationship has been part of the reason for moving to the target country.

Table 1. Brief presentation of the informants

Name	Age	Country of origin	Target country, since	Educational background	Experience with underemployment/ Unemployment after master's degree	Relationship
Alexandra	26	Romania	Denmark 2008	MA Business Innovation and Marketing	Unemployment	Yes, reason to move and stable.
Maria	46	Czech Republic	Denmark 1998	2x MA in Social Sciences and Educational Anthropology	Underemployment, Unemployment	Yes, as reason to move to Denmark. Now divorced.
Anna	28	Romania	Denmark 2009	2x MA in Accounting, Auditing and IT and Management Accounting and Controlling	Unemployment	Yes, reason to move and stable
Christine	46	Germany	Denmark 1996	Diploma in Horticulture and MA in CCG	Underemployment, unemployment	Yes, reason to move, now married
Chris	32	Great Britain	Denmark 2004	MA in International Politics and Diplomacy	Unemployment	Yes, reason to move, now married
Jasmin	33	Iran	Germany 2008	Physics	Unemployment	Not when moving; now yes
Amin	29	Iran	Germany Ca. 2009	Engineering	Underemployment	
Stefano	30	Italy	Germany 2013	Engineering	Underemployment, unemployment	Yes
Helena	31	Greece	Germany 2009	2X MSc Chemical Engineering and Water Resources and Engineering and Management	Underemployment	Yes, when moving; relationship did not last.

2.6.1. Requirements

As I aimed to investigate the consequences of underemployment and unemployment of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany and establish a comparative analysis, it was necessary that those participating in the interviews had at least one benchmark in common. Since it is of extraordinary importance that the interviewees were highly educated, I decided to use the educational background as the benchmark. Looking closer into the concept of higher education (3.1.1.) in the next chapter, Jacob and Mugimu (2013) state that an identity shaping and the establishment of an identification with the studied subject and possible future employment takes place while still undertaking higher education. As a result, all of my interviewees needed to obtain a master's degree of any faculty of any university in the world to participate. The reason is that in order to find patterns and make constructive comparisons, a common ground could be useful.

2.6.2 Recruitment

The recruitment of the participants for my research took place differently in the both target countries. In Denmark, I could use my network established in 2014 when collecting data for my 8th semester project “Deskilling internationals on the Danish labour market – What shapes and defines their identity?”. In this frame, my colleagues and I then got in touch with “The Bridge Project”¹ in Aarhus. All of my respondents in Denmark, except Christine, are members of this group and I got in touch with them through the social network Facebook. Christine is a university teacher I met during my studies at Aalborg University.

Chris, Christine and Maria were contacted via email, as they participated in the interviews last year and I still had their contact data. Anna and Alexandra responded to a call I had made in the Facebook group of “The Bridge Project”. We then got in touch via private messaging and dates have been set up with all the people interested in participating. In fact, there would have been two more respondents, however, they fell ill in the period I have been present in Denmark to conduct the interviews.

¹ Further information about „The Bridge Project“: <http://expatviden.dk/da/Initiativer/CaseFolder/The-Bridge-Project.aspx>

² Further information about the „Ethno Medical Centre“ (Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V.): http://www.ethno-medizinisches-zentrum.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=5

³ Job Satisfaction is measured through a five-part questionnaire, which serves as the basis for the Job Descriptive Index (JDI).

Stanton et al.: „Development of a compact measure of job satisfaction. The abridged job descriptive index.

⁴ Based on Marinkens suggestions, Boyd explains the different meanings of the various concepts of disease.

In Germany, I met my respondents through a Facebook group of internationals in Hanover. Through an invocation of mine in February 2015, I got in touch with several people interested in my research. Four of them then were my interview partners. The fifth respondent I met through my internship at the Ethno Medical Centre² (October-December 2014).

2.6.3. *Setting of the interviews*

The interviews took place at different locations, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2. *Setting of the interviews.*

Name	Place
Alexandra	Library
Maria	Library
Anna	At her boyfriends' work place
Christine	At her home
Chris	At his home
Jasmin	Café
Amin	Café
Stefano	Café
Helena	At her home

The respondents and I agreed on the places shown in Table 2 to do the interviews. I mostly followed their suggestions, thinking they would feel most comfortable if the interviews took place in the environment suggested by them. Furthermore, as I have been conducting the interviews alone, I needed to make it logistically possible to meet all ten interviewees in two different countries, in various different cities. However, reflecting the interviews themselves and the words exchanged with the interviewees afterwards and also considering the quality of the recordings, I recognised some disadvantages in this strategy. The recordings of the interviews conducted at the homes of the interviewees are of higher quality and the relaxed atmosphere led the informants to opening up towards me. This became especially obvious in

² Further information about the „Ethno Medical Centre“ (Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V.): http://www.ethno-medizinisches-zentrum.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5&Itemid=5

the cases of Helena and Christine. I was not fully aware of the sensitivity my research topic and the questions asked entail, until Stefano told me once the interview was finished, that it has been very difficult for him to respond to some questions as he felt them to be “private”. Perhaps, in a calmer environment, opening up towards me would have been easier for him. If I had to conduct qualitative interviews again, I would rather not choose public places, but rather meet the informants at their homes, at my homes or if this would make them feel uncomfortable, in a park or alike, to represent a safe and silent surrounding without too many distractions.

2.7. Ethical principles

According to Bryman (2012), the following ethical principals need to be considered when undertaking qualitative interviews: The participants of the inquiry may *not be harmed*. That means that no physical harm, no harm of their personal development, nor the cause of stress or a negative impact on their self-confidence may take place (Bryman 2012). I made sure that the informants could just withdraw from the interview if they felt the desire to do so. Furthermore, before the interviewing started, I explained that they do not need to answer in case they felt uncomfortable responding to certain questions. During the interview no situations occurred, in which the interviewees could have felt harmed in anyway. Furthermore, there may not be a *lack of agreement*. The agreement requires that the participants are given as much information about the inquiry as possible for them to decide whether they want to function as participants. Before recording and in some interviews even once the dictaphone already recorded, I precisely explained what my research is about. I elaborated my research questions, why the interviews are needed for my research and how I will treat the information the interviewees give me. I explained that the interviews will be transcribed and analysed later in my thesis and that I would change their names to make sure, no inferences to the person behind the information could be made by the readers of the given research. Additionally, the *privacy* of the respondents needs to be respected. This point entails that participants in qualitative interviews may “refuse to answer certain questions” (Bryman 2012:142). It is necessary that the researcher treats the information provided by the participants confidentially. Besides the confidentiality, which I assured my respondents, I explained them before the interviews began that they are not forced to answer if they feel uncomfortable with any of my questions. They participated in the interviews voluntarily and I wanted to signalise that they can refuse answering questions if they thought it would reach too

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants deep into their private sphere. The last ethical consideration stated by Bryman (2012) is *deception*. The researcher may not “represent their work as something other than what it is” (Bryman 2012:143). This could happen if the researcher does not want to reveal as much of their research towards the participants for instance. In all interviews, I have tried to be as transparent as possible, and answered all the informants’ questions on my research about the content or the treatment of gathered data.

3. Frameworks

This chapter shall provide the given research with two different items: a conceptual framework, and a theoretical framework.

In chapter 3.1., the conceptual framework of the given research, the concepts will be represented the way, they are understood by the researcher. This is to avoid misunderstandings, as the terms used might be understood differently in different disciplines. The theoretical framework (3.2.) relies on the spheres of recognition investigated by Honneth, who often relied on Parsons in his research. Here, it will be represented, how recognition differs in the different environments (3.2.1.). Additionally, Stets’ (2013) investigated theories of identity. Her compressed conclusions will be expressed in chapter 3.2.2. As this given research is supposed to fill a research gap, there is no literature including all the determinants (immigrants, higher education, underemployment/unemployment, Denmark/Germany and well-being/mental health) necessary for the given research, I chose literature as close as possible to the research question and link it as good as possible to provide a convenient overview and contextualise my investigation in the scientific debate.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

The defined terms are closely connected with the interview guide (appendix I) and serve as a roadmap for the research tool on the one hand but also as a foundation of the given thesis as a whole. The concepts of higher education (3.1.1.), work (3.1.2.), underemployment (3.1.3.), unemployment (3.1.4.), health (3.1.5.) and well-being (3.1.6.) will be elaborated in the following subsections.

3.1.1. Higher Education

In the given thesis, higher education states a very important parameter as the investigation focuses on immigrants having undertaken higher educational programs (2.6.1.). Therefore, it is necessary to find a definition on “higher education”. In fact, there exist different terms acting synonymously for higher education: tertiary education, vocational education, postsecondary education or university education are a few of them according to Jacob and Mugimu (2013). When considering the mentioned concept, scholars talk about “the top-level education opportunity available in society ... that equips individuals with the needed skills to function in the workplace and society” (Jacob and Mugimu 2013:3). Higher education aims towards “socializing them [the students] into responsible employees, functional society members [...] and critical thinkers” (Jacob and Mugimu 2013:3). While on the one hand, higher education provides individuals with the skills required to work in the field, the studies aim to, it shall still be considered, that during undertaking higher educational programmes, the university students develop an identity which is strongly connected with their studies, the surrounding and other individuals they get in touch within this episode (see 3.2.2. Stets’ theory of identities). This fact mentioned by Jacob and Mugimu (2013) is confirmed by Anderson and Winefield (2011): “When graduates leave school, they typically face a challenge of establishing a meaningful occupational identity” (Anderson and Winefield 2011:168). This shows that undertaking education in general does not only entail socialisation, but also skill-learning and identity establishing. The next chapter will focus on the concept of work as finding an appropriate employment chronologically follows after having undertaken education.

3.1.2. Work

“Work itself has long been acknowledged as an important social determinant of health and health inequalities.” (Bambra 2010:214)

This sentence by Bambra (2010) reveals how relevant work is for the health of a person, which is why this subchapter shall provide an in-depth conceptualization of “work”. It relies on the contemporary Western conceptualization of work, which is “typically individual-centric” (Budd 2013:6). That implies among other factors that the individual’s and family’s needs are considered as the centre of interest of a human being conducting work. Schmucker (2011) emphasises that a good job not only serves to cover the living expenses, but also offers opportunities of participation, the development of the own personality, social support and

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants acknowledgement. That shows that the “psychological fulfilment, social recognition and identity” (Budd 2013:6) (REF 3.2.1.) are of very high importance connected with work.

According to Budds (2013) rather broad definition of work, it is considered as a “purposeful human activity involving physical or mental exertion that is not undertaken solely for pleasure and has economic or symbolic value” (Budd 2013:3). With this attempt, however, he tries to differentiate work from leisure without trying to focus entirely on paid employment, as conducting work entails more than that. More importantly, when mentioning the symbolic value of work, Budd (2013) points out that volunteerism for instance needs to be considered under the concept of work just as paid work does. However, looking into the meaning of work retrospectively, it becomes an obvious matter that there has been an enormous change in the last two centuries. While it has been considered as necessary for survival in pre-industrial times, Marx seems to have shaped a new definition during the industrialisation significant Europe during the 19th century. He uplifted work and considered it as “the highest form of human activity” (Budd 2013:4), which is why “[t]oday, scholars in psychology and related fields conceptualize work as a source of job satisfaction, self-esteem, and other facets of psychological well-being” (Budd 2013:4). The constant and complex uprising of its relevancy implies that “work can be thought as a source of identity” (Budd 2013:5). Bambra emphasizes that “work [...] dominates adult life” (2010:214), while Budd (2013) confirms, that the identity shaping through work takes place on different levels in a human being’s life of which it possibly matters the most that we identify ourselves with our occupation as well as employers but also colleagues. The side-effects work entails can be positive as well as negative as they are influential on a human being’s life. This implies that job satisfaction³, which can rise and fall through the content of the job, the supervisors at work, the salary, opportunities for promotion as well as the relationships created with colleagues at work might take an impact on a human’s psychological health (Budd 2013, Crosby and Bayne 2013).

Looking closer into the concept of work, it is obvious that –as a single phenomenon –it is linked with many different and complex further social phenomena observable in societies. For the given research, out of these phenomena, it is most important to look closer into the meaning of social status provided through work, as this again matters for psychosocial connections and (therefore) the psychological well-being of workers (or those who actually do not work). Budd emphasizes that work is also considered “as a set of human interactions”

³ Job Satisfaction is measured through a five-part questionnaire, which serves as the basis for the Job Descriptive Index (JDI).

Stanton et al.: „Development of a compact measure of job satisfaction. The abridged job descriptive index.

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants (Budd 2013:5), which includes its importance of establishing social networks for instance. The interview guide (appendix) entails questions aiming towards the meaning of work for the informants, apart from its monetary function. This is to investigate, whether a social network through a work place, plays an important role for the informants and whether they try to replace it with a social network outside their work place.

The next two chapters provide an overview on misfortune on a labour market: underemployment and unemployment. The various types of underemployment will be presented in the upcoming chapter.

3.1.3. Underemployment

Friedland and Price (2003) give a very precise definition of underemployment, which serves as the definition this research is based on:

“We define underemployment according to an expanded version of the LUF. People may be underemployed by hours, by income, by skills or by status. People are ‘hours-underemployed’ if they are involuntarily working less than full-time. People are ‘income-underemployed’ if their job would not provide them with a liveable wage even if they worked full-time. People are ‘skill-underemployed’ when their job does not afford them the opportunity to put their skills and training to use. Finally, people are ‘status underemployed’ when their job provides less occupational status than expected on the basis of their background.” (Friedland and Price 2003:34)

This citation already shows that there are various concepts gathered within one term. All of the mentioned concepts could be of high relevance for the given research. According to the IOM (2012), there are different terms used for underemployment. They, for instance use “deskilling” to describe this rather multifaceted concept. “Deskilling can broadly be defined as a situation in which migrant workers occupy jobs not commensurate with their qualifications and experiences.” (IOM 2012:14). More precisely, it implies that a conducted work “is inadequate, inferior, or low quality, relative to some standard” (Maynard 2007:3). There are many different types of underemployment, such as a) over-qualification, which plays an extraordinary role in this given research, b) involuntary educational mismatch, which means that employees feel forced to execute work “in a field outside their area of education as they cannot find employment that better matches their education” (Maynard 2007:3), as well as c) involuntary part-time or temporary employment, which can also be defined as underemployment, as employees choose to work less hours than they prefer to, as full-time employment or permanent work cannot be found. According to Maynard (2007), a last type

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants corresponding to underemployment is d) underpayment. The connotation of underemployment is that the employees' salary is comparatively lower than a certain standard. There are several further definitions and phenomena in the employment sector that could be defined as underemployment. Maynard (2007), however, emphasizes that researchers do not quite agree on a common concept of underemployment and therefore consider different types when defining the term.

The reasons for underemployment are diverse. The IOM (2012) refers to Nonnenmacher (2007) for instance who emphasized that the non-recognition of foreign university degrees plays an extraordinary role, when it comes to be employed in positions not matching the qualification nor imagination of a proper job of migrant workers. Having given an insight on the concept of underemployment and the different ideas the term entails, the next chapter will represent the diverse kinds of unemployment.

3.1.4. Unemployment

First of all, it is necessary to emphasize that there are different types of unemployment: frictional, seasonal, cyclical and structural (Oschmiansky 2010).

a) Frictional unemployment

Frictional unemployment might often be a result of fluctuation and is of comparatively short-term or even voluntarily. It mostly describes the episode of unemployment between two jobs (Oschmiansky 2010; Lester 2006) and therefore, the period before "reentering the labor market" (Lester 2006:4).

b) Seasonal unemployment

This type of joblessness is based on variability typically taking place on a labour market through climate conditions or changes in market demands. The reason for this phenomenon is that a national economy is utilised differently throughout a year (Oschmiansky 2010).

c) Cyclical unemployment

Once the boom of a national economy abates, this takes an impact of the stability and consistency of a nation's labour market as well. As the market demands diminish, companies have to dismiss part of their employees which are not required any longer as branches do not have to produce as much anymore, if at all. Joblessness through

cyclical reasons can turn into a long-term issue, depending on the national economy's development (Oschmiansky 2010).

d) Structural Unemployment

“Structural unemployment is joblessness due to the mismatch between workers' skills and employers' needs or to workers' unwillingness to relocate” (Lester 2006:4). Oschmiansky emphasizes that structural unemployment is the most diverse model of unemployment. It can be differentiated in sectoral, regional, technological and skill-specific reasons (“Strukturelle Arbeitslosigkeit kann differenziert werden nach sektoralen, regionalen, technologischen oder qualifikationsspezifischen Ursachen.” (Oschmiansky 2010). Adaptation issues caused by dislocations from one sector (primary, secondary, tertiary) to another can lead to structural joblessness, which in this case describes the difficulties of imparting workers from one sector to another generated by qualification disparities (Oschmiansky 2010).

According to Lester (2006), different factors leading to unemployment entail different consequences for the unemployed. If they voluntarily choose to be jobless by quitting their jobs, they might feel content with their decision and their status. In case of an obvious temporary situation, “the prospect of reemployment reduces anxiety” (Lester 2006:3). However, the most important type of unemployment for the given research is (the involuntary) long-term joblessness, which besides financial problems entails health issues for the unemployed (Lester 2006). Unemployment can take a strong impact on people's health, both, physical and mental (Lester 2006).

As the given thesis will connect unsuccessfulness on labour markets with health issues and the question on its impact on an individual's well-being, the upcoming chapters will represent the concepts of health and illness on the one hand and well-being on the other hand.

3.1.5. Health and illness

Callahan (2012) considers health as an “ingredient for the pursuit of other human goods” (Callahan 2012:1). According to the WHO (World Health Organization), “[h]ealth is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO 2014, definition health). This definition dates back to 1947, and is criticised by many scholars as it is considered as “overambitious” (Boyd 2000:12). Furthermore, the

WHO's definition of health poses the question "what is a disease?". Looking closer into Boyd's (2000) definition, which he bases on the general practitioner Marinkers suggestions⁴, a disease is considered as unhealth, a pathological process and more importantly, "[t]here is an objectivity about disease which doctors are able to see, touch, measure, smell" (Boyd cites Marinker 2000:10).

The discussion on the validity and the meaningfulness of the health term or the different ideas of unhealth, cannot be extended in the given research, as it does not offer room for it. This is why there is only a short look into the mental health term provided.

Mental health: The WHO (2014) considers mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stress of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO 2014, definition mental health) Looking into this definition, the value of work is very present (although the WHO does not point out paid employment, yet, the act of participating and contributing to one's community matters just as much as a meaningful occupation).

3.1.6. *Well-being*

Luhmann et al. (2012) define that the subjective well-being "relates to how people feel and think about their lives" (Luhmann et al. 2012:593). They divide it into the affective well-being which describes the presence or absence of a positive or negative effect and the cognitive well-being which focuses on an over-all life satisfaction as well as life domains which entail job or marital satisfaction (Luhmann et al. 2012). Occurring life events in an individuals life influence both constructs differently (Luhmann et al. 2012), "[s]tressful life events are all events that significantly disturb the daily routine" (Luhmann et al. 2012:594). Dodge et al. (2012), however, point out that a concise definition of the term well-being is still lacking. They point out that descriptions do exist, but a universal concept does not. By analysing several theories on this issue, they come to the conclusion, that stable well-being can be achieved, once "individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge" (Dodge et al. 2012:230). In further elaboration, this entails that once the challenges overgrow an individual's resources, its level of well-being decreases. According to Dodge et al. it, therefore, matters how

⁴ Based on Marinkers suggestions, Boyd explains the different meanings of the various concepts of disease, illness, sickness, health, healing and wholeness.

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants successful coping strategies developed by the affected individual are, to re-gain their balance and with this their (subjective) well-being (Dodge et al. 2012).

According to the WHO, well-being is a criterion for good mental health (3.1.5.). Castree et al. (2013) describe well-being as a “state of feeling content and healthy, of experiencing a good quality in life [...] Well-being is not simply concerned with people’s mental and physical health, but also their social wellness and satisfaction in their lives.” (Castree et al. 2013:559). Castree et al. (2013) describe several criteria entailed by their definition of well-being: good health, economic wealth, strong relationships including friendships, job satisfaction and low levels of stress (Castree et al. 2013).

3.2. Theoretical framework

Besides the methodology and the conceptual framework, a theoretical framework shall serve as carrying column to support and to reinforce the findings of the inquiry. The frameworks serve to explain the recognition of a human being’s value and its identity in-depth: In 3.2.1., first Honneth’s theory of recognition is considered. Later on, under 3.2.2. the focus lies on theories explaining how identities are constructed and what helps establishing those. This happens with a perspective on the impact non-verification of a person’s identity takes on a person’s emotions. While Honneth generally discusses (the lack of) recognition in different spheres, Stets (2013) holds her focus strongly on the non-verification of someone’s identity. Both concepts (of recognition and identity) and theories support each other through the hermeneutical approach of the given inquiry; therefore, a continuous reoccurrence will follow throughout the analysis (4.).

3.2.1. Honneth’s theory of recognition

In *Verwilderungen. Kampf um Anerkennung im frühen 21. Jahrhundert*, Honneth (2011) describes the spheres in which human beings experience recognition. According to him, recognition describes an act that expresses, that an individual is worthy and entitled to legal rights.

Parsons explained that human beings are primarily interested in obtaining their self-esteem. This self-esteem relies in the recognition provided through interaction with other human beings around us, in different contexts and different spheres (Honneth 2011). This strengthens

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants or weakens interpersonal relationships. However, Honneth (2011) emphasises that reciprocal recognition is needed to archive recognition by the individual one interacts with. In detail, this means that only when recognising others, a human being can receive recognition itself. Not receiving the recognition desired, possibly leaves emotions of discomfort and could entail various consequences for the individual itself (Honneth 2011).

As already mentioned, recognition or the lack of it can be experienced in different spheres. Honneth (2011) separated those in three: 1) the sphere of primary relationships such as family, couple relationships and friendships, 2) the sphere of legal rights allowing participation in the society, and 3) the sphere of social acceptance and solidarity for the individual in the society. All of the spheres reflect commonly known and societal accepted values, helping individuals to understand their positions and tasks in the society, which have to be conducted to achieve the recognition of the other members of the society as well. The spheres are described in the following way:

Primary relationships: Based on this concept, Honneth (2011) describes the importance of primary relationships, which might entail dyad relationships, friendships, parent-child-relationships and in general relationships which consist of only few people emotionally bonded to each other. In these kinds of very close relationships, recognition of emotional desires is primarily important for the individuals enclosed in these relationships. However, besides the recognition of emotional desires, also the understanding of fundamental fears and mutual love are provided. Love and understanding help the involved individuals to develop self-esteem and to recognise themselves on the one hand and desires of other individuals on the other hand. This interconnection, the recognition of others' perspectives offers fundamental competencies for participating in public life ("fundamentale Kompetenzen für die Partizipation am öffentlichen Leben" Honneth 2011:39). Self-recognition and understanding for others are therefore necessary to establish intact relationships (Honneth 2011). Honneth emphasises that the primary relationships function as a compensator for experienced lack of recognition and disrespect in societal spheres, which will be described next. For the given research, Honneth's theory of primary relationships and their function to compensate unpleasant experiences of individuals matters, as it might explain the function primary relationships obtain for the informants participating in the qualitative interviews (Table 1).

Legal rights: This concept of Honneth's model is not as much in focus as the other two. The reason is that for the given research question, it matters more to look into the institutional, but

most into the interpersonal relations of individuals. This sphere plays an important role, when it comes to individuals being legally and equally accepted in a nation state and by its society (Honneth 2011).

Social status: Honneth emphasises that in capitalistic societies, the performance principle is omnipresent. He states that this principle, however, does not entail an equalising function for all members of a society, but that it stands for a foundation for social inequality⁵. This social inequality might be considered as responsible for a constant fight of recognition by the members of a society, which take place within the institutions as well. According to Honneth, who refers to Parsons, the recognition on a labour market becomes visible through a certain income which provides individuals with a certain societal accepted status. Money can therefore be considered as a symbol of recognition. In this sphere of economy, human beings experience recognition for their individual talents and abilities which supports them in developing self-appreciation and understanding their self-worthiness (Honneth 2011). The recognition and the position of the individual in an equalised society in which all participants obtain the (same) opportunity for achieving self-worthiness, are necessary for a successful integration on the one hand, but also for establishing a stable society on the other hand. Without this reciprocal recognition, meaning the equally recognised individuals who recognise and interact (with) each other and societal standards and values, performances cannot be successfully conducted and reciprocal recognition cannot be achieved. Also including Parsons elaboration, Honneth points out the importance of a certain income serving individuals with a certain status in a society. However, looking back into the concept of work (3.1.5.) we realise that Budd (2013) also realises the symbolic value of work rather than only referring to the monetary value. The source of psychosocial well-being (Budd 2013) is probably closely connected with the identity shaping (Budd 2013) and the recognition a position on the labour market provides individuals with. With underemployment or unemployment, which state the issue for those participating in the inquiry for the given thesis, the desired recognition is lacking. Adapting Honneths' elaborations to the given research, the analysis (4.3.) is going to reveal, how the respondents perceived their own recognition when not being employed (or not in a way they aimed for) and which role (not) having a job plays for them.

⁵ In a social structure, consisting of various social benchmarks, social inequality can be found in many areas. It can mean the unequal access to the education system or to the labour market, based on gender, age or ethnicity for instance. (For further reading: Geißler (2011): Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands. Zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit einer Bilanz zur Vereinigung.)

3.2.2. Stets' 'Identity Theory and Emotions'

In this subchapter, it is the aim to differentiate between identity and emotions. According to Stets (2013) who refers to Smith-Lovin (1990), emotions felt and experienced by an individual are linked to a person's identity. But how can 'identity' be conceptualized? "Identity refers to the fundamental defining characteristic of an individual or group." (Muldoon 2010:679) and it furthermore states the "internalized positional designation" (Stryker 2002:60) for all the various positions human beings obtain in society (Stets 2013). This means that a person's various identities can be considered as an individual's basis shaping its character.

Muldoon (2010) offers a short historical insight into the meaning of identity and states that the breakage of traditional lifestyles, like they took place in kinship systems in pre-industrial times, led to human beings seeking for their identities in other environments. These systems entailed structures that strengthened their member's identities through offering emotional support for instance (see also Honneth's theory of recognition under 3.2.1.). With the industrialisation and the breakage mentioned above, generally, an identity-loss took place. Muldoon emphasises that ever since, identity is something that needs to be achieved, while before, it has been "something given" (Muldoon 2010:679). Having to establish an identity during the process of life rather than already having it through the process of life, however, might cause "the threat of alienation, disorientation and misrecognition" (Muldoon 2010:679).

To categorise 'identity', it is necessary to underline, that human beings obtain several identities in their various spheres of life. These identities may change over time through experiences collected. To identify changes of those participating in the given research, they were asked, whether their misfortune on the Danish/German labour market took an impact on their personality.

Stets and Burke defined and categorised the following identities:

- role identity
- social identity
- person identity (Stets 2013).

Referring to Stets (2013), the "role identity is the *meaning* that actors attach to themselves while enacting a role" (Stets 2013:203). An individual's cultural background, states an important factor in this matter, as socialisation strongly depends on it. Through socialisation,

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants individuals learn about societal expectations on their particular roles, like as an employee, a parent etc.. Relying on Burke, Stets (2013) emphasizes that role identities always stand in interrelation with other role identities. To explain further, she mentions that “the role identity of parent has the corresponding role identity of child” (Stets 2013:204) and to adapt Stets’ theory to the given research, an employer and the employee for instance could be considered.

The social identity refers more to certain benchmarks individuals obtain, such as gender, political orientation and so forth. Social identity makes the individual “a member of a certain group” (Stets 2013:204) and this leads to identification with the group⁶ itself and the other members belonging to it. The belonging to such a group offering social identification serves the individual with “a feeling of acceptance and social approval [and] [...] activate a sense of self-worth” (Stets 2013:204).

“Person identities are meanings attached to the self that define the individual as distinct from others” (Stets 2013:204). The own values and goals are to be found in this category (Stets 2013). Stets (2013) emphasises that the three types of identity shall not be seen as separated from each other but be considered as interrelated. “Within groups, there are roles, and within roles, there are persons who play out the roles differently” (Stets 2013:204) based on their own goals and values (social identity). Nevertheless, implementing the theories of the various identities into the given research, seeking to reflect upon experiences with underemployment and unemployment of highly educated immigrants in Denmark, it poses the question what exactly identity is affected by misfortune, it is worth questioning, which identity exactly is affected by misfortune on the labour market. Role identity, paired with person identity might possibly be those identities mostly affected by misrecognition on the labour market.

The interview guide (appendix I) that serves as a basis for the conduction of the given inquiry, contains the question about whether the misfortune on the labour market took an impact on the informant’s personality, as experiencing discontinuity in the verification of their identities, individuals might feel emotions like embarrassment (social identity), discomfort that can grow so strongly, that it turns to guilt (role identity) and sadness that can reach as deep that a depression might be established (person identity) (Stets 2013). However, the misfortune might take an impact on all three kinds of identity simultaneously, as it might run like a red thread through people’s life. In her own research, Stets (2013) identified that with non-

⁶ In sociological meanings, a group is a number of individuals who share relevant benchmarks. If the connectivity goes beyond sharing statistically relevant characteristics and a feeling of unity and stable interaction between its members takes place, a group might be considered as a social group (Scott and Marshall 2009).

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants verification, an individual does not only receive a negative feedback to its actions, which influences his or her identity. She states that “there is also an implication that the individual ‘is not a good person’” (Stets 2013:218) which takes an impact on the individual’s feelings. In other words: Stets (2013) investigated that through the non-verifying and the non-enhancing of a person’s identity, an “intense negative emotional arousal” (Stets 2013:218) is generated. Interestingly, Stets (2013) observed that women are more affected by disruptions in their identity, when the disruption occurs “from a familiar other” (Stets 2013:220), while men are mostly affected once the disruptions happen caused by an unfamiliar person. Stets (2013) explains this with the different status men (high) and women (low) possess in societies. It seems that “women more than men are oriented to relationships” (Stets 2013:220)

The interview guide (appendix I) includes questions focused on the emotional well-being and on the emotional stability of the informants, to understand whether the non-verification of the part of their identity established through their studies i.e. their (former) jobs, is shaping or causing changes in people’s identity.

4. Analysis

The following chapter will be split into three main sections. The first one will introduce the informants. While 4.2. will entail an analysis of the formal issues the interviewees had to face, chapter 4.3. will go in-depth and investigate the individual experiences gathered. Hereby, the themes treated in 4.2. will be divided in order to offer an overview on the Danish and the German context and allow to draw comparisons to investigate differences. This, furthermore, might allow further specific research in the long-term and serve as an opportunity for both countries to learn from each other. However, the formal part of the analysis will look into the participants’ experiences gathered in interaction with the Danish and German authorities, job centres in particular. The individual part of the analysis (4.3.) will be structured like the interview guide (appendix I). However, the strongest focus will be held on the informants’ emotions and well-being caused by underemployment and unemployment. Furthermore, their personal relations as well as possible coping strategies will be analysed.

4.1 Introducing the informants

In this subchapter, the information in Table 1 will be extended. The informant's background will be represented factually without going in-depth on their emotions and points of view on the different topics (4.2. and 4.3.)

Alexandra is 26 years old, from Romania, residing in Denmark since 2008. She moved due to study reasons and has followed her boyfriend who already lived in Denmark by then. The relationship is still lasting. Her highest university degree is a master's degree in "Marketing and Business Innovation". She is currently unemployed and has also been working in jobs not matching her qualification. Alexandra talked to a coach to find solutions out of the joblessness and underemployment.

46 years old *Maria* moved to Denmark in 1998. She comes from Czech Republic where she obtained a master's degree in social sciences. She had been married to a Dane with whom she lived together in Czech Republic for six years. They have three children together and are divorced now. Due to joblessness and underemployment, she decided to study to obtain a second master's degree at a Danish university in educational anthropology. Maria is now finally employed in a job matching her qualification. However, she has struggled a lot on the way and experienced all kind of different psychosomatic⁷ symptoms and has been in touch with her general practitioner about this frequently.

Like Alexandra, *Anna* originally comes from Romania. In Romania, she obtained her bachelor and a master's degree and decided to study in another master programme in Denmark. When she moved, she has been in a relationship, which is still lasting. She experienced underemployment as well as unemployment and is currently employed in a job not based on her master's degree but which is something she "*worked with before coming to Denmark*" (Transcript 3).

Christine is a 46 years old German citizen who moved to Copenhagen in 1996 together with her then boyfriend, now husband. She studied Horticulture in Germany and after experiencing underemployment and unemployment in Denmark, she decided for a second education. She therefore possesses a second master's degree in Culture, Communication and Globalisation and is currently employed as a PhD fellow and assistant professor.

⁷ Physical symptoms caused by psychological issues.

In 2004, *Chris* moved to Denmark together with his girlfriend. He is now 32 years old and obtained a master's degree in International Policy and Diplomacy. Chris has been unemployed after a company in which he worked in a job somewhat matching his qualification did not extend his contract. Currently, he works as an English teacher in a business school. His relationship lasted and he is married now and is the father of two children.

Jasmin is a 33 years old woman from Iran. She moved to Germany to work as a research assistant and to obtain her PhD in Physics in 2008. She gathered experiences with unemployment but found a job now, that somehow matches her qualification. She has not been in a relationship when she moved to Germany, however, she met a man whom she married.

Amin is a 29 years old engineer from Iran. He moved to Germany in 2009 within the frame of an exchange program to study and finish his bachelor degree. He afterwards finished his master's degree. When he moved to Germany, he has been in a relationship, which could not resist the long-distance in the end which made them breaking up after one and a half years. However, he has a new girlfriend now. Amin found employment, which matches his qualification after working as a tutor which was a job not paying enough. He has also been unemployed in Germany after obtaining his master's degree. His new relationship lasted during the times of not succeeding on the labour market.

Stefano is 30 years old and moved to Germany one and a half years ago together with his girlfriend. Stefano has a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering, but before finding the job he has now, he has been bartending for four months but also has been unemployed for a while. He lives in Hamburg together with his girlfriend and is commuting to Hanover every day where he works in a job that somewhat matches his qualification. However, the salary is not as high as it is supposed to be for a mechanical engineer, which is why he is still looking for better employment.

Just like a few other informants, *Helena* possesses two master's degrees: The first one in Chemical Engineering and the second one in Water Resources Engineering and Management. She is now working in a position that matches her qualification, before this, she had been underemployed in the sense that she did not work as many hours as she aimed to. Helena is 31 years old and she moved from Greece to Germany together with her boyfriend. This relationship did not last.

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Having provided an introduction of the informants who contributed to this given research, the following chapters will contain an analysis on the respondents' experiences with the target country's system and its job centres.

4.2. The support of the jobcentres

When looking for employment, the welfare systems of both states, Germany and Denmark support the applicants. This happens through monetary benefits on the one hand and through providing help in job seeking on the other hand. In case, the informants responded with "yes" on the question *"Have you been in touch with job agencies (such as job centres)?"* (question 14, see appendix), question 14.1. *"How have you'd been treated and how could the employees help you?"* has been asked. Based on the answers of the interview partners, this chapter is established. The chapter is divided in subchapters to represent the Danish and the German case separately, which finally allows to finish the chapter with a comparison of the helpfulness and treatment the highly educated immigrants experienced in the system (4.3.).

4.2.1. Contact with Danish jobcentres

All of the informants have been in contact with the job centres. This is required to receive social benefits on the one hand but also to undergo certain unemployment programs supported by the job centres on the other hand.

4.2.2.1. Helpfulness of Danish jobcentres

The informants living in Denmark stated that they experienced that the job centres responsible for them have not been supportive nor helpful. Christine and Alexandra mentioned that there has been a strong focus on training them in writing an appropriate CV, but apart from that, they could not recognise support. Furthermore, one problem in the interaction with the job centres has been the shifting staff.

"[...] and people were changing, you always had a new person to talk to, that was total crap." (Christine)

Chris mentioned that there has been staff interested in his case and staff that was not.

“But the few that were generally helpful and interested seemed to be stuck in the system, that didn’t really work. That was just designed to control and make sure we did what we were meant to do to keep getting our benefits. So their powers to help were limited. [...] But the whole system just seemed to be built on controlling people [...] not helping people” (Chris)

Help and a positive outlook instead would reduce the individual’s anxiety, as Lester (2006) stated. Chris mentioned, that the letters coming from the job centre have not been welcoming, but controlling and telling him how to act to receive the benefits instead of really helping him out of this situation and Alexandra has been wondering why the staff did not help her to get out of their system as this should be their aim after all. Due to always having to talk to different people at the job centre, Alexandra felt rejected and pushed around from one person to another:

“[T]hey have in Horsens about 4.000 students every year, but it doesn’t seem like they know how to deal with the graduates, because [...] I asked them for so many months to help me with my Danish, to help me with networking [...] they just say ‘no’ to everything [...] and they push you around from one person to the other” (Alexandra).

As Honneth (2011) emphasised, recognition entails the function of equalising and evening out a society, while the lack of recognition leads to the opposite: inequality. This, furthermore, causes exclusion of certain groups, which states an obstacle for a proper integration (see 3.2.1.)

4.2.2.2. Treatment by the staff

Chris mentioned that they have been treated well and that the interaction took place in a kind and polite way, Alexandra felt rejected (4.2.3.1.)

The lack of recognition and the consequences become even more visible when looking at the examples mentioned by Maria. Although, Maria states that there has been a change in the

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants treatment from her visits at the jobcentres from 1998 until now (*"I was very positively surprised."* Maria), she mentions that her previous experiences with the staff at jobcentres shocked her and made her wanting to go home to Czech Republic. She felt stigmatised as a person who chose Denmark as their destination to misuse the social benefits provided by the welfare state in cases of unemployment for instance:

"I was definitely treated like I came with a Danish husband [...] and I felt and I was looked at and talked to like I just came to Denmark through a marriage [...] and like that I just use the system and get the money and not work and all." (Maria)

Referring back to Stets (3.2.2.) and her theories of identity Maria's experiences might lead to the thought that through the non-verification of Maria's identity, explicitly Maria's person identity took damage. These negative experiences from the past, gathered in the late 1990's still have an impact on her visits at the jobcentres today:

"So I went with this pain in the stomach to the meeting with the jobcentre" (Maria).

The lack of recognition and the real reasons behind the visits at the jobcentres seem to have caused psychosomatic symptoms in her and established anxiety occurring before the frequent meetings she had to face. During the interview, she emphasised that she did not experience low feelings back in her home country.

The upcoming chapters will deal with the experiences gathered with German jobcentres of highly educated internationals. This allows establishing a comparison under 4.3.

4.2.2. Contact with German jobcentres

Except Amin, all highly educated internationals residing in Germany have been in touch with the job centres. Amin states that due to his job searching visa and the fact that he had a job in which he earned a little bit of money, he did not seek for help. He also mentioned that his friends told him that the jobcentres would only provide him with small jobs not connected to his education. He, however, aimed towards working in a study-related branch and therefore he

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants sought for help in the private sector instead (head hunting companies). Helena has been in touch with the jobcentre; however, she did not talk about her experiences but mentioned that she preferably contacted a recruitment company to support her in her job search.

The upcoming subchapters will present an overview of the experiences gathered by the other informants.

4.2.2.1. Helpfulness of German jobcentres

Jasmin, mentioned that she entered language school through the jobcentre. For Jasmin, who had to apply for unemployment benefits after submitting her PhD thesis, the jobcentre played a supportive role. Concerning her descriptions, she seemed to have felt nervous due to the “horrible pressure” (Jasmin) she felt about the upcoming period of unemployment, nevertheless, she was after all positively surprised by the service of the jobcentres:

“And then I went to Arbeitsamt [jobcentre] and I got my Arbeitslosigkeitsgeld [Arbeitslosengeld – unemployment benefits] and it was not so horrible then.” (Jasmin)

Jasmin felt supported as the jobcentre helped her entering language school and when she felt that she did not learn enough in her C1-level course, they let her repeat the course despite the expenses (4.000€).

“Yeah, of course before that I was really under horrible pressure. I was just thinking: ‘I’m not going through it.’ But I mean, because of the support I got from Arbeitsamt [jobcentre], it was really good.” (Jasmin)

Stefano provided a comparison with Italian jobcentres, which did not seem to be helpful to him at all. In Germany, he thinks, the staff tries to be helpful.

“Here, I was there one morning and I talked with three persons [...] in specific for my field [...] and then at least every week, I got three or four emails from them and they suggested me to apply in this or this ... this was really good but I, I didn’t find a job” (Stefano)

Being provided with support leads to positive feelings. This might be a sign of the reciprocal recognition, Honneth points out (3.2.1.).

4.2.3. Comparison

In Germany, two of four interviewees have not been in touch with the job centres or if so, then just briefly (Helena), while all informants in Denmark used the job centre's services. However, Jasmin and Stefano, who received help through the jobcentre's staff have been satisfied and Jasmin pointed out that the jobcentre has been supportive and made her period of unemployment less "horrible" (Jasmin) through the generous provision with the German courses which she even was allowed to repeat. Looking closer into the Danish case, the respondents talked rather negatively about the experiences:

"They couldn't help me at all!" (Christine)

Not only Christine had this impression, but all of the unemployed highly educated informants residing in Denmark. Considering the question of the treatment by the staff, those informants living in Denmark have commented throughout negatively, or, considering Chris' statements, somewhat indifferent. In Germany, Stefano pointed out clearly that he has felt treated well while Jasmin's words lead to the assumption that the contact with the jobcentre generally took a positive impact on her well-being.

4.3. Analysis of the interviewees' social relationships and coping strategies

Based on the research question of this given inquiry about the impact underemployment and unemployment take on highly educated immigrants residing in Denmark and Germany, the given chapter will provide the further analysis of the interviews. In this part, the social relationships play the most important role. It will be shaped after the interview guide, which means that to provide an overview, first the general findings will be presented. Secondly, one

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants after another, the topics education, work, primary relationships and further coping strategies will be analysed. The strongest element in the analysis is the informants' well-being.

4.3.1. General findings

Out of nine informants who have been considered for the given inquiry, seven are European citizens. Two respondents are Iranian. Dividing this into the Danish and the German context, there have been five European informants in Denmark (from Romania, Czech Republic, Germany and the United Kingdom). In Germany, the two mentioned Iranians, one Greek and one Italian person have been interviewed. Looking into the gender diversity, there have been six female interviewees and three male. In the German context, the distribution has been 2:2 while in Denmark it has been 4:1 (Table 2).

Eight informants have been in a relationship when they moved to their target country; however, only three of them mentioned "love" as the reason for migration. In Denmark, all five respondents were in a relationship, for two of them, however, the opportunity to study has been the reason to move. There has been one break-up, which is Maria's marriage. In Germany, three informants have been in a relationship when they migrated. None of the informants mentioned "love" as their reason to migrate. Out of the three relationships, only one lasted, however, Jasmin, who has been single when she moved to Germany, now is married.

Regarding current employment, eight out of nine informants are currently employed. Only Alexandra (Denmark) is currently without employment, however, amongst those who are employed, three consider themselves as currently underemployed (Anna, Helena and Stefano) regarding the salary they are provided with. This, does not mean, that the other interviewees consider their current job as matching their qualification. Chapter 4.4.3. will go in-depth, regarding this theme.

4.3.2. The meaning of education

Chapter 3.1.1. already revealed that education does not only serve to find a satisfactory job afterwards. It also plays a significant role for individuals to establish a part of their identity. Referring to Stets (2013), the verification of an individual's identity supports its health status, she emphasises, that depending on which identity is not verified, embarrassment, discomfort or even depression could be established (Stets 2013).

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To gain the ability of competing with others on the Danish labour market, Maria and Alexandra took a Danish university degree:

“I thought, it would mean an easy entry into the Danish labour market.” (Alexandra)

Unfortunately, Alexandra as well as Maria have been unemployed for a longer period, or sometimes also worked in underemployed positions (Maria), instead of succeeding on the Danish labour market. Chris mentioned that he should rather have taken a Danish degree instead the distant studies at a British university to develop a better focus on the Danish context. Similar statements were not made by the informants residing in Germany.

Looking closer into the identity-shaping effect education entails as well, Christine, who possesses two master’s degrees, mentioned about her second master’s degree:

“I think, it very much equals my identity, what I actually am and since we also lived abroad, it kind of sums up the experiences I had during life and now I just [...] know what it means theoretically” (Christine)

Amin, who obtains a Master of Engineering from a Germany university describes a process education took on his personality:

“During the education, it was that [...] like it made me feel better to develop myself personally [...] and also somehow scientifically [...] but now, it’s part of my personality, because I work eight hours per day [...] and I can somehow find myself due to my task.” (Amin)

Amin’s description matches the concept of education (3.1.1.) and therefore Jacob and Mugimu’s (2013) as well as Anderson and Winefield’s (2011) elaborations quite well.

4.3.3. The meaning of work

The given inquiry aims to investigate the impact of underemployment and unemployment on the psychological well-being of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany. As Bambra (2010) has pointed out, work is considered as a feature in an individual's life, which influences its health (3.1.2.). Budd (2013) clearly states that work entails "psychological fulfilment, social recognition and identity" (Budd 2013:6). Regarding the mentioned (social) recognition, a reference back to Honneth (3.2.1.) is useful. Through interaction with other human beings, and through reciprocal recognition within this interaction process, the individual establishes its self-esteem and furthermore, according to Stets (3.2.2.), the non-verification of a human beings identity, which is shaped throughout the life and obviously an enduring process entailing a peak in the period of undertaking (tertiary) education might lead to negative emotions (3.2.2.). To understand the meaning of work for the interviewees, question 15 has been asked during the interviews: *"What does work mean to you (apart from being a source of money)?"* In fact, there are parallels that can be found in some interviews as a couple of determinants mentioned by the informants reoccurred in a few interviews. The determinants can be categorised the following way:

- work causes usefulness
- work shapes the identity
- work entails contribution
- work establishes a social network
- work is connected to recognition.

The mentioned determinants will be represented through citations taken from the interviews.

Stefano as well as Helena and Christine underline the feeling of being useful in the context of working:

" [...] that you feel that you are not useless [...] that someone needs you and your qualification and your brain and everything you can offer [...] you are meaningful to some people ... you feel productive ... there is something good that you can do. You are qualified of doing something important and that affects everything." (Helena)

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Christine confirms Helena's words and adds the necessity that she considers work also as a task to contribute:

"It means, I can feel worthy to kind of like be alive and not just a burden to whatever, the system or the husband or the friends." (Christine)

"I do feel that one year ago, it was time to go out and provide and contribute, to do something meaningful." (Alexandra)

Contributing and "doing something meaningful" (Alexandra) is also connected with achieving recognition. According to Honneth, recognition is provided through communication with other individuals (3.2.1.). In this context, Christine points out that through the thankfulness of her students, she feels that she and her work are appreciated:

"And in terms of my job right now as a teacher [...] I can also see that sometimes, I have a maybe positive influence on some of the students and then they are really thankful for what I've done to them ... it's just the appreciation you get back, that you're doing a good job." (Christine)

And Maria mentions what Chris describes in another scenario which connects the effect, recognition might take on someone's identity:

"And I guess, also sort of a part of your identity [...] When you meet people, one of the standard questions that uses to come up at some point, is: 'Now, what do you do?' and it's sort of an awkward situation: 'I do nothing. I'm unemployed.' It sort of gives you kind of a pretty negative feeling, whereas now [...] if you can say 'I teach.' [...] So I guess, it is an important part of my identity as well." (Chris)

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Jasmin has been less concise, yet, rather precise when responding to the question, what work means to her:

“It’s defining my personality and my happiness.” (Jasmin)

While work is *“a place to go outside the house”* (Chris) which helps *“structuring [...] the day and the week”* (Christine), for most of the informants it also entails a part of their social network.

“But yeah I mean, meeting people, being social, working together with people, to meet some challenges, to achieve something, to do a good job” (Chris)

“I’m part of a collective, this is the most important thing [...] I’m doing that I like, helping people” (Anna)

Anna pointed out that she is very proud about the team she is working in and that she gets along with all of its members. She states that they are part of her social life and considers some of them even as her friends. The following subchapters will reveal the informants’ experiences with underemployment (4.4.3.1.) and unemployment (4.4.3.2.) and their emotions about these experiences.

4.3.3.1. Experiences with underemployment

Now that the positive effects of work have been represented, the ambivalent feelings of the informants regarding underemployment will be shown. As described under 3.1.3., underemployment is rather multifaceted. According to Friedland and Price (2003) “[p]eople may be underemployed by hours, by income, by skills or by status” (Friedland and Price 2003:34)

Based on the interview question *“Did you have to work in jobs here, not matching your qualification or which were not satisfactory for other reasons?”*, the given table provides a

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 brief overview on those informants who have experienced underemployment and the kind of underemployment they had to face:

Table 3. Types of underemployment

Name	Target country	Type of underemployment
Christine	Denmark	Skills (cleaning, German teacher)
Maria	Denmark	Skills (cleaning, storage, hotel)
Stefano	Germany	Skills (bartender), income
Helena	Germany	Income, hours
Amin	Germany	Income

Five out of ten informants have been underemployed in their target country after obtaining their highest university degree. The table shows that those who are or were underemployed in Denmark are/were underemployed by skills, while all of those underemployed in Germany, are underemployed by income or by hours. To understand the informants' emotions about their underemployment, they have been asked how they feel about their experience (appendix, interview guide, question 11.1). To provide an overview, their most distinctive feelings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Emotions about underemployment.

Name	Feeling about underemployment
Christine	Doubtful about her skills; unstructured
Maria	Uncomfortable
Stefano	Was "okay" with it as it only would be for a few months
Helena	Depressed
Amin	Doubtful; not good, but not so down

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The feelings of the informants differed. While Amin and Stefano have remained optimistic and Christine also stated that she tried to look at the positive side of her underemployment like being in this situation in Denmark and not in Germany, the negative feelings about not working in a job matching their qualification has been significant:

“It wasn’t good [...] it was difficult [...] not to be able to use myself and [...] it also [...] wasn’t enough to earn enough money” (Maria)

“Well, I felt diminished [...] I was asking myself whether I was too stupid to do this. ... And I definitely also felt like I wanted to get out of it as soon as possible and try to find something else, that would really match my qualifications or at least should be something that I really feel like I would like to do.” (Christine)

The doubt about the own self represents what Stets writes about the non-verification of the different identities we carry within us (3.2.2.). Looking back into the concept of work (3.1.1.), work is considered “as a source of job satisfaction, self-esteem, and other facets of psychological well-being” (Budd 2013:4). Not having achieved the job satisfaction seem to have lowered Christine’s self-esteem, although she emphasises that the sensation of experiencing underemployment in Denmark was not as bad as it possibly would have been in Germany, as she mentions that the payment is still “okay” and *“also as people don’t really look down on you [while] in Germany, people would just think: ‘Come on, she is really stupid and she can’t do anything else!’”* (Christine)

Another type of underemployment is the underemployment by income. All interviewees residing in Germany gathered experiences in regard of not receiving a convenient salary. Stefano, who has to commute long hours every day to be able to conduct his tasks, is currently working in a position somewhat matching his qualifications and yet seeking for another job:

“It’s not really what I wanted in the beginning and it’s also not paid like a normal mechanical engineer [...] So I’m still searching.” (Stefano)

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Helena who has been underemployed by income as she has been underemployed by hours needed supplementary monetary support from her parents as she could not fully provide for herself:

“I had to depend on my parents. And that I didn’t like, because [...] I had two degrees, I was old enough, so I should have been in the position, to support myself alone.” (Helena)

Amin worked as a tutor. His aim has been to work for a big company directly after graduating as an engineer. Not achieving this, caused doubt in his own abilities:

“I was asking myself, what’s wrong with my profile.” (Amin)

In the job he conducted, he had been paid by hour instead of having a fix salary. As he never knew, how many hours he would be working this month, he was left in uncertainty:

“It could be like 500€ per month or like 700, but it could also be less [...] and it should be many hours to go to 700€” (Amin)

Well-being and health

Considering the concept established by Friedland and Price (2003) (3.1.3) depressive symptoms in individuals are possible when they experience underemployment (especially by the skills). Friedland and Price, however, state that they are mostly recognisable after a time period of approximately two years. The interviewees have not been asked about the time period of their underemployment, yet, especially Helena, who has been underemployed by hours and by income (Table 3) pointed out that she had established a depression during her episode of underemployment. To investigate the impact underemployment takes on the well-being and mental health of the informants, they were not only asked *“Did you have to work in jobs here in DK/GER, not matching your qualification or which were not satisfactory for other reasons?”*. The 11th question of the interview guide has been equipped with the sub-question *“How did you feel about it?”*. While Amin emphasised that he felt stressed about his

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tutoring job, which did not match his qualification and, moreover, has not been a job he aimed to beforehand, other respondents who experienced underemployment in one way or another mentioned that this episode took an impact on their emotions. Helena mentioned that for the first six months, being underemployed by hours and by payment have not been bad:

“[...] because I had time to sit down and think if I want to stay in Germany, if I want to move to another country, so just having a small job was okay” (Helena)

After these six months, she recognised that the dependency on her parents made her feel bad as she wanted to support herself alone. She experienced feelings of anger and stress as she got insecure whether she took the right decisions in her studies on the one hand and she was stressed whether there would occur a change of her situation in the future. Helena had to struggle extraordinarily much as in this period, her relationship broke as well:

“Yeah because he had a job, I could not find a job, so I was really stressed. And there [I] was crying a lot and [...] I think [...] I had a small depression [...] Just because of that, because I had the degrees [...] and I had everything and I applied in positions, but I could not find anything. Not even an internship. Because for internships I was [...] overqualified and I was old and not a student anymore.” (Helena)

The concepts of the given research (3.1.) reveal that well-being (3.1.6.) is a criterion of (mental) health (3.1.5.). According to Castree et al. (2013), one element required to achieve well-being is job satisfaction (3.1.6.). Once the well-being is not established, meaning, once the challenges exceed an individuals resources, an impact on the mental health can be the result (Dodge et al. 2012). During the interview, Helena pointed out a few times that she did feel depressed during the time of underemployment. One reason for this is that she did not have a convenient job.

“I could not think of a way getting out of my situation. And that was really dramatic. So for six months I had [...] a bad time, had tough times.” (Helena)

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Helena emphasised that once she found appropriate employment entailing responsibilities, she begun to feel better, which proves Castree's et al. theory on well-being:

"[A]fter I found the job, I felt stronger as a person [...] Yeah, that I could overcome the depression and all these bad feelings and [...] I succeeded on what I wanted." (Helena)

Maria explained that her period of underemployment made her feel excluded from conversations matching her educational level. This, furthermore, gave her a lower social status than she aimed to have:

"I felt like being lost and uhm being like really losing a life [...] it's not the job itself, it's the social status [...] you are [...] categorised [...] So I felt, I was not allowed to have conversations even on the level I was missing [...] I haven't been comfortable [...] it was discomfort of not living a life that I've actually had." (Maria)

The mentioned discomfort can be caused by the non-verification of a person's identity (3.2.2.). In Maria's case, the discontinuity in the verification would have affected her role identity. Her role as a highly educated person has not been recognised when she worked as a cleaning lady, which has been obvious for her when she started feeling excluded from conversations matching her educational level. However, regarding her revelations during the interviews, her periods of unemployment took a stronger influence on her well-being as well as on her mental health, as she in her process decided to seek for counselling. Helena explained that she, looking at the tough times she went through in retrospective, should have sought for psychological help in form of counselling:

"Yeah because that affected everything. I didn't want to go out, I was only saying that I don't have money, I don't have money for drinks, I don't have money to buy clothes, but I had money [...] but I felt insecure [...] maybe I could have spoken to someone more specialised in these situations." (Helena)

The lower perceived competence, mentioned by Friedland and Price (2003), could be considered as the lack of recognition in the sphere of social status, as Honneth (2011) categorised this (3.2.2.). Combining both ideas, it is worth questioning, whether a lack of recognition on the labour market not only leads to the individual missing out on mutually intact relationships, but whether the lack of recognition in general could be considered as a health risk.

This chapter revealed the discomfort underemployment caused to the informants contributing to the given inquiry. The upcoming chapter demonstrates the experiences gathered regarding unemployment. Like in the previous chapter, also the impact unemployment took on the informants' well-being (and mental health) will be outlined.

4.3.3.2. Experiences with unemployment

The informant's answers on question 11 of the interview guide (see appendix) "*Have you been unemployed here in Denmark/Germany?*" and it's sub-question (11.1.) "*How did you feel about it?*" will be represented in this given chapter. Table 5 offers a brief overview on those informants who were unemployed in their target countries after obtaining their highest university degree and the most significant emotion they pointed out on that situation.

Table 5. Emotions about unemployment.

Name	Target country	Feeling about unemployment
Christine	DK	Terrible; embarrassed
Anna	DK	Worried
Chris	DK	Stressed and irritated after a while
Alexandra	DK	Sad
Maria	DK	Sad; pressured
Jasmin	GER	First afraid, but then not as bad
Stefano	GER	First motivated, then low and upset

The given table first of all shows that all of the informants who chose Denmark as a target country, gathered experiences with unemployment. Furthermore, the emotions they described about this period are consistently negative. Those who chose Germany as their target country and experienced unemployment (Jasmin and Stefano), however, mentioned vacillating feelings regarding their unemployment. Referring back to 4.2., it is obvious that these two informants talked positively about their experiences with the job centres and pointed out that they felt supported by the staff. Jasmin pointed out that work defines her personality and her happiness, which is why she had been afraid of becoming unemployed:

“I would say, before getting unemployed, I was really really horrified about it. But during it, it was not so horrible. And my job search didn’t get so complicated.” (Jasmin)

Not remaining in the target country and re-migrating or going elsewhere instead of continuously facing the struggles would have been an option for Stefano and Christine, too. Also Maria mentioned (half jokingly) that she packed her bags to return home every second week, as she felt a lot of discomfort. Stefano describes his vacillating emotions regarding his unemployment:

“In the beginning, I was really, really motivated. [T]hen, after 400 [...] applications, it was a little less [...] and in the end, in January this year [shortly before he started working in his current job], I was not so motivated and I was also thinking about flying back maybe in a couple of months [...] because I was a little stressed in the end.” (Stefano)

Christine, who moved to Denmark together with her partner, had similar ideas:

“[I]t felt very very bad and I was really thinking of: ‘Oh, I should definitely leave this country and find something else. Maybe I should go back to Germany or maybe I should go somewhere else.’ And yeah, there were some really sad times.” (Christine)

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Maria, who has never been jobless for longer than two weeks in her adult life, talked about the discomfort she felt during her unemployment, she affirmed the question “*Have you felt sad?*” and explains:

“I had a good job, I had a leader job before we came here and I had some kind of career [...] So it [the unemployment] was quite difficult, I think, for my self-esteem and ja, not to be able to get a job even though I was applying for jobs and also treated like ja, to feel like not being good enough, being put in the box of ‘social needy’.” (Maria)

Chris also stated that he never had issues in finding a job in his country of origin before and explained that he has been in part-time employment ever since he was twelve years old. He mentioned before, that work states a big factor in a person’s life and:

“I guess, it becomes a big part of your identity, when you have a job [...] being unemployed [...] you miss a big part of your identity, you also lose the sort of social network involved in going to work and having colleagues.” (Chris)

Backhans and Hemmingsson (2011) confirm Chris’ words. They emphasise that an individual’s identity at work is established through the task itself, but also the solidarity with the colleagues. The importance of obtaining a social network in general, will be shown under 4.3.5.1.

Well-being and mental health

According to Bambra (2010), unemployment bears a high risk of “an increased likelihood of morbidity” (Bambra 2010:213). A higher risk of comparatively poor mental health has been observed in several studies. Backhans and Hemmingsson (2011) investigated that unemployment entails a role-loss for the individual which might be connected with the non-verification of its identity (3.2.2.). The non-verification of identity (or parts of it), might cause discomfort or in the worst case even depression. The interviewees have been asked how their unemployment made them feel. To understand whether the emotions were new to them and

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants caused by the new circumstances, they additionally have been asked “*Have you felt lower compared to the time you still lived in your country of origin?*” as a supplementary question. The results are represented in Table 6:

Table 6. Previously experienced low feelings.

Name	Experienced low feelings before
Christine	No
Anna	No
Chris	No
Alexandra	No
Maria	No
Jasmin	Not asked
Stefano	Yes

This table reveals that none of the interviewees residing in Denmark experienced low feelings like those experienced through their joblessness in Denmark back home in their countries of origin. That shows that they had to face new (negative) emotions in a new surrounding that confronted them with a new life situation (unemployment). To underline this, the informants have been asked “*Did the episode of failure on the labour market change you?*” and this question has been backed-up with “*If so, how?*” (see interview guide, appendix). Table 7 shows the negative (or positive) traits, the interviewees have developed during their time of unemployment:

Table 7. Impact of unemployment on personalities.

Name	Change in character/personality
Christine	Considered to make up stories; more determined and strong
Anna	No change
Chris	Easier irritated, stressed
Alexandra	Temporarily very pessimistic, frustrated and excluded; proactive, determined and adjusting in the long-term
Maria	Powerless; isolated
Jasmin	More motivated
Stefano	No change in personality, but more motivated in using the time properly

The table reveals that in most of the cases, the interviewees observed a negative change within themselves. However, Maria is the only interview partner who pointed out that she sought for help in form of counselling. Her case is rather complex, as she described, that her dissatisfaction regarding her misfortune on the labour market took an impact on her marriage, which in the end failed and had been divorced. Thus, her seeking for counselling happened due to the reason of her unemployment and her broken relationship as well. She also went to her general practitioner, as she had several physical symptoms. Her doctor, however, explained her, that her symptoms are connected to her psychological imbalance caused by the hard times she was going through:

“[T]hat took me a long time to do that [seek for counselling] because I felt like, well, I have education, I have to handle this myself [...] There was several times during this period when I went to a doctor [...] but mostly I went there when there was the physical condition I could feel I couldn’t cope uhm and the doctor pointed out that it’s connected with the psychological situation.” (Maria)

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Referring to Jahoda, Paul and Moser (2009) give an even more in-depth description: those effected by unemployment, “lack of five latent functions of employment” (2009:265). The mentioned functions entailed by work state essential psychological needs for human beings:

- a) time structure
- b) social contact
- c) collective purpose
- d) status
- e) activity.

Having lost these necessary features and facing (a new situation) “unemployment leads to a state of deprivation, resulting in distress” (Paul and Moser 2009:265). During the interview, Maria pointed out that the which factors created the base of her distress: Lacking social status, contact with the colleagues and engaging in an activity matching her qualifications. She emphasises that she was aware, she had developed a depression, yet, such a diagnosis was never given. However, her doctor wanted to prescribe pills, but she refused taking those:

“I thought if I start to go on medication, I was afraid that I would get the slide all the way down, so I’d never get there.” (Maria)

Maria has been in and out of employment ever since she arrived to Denmark in 1997. However, if she had been employed, she always conducted work not matching her qualification – until she now started her current job. She can look back on a long period of under- and unemployment. Schneider (2010) points out that unemployment entails a high risk for the psychosocial health and emphasises that especially those unemployed for two years and longer often suffer from psychological or psychosomatic but also physical illnesses, which is a statement matching Maria’s elaborations.

The last two chapters revealed that underemployment and unemployment do take an impact in the highly educated immigrants’ well-being and mental health in a few cases. Dooley (2003) observed that “marital status, perhaps representing social support, buffered the impact of both, unemployment and inadequate employment” (Dooley 2003:16). The upcoming two chapters draw attention on the importance of social relationships on the one hand and on the

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interconnectivity of social relationships and other ways of coping with the lack of success on
a labour market and its influence on the well-being on the other hand.

4.3.4. Couple relationships in times of underemployment and unemployment

According to Honneth and his theory of recognition (3.2.1.), recognitions can be achieved in three different spheres. As the most important sphere, he considers the sphere of primary relationships, in which he, however, gathers close relationships in general. Within this sphere, imbalances, or precisely lack of recognition experienced in one of the two other spheres are being compensated (if the relationships are stable). This given chapter will demonstrate the importance of the informants' networks. On the one hand, their elaborations on the role of their partners will be revealed. Furthermore, changes in their dyad relationships will be represented. And on the other hand, the their investigations regarding "other" relationships (friends, family) will be sketched.

The role of the partner during misfortune on the labour market

In his theory of recognition (3.2.1.), Honneth emphasises that the recognition of fundamental fears and the existence of mutual love make concepts of primary relationships valuable and serve as a compensator for experiences, which cause instability in an individual. The interviewees have been asked "*Have you been in a relationship when you moved?*" and the question has been supplemented with "*If so, are you still in it?*" The questions gave room to ask more specific question in the progress of the interviews. The informants' replies allow me to emphasise that the relationships sketched in this given chapter are relatively long-lasting, when looking at the year of arrival. Due to asking the above mentioned questions, the process of the interview as been affected, as I could ask more precisely about the consistency of their relationships. What matters the most for the given research is whether the interviewees have been in a relationship during their failure on the labour market and whether there were changes for them to observe in it. Moreover, it mattered for me to investigate how supportive this primary relationship is in times of underemployment and unemployment in a foreign country. All the interviewees, except Amin and Jasmin have been with the partner, they moved to Germany beforehand: Amin broke up with his partner after one and a half years after his arrival, but has a new partner now who has been there during him not succeeding on

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants the labour market in Germany. Jasmin has not been in a relationship when she moved to Germany.

The given Table 8 first of all reveals who of the informants have been in a relationship when experiencing underemployment or unemployment and whether this relationship has been the one with the partner they moved to their target country. In addition, it shows, whether the relationship overcame these hard times.

Table 8. The informants' relationships.

Name	In a relationship during failure?	Survival of relationship?	Same relationship since arrival?
Anna	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alexandra	Yes	Yes	Yes
Christine	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jasmin	Yes	Yes	⁸
Helena	Yes	No	Yes
Amin	Yes	Yes	No
Chris	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maria	Yes	No	Yes
Stefano	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 8 shows, that all informants have been in a relationship, while they experienced underemployment, respectively, unemployment. Looking closer into the third column, we can see that seven out of nine relationships lasted and overcame the difficult period. The significant fact of this presentation, however, is that the relationships of Helena and Maria failed. Helena and Maria have been the informants obviously struggling and suffering the most in terms of their underemployment (both) and unemployment (Maria). Looking into the results regarding their well-being (4.3.3.1. and 4.3.3.2.), it becomes obvious that they felt

⁸ Jasmin has been the only informant who had not been in a relationship, when she moved from Iran to Germany.

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants psychologically relatively low which led Maria to choose psychological counselling and Helena emphasising that in retrospective, she should have done the same. The other informants mentioned that they did feel low as well, but never as much that they sought for psychological help or considered it. The informants have been asked *“Was your relationship affected by this experience?”* and in the most cases, they have been asked supplementary, how the relationship changed and which role the partner occupied.

As stated, Maria and Helena are the ones whose relationships did not last. Both stated that a lack of understanding has been present in their relationships, although on different levels. Maria mentioned struggles in their communication and Helena emphasised that her boyfriend just could not understand her as he never had to go through the same:

“I was all the time complaining about Denmark and everything that was Danish and he felt it as a personal attack so he reacted as if I’ve attacked him and I didn’t understand it, so I didn’t understand his reaction and I felt like he is supposed to support me and he is not [...] So I felt lonely.” (Maria)

Maria obviously did not receive the required recognition within the sphere of her family (3.2.1.), as the only one who could provide it, would have been her husband since her children were too small and her own family lived back home in Czech Republic. As pointed out before, she chose counselling as an option for herself and also visited her general practitioner frequently. She stated:

“Because mostly, I just need to talk to somebody [...] You know, there are some things you don’t talk to even to your friends [...] I just needed to get it off my chest and to hear that ‘yes, it is hard, you have complete right to be tired’.” (Maria)

In Maria’s specific case, it seems like she needed to experience the recognition usually given in primary relationships to balance out lacking recognition in (one of) the two other spheres in her talks with her general practitioner, as she could not find recognition in her relationship itself (3.2.1.). Helena points out that her boyfriend never had to face struggles like hers, since

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants after taking a bachelor degree in Greece, he obtained a master's degree in Germany and immediately found a job:

“[M]y ex-boyfriend was a successful person [...] he found really easily a job. A really good job in a very good company [...] Maybe he could not understand how I felt because for me it was much more difficult.” (Helena)

As he tried motivating her, telling Helena “[t]o try harder” (Helena) he reached the opposite and made her feel even less understood:

“[H]e tried to help me with my CV, with my cover letter, with everything. But I don’t think, he could understand how hard it was for me. Because he didn’t go through the situation.” (Helena)

In the given case of Helena, her ex-boyfriend could not provide her with recognition (3.2.1.). Primary relationships are supposed to be places, in which individuals experience recognition and in which imbalances regarding their recognition in other spheres are evened out. Helena strongly emphasised that due to his lack of understanding for her situation and her feelings, she felt rejected by him:

“And the fact that he could not understand my situation even that he tried, made me feel like he rejects me also. So I don’t get rejected not only from the companies, but also from the person that I love.” (Helena)

These words describe what her primary relationship was supposed to do regarding recognition: To compensate her struggles in another sphere (3.2.1.). As this did not happen, her identity was not fully verified (3.2.2.) in this very close and intimate relationship. This, furthermore, led to struggles affecting her well-being even more and then finally her mental health when she obviously started to get depressive. Comparing Maria’s and Helena’s case, Maria experienced recognition through her general practitioner instead, while Helena did not

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants mention a similar support in her life in this time. Both, Helena and Maria, emphasised that her misfortune on the labour market and the entailed unhappiness and dissatisfaction took a strong impact on their relationships, which made them fail in the end:

“[O]n the marriage I think, it really had an impact in the way that it ended up with a divorce. I think, because I was getting depressed and I was having all those problems [...] [it] was very difficult to have this relationship working.” (Maria)

Unlike Helena and Maria, Christine did not really consider breaking up with her boyfriend. She secretly blamed him and he also felt responsible, yet, instead of breaking up, he would have gone together with her, if she decided to leave Denmark:

“I of course had episodes where I really felt sad and of course he could feel that and he also had episodes where he was sad about that I felt sad. And made himself a little responsible for that, because I followed him. But it never went so far that we were thinking of breaking up.” (Christine)

Being frustrated about not finding appropriate employment after having been unemployed after finishing her second education, Christine approached her boyfriend/husband that she would apply for jobs in other countries, to what he responded:

“Okay, if you really get something there, then maybe it’s my turn to follow.” (Christine citing her husband)

Regarding her boyfriends role during her underemployment and dissatisfaction, Christine elaborated that he occupied a counselling function on the one hand, and has been actively supporting her on the other hand: he tried to help her finding a job and even connected her with colleagues who could possibly provide her with a convenient position.

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Alexandra, who stated to temporarily having been pessimistic (4.3.3.2., Table 5) elaborated that her boyfriend tried to motivate her, but she felt that due to him being very optimistic and her being very pessimistic, his attempts of motivating her did not succeed:

“I didn’t feel like he was supporting me, maybe he was, in his own way [...] and we haven’t had long hours conversation” (Alexandra) as she would not have felt supported by his phrases anyway.

Amin and Stefano also experienced ambivalent feelings regarding their relationships. Both stated that their partners generally have been supportive and tried to motivate them as much as they could within their own possibilities.

“I think generally, I can say, my girlfriend was so supportive and she was also on my side, tried to help me.” (Amin)

“She supported me really a lot finding the right place [...] writing the CV [...] she helped me a lot.” (Stefano)

However, Amin emphasised that it was sometimes difficult when he needed his girlfriend’s help in writing his CV or cover letter for instance. She, at the same time, had been busy writing her master thesis and therefore sometimes did not have enough time. Furthermore, he points out that when he felt upset, she could not help him much. Nevertheless, she tried to motivate him:

“Come on, you will get the job, you can do this and you understand your study [...] you are really an engineer and you will get the job.” (Amin citing his girlfriend)

Stefano stated that his girlfriend’s comments sometimes had a negative effect on him which seemed to have led to insecurities or de-motivation:

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“[F]or example, during an interview, I am shy and not showing the best way what I studied or what I’ve done in my life [...] and sometimes, I feel like I’ve made the best, but it’s not [...] she told that I haven’t made the best [...] but it’s difficult to explain [to] a person what has happened during an interview.” (Stefano)

The attempts of Helena’s ex-boyfriend had a similar effect on her as the comments of Stefano’s girlfriend had on him:

“So I thought I do something wrong. So I don’t try hard enough.” (Helena)

Generally, Amin and Stefano have felt supported by their partners. During the interview, Amin mentioned a few times, that he generally is a very positive person making the best of his situation, just as Stefano did (4.3.3.1.). Looking back into the theoretical framework of the given thesis, Honneth (3.2.1.) pointed out that the lack of recognition in other spheres can be compensated by the recognition and the love given in the first sphere of primary relationships and further, the non-verification of an individual’s identities take an impact on their well-being and possibly mental health as well (3.2.2.).

Christine stated, that her relationship even got stronger through the struggles she and her husband had to face ever since they arrived to Denmark. Anna similarly mentioned, that she and her boyfriend have been so close to each other, as they had to face many struggles ever since arriving to Denmark, that their relationship did not undergo changes:

“Because we have always been close since we came to Denmark.” (Anna)

Interestingly enough, just like Christine, Anna emphasises that her boyfriend has been the person she talked the most with and like stated above, Christine even thought that her boyfriend/husband obtained a counselling position in her life in this episode.

4.3.5. Coping strategies

For most of the informants, the partner played an important and supporting role during their period of not succeeding on the Danish, respectively, German labour market (4.4.4.). Besides relying on their partners, there have been several other strategies the informants follow to (re-)establish their own well-being, which is affected by underemployment as well as unemployment. Research has shown that especially regarding unemployment (there is not as much research on underemployment, see Dooley 2003), individuals discover different strategies to ease up their situation and to find occupations, which replace the meaning of work and it's positive affects such as recognition, fast tasks or the personal development for instance. The following table reveals the informants' strategies to cope with their unsuccessful times on the labour market:

Table 9. Type of failure and coping strategies.

Name	Form of failure on labour market	Coping strategies
Christine	Underemployed/unemployed	Gardening, socialising, sports
Stefano	Underemployed/unemployed	Studying, housework, socialising, sports
Amin	Underemployed	Sports, self-structuring
Maria	Underemployed/unemployed	Socialising, sports
Chris	Unemployed	Sports
Alexandra	Unemployed	Volunteering

McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) investigated, that “social network embeddedness helps people feel good about themselves and their lives” (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005:57). They found out, “that the quality of social contacts was positively related” (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005:57) to their probands' well-being. The first subchapter will represent the importance of the social network apart from the individual's couple relationships and reveal the informants' feelings about it.

4.3.5.1. Social relations apart from the partner

McKee-Ryan et al. (2005), mention in their research, that a well established-social network and the interaction very well functions as an element of coping. Besides their couple relationships, many of the respondents mentioned other relationships that were influenced, helpful or maybe changing as well. The interviewees' elaborations will be presented to demonstrate how important their social network has been in the times of their struggles on the labour market. According to the concept of well-being (3.1.6.), also relationships like friendships affect a person's well-being. In this chapter, it is important to look at the impact the social network took on the informants: Did they use offered support and regained their well-being? Or did they neglect their social network, maybe due to reasons like not feeling well?

Stefano as well as Jasmin mentioned that besides their partners, the people they have met through their German courses state an important role within their social network:

"My German course was very good, so I met lots of friends who were just like me, had problems." (Jasmin)

"It was really easy to find friends in my German course, because there were a lot of people from other countries who didn't know anybody, so I had known a good group of friends." (Stefano)

The language courses – in Germany – obviously helped the informants to establish an own (international) network to begin with. Chris, residing in Denmark, mentioned that he is a member of a network for local unemployed academics. Alexandra mentioned that she does not participate much in her Romanian network anymore, as she felt pressured there about lacking employment. She emphasises as well that she now is part of an international community, just like Jasmin and Stefano. Stefano pointed out that the network of acquaintances he already had in Germany, represented an Italian community:

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“But it wasn’t useful for me [...] it was easy because I could speak Italian, so we had something in common” (Stefano)

Christine mentioned that establishing a food club and meeting its members frequently has been part of her coping strategy. Stefano changed his strategy and focused on the people he met at his German course. He started to regularly organise parties with people from his German course to be in touch. On the question *“Did it help you?”*, he responded:

“I think, ja. Because when you are not alone looking for a job, not alone not speaking German, but if you meet other people in the same situation, it could be useful.” (Stefano)

The frequent meetings with people being in the same situation (Stefano) or sharing the same interest (Christine and Stefano) took a positive impact on their well-being and should be considered as a coping strategy. Another way of coping has been pointed out briefly by Alexandra and Maria. Both of them decided to volunteer. They brought up the topic when responding to the supplementary question *“How did you cope with it?”* which does not occur in the interview guide, yet, has been asked during the interviews nevertheless. Interestingly, Alexandra as well as Maria emphasised the importance of volunteering. Alexandra pointed out that volunteering keeps her busy and at the same time connects her with people occupied with the same field of interest, with this, she somehow followed a similar strategy as Christine who also sought for people sharing her interests (food club). Alexandra’s purpose of volunteering additionally is to meet people who could finally provide her with a desired job or at least connect her with someone who could. Although, volunteering is unpaid work, Budd (2013) mentions it in his concept of work. That could mean that all elements, except the monetary part, are provided to an individual no matter, whether the tasks are being paid or not. Maria worked as a volunteer, too, and through this established network, she met people with whom she eventually became friends who supported and helped her seeking for equivalent help in her lowest times:

“[I]n that period when I was down I didn’t have energy to have any social life, so it was very much closed. But then, I must say, by that time, I knew already some of the people who were involved in volunteer work, where they met situations like that. [...] I think that that’s maybe

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants *also the reason why I never ended up with really a diagnosis of depression, because there was a network that actually came.*" (Maria)

Besides doing Tai Chi (4.3.5.3.) and seeing a counsellor, attending this voluntary work, has also been considered as one of Maria's coping strategies to deal with the experiences she gathered on the Danish labour market.

Although some of the informants isolated themselves from their former social network, like Alexandra and Stefano did for instance to establish a new one which adapts more to their (new) environment, most of the interviewees seem to have felt that socialising has been helpful for them and their well-being. Besides socialising, research has shown that those unemployed who managed establishing an own time structure, were provided with a subjectively better well-being than others (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005), as the following subchapter will represent.

4.3.5.2. Re-establishing a time structure

"Besides money, it means very practical stuff like just structuring of the day and the week." (Christine on the question *"What does work mean to you, apart from being a source of money?"*)

The time structure provided through work takes a positive impact on an individual's well-being and mental health (3.1.6.). "[S]ome unemployed individuals, for example, are able to organize their time, keep routines, feel their time as a sense of purpose, avoid excessive contemplation of the past, and persist at their activities while others are not" (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005:58).

Although, he has not been unemployed, yet, underemployed (Table 1), Amin is the respondent who emphasised the importance of structuring his day:

"And the biggest thing is, I hate uhm to wake up soon, but in this period, I wake up every day around six, just to push myself 'you're not unemployed to sleep till 10, you should do something with your time' [...] it was hard, I was not like 'ja, I was so happy', no, it was

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stress and then I should handle it and because of that I tried to have some discipline in my life” (Amin)

He pointed out that he purposely gave himself a structure with this:

“[W]hen you do nothing, you can’t reach anything [...] I had days when [...] I had five students, that means ten hours of teaching, and also doing my stuff, that means, it’s more than 12 or 13 hours of work per day [...] but it was not every day, like I have also my phase that I couldn’t do so much and I was a bit pity about everything” (Amin)

McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) explain that a self-set time schedule gives an individual a similar structure as work does. Interestingly, time structure generally influences the individual positively, as it has “positive health consequences” (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005:58). As emphasised, Amin has not been unemployed (Table 1) but has been underemployed by hours and income and was generally not satisfied with his job. He pointed out that he generally is a very positive person, yet, in this episode, he felt low and upset. As Dooley (2003) realised, the effects of underemployment and unemployment can be similar. Therefore, it is worth questioning, whether in times of underemployment (by hours), a well-established own time schedule might take a positive impact on the individual’s well-being as well.

4.3.5.3. Physical activity to re-gain psychological well-being

Underemployment as well as unemployment take an impact on an individual’s well-being. The whole chapter 4.4.5. represented the coping strategies the informants of the given thesis established to build up their own psychological well-being. Interestingly, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) did not mention physical activities as a purpose to re-gain well-being, respectively mental health. They, however, point out that job loss takes an impact on the individual’s psychological (and physical) well-being which can also occur in form of depression. Also Smári et al. (1997) who conducted their study on unemployment and its impact on the psychological well-being based on Iceland, have not investigated the necessity of sports regarding psychological distress caused by unemployment. Maria is the only informant who has been affected psychologically as well as physiologically by not succeeding on the labour market, or more precisely, the impact this took on her mental health. Knowing that the effects

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants of unemployment and underemployment on the individual are similar (Dooley 2003) and looking into McKee-Ryan's et al. (2005) research, it is worth questioning, why they point out that depression might occur, without investigating whether sports are considered as coping strategies by those affected. In medical literature, the phenomenon of sports taking a positive impact on the health status of depressive people, is widely discussed and affirmed⁹.

Maria explained that when she did the psychological counselling, her psychologist mentioned the possibility of medication. She explained that at this point, she started doing Tai Chi. In fact, Maria states a good example, that sports (as well as the socialising around it) seem to be very supportive in times of poor mental health and non-achieved psychological well-being:

“I think it's both, the Tai Chi but also the lifestyle around it and the group of people around it [...] and the common interest [...] it was both, the training itself and [...] the energy and all the things around it” (Maria)

Chris, who earlier explained that his unemployment made him feel stressed and easily irritated also explained that he has always been a sporty person and that doing sports have been a helpful tool in the times of his unemployment:

“I've always been into running and fitness training and stuff like that [...] if I felt frustrated, you know, couldn't find any jobs to apply to or couldn't figure out about a job application, then going for a run was always a pretty good option sort of, also now, I mean, when I am stressed, I need to go and get some fresh air [...] so that's kind of always been a coping strategy for me against stress.” (Chris)

Amin emphasised that one the one hand, shaping his own time schedule around his job (underemployment) has been a coping strategy. On the other hand, however, he said that on days he felt lower, he chose to do sports to get better again:

⁹ In her inquiry aiming to investigate the antidepressant effect physical exercise entails, Craft (2004) concluded that „[e]xercise was associated with the reduction in the symptoms of depression“ (Craft 2004:151). Further studies conducted by Legrand and Heuze (2007) and Schulz, Meyer and Langguth (2011) reveal that physical training has an antidepressant effect, which „decrease the symptoms and increase the well-being“ („Symptome lindern und das Wohlbefinden steigern“) (Schulz, Meyer and Langguth 2011:55). They emphasise that physical activities are similarly helpful than prescribing medication against depression.

“Most of the things that helped me was sports. Because when I was out [...] it was like fresh air [...] and then I feel like I’m healthy, I have a great family, I have my girlfriend, I have everything many people just wish to have” (Amin)

He explained that during the sports outside, he could re-arrange his thoughts and focus on the positive things his life contains – beside the job he was not happy with. While doing sports, he found new strategies on how to deal with the contemporary situation.

Stefano also stated that doing fitness has been a useful coping strategy to overcome bad feelings regarding his employment situation. Christine, who mentioned the importance of socialising and gardening beforehand, also said:

“I remember, yeah, going swimming again, finally. We started kayaking.” (Christine)

Having emphasised this, one can state, that most of the respondents who have been asked about their way of coping with their unpleasant situation caused by their underemployment or unemployment, in fact used physical activities to either distract themselves or to re-gain resources to re-establish their psychological well-being.

5. Conclusion

The given research aimed to answer the research question *“Which impact do underemployment and unemployment take on the well-being of highly educated immigrants in Denmark and Germany?”*. It is based on a qualitative inquiry conducted with semi-structured interviews. Honneth’s Theory of Recognition (3.2.1.) and Stet’s theories of identities (3.2.2.) as well as a conceptual framework (3.1.) served as a scope for this thesis.

A significant result of this inquiry is, that the informants have been affected equally much, no matter whether they experienced underemployment or unemployment. Those who experienced both, however, pointed out that unemployment felt worse or at least different, the impact on their well-being left similar traces in their biographies nevertheless. The informants

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants mentioned negative feelings such as stress, irritation, sadness, guilt, self-doubt and depression. One of them clearly revealed psychosomatic issues connected with her unemployment and negative experiences at the centres. Having conducted this inquiry in a comparative way, one can state that there is no visible difference in the negative feelings of the target groups in Denmark and Germany. However, those who have been in touch with the jobcentres in Germany, felt better supported than those who had to get in touch with the Danish jobcentres, which also took a positive influence on how they experienced their unemployment. What is obvious in the given thesis is that the participants of the interviews residing in Denmark, all gathered experiences with unemployment, while those residing in Germany did not. In Germany, only two (of four) respondents experienced unemployment. It must be considered that the informants in Denmark studied the “soft science” (social and political sciences, anthropology and management related subjects), while those informants in Germany studied the “hard sciences” (3x engineering, 1x physics).

In regard of the importance of primary relationships, it is crucial to state that those who felt recognition of themselves and their strains regarding their joblessness or dissatisfaction in their jobs (underemployment) felt comparatively better than those who did not experience this recognition. Those who did not feel the recognition needed in the sphere which is supposed to solve imbalances in societal spheres, experienced a) depressive symptoms (one additionally mentioned psychosomatic issues) and in two cases b) the failure of their relationships. Both informants whose relationships failed, stated that their job situation could be considered as one trigger for the final breakup with their (ex-)partners. It would be worth directly connecting Honneth’s theory of recognition with the concept of well-being, as there might be a connection between the lack of recognition (in the sphere of primary relationships) and an ill well-being. In her compressed theories of identity, Stets is pointing out that the non-verification of identity does take an impact on an individual’s subjective well-being, regarding Honneth, however, such a statement connecting recognition and well-being, is lacking.

6. Perspectives

The conducted research might serve as a basis for further research. As this thesis did not offer space for going in-depth into some issues, here, suggestions of how to extend this inquiry or establish a new inquiry, will be represented.

First of all, it is strongly suggested to investigate the concept of underemployment closer and to conduct further research on it. As mentioned, this inquiry figured out that underemployment takes the same impact on (highly educated) individuals (of foreign origin) as unemployment. As Dooley (2003) already investigated, there are not many inquiries investigating the phenomenon of underemployment. Yet, as his and also the given research reveal, the consequences for well-being and (mental) health of underemployed individuals (respectively, the target group of this given research), shall not be underestimated. Further inquiries investigating this phenomenon in-depth, might lead to an establishment of convenient concepts serving counsellors to help affected individuals coping better with the situation. The given thesis has already revealed that an individual underemployed by hours might feel a self-set time schedule to be helpful. Furthermore, there are many inquiries done examining the effectiveness of sports on people with depression. Many of the informants mentioned that doing sports has been an adequate coping strategy in their times of dissatisfaction based on underemployment and unemployment. Research established with individuals affected by it (no matter their heritage) could directly represent whether there is an especially positive impact on those experiencing symptoms of depression based on dissatisfaction regarding their job situation/joblessness. There could be caused awareness and the individuals could be prevented from suffering too much. Different groups undergoing the different types of underemployment could be participating in an experimental trial, where they use different strategies such as developing an own time schedule or doing sports. They could evaluate, which strategy helped them the most in re-gaining their subjective well-being during this period.

Secondly, to understand, whether the impact of underemployment, respectively, unemployment on the target group is extraordinarily strong, a second comparative research needs to be conducted. Qualitative interviews with natives in Denmark and Germany obtaining the same parameters as the previous target group, except the life event of migrating to another country, should be carried out. The comparative analysis would reveal whether migration as a life event itself causes such an immense strain on individuals, that they are already emotionally weakened by it and are not as good in facing unexpected failures regarding their wishes about employment and eventual failure. Thirdly, being aware of this, the approaches of the jobcentres could be adapted to this target group. As this inquiry revealed, the all-over satisfaction with the German jobcentres has been comparatively higher. By looking closer into both different concepts in Denmark and Germany, and by examining

the responsibilities and focus of those, a comparative policy analysis could be conducted to point out differences in both approaches. Based on this inquiry, existing concepts could be improved with the content of a higher level of cultural sensitivity, and awareness of the determinants the target group entails: highly educated, of foreign origin. Better service and understanding for diversity would not only serve the individuals as the specially trained staff could consider their needs in a more concise way, also the state(s) would profit from it when establishing new concepts or improving the old, to help highly educated individuals with entering the labour market, attending employment matching their qualification (and therefore, help keeping up their well-being and good health).

Finally, having investigated the impact underemployment and unemployment take on relationships and having enquired that both phenomena might even be considered as responsible for relationship failures, further research could possibly detect in which way they are influential. For this, it would be required to research the interconnectivity of the parameters: underemployment/underemployment, depressive symptoms/poor well-being, and relationship failure. Considering those and investigating those separately in individuals, could find answers whether it is the established depressive symptoms based on the employment situation or the environment caused by the joblessness/underemployment (lack of [enough] income for instance).

Individuals not living in their country of origin have to adapt to many new circumstances, which puts them, eventually, in an extraordinarily difficult situation. Several studies show that migration itself is a stressor for the immigrants, which can lead to psychological distress (Schouler-Ocak et al. 2015). All the suggested research ideas can be considered under the already mentioned comparative concept of cultural sensitivity. Using such a concept would cause understanding about whether immigrants are affected more by certain life events compared to a native population obtaining the same parameters.

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Appendix

I. Interview guide

A General Questions

- 01 How old are you?
- 02 What is your country of origin?
- 03 When did you move to DK/GER?
- 04 What were your reasons of moving to DK/GER?
- 05 Have you'd been in a relationship when you moved?
 - (5.1 If so, are you still in it?)
- 06 Are you currently employed?
 - (6.1 In a position matching your qualification?)

B Educational Background

- 07 What is your highest university degree?
- 08 Which subject(s) did you study?
- 09 Where did you obtain your degree?
 - (9.1 If obtained in the country of origin: Did you work in a study-related employment prior moving?)
- 10 What does your education mean to you?

C Employment in the Target Country

- 11 Did you have to work in jobs here in DK/GER, not matching your qualification or which were not satisfactory for other reasons?
 - (11.1 How did you feel about it?)
- 12 Have you'd been unemployed here in DK/GER?
 - (12.1 How did you feel about it?)
- (13 if experienced both: were there significant differences of how it felt?)
- 14 Have you'd been in touch with job agencies (such as job centeres)?
 - (14.1 If so, how have you'd been treated and how could the employees help you?)
- 15 What does work mean to you (apart from being a source of money)?

D Changes and Emotions

16 Did the episode of failure on the labour market change you?

(16.1 If so, how?)

17 Could you describe the feelings you have had in this phase?

(17.1 Have you felt lower compared to the time you still lived in your country of origin? 17.2 Was help from outside in form of counselling required? 17.3 Has there been a diagnosis?)

18 Did it change your habits, motivation and goals?

19 Were you in a relationship in this phase?

(19.1 If participant is in a relationship/an own nuclear family: Was your family life affected by this experience? Could you describe it?)

II. Interviews

ALEXANDRA

[00.00-01.11]: Interviewer explains previous project about “Deskillling Internationals on the Danish Labour Market” and the aim of the given research. Furthermore, the structure of the interview is explained to the interviewee.

[01.11-01.12]

Q: Ehm how old are you?

[01.12-01.13]

A: 26.

[01.15-01.16]

Q: 26. And uhm where are you from?

[01.17-01.17]

A: I am from Romania.

[01.19-01.23]

Q: Romania, okay. And ehm when did you move to, to Denmark?

[01.23-01.28]

A: Oh in 2008 [2008] in summer [okay].

[01.28-01.33]

Q: And what were your reasons, was it for studying?

[01.33-01.33]

A: Yes [okay]

[01.34-01.35]

Q: So it, it was uhm a Bachelor degree, or...?

[01.35-01.44]

A: Yes uhm I had my Bachelor in Sønderborg [ah ja] and then my Masters in Aarhus University in Herning [okay].

[01.45-01.49]

Q: Okay uhm when you, when you moved here, have you'd been in a relationship?

[01.49-02.07]

A: Yes. My uhm boyfriend was already here and then him and another friend of mine convinced me that Denmark is great and the schools are good and so on [okay] so I was looking into universities abroad and then ja [okay, interesting]

[02.07-02.09]

Q: Uhm are still in this relationship?

[02.09-02.13]

A: Yes. [okay, we will get back to this later – laughs] Ja.

[02.14-02.18]

Q: And uhm do you currently have a job? Are you employed?

[02.18-02.23]

A: No. [No, so you are unemployed and on I don't know, benefits.] Ja, A-Kasse. [hmh]

[02.23–02.32] Introduction to block B of the Interview guide (questions about the educational background)

[02.33-02.34]

Q: Which subjects did you study?

[02.34-02:39]

A: uhm the Masters was in 'Marketing and Business Innovation' [aha, okay]

[02:40-02:43]

Q: And ehm you've got it here at Aarhus University?

[02:43-02.46]

A: Yes. In English (?).

[02.47-02:51]

Q: Now when you are thinking about your education, ehm, what does it actually mean to you?

[02:52-04:04]

A: [both laughing] [I know it is a difficult one] Ja. I thought it would mean an easy entry into the Danish labour market [ja] but it wasn't really like that. ehm I think it was a bit too theoretical [mhm] ehm [okay] so I didn't... from school I didn't get many practical experiences [ja] [...] I got the mentorship and some work outside the school and I volunteered, wherever I was able to contribute with something [mhm] ehm but what it means to me, well, I put a lot of effort into it [mhm] and I did learn I mean it is not like it was useless [mhm] and I would very much like to use what I've learnt [mhm] both from school and outside of it in a company [ja] and I know, I can do that, I know I can contribute [ja] and I have been told so by all the mentors [ja] and the internships that I've had [ja] but...

[04:05-04:06]

Q: ... do you speak Danish?

[04:05-04:39]

A: Just a bit [okay]. I have mostly done research, I wrote business plans [mhm] and ehm conducted some promotion activities [there you probably only needed English] ja and I mean to write a business plan in Danish, I am not there yet, just to put it into perspective [ja] I can talk to my colleagues in Danish over a coffee [mhm] or lunch [mhm] but more than that not really [okay, I see]

[04:40-05:09]

Q: Uhm about your education... you already wrote that you worked in different jobs ehm were they kind of matching your qualification? Would you say that, I don't know, ehm working for the companies you have been in, was it close to the education? Was it ehm, were the jobs, ja, matching your plan somehow?

[05:10-05:55]

A: Up to some extent. [mhm] I've also had the cleaning jobs [mhm] but these ones that were sort of related to what I want to do [mhm] ehm they did provide some opportunities for developing my skills [mhm] and [okay] for keeping in touch with what I know and not [ja okay] forgetting all about it, but to a certain extent because they are all small organisations [mhm] mostly start-ups, so they all kind of deal with the same things, they all want some market research, they all want a business plan, business model [mhm] and then it sort of stops there [hmh] ehm so there is much more that I would like to do [mhm] than this basic starting things [ja okay, I see]

[05:56-06:06]

Q: Ehm but like you said, you also did those cleaning jobs [mhm] for instance [ja] I mean, was it only cleaning or did you do other jobs?

[06:06-06:54]

A: Ja I worked as a dish washer when I came here at the beginning ehm cleaning, then I did some translations [but did you have to do this also after obtaining your Masters degree?] I didn't because I've this benefits [mhm], I didn't have any income when I was studying [mhm] ehm and then I needed some income, but after, I preferred to focus [okay] on using my skills and even if I am not paid that I rather put my time into using these skills and meeting people and networking [ja I see] increasing my chances [ja] basically in getting a job [okay] than going for cleaning and earning some more money [okay, I see, I see mhm]

[06:55-07:08]

Q: Ehm and now that you are unemployed, you say, you are on these benefits, we don't need to talk about this, it's not necessary..., but ehm how does this make you feel?

[07:10-08:12]

A: Sad [laughing] to some extent because I know a lot of people who know as much as I know [mhm] or the other way around, I know I am as good as they are [mhm] ehm and it was much easier for them to get a job [why do you think so?] because their father worked in that company or because well they were born here and all through out their lives they have been part in different environments and met different people and then upon graduation, it was really easy to say 'hey you know, we are hiring, how about it, give it a try' and then ehm of course whereas when you come from a different place and also, I've moved a lot in Denmark, ehm so I've kind of left my network behind [where did you live before?] I lived in Sønderborg, then in Silkeborg, then in Herning, now I live in Horsens, but I've mostly built my network in Aarhus, ehm... [mhm]

[08:13-08:24]

Q: But you said that, ja, that you are sad about it [ja]. Ehm, could you elaborate further?

[08:24-10:20]

A: Ja, ja sure. I've been unemployed for 14 months [okay] ehm and I always get, like I said, good feedback on my work and ehm I have good references, but still I'm being told 'oh your Danish level is not good enough' [mhm] and the government would rather pay me the benefits than pay me to learn Danish which is a whole other discussion, but just ehm to make a point that I would love to learn Danish, but I'm, I can't, because I am not in a company where I can uhm use it ehm and things, the time, the effort that I put at home doesn't really pay off [mhm] because I am never really using my Danish, so I can read and understand more all the time [mhm] but I cannot speak more, because I am never using it anywhere [I see] and ehm ja, like I was saying, I [...] have been told 'your Danish is not good enough' or 'you don't have the years of experience that we require' [mhm] [...] graduate programs asked for two years [...] work experience [mhm] I don't have that [mhm] ehm so it's very difficult to get in even though I have been working in various projects [mhm] but it all adds up to maybe one and a half years of experience [mhm] that is just not enough [mhm okay] so it is frustrating, I would say, it's a better word [ja] because I know I can do all these jobs and I am working on my CV and application all the time proving, doing my best and it still doesn't pay off [mhm so you feel you are giving a lot and you are putting a lot of effort into it.] yes. yes. [mhm, I see, I see].

[10:22-10:29]

Q: And like you said that you are on benefits, so you are in touch with job centers?

[10:29-10:29]

A: Yes.

[10:30-10:31]

Q: How do you feel you are treated there?

[10:32-12:22]

A: Aah ja [laughing] that's a delicate topic ehm also my job center is in Horsens, just to make a distinction [ja] uhm they have in Horsens about 4.000 students every year [ja] but it doesn't seem like they know how to deal with the graduates ehm because I've asked them for so many months to help me with my Danish, to help me with networking, where, what can I do and it's just this barrier, they are just saying 'no' to everything and 'I don't know' and they just push you around from one person to the other [mhm] and not even they tell you 'dagpengeafdeling' or something like that, which you don't know who that is because [...] only has the contact information of the receptionist which again will tell you 'oh, nobody is available' or something [mhm] [laughing] [so you feel pushed around or...?] ja, ja [ja] pretty much [ja] and there is no help there and they call you in every month to check up on what you are doing [ja] ehm but as far as I understand, they are supposed to help you, I mean, they want you out of their system [mhm] as much as you want to get out of their system, yet there is no help [mhm] even if you ask for it 'please do help me' [laughing] [mhm mhm] with whatever you can, is just, ja... 'do you have a CV?' 'ja, please'. [mhm] So many people helped me with my CV, I mean, if I get one more opinion [laughing] [??] [ja, I see, I understand... okay, that's uhm ja, I understand]

[12:23-12:48]

Q: Uhm, I already asked you, what your education means to you. And uhm [...] it would be very nice, if you could answer: what does work mean to you, apart from, ja, being a source of

money? What does it mean to you to work, and especially to work in the field of your education, what does it mean?

[12:49-14:23]

A: Well, first of all, to work, I am really not good at staying at home [ja] if I am at home, I am online all day, reading on topics that interest me [hm] just to keep busy and in the end of the day, I'm still tired [mhm] but then I haven't contributed to anything [mhm] ehm I have been learning for so many years about so many things [ja] I do feel that one year ago it was time for me to go out and provide and contribute, to something meaningful. Ehm so that's what work is to me [mhm] both being busy [mhm] but also seeing that you are doing [mhm] something for a purpose. Ehm whereas... well, it has been nice as well, helping all these start-ups ehm but that doesn't give you continuity and apparently doesn't help that much in your job search as I had thought, it would [mhm] and then it doesn't give you... or me the satisfaction [mhm] that I expect that a longer term job [mhm] would, because I would be able to see more of my work and I would be able to put my finger on this is what I've done [mhm] I can now also, I've done this business plan and so on, but then again, that can be changed every day, it does change a lot, so it is not that much that I can point at [mhm] as something that I've done

[14:23-14:51]

Q: Ehm you've said that ehm, it keeps you busy. Ehm why do you think it's important that you are busy, I mean, why not relax? [laughing ja] Right? I mean, I am just clinging a bit on this term, it keeps you busy'...

[14:51-15:08]

A: That's a hard question. I never thought why I want to keep busy. Uhm [if it's too difficult, then we just take it out] Ja, I am thinking about it. [Or maybe we get back to it afterwards] Ja sure.

[15:12-15:21]

Q: Uhm this episode of not succeeding on this labour market, which is, you said, 14 months now, did it change you?

[15:24-17:45]

A: Well, I think so for a while at least, I was very pessimistic [ja] ehm like I said upon graduation I thought 'okay, I am going to get a job' then it didn't come for so long and I kept trying and waiting and trying [mhm] ehm so I became, I was perfectly..., I felt perfectly integrated in Denmark, especially while a student, but of course, there wasn't really the truth and then I felt like, well, it wasn't a cultural shock but close to it, probably [mhm] again, people have told us, teachers, whatever, career counsellors, that 'your network is important in getting in job in Denmark'. But you don't really build one when you're a student. I mean, you get some people around you but not as much and then when you're unemployed, it's suddenly 'well, where is my network' [mhm] I don't really have it [mhm] I felt like everything was okay, but clearly, it isn't [mhm] ehm and then it is frustration and this shock. I've been here for so long and still, I am not part of their culture [mhm] and not part of a Danish network and ehm if I can't get a job, maybe something's wrong with me, maybe something is wrong with them, maybe I don't belong here [mhm] I've recently snapped out it again, I said 'no, well, I have to do it, of course I can do it and of course there is a job for me here' but for a while I stopped believing there was. Why didn't it come so far? [mhm] I mean, it's not that you need to take ten years to find a job, it should be okay a few months [mhm], but how many months

[mhm mhm] and now, I am just fighting to get a job, I somehow regained my trust, because I just kept telling myself, ,well, I do have skills [mhm] to contribute so why not, they have to take me' [okay]

[17:46-18:25]

Q: Ehm so but you have those like [ja] episodes [ja], when you are turning more pessimistic [yes] and then it's going up again [yes] when you try and motivate yourself [yes, yes, exactly] I see, I see. Ehm when you, the feelings you had in this, in this episode... You already talked about that you were sad, or that you are sad and ehm frustrated. Did you know feelings like these from the time you still lived in Romania? Or was it something new?

[18:25-20:38]

A: Not really, no. But I was in Romania only until I was 14. [of course it's different] I didn't have a major change when I was 12, [mhm] no, sorry, I was, I was in Romania until I was 19 and I was back home with my parents until I was 14 [ja okay] and then I moved to a completely new, much bigger city and everything to study in high school [okay] ehm it was just a very well known and interesting high school for me, so I wanted to go there and I did ehm and there was tough to adapt [mhm] it was the first time I took such a big step [of course] ehm out of my comfort zone [ja] but I wouldn't say, I was ever so frustrated or sad, I mean, there was, I was actually thinking about this a few days ago. I was in a new circle, because a lot of the people in my class, have been studying in this high school, they also have primary, 1st to 8th grade, so many of them were there from 1st grad [mhm] so they knew each other [ja] they knew the teachers and so on, so of course it was tough getting in and in some of the circles, I didn't get but I did make friends [mhm] and I did adapt to it [ja] So to some extent, of course, everything new, it doesn't have to be Denmark or anything [ja], every new environment can be difficult to adapt to [sure] it can be frustrating to fit in to find a way to fit in [yes] but I wouldn't say it was so tough, maybe the pressure wasn't so high either [mhm mhm] I mean, in high school you study, if you get through, then you're okay [ja, now it's more responsibility, probably] yes, of course. Now I want a career and time is passing by and I don't want to be bored [yes, I understand, yes]

[20:39-20:58]

Q: Now that you've talked about frustration and sadness, ehm, have you considered or did you use any counselling? Did you feel that you had to talk to someone about it, like I don't know, maybe a job coach or maybe even a psychologist or a doctor? Was it to such an extent?

[20:59-21:59]

A: Ehm well, I talked to Tom once and that's from the Bridge Project [ja coach, ja] ehm that was about a month ago, I think [yes], but I contacted him at the end of last year some time [ja] must have been november, december, something like that. That was my down, when I was like ,okay, now what? [ja] I really need to do something'. [ja] Then he was on the list of mentors for Alumni from Aarhus University [okay] and ehm ja, I talked to him once and he really helped actually that's how I got my up now [okay! So it was a good choice to...] yes! [... contact him] yes, definitely [okay, that's good, that's a good thing. But eh mit was not that you, that you visited a psychologist?] No, no. [Okay, so that wasn't necessary]

[22:00-22:12]

Q: Ehm these 14 months, did they change your habits? And your motivation or your goals?

[22:16-23:51]

A: Oh, I think, I am even more proactive than before [mhm] when I was studying, It was easier, sort of, because you knew exactly how much you have to read, how much you have to study, what you have to do [mhm]. Now it's just continuously looking for jobs, applying [mhm] for as many as you can, contacting as many people, doing all sorts of activities [yes] ehm that's to my habits. Ehm, my goals as well. Because when I was studying, I was thinking about ehm some big companies [mhm] and even i didn't apply to one of them, because everybody applied there [???] ,I'm still not fond of that company' [coughing, mhm] but looking back, if I would have, maybe I would have one year of experience in one company [mhm] and maybe that looks better on a CV [mhm] than fragments like I have [ja, I see] ehm so I've sort of 'lowered, I don't know if it's 'lowered', because I don't know if the companies that I want to work for are the best choice [mhm] but they are interesting to me. Ehm and now I am looking for a long-term job [okay] for a job that's not just two months [mhm mhm] and where there's opportunities [mhm] to grow and to contribute to the [???] of the company as well [mhm ja] ehm [I see]

[23:51-24:14]

Q: Uhm you already said you are still with the partner you have been [yes] with when you came to Denmark. Ehm could you that this... Or did these 14 months change it? Do they have an impact on your relationship?

[24:17-25:30]

A: I wouldn't think so. Ehm but then again, maybe I don't see it [laughing] [mhm so you don't feel that it changed or that maybe you changed towards your partner? That maybe your sad feelings had an influence of something?] Mmm I don't think so [you don't think so, okay, okay] I think maybe when it's, when I'm working on, very intensively, like preparing for an interview, say on a short notice, then I just want to be left alone [mhm] and then if he says something [???] but that's very small things when I'm under pressure [mhm] basically, it would be the same if I would be on a deadline for school [mhm mhm] or for a job [okay] and so on, I told you before, I like to have peace and quiet when I am working, so I can focus [ja] but I wouldn't relate that to being unemployed [?] it's just something that I need [okay]

[25:31-25:40]

Q: Uhm did you feel supported? I mean, did he support you or comfort you in this?

[25:41-26:32]

A: Well, he is the type of person who doesnt really care [okay] about being unemployed for I don't know how long [mhm] he is very optimistic [???][mhm] ehm so he has been the sort of guy who says ,you're going to get the job'. I didn't find that as being very supportive, because I wasn't that optimistic for a very long time [yes] I am not to his level even now [okay] uhm and then I didn't feel like he was supporting me maybe he was in his own way, but also I don't really like to bring these sort of issues in the relationship, like ,you have to support me' and I don't want him to hold my hand and say ,oh it's going to be okay' [laughing]

[26:32-26:45]

Q: But did you interact about the feelings you've had? Like when you said you were sad and frustrated, I am just picking up those two terms again [ja], uhm did you talk about this frustration or did you feel like ,no I don't want to bring it up'?

[26:46-27:20]

A: I did bring it up, well, I didn't intentionally say 'hey look, I am sad' [mhm] uhm but of course we are talking about the situation and so on and we haven't had very long hours long conversations, because like I said, he is just saying 'it's going to be fine, there is a job for you there, you know you can do things [mhm] and I know it and somebody else will see it as well' [ja] ehm so in that sense, he has been supportive [mhm] but [I see.]

[27:23-27:35]

Q: Alright, that's it! I had 19 questions we are through them. Uhm is there anything else you'd like to add? Do you have anything else on your mind you think that could be necessary for the topic?

[27:36-33:44]

Interviewee elaborates about volunteering which keeps her busy and connects her with people. It helps her extending her network. She gets back to „being busy“. However, she explains that she met interesting people who could provide her with finding a job eventually. She returns to her problem of having moved a lot which makes it difficult to establish a network. She emphasises that she has a Romanian network through her boyfriend, the people involved however, work in so many different fields and the people are of quite diverse background, which leads to that she does not consider them as her social network either. Volunteering, however, helps her finding people with the same interests.

She is not in touch with the network of Romanians as much anymore, as they gave her additional pressure about not being in employment. She felt judged by them and limited the meetings.

Most people she knows are of „international origin“, she doesn't know many Danes as she did not meet many due to lacking employment, where one often meet people.

MARIA - Interview pt. I

00:00-00:29

Interviewer briefly explains the interview structure. The short introduction ends with the interviewee confirming that she is 46 years old.

00:29-00:31

Q: Your country of origin?

00:31-00:31

A: Czech Republic

00:33-00:36

Q: Okay, I still remember that. When did you move to Denmark?

00:36-00:38

A: In 1998.

00:39-00:42

Q: Mhm. And what were your reasons of moving?

00:42-01:13

A: Uhm marriage. I was married to a Danish guy. We lived in Czech Republic together for six years [mhm] before we came here and we got a son, I was on maternity leave [mhm] so [...] he would like to build his career back home, so we came here and the plan was that we should stay the three years I was supposed to be on maternity leave and see what happens [okay, you stayed] [both laughing]

01:14-01:17

Q: So you told me that you have been in a relationship by then. Are you still in it?

01:18-01:24

A: No. We got divorced [okay] after the three years [right afterwards, okay] [both laughing]

01:25-01:27

Q: Uhm are you currently employed?

01:27-01:30

A: Ah ja. [laughing]

01:31-01:34

Q: And the position is matching your qualification or not?

01:34-01:39

A: Yes. [It is. Perfect. Now we have the part of the general questions done.] [both laughing]

01:39-01:41

Q: Uhm what is your highest university degree?

01:42-02:07

A: It's a, what is it called? Master's degree. [mhm and in which subjects?] It's two actually. It's an MA in Social Sciences from a Czech university [okay] and an MA in Educational Anthropology from Aarhus [from Aarhus University, I see, mhm]

02:08-02:12

Q: Uhm, it is a bit of a tricky question, but what does your education mean to you?

02:16-03:09

A: Well, that is a tricky question, because it didn't meant much when I finished the first education [mhm] I was actually tired of those academics [mhm] I used to say that I wanted to get out of the academic world [mhm] [...] and then we came to Denmark and I got all the way down and then I really missed it [mhm] and after taking the Danish education, it was like I was so happy I was allowed to come back to the world [mhm] so uhm ja well I don't know. It has a meaning

03:10-03:15

Q: Did it form you, for instance? Shape you?

03:15-03:31

A: Ehm well, that I think it's difficult. But yes, of course [okay... we can just leave it like that]

03:31-03:40

Q: Ehm were you working in jobs here in Denmark, which did not match your qualification? [yes] What kind of jobs?

03:41-04:05

A: Cleaning. Ehm, storage, [lagermedhjælper], in a hotel ah ja.

04:05-04:10

Q: How did you feel about having to work in these jobs?

04:11-05:11

A: uhm, it wasn't good, I was really, eh ja, I felt really, it was difficult to ehm, not to be able to use myself and ehm it also it wasn't enough to earn enough money ehm it was kind of, it is like the brain is completely [like you cannot use it] like a zombie, ja [ja okay] because I thought, okay I could do this for the hours to earn the money [mhm] and then could still read my books but I had small children [mhm] at that time. So you end up to be like really just cleaning and cleaning and you come home and you continue cleaning and change diapers [mhm] and then at the end it's like [no time for the books] no energy and not time [ja, I understand]

05:11-05:19

Q: Uhm have you been unemployed as well? [yes] And ehm how did you feel about this?

05:20-05:57

A: I think it was difficult, because I haven't tried it before I came to Denmark when I was back home, I was also working during I was studying and I was never been longer without a job than two weeks [mhm] even though we moved to another city [mhm] So it was quite difficult, I think, for my self-esteem [mhm] and ja, not to be able to get a job [ja] even though

I was applying [ja] for jobs and also to be treated like ja to feel like not being good enough [ja] being put in the box of 'social needy' [mhm]

05:59-06:18

Q: Those two experiences of, of working in jobs not matching your qualification and ehm unemployment, are the feelings you've had, about these different episodes, similar or do they differ?

06:20-06:54

A: I think they are similar [mhm] mostly. This being unemployed [?] is worse than at least being employed also with the status you have [mhm] in ehm the community [mhm] is different [mhm] so even though you have lower jobs, then you still, when you have jobs, when you earn the money [mhm] you have a better status than when you are unemployed [mhm because you're just doing something?] ja [ja okay, I see]

06:55-07:07

Q: In these episodes, have you'd been in touch with ehm job agencies, like the job center or...? [yes] How was that?

07:08-08:56

A: Uhm I have been in touch with them actually since we came to Denmark [mhm] and continuously during the years and I must say it has changed very much [mhm] because the first time, when we came, I was immediately treated as like I came with a Danish husband and I felt and I was looked at and talked to like I just came to Denmark though a marriage [mhm okay] and like that I just use the system and get the money and not work and all [that you... ja okay mhm] and that thing has changed pretty much [mhm] from how it is now where it's more, people look more, differentiate, and I haven't met that the same, I remember, it was the biggest shock I got [mhm], when I came here and my husband had a job as a teacher but he didn't earn enough so it [?] to get a help to get in work [mhm] and we had a little kid and and then this I was immediately met as like I am somebody who wants to cheat and all this [mhm] and ehm that was very difficult [mhm] that was really a huge shock and at that time, I had every second week, were packing my bags [mhm] [mhm] and wanted to leave [mhm ja] [laughing] I think that was also part of the reason for the divorce because our relationship was not working, because I was all the time unhappy and complaining and that was difficult also for him [mhm mhm] this meeting with the system and being pushed, too. And I think that has changed really much through the years.

08:56-09:06

Q: Do you feel that the employees at the job centers are treating you good or did you feel [now that I got again back into the system just a few months ago?] now, ja?

09:06- 09:58

A: It was very different. I was very positively surprised [okay] that you really are met [mhm] as a partner [mhm] and they ask you what kind of assistance you need [mhm] and ehm ja, it was a really nice surprise [could they help you?]. Ja. Actually but I think it was a bit accidental that I've really met a good consultant [mhm]. who actually... the job [?] it was for him [okay] it wasn't a job that was ehm [that wasn't announced?] it wasn't announced, no [no, okay, very good].

So I went with this pain in the stomach to the meeting with the job center and [it turned out very good, cool] [?] working for them, so I get to the other side of the table [that's good, very interesting]

09:58-10:07

Q: Ehm I already asked you what your education means to you. What does work mean to you apart from that it is a source of money, of course?

10:09-12:32

A: It's primarily a source of money [both laughing] because I am really [?] because the economic situation is really really difficult [mhm] right now [mhm] and ehm I have growing, what do you call it, ehm debts [mhm] in the bank [okay] and really, at the end of the month, it's not enough for food and ehm and I really have to like put ,you can't take more bread because then we don't have enough for tomorrow' [okay] [mhm] So I think that's that's pretty difficult also to concentrate on being creative and do some work [yes] when you, when you have to use your energy to keep up some kind of life [ja] and uhm and sometimes some people told me that I have to sync [?] my ambitions but there is a limit i think [mhm] because we don't live the way I would like to live [mhm] we live in a beton house, many things are not...uhm many things I can't do with the kids I would like to [mhm] we can't go to the cinema, and all the cultural things, because we can't afford it [mhm] uhm so ehm but I really want to keep some kind of level still for them to grow up and then it's hard [ja] because then there is no space for me to go anywhere [mhm] to go to town or eat or something, that's just not happening [okay] so to work it is a lot about money [mhm] but it's also having colleagues, some kind of environment you're part of [mhm] this is why I also took the Danish education [mhm] I don't think I've learned so much professionally [mhm] more than I could before but just to be, getting entrance [mhm] to being part of the world again [mhm] getting into the network [mhm] that was really valuable [ja] to belong somewhere [ja] on some kind of acceptable level [mhm ja I understand, yes. That's tough. Really.]

12:33-12:52

Q: These episodes of not succeeding on the labour market uhm be it that you have been underemployed or that you've been unemployed ehm, did it change you? Your personality? Did it do [ja] something with you? How? Can you elaborate this?

12:53-14:10

A: Well I, I used to say that uhm, when comparing for example, when I am talking to my colleagues back home in Czech Republic [mhm] the people I studied with, most oft hem have a career [mhm] and some leading positions today [mhm] and when I was a student or unemployed I used to say that I probably will not build the same career because now, I am getting old and ehm you know it's just chronologically [mhm] not so much time to build a career [mhm] for example, academic career [ja] it's just really difficult to get in [ja] when you don't start there in your twenties [mhm] but that on a personal development eh I think that ehm because you go through so many challenging things where you have to deal with [mhm] so many emotional stuff and all that, that it was like a great school for personal development [mhm] but maybe sometimes unnecessarily painful [mhm] on the limit of you live or you die.

14:11-14:17

Q: So you feel negative changes on the one hand but also positive changes on the other hand?

14:18-14:55

A: Well, I think that I would be a different person if I stayed home [mhm] I would just have this life I finished, I had a good job, I had a leader job before we came here and I had some kind of career [[mhm] but ehm on the other hand, right now, I am actually quite happy, because I've been through some things because I can also see that uhm emotionally, I am somewhere else...

Here, the interview has been interrupted, which is why the recordings have been divided into two.

MARIA - Interview pt. II

00:00-00:27

Q: Okay, so we just start a new one and continue with question number 17. Alright, so many. Ehm when you were in those episode when you didn't succeed on the labour market, could you describe how you felt? Could you describe your feelings about it?

00:27-01:19

A: That has changed also [mhm] because in the beginning, I understood that I don't speak the language [ja], even though I thought that that shouldn't be a problem and I just approached some institutions I supposed where English would be enough [ja] but it showed that even though, it might have been for the work, then for all the other social things, and I was not aware of how much that is in a Danish workplace [ja] that I couldn't have a conversation over a lunch [mhm] because they just spoke Danish [mhm] ehm then I also thought, that the first cleaning jobs I've got, I just take those and then I learn the language [mhm] and it'll change. And I've learnt the language and nothing changed [mhm] [laughing]

01:19-01:27

Q: How did it make you feel, this recognition? I mean, you thought first...

01:27-06:26

A: At first, it was really a shock also [mhm] because I thought I've made an effort now and I've learnt it really and I can speak [mhm] everybody said I speak very good and I can write in Danish, but it's still not good enough [mhm] it's not enough, it's always something it's not enough [mhm] so this feeling of 'it's never good enough' [mhm] to get a job. It was enough to get a volunteer job [mhm] and then everything was great [mhm] but to get a salary it was not possible to get in to [mhm] because and sometimes when I've asked what was missing for the job I was applying, they said 'ah but you know it's because uhm mostly the jobs where I could feel I could use my profession then you also have to write about reports and all that' and then they always said they were afraid that my Danish was not good enough so they would have to spend some resources on [?] correcting [mhm] and helping me [mhm] uhm so then I also said that was the decision to take the Danish education, partly because then the years suddenly run and I got two other kids and uhm yes, I was not working within the profession [mhm] so of course and some update would be good, but partly it was also to get the Danish education. I've actually never got the Danish language exam [mhm], because I've stopped going to the language school after the first year, because I was married to a Danish teacher [mhm] and I thought that the teaching also changed, but I've never learnt anything

there [mhm], I haven't learnt Danish in the language school [mhm] ah so I just didn't want to spend my time there and I had a lot of fights with the kommune [mhm] and all that [?] because I am not learning anything. So I fell off the system and I've never got to the exam [okay] and so when I've applied at the university [okay]

... interrupted again by others at the library, switching place...

I was surprised when I've actually got the letter from the university, that I can start [okay], because they, they just called me and talked to me and they thought my Danish was alright [and you, you undertook the education in Danish also?] yes [ja okay, mhm mhm] It was officially in Danish but because Anthropology, most of the literature is in English [ja, of course. Of course it is.] And I wrote my thesis in English because there were, we had some teachers, some lecturers who were English and American [ja] and ehm they didn't have so many students, because the Danish students were not so happy in writing in English and working with them and for me it was easier [ja] so I've, that was also my intention to start this education, was to, to get professional language [ja] in Danish and I don't think, that worked. Because I got my professional English [mhm] better [ja, sure], because I worked mostly in English and got all the support in doing that, because they wanted that more international [mhm] ehm papers and all that so there was no problem [okay] so it was mostly in English [mhm] so it wasn't there to get much more of the Danish language, professional language [mhm], but it was a bit of getting to another also [?] according to both, the system and the social status, suddenly being a university student got me somewhere else [mhm] from being the cleaning woman [mhm mhm] so I could feel that that changed in many ways from being unemployed to being a student, so that was new...

06:26-06:40

Q: But could you, could you elaborate, how it made you feel? How you felt of being the cleaning lady, of being unemployed? How was it for you?

06:42-8:36

A: Well, I felt like I wasn't [...] I felt like being lost and uhm being like really losing a life [mhm] and not the yeah I don't know, it's not that the job is something less. The opposite, I think the job is really really necessary. So it's not the job itself, but it's the social status, I think it's about the social status [mhm] ehm of how you, even though you talk so much in Denmark about equality, then when you come to any group with people, one of the first things they ask you after 'what's your name?' is 'what do you do?' [mhm] and then you are [categorised mhm] categorised [mhm] [mhm] and the conversation is [mhm] just differentiated by then. So I felt, I was not allowed to have conversations even on the level I was missing. [Was it exclusion you felt?] Yes. [mhm] [mhm] I've really been put in a box and felt like I can't really get out and I didn't feel comfortable and I can't put word on what was so uncomfortable, but it was discomfort [mhm] of not living a life that I've actually had [?].

08:36-08:39

Q: Have you felt sad?

08:40-11:05

A: Ja. [it made you sad, ja] Ja it was most of the time, also of being unemployed that I felt like uhm being under pressure also like from this controlling system and also towards ehm that I can't live my life freely actually and also all the time being afraid of what about my children. I've also had episodes of when I was unemployed and was on kontanthjælp when

the twins were small and their father left and uhm I was sent to a job from the kommune, that was in a hotel, and it was just a year after I gave birth to twins, it was quite a hard pregnancy and my back just couldn't take it. And I was put on the sick leave and then the worker from the kommune, where they have a social worker, suggested that she thinks I have a problem. That I can't be on the job market and shewas just suggesting that they maybe find a Danish family that would have the children in some periods or weekends or something because I can't handle that [mhm] uhm and that was there when I was just ,okay, now we stop [mhm] because what is this?' [mhm] it's like ,what do you think you're doing? Of course I can handle my kids or raise my kids. I'm just having a period, everybody can get into.' Uhm uhm and that was there when I started [?] okay, I have to do something else [mhm] and that was where I came into ,okay, I will take this new education' [mhm] oh, one of the things was purely uhm calculative, that I can get to A-Kasse [...] and even though I don't have a job, I would get out of the system [yes] that that I felt wanted to take my children from me [ja, that's very tough]

11:05-11:37

Q: Uhm so you said that you've been sad and that whatever you did, wasn't enough somehow, right? [Ja, it was like it was never enough ... everything was wrong] mhm Have you experienced feelings like that in your country of origin before or was it new?

11:38-12:42

A: It was new [mhm] because I think it was mostly this feeling of helplessness [mhm] it was kind of like a disparity [talks about the aims of the revolution in 1999 in Czech Republic, she participated in]. All the time being suspected that you are misusing the system and you just being like under the surveillance or so [mhm] I grew up in a totalitarian system and I never felt not so being free [mhm] like when I came here [mhm, that's very interesting].

12:43-

Q: Uhm have your feelings or your situation mmm did it make you seek for counselling, for help from outside?

12:56-13:40

A: Ja, that took me a long time to do that [mhm] because I felt like, well, I have education, I have to handle this myself. Uhm and that was through some of the volunteer work that I was doing, because I felt that well, that I should give, because I have some experience, I have education and all that, so I should be giving [mhm] instead. And then [...] some of the people I've met for the volunteer work who became friends just noticed that and actually took my hand and said ,look now you need help and there are places where you can get help'.

13:40-13:41

Q: What kind of help did you get?

13:41-14:15

A: Counselling [mhm] Which I didn't know and they showed me that there is a system of actually free counselling when you are getting divorced where you can talk to a lawyer and [...] a very concrete counselling [mhm] because that was after the experience I had with the kommune with the system and I thought it was better not to talk to anyone [mhm] and then I heard that there is this volunteer world where you can get a lot of counselling for free [mhm] that was very helpful.

14:15-14:18

Q: Was it a psychological counselling as well?

14:18-14:33

A: Yes. And that around the divorce. The first time I came there, I had some psychological, both uhm economic and psychological and legal assistance. [mhm]

14:33-14:46

Q: Did you also ehm see a doctor? Did you feel so low that you thought you should see one about it? Seek for help, was it required? Was it necessary?

14:46-15:11

A: There was actually several times during the period when I went to a doctor... but mostly I went there, when there was the physical condition I could feel I couldn't cope uhm and the doctor pointed out that it's connected [mhm] with the psychological situation.

15:12-15:15

Q: Has there been a diagnosis, may I ask that? I know it's very personal...

15:15-16:25

A: Ja, no. It wasn't diagnosed [mhm], because it was on the level of counselling [mhm] uhm ja, that was one time, when the twins were small, we were talking about some medicine to put on and at that time, I was starting training Tai Chi and had a very good trainer and ehm I wanted to try... Because I thought if I start to go on medication, I was afraid that I would get the slide all the way down, so I'd never get there. [so it was not an option. Did you feel, can you describe it, did you feel depressive?] Ja, it was depression. It was very difficult, well [mhm], I always got up, when you have children, you do get up, because you have to [you have to] [both laughing] But it was very difficult. I think, it was a hard struggle, just to get up from the bed in the morning and get through the day.

16:26-16:37

Q: Do you feel, that was mostly connected to the divorce or to this uhm ja, not being able to work really?

16:37-17:13

A: I think it was a combination [mhm ja mhm] because it was a combination of it like you have no success in any [mhm] marriage is not working, it is difficult to take care of the kids, i don't have a job [mhm] I thought, there was nothing to hold on [mhm ja] there was no light and I can't go back home, because then I can't take my child [mhm] it was a complete hole [mhm] I think it was mostly like it was a combination of things [mhm]

17:16-17:41

Q: These feelings, did they change your habits and your goals? Like maybe you stopped seeing friends or...

17:42-19:20

A: Ja in this period when I was down uhm I didn't have energy to have any social [mhm] life, so it was very much [mhm] closed. But then I must say, by that time, I knew already some of

the people who were involved in volunteer work where they met situations like that. [mhm] And uhm some of them became friends and some of them [...] it was just a volunteer network. I think that that's maybe also the reason, why I never ended up with really a diagnosis of depression because there was a network that actually came. [mhm] [mhm] and there were two of his friends I've met who started a network for women in Indvandrekvinder. At that time who worked with them [...] when I just disappeared, they literally came and knocked at the door and uhm came to ask 'so what's up, we haven't seen you' [mhm] so that was already the network [so they were having your back somehow] yes. [okay, that's very interesting and very good and important mhm] mhm [...] That what really what helped me coming up.

19:20-19:26

Q: And you said, you also started with Tai Chi. Do you feel that it also helped you?

19:26-20:42

A: Ja. That's really something I started before we got divorced, just about the time when it started to get rough [mhm] and I think that it was very lucky that I met the trainer who's Chinese and I think it's both, the Tai Chi but also all the lifestyle around it and the group of people [mhm] around it [mhm] [...] and the common interest ehm and I was the only foreigner and I still am, except the trainer [mhm] uhm and that became this group [mhm] of people I know it took some time, so it was both, the training itself [mhm] and what it gives [?] the energy and all the things around it and we also started a union around it. So it's also social [mhm] and the connection [ja] when you don't have colleagues, then it is this volunteer world that works in Denmark [ja] that can give you this network [ja, that's very interesting] support [mhm]

20:43-21:29

Q: Uhm you already told me that you have been married [yes]. In this ... when you have been unemployed and having these rough times. Ehm how did it affect a) your relationship but also your children ... Maybe you can differentiate a bit, like how it had an impact on your marriage back then but also on your children maybe when they grew a bit older [mhm] not only when they were very small?

21:29-27:04

A: Uhm, well on the marriage I think, it really had an impact in the way that it ended up with a divorce. I think because I was getting depressed and I was having all those problems uhm it's there was just very difficult to have this relationship working [mhm] and we talked about that lately now, when we can talk with distance to that [mhm] and my husband experienced it as if I was all the time complaining about his country, that I was all the time complaining about Denmark and everything that was Danish [mhm] and he felt it as a personal attack [mhm] so he reacted as if I've attacked him [mhm] and I didn't understand it, so I didn't understand his reaction and I felt like he is supposed to support me [mhm] and he is not [mhm] so I felt very lonely in the relationship [mhm] because my family was far away my fam... the only family I had, was not supporting me [mhm] so the only [...] my kids [...] is the only partners I have [mhm] which I was aware of that I should, that I was afraid of that especially my oldest son that it was a bit of a burden for him [mhm] to be more a partner than a child [mhm] in a way. The way he was growing up. [But did you talk about it?] With him now, when he is adult, he just turned 18 [mhm] uhm he doesn't see it that way [okay] [...] but I can see that [...] he is more adult [mhm], as he was 15 [aha], people thought he was 18 [okay] he was more adult and taking responsibility [mhm I see] on him, that probably was too early to take on [mhm] and even though I've tried [mhm] not to put that on him [mhm]

consciously [...] [And the twins?] Ehm the twins, I think it's maybe a bit different uhm because they, well they never experienced having a father around, because we were alone since they were born [mhm] so they only have the big brother [mhm] he's 7 years older, so for them, this is the father figure in a way [mhm ja] uhm and this about the unemployment for them is they were too small and since they were 3 or 4 then I have been all the time periods in some projects [mhm] so it's not like I have been home for a longer period, I always had some places of had the volunteer work so for them it's that I was always working. They experienced that I am working all the time [mhm] and I am working too much but we don't have enough money [mhm] so we can travel, do things what their friends do. [But this did something with you, I'm working all the time and we don't have enough money and my kids cannot participate really', it caused some feelings in you. ... Could you still be the mother you wanted to be?] Ehm well, I think it is ehm, it makes me feel, sometimes angry and sometimes also not good enough [mhm] to provide the life I would like to provide for them [mhm] But on the other hand [...] the material things are not the most important and that also it makes our relation in the family like really stick together [mhm] because it's hard, because we have to fight, because we can't just get everything we want [mhm] we have a very strong relation [so it didn't turn bad uhm...] I hope not [laughing] [mhm okay] I can see it on the oldest, the way he is with his friends, with his girlfriends, that now after all these years of disappointment and depression that I am not good enough [mhm] I actually feel quite proud when I see him [mhm] there is something I must have done good [okay! that's good] so that's a nice satisfaction to get [mhm] even though the life was like it was and eh mit wasn't perfect life, but that he got the good out of it [mhm mhm] obviously [ja] I hope [ja. That's very important]

27:05-27:24

Q: Ja! I am actually done with my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to add? [...]

27:25-28:37

A: [The interviewee elaborates that the process of her struggle took unnecessarily long as she has been „so deep down“]

28:37-29:20

A: ... that it costs some health. That it has an impact on health. [Could you elaborate that?] Uhm I think I feel that I have some health problems that are connected with the stress [okay] the pressure that has been around that might have been avoided. The period [of unemployment] has been too long where you have to find your way through things.

29:20-29:31

Q: But how „healthwise“? [uhm] It's confidential...

29:32-31:04

A: Uhm it's not ehm any concrete diagnose [...] but I really think it's a lot, that I've been working a lot, I have been working a lot with the Tai Chi and the alternative methods of keeping the body working uhm which prevents some problems. But I do have problems with my back, knees, legs, stomach [mhm] and that is just in imbalance [mhm] but it's getting worse everytime... Now I have been in this again, this period which was very difficult mentally [ja] and I was actually quite sick physically [physically okay, ja.... and but you see a connection, you would say it's a psychosomatic thing?] Ja. [okay] Definitely.

31:05-31:15

Q: How do you come with this? You told me that you saw a doctor back then, when you felt...

31:15-36:41

A: [...] I have quite nice conversations with my GP now, because she knows me now and she knows that when I come to her, then I've tried everything else [laughing] [ja] and it's not very often and ehm latly when I was there now, after Christmas, then I've actually told her 'I know what the problem is, it's mental.' [mhm] [...] because mostly I just needed to talk to somebody, because my family was having some problems. [...] You know, there are some things you don't talk to even to your friends, because you maybe you need to just to say it [...] just to say it to somebody [ja, just to get it out, ja] And my doctor [...] knows me know and so she said 'okay sojust throw it at me and do you want any...' but I said 'no', I don't want any pills and I know what to do basically and I just needed to get it off my chest and to hear that 'yes, it is hard, you have complete right to be tired'. Sometimes, that's enough. [Did it help you?] Yes. [mhm] Ja. [she elaborates further that she needed to get the recognition that what she goes through is hard from someone outside. And further, that she learnt to use the help offered. The net of counselling she uses is part of her coping strategy. This place to go gives her security.)

36:42-46:07

[Talk about the job opportunity that occurred for the interviewee at the jobcenter which she got via her network and additional connections]

ANNA

[00:00:02] - [00:00:21]

NE: All right. Then we can start. Like I have told you before, I start with general questions, ask about the educational background and ask about your work experience and then about feelings about it. So, how old are you?

[00:00:21] - [00:00:23]

IP: Twenty [mhm, thinking] almost twenty nine.

[00:00:23] - [00:00:31]

NE: Oh, you had to think [both laughing]! How fabulous! And what is your country of origin?

[00:00:31] - [00:00:32]

IP: Romania.

[00:00:32] - [00:00:36]

NE: Romania, okay. When did you move to Denmark?

[00:00:36] - [00:00:37]

IP: 2009.

[00:00:37] - [00:00:42]

NE: 2009. And what were your reasons for coming to Denmark?

[00:00:42] - [00:00:46]

IP: To study, to do my masters in Denmark.

[00:00:46] - [00:00:47]

NE: So you took your bachelor in Romania?

[00:00:47] - [00:00:51]

IP: Yes. And another master degree.

[00:00:51] - [00:00:55]

NE: So you have a bachelor and a master from Romania?

[00:00:55] - [00:00:59]

IP: Yes, and I was- doing my second master degree from Romania and moved her in Denmark.

[00:00:59] - [00:01:00]

NE: Okay, so you didn't finish it?

[00:01:00] - [00:01:26]

IP: Yes, continued with it. So one year I was both at the master in Romania and the one in Denmark //okay//. But the second year in Romania it was just have a year, it was writing my master thesis and then- so I kind of lost only have of the year when we had classes and so but I just went to [mhm, thinking] the exams. //okay, I see, I see//. And sent my projects online.

[00:01:26] - [00:01:26]

NE: Okay, that was possible?

[00:01:26] - [00:01:27]

IP: Yes, yes.

[00:01:27] - [00:01:33]

NE: Okay, nice. When you moved, have you been in a relationship?

[00:01:33] - [00:01:34]

IP: Yes.

[00:01:34] - [00:01:36]

NE: Yes. And are you still in this relationship?

[00:01:36] - [00:01:42]

IP: Yes. My boyfriend came together with me.//okay, okay// And we came just because of me [laughing shortly].

[00:01:42] - [00:01:45]

NE: Okay, oh, we get back to this [laughing shortly]. Are you currently employed?

[00:01:45] - [00:01:48]

IP: Yes.

[00:01:48] - [00:01:52]

NE: Okay. And is this position matching your qualification?

[00:01:52] - [00:02:20]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Not what I studied, no. [Mhm, thinking] It is something that I worked with before coming to Denmark. And then I also took a- not a class, it's six weeks training that you are allowed to take if you're unemployed in Denmark and they're paid by the state, the //commune// commune, yes. And I took the six weeks in [mhm, thinking] yeah, something relevant what I'm working now in.

[00:02:20] - [00:02:33]

NE: Okay, okay. We will get back to this. So, you said- I mean the next question is what is your highest university degree, so you have two master degrees?

[00:02:33] - [00:02:35]

IP: Yes.

[00:02:35] - [00:02:40]

NE: Wow! Which subjects did you study?

[00:02:40] - [00:02:55]

IP: In Denmark or- //both//both- in Romania it was most focussed on accounting and auditing and informational systems while in Denmark I studied management accounting and controlling so more on the controlling side.

[00:02:55] - [00:02:58]

NE: Okay, I see. Did you study here in Aarhus?

[00:02:58] - [00:03:02]

IP: Yes. Aarhus school of business.

[00:03:02] - [00:03:15]

NE: Yeah, okay. You said, you finished your degree in Romania basically here //yes// so you didn't work in Romania?

[00:03:15] - [00:03:29]

IP: I worked //or just beside your studies?//yes, before coming to Denmark I- after graduating for my bachelor, I- and before coming to Denmark I worked something like eight months.

[00:03:29] - [00:03:39]

NE: Okay, but it was not on the basis of your master degree? I mean, it was not- you haven't finished and you didn't return to Romania? It was not-

[00:03:39] - [00:03:43]

IP: No, no, no, no, no!

[00:03:43] - [00:03:53]

NE: Okay. I have another- I figured it's quite a tricky question, but maybe we can try? What does your education mean to you?

[00:03:53] - [00:03:57]

IP: Like, it- important- education in-

[00:03:57] - [00:03:58]

NE: Your education.

[00:03:58] - [00:04:00]

IP: My education, not the word education [laughing shortly]?

[00:04:00] - [00:04:04]

NE: No, no, no, not the term, but our education, your achievement.

[00:04:04] - [00:04:33]

IP: Before coming to Denmark, I mean, it was very important. After I came to Denmark and studied here and the way of studying and working it's totally different //yeah// and after I got my job were- they didn't even care about asking what I studied [laughing shortly] but only what I know. It's not so important anymore //it's not so important//. Yes. But before coming to Denmark, yes, I took pride in it, but now it's-

[00:04:33] - [00:04:45]

NE: I see, I understand. In Denmark, have you been working in jobs that did not match your qualifications?

[00:04:45] - [00:04:49]

IP: Yes. I worked as a cleaning assistant-

[00:04:49] - [00:04:54]

NE: But after obtaining your masters?

[00:04:54] - [00:04:57]

IP: Masters- [mhm, thinking] no. No, no.

[00:04:57] - [00:04:58]

NE: More like during your studies?

[00:04:58] - [00:05:16]

IP: No, because during the studies I had the cleaning job //yeah, okay// and then after the masters I was unemployed and then the first job that I got it was also in accounting and [mhm, thinking] yeah, it was more or less what I studied in Romania, doing something that matched with what I studied in Romania.

[00:05:16] - [00:05:35]

NE: Okay, I see. So you just said, you have been unemployed here in Denmark. How did this make you feel? How did you feel about being unemployed, about not being able to use your education?

[00:05:35] - [00:06:18]

IP: I worried a lot about it. And [mhm, thinking] I mean, not saying I felt (?) but just could not understand why I can't find a job, when I was qualified for it. [Mhm, thinking]. I didn't get depressed [laughing shortly] in that way, but- yeah I worried a lot about not being able to find a job. And especially as [mhm, thinking] there is no one who can help you, so it's you fighting and finding a job and so on.

[00:06:18] - [00:06:23]

NE: Have you- I mean, I guess you have been in contact with job agencies, with the job centre?

[00:06:23] - [00:07:10]

IP: Yeah, just with job centre, but despite calling me something like every [mhm, thinking] every month, once a month, it was- [mhm, thinking] ah, just talk [laughing shortly]. They never helped me out //okay//. So just asking me: "How are you doing, are you looking for jobs, are you-" and I also- I was also part of- what do you call it?- in A-Kasse //yeah// the unemployment thing, and you also had- yeah- talks, meetings with them, but again, they- I think they helped me a little bit on my CV, but [mhm, thinking] not so much.

[00:07:10] - [00:07:20]

NE: How did they treat you? Did you feel treated well or was it //I didn't// uncomfortable or-?

[00:07:20] - [00:07:47]

IP: They didn't mean so much to me //okay//. Because I knew from my other colleagues that graduated before me and they were unemployed, that they won't help you as much as possible as- once you have a higher education then they would expect you to find a job. So it was: "Okay, let's do this". No I never had expectations from them or-

[00:07:47] - [00:07:58]

NE: Okay, I see. What does work mean to you? Apart from being a source of money? What does

work give you?

[00:07:58] - [00:08:23]

IP: Well, I'm part of a collective, this is the most important thing //yeah// and [mhm, thinking] I'm doing something that I like, helping people [laughing shortly] in a way in my work, so //yeah, sure// this is very important. And having in mind that I drive one hundred kilometres from Aarhus to Billund every day-

[00:08:23] - [00:08:23]

NE: You work in Billund?

[00:08:23] - [00:08:47]

IP: Yes, at [naming a company], so [laughing shortly] so I really like it! And I don't take pride in working at [naming a company], but I do take pride in working with my team. And that I have a really good team and I really get along with all the people that I work with and-

[00:08:47] - [00:08:58]

NE: Can you maybe elaborate the role the team plays for you in your life?

[00:08:58] - [00:09:28]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Well, usually [mhm, thinking] I mean- in Denmark people will just take the work only at the professional level and stop there, but I take it also at the personal level from Romania where we also you get along with the colleagues and you discuss also personal things and you make friends that you go out with them afterwards after work. So some of them are also something like part of my family //okay// so-

[00:09:28] - [00:09:30]

NE: So they are part of your social life as well?

[00:09:31] - [00:09:33]

IP: Yes, yes.

[00:09:33] - [00:09:42]

NE: I see, okay. And you would- or would you consider some of them as your friends also?

[00:09:42] - [00:09:46]

IP: Yes, yes, definitely.

[00:09:46] - [00:09:53]

NE: Okay. You said you have been unemployed. For how long?

[00:09:53] - [00:09:56]

IP: Let's co- do we count- because-

[00:09:56] - [00:09:57]

NE: Just after the master degree?

[00:09:57] - [00:10:26]

IP: After the master degree I was something- unemployed something like nine months //yeah// and afterwards I found an internship of eight weeks //yeah// and after that internship they hired me //okay, cool//. So I don't know if the internship would count- and the internship was daily- a normal job like going forty hours a week at a job //okay, so around nine months?// nine mon- yeah.

[00:10:26] - [00:10:45]

NE: This episode of not finding employment after your successful degree, did it change you? These nine months? Did they do something with you?

[00:10:45] - [00:10:49]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No. Change me- what we-

[00:10:49] - [00:10:52]

NE: Your- your //no// personality, your //no, no// character?

[00:10:52] - [00:12:35]

IP: No. Because- I knew that I- it- the problem with us foreigners is also the language. Because I was at a lot job interviews were- my area is accounting, so all the jobs that I applied for they were in accounting. Or something related to accounting. In that management accounting, and normal accounting and when you work with numbers you also need to speak Danish, because it's (?) normal accounting, then it's accounting in Denmark, so you need to understand financial statements in Danish so on. So first of all, all the interviews they were almost in Danish, and at the beginning I would speak something like half Danish, half English [laughing shortly]. And then they would say: "Umh, yeah, you're Danish skills are not so good." And then they would find a Dane for the job. Because I noticed that for Danes even- even in an international company, if they say that: "No, English is our official language." Inside the team, when you are at lunch, when you are at Friday (?) at the- when you're eating breakfast, they would speak Danish between them. And unless you come with some qualifications not necessarily qualification from school, but personal- not personal- professional experience like ten years experience and you are very very good at what you're doing, then if you are a junior, then they would always prefer a Dane than a foreigner. And I knew that [laughing shortly] in order to get a job I would need to improve my Danish skills.

[00:12:35] - [00:12:37]

NE: And how are your Danish skills, now?

[00:12:37] - [00:12:41]

IP: Good. I'm speaking Danish.

[00:12:41] - [00:12:45]

NE: Did you finish the Sprogskole?

[00:12:45] - [00:12:49]

IP: Yes //okay, mhm// And afterwards I studied by myself(?).

[00:12:49] - [00:12:54]

NE: Okay, so the job you are having right now, you're conducting in Danish?

[00:12:54] - [00:13:18]

IP: Yes. //I see//. Now, as I'm working also as internationals it's fifty-fifty but when I'm talking with

Danes it's only Danish. So, yeah. And even if my current boss is saying, that Danish was not so important in hiring me, I do think it played a role.

[00:13:18] - [00:13:23]

NE: Okay. Is it a limited contract you have or is it-

[00:13:23] - [00:13:24]

IP: No, it's unlimited.

[00:13:24] - [00:13:47]

NE: Perfect. That's pretty good. But returning to the episode of unemployment. You said, you have been worried? Could you elaborate it, could you describe the feelings you had, why you have been worried and how much of an impact it had?

[00:13:47] - [00:15:20]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Well, first of all, I was worried that if it would go a lot of- along time without doing nothing, then when you would go to an interview, they would ask me: "So what did you do all these months?" [laughing shortly] and I would say: "Oh, well, nothing." And even if you're graduated with a high degrees from university, if you don't apply what you're studying, you tend to forget it. And there was not like every day looking into what I studied just to [mhm, thinking] yeah, to keep up, then. So- yeah, this was my biggest worry, and afterwards that when I would finally find a job, it won't match my qualifications. As it happened here at [naming the company she works at], that I'm working something that, as I told you, I studied six months- no, not six months, six weeks and afterwards so- and they took me only based in my experience. And that was okay //okay//. So, you see, and yeah it felt also uncomfortable //how?// of not being, I mean, like [mhm, thinking] I'm not doing nothing that I'm doing nothing and especially [mhm, thinking] all the talks about the foreigners, that come to Denmark to get unemployment money or to (?)- I do want to work [laughing shortly] but I can't find a job //yeah, I understand//. And yeah.

[00:15:20] - [00:15:22]

NE: So you felt kind of stigmatized from-

[00:15:22] - [00:15:25]

IP: Yes, yes, a little bit.

[00:15:25] - [00:15:36]

NE: Yeah, I see. Did it make you insecure or did it strengthen you also?

[00:15:36] - [00:16:41]

IP: Yeah, I can say I really felt yes insecure at [mhm, thinking] at the beginning, but then when I realized that my (?) afterwards so I went to a lot of interviews. I think in that period of nine months I was at least at- I was at least fifty interviews //mhm//. And most of them it was (?) because I also (?) so didn't apply only for jobs at my level of junior, but also higher up and then of course someone would come. And I knew that my biggest problem was the Danish thing and of course some experience would help. And so I said at the beginning I was very insecure until I start having interviews, but well don't at so many interviews and find out , okay, what my [mhm, thinking] my issues are [laughing shortly]. With my CV and my experience then- I said: "Okay, so, in the end I would find a job, don't worry."

[00:16:41] - [00:16:44]

NE: Mhm, okay, So the worries got less //yes, yes// with the invitations to the interviews, right?

[00:16:44] - [00:16:46]

IP: Yes, exactly, exactly.

[00:16:46] - [00:16:57]

NE: Okay, I see. Have you in this episode felt lower compared to the time you still lived in Romania?

[00:16:57] - [00:17:21]

IP: Yes, I definitely did, yeah //yeah//. Because in Romania I had a job, a good job at my qualifications and I also was at the master programme, so I could handle both of them, so I knew that I was capable of working and doing something [laughing shortly], in my area, of course. So, yeah.

[00:17:21] - [00:17:31]

NE: I see. Did you need counselling somehow, did you need to see someone to talk about this?

[00:17:31] - [00:17:32]

IP: No.

[00:17:32] - [00:17:37]

NE: No, you felt still worried, but content anyway that-

[00:17:37] - [00:17:38]

IP: Yeah, exactly, no, no, no.

[00:17:38] - [00:17:45]

NE: [Laughing shortly] That's good. Did this phase somehow change your habits?

[00:17:45] - [00:17:47]

IP: Habits of what?

[00:17:47] - [00:17:55]

NE: Like- I don't know, maybe seeing people or maybe being //no, no// determined in finding //no, no// or-?

[00:17:55] - [00:18:14]

IP: No, no, no. And the idea is that I was also like having my boyfriend with me. So, as he was there for me and: "Go on, Anna. You'll find a job, don't worry, you'll find." Because of course I was complaining every day and night to my boyfriend: "Why I don't find a job, why!?" [laughing shortly].

[00:18:14] - [00:18:21]

NE: Did it change your relationship or at least, has your relationship been different in this episode?

[00:18:21] - [00:19:14]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No, no. Because we have always been close since we came to Denmark, we had to work a lot and find the first jobs, that we found, so we always had been close, so we always had to fight [laughing shortly] for being here in Denmark, since the beginning, since 2009. So, this episode was not different than coming to at the beginning in Denmark. Because in order to support my study to support my life here in Denmark I had to have the cleaning jobs, so I also working and studying

and going to Danish classes, so //mhm//. And also while I was unemployed, I went to Danish and studied beside and so. No, we were close.

[00:19:14] - [00:19:25]

NE: So, was it a topic between of you? I mean you said //yes//, he has been supportive but //yes// how? Dow, did you-?

[00:19:25] - [00:19:30]

IP: Supporting in- I mean, he was keep telling me-

[00:19:30] - [00:19:31]

NE: He motivated you?

[00:19:31] - [00:19:56]

IP: Yes, exactly. "Don't worry, Anna, you'll find a job. You're a smart girl, but you have to understand that the Danes need to know you" and so. We talked a lot about this topic. And I think [mhm, thinking] yeah, I didn't talk so much with my parents as they are in Romania, so once in a while, but mostly, yes, mostly with my boyfriend [name of her boyfriend].

[00:19:56] - [00:20:02]

NE: Yeah. And he has bee of support for you //yes//, you felt that you //yes// could rely on him and-?

[00:20:02] - [00:20:33]

IP: Yes, exactly. But in the end, the idea was that I also had the base that is my mother. Also my parents even if they're far away, they- my mother said: "Anna, if you can't find a job, then you'll come back to Romania, and that's it." Because I didn't leave Romania because I had it so hard and: "Oh, get's go to Denmark and make some money." It was because I had [laughing shortly] my thing (?) was to study abroad and then after coming here, I said: "No, let's see, what."

[00:20:33] - [00:20:37]

NE: Was returning to Romania an option for you, did you //yes// think about it?

[00:20:37] - [00:20:45]

IP: Yes, yes. I said that if I can't find a job within a year or half one, one year and a half then we will go back to Romania.

[00:20:45] - [00:20:47]

NE: And he would have gone with you?

[00:20:47] - [00:21:32]

IP: Yes [both laughing shortly] //that's good//. So that I was not so- I was worrying of course, and I was feeling- yeah, on a lower level than the others that had a job, but I was still having that [mhm, thinking] yeah, the second option: "Okay, we can go always back to Romania. We can always go back to Romania and I have my family, I have friends, so someone is there to help me." So, it's not like cutting my veins now, going to (?) and getting into depression, because I // because of these back up plans somehow// yes. And I'm close with my family and my parents, and my sister, and my aunt and- yeah [both laughing] //big family//all the (?). And so I always knew so it's not like I will die of hungry here in Denmark if I don't find-

[00:21:32] - [00:21:38]

NE: Okay, so you knew, you would fall back into this //yes// social net, somehow.

[00:21:38] - [00:21:38]

IP: Exactly, exactly.

[00:21:38] - [00:21:55]

NE: I se, I see. Yeah, I mean I'm done with the questions. But maybe you would like to add something. Maybe you have an idea of what you would like to-

[00:21:55] - [00:22:23]

IP: So, about being a foreigner who studied? The idea is, that if I had known from the beginning, before coming to Denmark that it would be so hard to establish a life her, I wouldn't do it again //mhm, okay//. So I would stay in Romania and do my master and work and say: "Okay, leave these dreams." Because I wouldn't-

[00:22:23] - [00:22:25]

NE: It has been such a struggle for you?

[00:22:25] - [00:22:34]

IP: It has. And not only with the nine months, but also, as I told you, during the university degree I was working in- it has been.

[00:22:34] - [00:22:36]

NE: Because?

[00:22:36] - [00:22:55]

IP: Well, I had to work as //yeah// I told you, cleaning assistant and Danish schools and English and-not English, Danish school and the university. And [name of her boyfriend] he was also with me and he also needed to work and- job at cleaning it's not so easy for a foreigner [laughing].

[00:22:55] - [00:23:01]

NE: No, no, I see. But dos your boyfriend- did he get his education in Romania or here in Denmark?

[00:23:01] - [00:23:03]

IP: No, in Romania.

[00:23:03] - [00:23:10]

NE: Okay, okay.

[00:23:10] - [00:23:19]

IP: And it was (?) because you don't have a scholarship as Danes have. So I had to support myself all the way.

[00:23:19] - [00:23:21]

NE: And if you look back, you say-

[00:23:21] - [00:23:26]

IP: And I think that, as I told you, I'm not using my education, so-

[00:23:26] - [00:23:29]

NE: What does it do with you, I mean, now-

[00:23:29] - [00:23:43]

IP: I studied management accounting and control, but I'm working with information systems. With that. So it's not pure IT, but computers are IT [laughing shortly], it's IT, it's-

[00:23:43] - [00:23:48]

NE: But are you content with this? Do you say: "Okay, I have a job, it's fine, I"-

[00:23:48] - [00:24:34]

IP: No, but I do like my job. So, yeah, I really like what I'm doing //okay,/. But the thing is, I wasted two years, two and a half years of my life on management, on that master degree. And now doing totally- of course, what I'm working on, you can't get a degree especially for that. That what I'm working you gain your experience from working with the system and with SAP and with the company, so, yes. But [mhm, thinking], yeah. (?) "Why did I study to- I did my studies here and then when I got a job, they didn't even ask what I studied."- "Oh yeah, you have a degree, a master degree, okay."

[00:24:34] - [00:24:38]

NE: Okay. So it was just based on those six weeks?

[00:24:38] - [00:24:52]

IP: Yeah, and what I worked in Romania with the system. And of course I also did something at school I took an elective, that had to do with this, but it was again only three months.

[00:24:52] - [00:24:57]

NE: I see, I see. And looking back, you wouldn't do it again, this-

[00:24:57] - [00:25:19]

IP: Yeah, coming to Denmark. If I knew that I had to struggle some much with work and Danish and- I'm not so good at foreign languages, so I hated learning Danish and I learned, because I knew that this is my only chance to get a job- and not only to get a job, but also to get friends, Danish friends and-

[00:25:19] - [00:25:24]

NE: Could you describe your circle of friends, is it more international or are there also Danes in?

[00:25:24] - [00:25:25]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Half-half.

[00:25:25] - [00:25:28]

NE: Half-half, interesting.

[00:25:28] - [00:25:47]

IP: Yeah, and this is because we struggle from the beginning in learning Danish and talking to the Danes in Danish and even if [mhm, thinking] ninety percent we wouldn't what they were telling us, we: "Yeah, you are right, yeah! What did you say?" [both laughing].

[00:25:47] - [00:25:50]

NE: Hello, [Danish]?

[00:25:50] - [00:25:53]

IP: Exactly [both laughing].

[00:25:53] - [00:26:11]

NE: I see. But you say, it was so hard, or maybe it still is so hard, right as a foreigner //yeah//. But are you- and now I'm repeating myself, but are you still the same person like you have been back in Romania?

[00:26:11] - [00:26:14]

IP: No, definitely not.

[00:26:14] - [00:26:17]

NE: So what changed you? Did the whole experience change you?

[00:26:17] - [00:26:19]

IP: Yes.

[00:26:19] - [00:26:22]

NE: Aha, not just the unemployment, but the whole experience //yes, exactly// of being a foreigner.

[00:26:22] - [00:26:23]

IP: Yes.

[00:26:23] - [00:26:25]

NE: I see. And how?

[00:26:25] - [00:27:10]

IP: In Romania you would care a lot of more about what the opinion of other people. That is why unemployment affected me, because in Romania, if you are being an educated skilled person unemployed, people would say: "Yeah, she's stupid." And you would care about other people say. Here in Denmark not so much. Even we have some very good friends that were our neighbours //yeah// and they knew- now we moved out from there, but they knew, when I was unemployed, and they said: "Anna, [Danish], you would find a job, don't worry, you're"-

[00:27:10] - [00:27:11]

NE: That's the Danish way, I think [both laughing].

[00:27:11] - [00:27:23]

IP: Yes, and so I don't care so much about other people opinions beside my family, my mother and my father. But otherwise-

[00:27:23] - [00:27:24]

NE: But this is a good development.

[00:27:24] - [00:28:23]

IP: Yes, yes, yes, yes. So I was- yeah [laughing shortly] (?) in a good way. From a Danish perspective we can say, but from a Romanian perspective //okay, okay, true, yeah// [both laughing]

it's not so good //yeah, okay, I see// that I'm more like: "Okay, what do I want to do? And okay, do I feel like working for this?" And also the unemployment period made me being invited at so many interviews that I was saying: "Okay, so, I'm invited to an interview, so it is people are interested in me and my CV looks like, so they will accept- first I will have to fight." Because my first job after the two weeks I had another job than this one. It was for six months. I knew that if I can find another job, I would leave. So I'm not staying in a job just for the sake of staying there, because [mhm, thinking] if I survived the nine months without a job, then [laughing shortly]-

[00:28:23] - [00:28:27]

NE: And in Billund is it a full time job now?

[00:28:27] - [00:28:29]

IP: Yes.

[00:28:29] - [00:28:35]

NE: Nice, it's really good.

[00:28:35] - [00:29:47]

IP: Yeah, I think also in Billund I was lucky, it was also luck, it was something involved, because they could not find a qualified person for the job, that had the experience that they needed and //yeah, but sometimes one has to be lucky, too// yes. But also from an- this is the stupid thing, that annoys me is that the second job that I left, they also- I had only a part time- not part time [mhm, thinking] it was a determined time. Six months, just to help them out with something, with the transfer price and policy and then they said: "Okay, we are hiring you." After the eight weeks they said: "Okay, we are hiring you to help us with this." Because I showed interest during the internship in the transfer pricing and they said: "Okay, we have this issue, so we are hiring you for these six months, but afterwards we can't promise you that we will give you position, a full time position." In the meanwhile I was also applying to- I was still applying to other jobs and got the [naming the company she works at]-job and then-

[00:29:47] - [00:29:49]

NE: Was it an announced position or-?

[00:29:49] - [00:30:07]

IP: Yes, yes. And before getting an answer from the [naming the company she works at] job, they offered me a permanent job in this company //okay//. That was good, I knew it good because [laughing] someone had trust in me.

[00:30:07] - [00:30:13]

NE: Yeah, that sounds really good. Yeah, nice.

[00:30:13] - [00:30:48]

IP: Unfortunately you have to go out there and- because also the internship I got it because I applied to a job at them and them and they said: "Okay"- they are picking up the other girl, because she had experience in accounting in Danish accounting, not in Romanian accounting. Even the accounting is the same all over the world, but never mind //yeah, yeah [laughing shortly]// and- but she was a Dane and she would speak Danish to everyone and- because otherwise when they called me for the internship, because I asked them: "Okay, so don't hire me, but can you give me an internship?" and-

[00:30:48] - [00:30:52]

NE: So it was your own initiative, also?

[00:30:52] - [00:31:28]

IP: Yes, yes. And then met also the girl who hired for the position that I applied and she was Dane, and she was speaking Danish all the time, I was speaking half Danish, half English. And all the people in the company, they were over something like forty-five years old, so not all of them would speak perfect English and so of course it looked a good choice also in my eyes: "Okay, of course you would want a Dane, not someone."

[00:31:28] - [00:31:30]

NE: Okay, I see. Yeah?

[00:31:30] - [00:31:52]

IP: But- I can also say, that it didn't also the unemployment period didn't affect me so much, because- yeah, I was unemployed only nine months //yeah//. One month you have- after graduating you are: "Oh, free!" and not doing anything, I will just relax and so on and then the second-

[00:31:52] - [00:32:05]

NE: So, your experienced it as okay, because you could //yeah// [Danish] //yes//. You can just relax a bit and //yes// this how you took it for yourself?

[00:32:05] - [00:32:06]

IP: Yes.

[00:32:06] - [00:32:08]

NE: I see. Yeah.

[00:32:08] - [00:32:13]

IP: You can say, I was lucky [laughing shortly].

[00:32:13] - [00:32:43]

NE: Okay, I mean, yeah, there are different personalities and people take those phases differently, right? Some say: "Okay, then I can just relax and figure out, what I would like to do" //yeah// and others on the other hand say: "No, I'm missing something really big and it made me insecure and I missed the structure and whatever." //yeah// There are different opinions and different feelings about it.

[00:32:43] - [00:32:54]

IP: Yeah. I was also like I had all the support I needed from my family: "Anna, come back to Romania if you don't find- don't stress out, don't get depressed and so."

[00:32:54] - [00:33:03]

NE: How about friends? I mean you said your family in Romania supported you //yes// and your boyfriend, who came here with you, supported you. How about your friends?

[00:33:03] - [00:33:06]

IP: They were all in the same stadium (?) [laughing shortly], so-

[00:33:06] - [00:33:10]

NE: Okay, but could you give each other a feedback and support you and //yes// motivate each other?

[00:33:10] - [00:33:12]

IP: Yes, yes.

[00:33:12] - [00:33:17]

NE: Was it important for you, that you had them?

[00:33:17] - [00:33:56]

IP: Yeah, so, yes, yes. It helped, it helped a lot. Yeah, also having- yeah. I'm now thinking of two persons, that were really close to me and said: "Don't worry, Anna, you will find job." And yes. Mostly, as also I was raised up to the family is the most important, not the friends. So my mother, my father, my sister. They supported me and that was enough for me and also my boyfriend. So and then if even also the friends came and helped me out, it was also good.

[00:33:56] - [00:34:21]

NE: Yeah, that's interesting to see how the social net is also //yeah// playing a big role in the well-being. Yeah, I see, nice. How did they distract you? Did they try to distract you, when they felt: "Okay, today she's a bit more worried than usual." Did they say: "Come on, let's go out or let's do something different." Or wasn't it necessary?

[00:34:21] - [00:34:35]

IP: No, it wasn't necessary //it wasn't necessary//. I think also my personality helped me, as I'm an optimistic person, one hundred percent, so [laughing shortly] //okay//. Yeah, so this also helped [laughing shortly].

[00:34:35] - [00:34:37]

NE: So you managed motivation yourself through this?

[00:34:37] - [00:34:39]

IP: Yeah, yes.

[00:34:39] - [00:34:45]

NE: Okay. Very good.

[00:34:45] - [00:35:27]

IP: Yeah, but- as I told you, when I look back now, I think it's the first time I'm looking back [laughing shortly] and considering, yeah, my boyfriend and my family, they helped me. Beside my personality, the fact that they were there: "Don't worry." So my boyfriend was taking it very calmly and: "Relax!" //that's great// So having someone that is relaxed and: "Anna, did you- what did you do interview"(?) "Okay, you didn't take it, don't worry, more will come!" And so, it's good to have someone, yes.

[00:35:27] - [00:35:37]

NE: Standing behind you //yeah//. Yeah, okay. Perfect, thank you! Are we done? Do you still want to //no// add something, I mean, you can!

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[00:35:37] - [00:35:39]

IP: No, no. That was it.

[00:35:39]

NE: Okay.

CHRISTINE

[00:00:43] - [00:00:44]

NE: So how old are you?

[00:00:44] - [00:01:01]

IP: How old I am? That's a pretty tricky question [both laughing]! Where are we now, 2014? //you can't remember, that's pretty good// [both laughing]. This is really difficult. I think I am already forty-six //really//, forty six years old.

[00:01:01] - [00:01:00]

NE: Are you sure?

[00:01:00] - [00:01:02]

IP: Yes [both laughing]!

[00:01:02] - [00:01:07]

NE: No that's a tricky one? What's your country of origin?

[00:01:07] - [00:01:09]

IP: Germany [both laughing].

[00:01:09] - [00:01:14]

NE: Okay and when did you move o Denmark?

[00:01:14] - [00:01:18]

IP: In December '96.

[00:01:18] - [00:01:22]

NE: Okay. And your reasons were...?

[00:01:22] - [00:02:04]

IP: My reasons were that I already at that point had a relationship with my [husband's name], who is now my husband and we both were searching for a job and he got a position offered in Copenhagen at the university and I got a position offered in Stuttgart and that was far away from Copenhagen and since [husband's name] would make much more money than I would have, we decided to move to Copenhagen together. That's how we ended up here. So due to relationships, you can say.

[00:02:04] - [00:02:05]

NE: Are you currently employed?

[00:02:05] - [00:02:08]

IP: Yes.

[00:02:08] - [00:02:12]

NE: And is this position matching your qualifications?

[00:02:12] - [00:02:19]

IP: Yes, yes it is. Yes it is. My second round of qualifications [laughing shortly].

[00:02:19] - [00:02:21]

NE: What's your highest university degree?

[00:02:21] - [00:02:24]

IP: That's a master's degree.

[00:02:24] - [00:02:28]

NE: And which subjects did you study?

[00:02:28] - [00:02:57]

IP: [Both laughing] Yeah, you already know my background //yes, I do, I do//. Well, I don't know whether this is a masters degree, but from Germany I have a diploma //yeah, that's the equivalent// is it? So it's a master's degree in horticulture and on top of that I have a master's degree in culture, communication and globalization from Aalborg University [laughing shortly].

[00:02:57] - [00:03:12]

NE: Yeah, you already said, that one degree you obtained in Germany, the other one in Denmark- Did you work in a study related job before you moved to Denmark?

[00:03:12] - [00:03:11]

IP: [Mhm, thinking]

[00:03:11] - [00:03:16]

NE: Then in your horticultural //yes// field?

[00:03:16] - [00:04:29]

IP: No, not really. I started taking- I wanted to take more than one PhD class, but I started to take a PhD course within horticulture at [Danish] in Copenhagen. And the aim was actually to get some, some knowledge how it would be to do a PhD there and I also applied for a PhD position, but I never got it //okay//. So, but that was not really working within it. Between- after I ended my studies in Hannover and we moved to Copenhagen, I worked a little bit in a nursery, but that's not really [mhm, thinking] actually what I've had- I should I have a leading position, I would really then also say that I would have had to have this qualifications, but I worked more or less as a gardener, so I could always a gardener, so we would say, so maybe I had no- so- to make it, say, I didn't have any job after the horticultural studies, that really would fit the studies.

[00:04:29] - [00:04:33]

NE: Okay, but after your masters' degree from Aalborg University?

[00:04:33] - [00:04:58]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] I did some internships, but that's because- well I did the internships due to the unemployment regulations in Denmark. So you have to apply for some internships positions and I always was- I always tried to find those positions myself and I had really nice internship positions, I would say. And they would fit my study field. But I didn't really end up in a job.

[00:04:58] - [00:04:59]

NE: And you didn't get paid?

[00:04:59] - [00:05:01]

IP: No. Exactly.

[00:05:01] - [00:05:04]

NE: What does your education mean to you?

[00:05:04] - [00:05:06]

IP: Which one? [laughing shortly]

[00:05:06] - [00:05:16]

NE: Let's say the second one. As you are working in this field now. Or maybe divide it.

[00:05:16] - [00:07:40]

IP: Maybe I start with the last one, so culture communication. I think it very much equals my identity, what I'm actually am and since we also lived abroad it kind of sums up the experiences I had during life and now I just- yeah, I just- know, what it means like theoretically. Where can I put all my experiences and make myself or I could see other people making like my husband and accompanies, where I can put those in different theories and make sense out of that. In that sense. So also it means, of course, that I got the position as a- this combined position as PhD student and assistant professor. Sounds a bit strange to me, but still. And might offer me a future job possibly. My first masters in horticulture means more or less that- yeah, what does it mean to me? [Mhm, thinking] After we moved to Denmark I think in the first place I thought like this was just lost time. But then when I did an internship at [names Danish company] somebody from the HR-department (?) actually showed me that this is a nice red thread through my whole life, why I studied horticulture and took those different courses I actually took in horticulture because already back then I was interested in communication and leadership [mhm, thinking] and now I ended up studying something like that just in an international context you could say //yeah// with a CCG. Suddenly it made sense to me, but only after I talked to this person, before that I really thought like: "It was really a waste of time, so I can just use this to play around in my own garden." But I still have this urge, now I have this urge with a research group and being there, that maybe somehow I could combine these two things. Could combine my knowledge about agriculture, horticulture together with internationalization and leadership and possibly trust. So there is still this feeling of I really would like to use it and draw on it.

[00:07:40] - [00:07:41]

NE: And somehow combine it.

[00:07:41] - [00:07:43]

IP: Exactly, mhm.

[00:07:43] - [00:07:51]

NE: I see, I see. Did you have to work in jobs in Denmark not matching your qualification?

[00:07:51] - [00:09:25]

IP: Oh yes! [Laughing shortly]. When we arrived here, I had to get a CPR number, and in order to get a CPR number I had to have a job. And the other way round kind of like, yeah, I just already said that. So I started trying to find a job and the easiest way to do that was starting with a cleaning job. So I cleaned private houses in and around Copenhagen. And I also met nice people there, but that was definitely under my qualifications [laughing shortly]. Later on when we [mhm, thinking] yeah, later then when I got my CPR number, I started working as a German teacher, because I couldn't find anything and that was more or less under my qualifications, you could say, because when I studied horticulture I also had this idea of: "Either I do some kind of like leadership stuff somewhere at a bigger- gardenery that's wrong- nursery or I would do teaching. And that's actually what I wanted to do in Germany, I wanted to become a teacher within- I don't know- like Berufsschule //yeah, business

school// yeah. And that wasn't possible. So this teaching was kind of like an idea I always had but not German teaching and I was not really qualified to teach German. So just because I'm German I can't [laughing shortly] //no, of course not// teach it.

[00:09:25] - [00:09:35]

NE: It doesn't mean that one is actually qualified //exactly//. How did you feel about having these jobs not matching your qualification?

[00:09:35] - [00:11:06]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Yeah, that's a good question [mhm, thinking] Well I felt diminished, I also felt like I was asking myself whether I was stupid to do this, but I had to have a job, because without the CPR number you can't do anything in Denmark, so I was really forced to find something and that was the easiest way. Perhaps even though I had to learn some Danish anyway. And I definitely also felt like I want to get out of this as soon as possible and try to find something else, that would really match my qualifications or at least should be something that I really feel like I would like to do. [Mhm, thinking] But then- I don't know- if I- ah that's a really long time ago, but I also remember that I kind of thought like: "Okay, it's not so bad to have those jobs in Denmark." Because in Denmark I had this feeling like: "No matter what you do, you always get a kind of okay-pay." Because there is a minimum wage and also people don't really look down on you. So it was maybe more feeling like: "If you would do something similar in Germany, people would just think: 'Come on, she is really stupid and she can't do anything else!'" //so you would-// while here it was, yeah?-

[00:11:06] - [00:11:10]

NE: People are more judgemental in Germany, I think.

[00:11:10] - [00:11:26]

IP: In that regard, I think so, yes //yeah, I see//. So it was not that bad, but I think it would have been really bad if I were in foreigner doing those jobs in Germany. I think so, yeah.

[00:11:26] - [00:11:28]

NE: Have you been unemployed in Denmark?

[00:11:28] - [00:11:32]

IP: Yes [laughing shortly]. For quite a while [laughing shortly].

[00:11:32] - [00:11:36]

NE: How did you feel about that?

[00:11:36] - [00:11:57]

IP: That was actually a terrible time, because that was when we lived in Copenhagen and before we actually [mhm, thinking] before I actually got this job I have right now. I was unemployed all the time, you could say. Besides studying and maybe do a PhD course or whatever. So I was really long time unemployed. And that was-

[00:11:57] - [00:11:58]

NE: Can you say how long?

[00:11:58] - [00:12:53]

IP: Oh, many years. [Mhm, thinking] We moved in '97 and then I just had these freelance jobs but I would not really call them like that I have an employment. I worked some hours, but I never knew

how many hours I would work. A maximum of twenty hours a week //okay//. Maximum, really. Normally less. And that felt like being unemployed. So [mhm, thinking] in that sense not having a full time job- I never had a full time job before I started this job I have right now. And that was in 2011. So there are really a lot of years. '97 till //fourteen years//, yeah, yeah. That's a really long time when I had like all this 'on and off' and some hours here, some hours there and- yeah, started my studies of course, which I considered to be a full time job back then.

[00:12:53] - [00:12:54]

NE: How did you feel about this?

[00:12:54] - [00:14:25]

IP: I felt, yeah that was a really time. Actually because I always had this feeling that my husband had to make all the money to get us through. And I had this feeling I had to ask him if I wanted to have something special. And of course he would always say: "No, no, you can just take the money." We had a combine bank account. So with one bank account that's not a problem. But still it felt very very bad and I was really thinking of: "Oh, I should definitely leave this country to find something else. Maybe I should go back to Germany or maybe I should go somewhere else." And- yeah, there were some sad times, really in that time. So it was more or less, just when you met people, they were in the same position as you and that was not too complicated in Copenhagen, because there were many unemployed, that we just could talk. So I think also that still most of the friends or acquaintances we have in Copenhagen, I due to these people that I met at a language school, who also were just teaching some hours and then you would try to plan your day together with them, so just to get it going. So that was really really- that was a hard time, I think, really. Also were sometimes I had to cry and really think about so what to do and: "Maybe I'm just a burden for [husband's name]." and stuff like that. So that was not nice.

[00:14:25] - [00:14:59]

NE: I see, mhm. As you experienced both, the underemployment and the unemployment, can you distinguish the feelings you had in those episodes? Were they kind of equal or- yeah- were they different? Have you felt better in one situation than in the other?

[00:14:59] - [00:18:31]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Oka, that's- yeah- I think maybe there are kind of like three situations. One situation is the one that you call underemployment, where I just had some hours on the side, and then there is one where I had no job at all. That was at the very beginning. And then I would say there is another, a third one, which was after I ended my studies at Aalborg University where I actually was in this programme, the unemployment programme where I had the internships. So the first one is the one- the total unemployment. And that- maybe that didn't really last that long, because I got a kind o like cleaning job very early when we moved. And I also took at the CPR number. And so since that period then falls after we just arrived in Denmark, I was kind of like very busy with finding a flat where we could stay and trying to make the day workable and see what's going on and where is it I actually can apply for language schools and so on. It was a lot of all this practical stuff going on, which kept me going and where I also felt like: "Okay, I am needed in our relationship, because I can take over all this practical stuff." So that was kind of okay, but I think the time of the underemployment, which was a long time, that was more struggling. Also due to that I had to plan- [mhm, thinking] or maybe the other way round, I couldn't really plan my week, because there was always this teaching stuff at suddenly somebody would just call from the language school and would ask me: "Can you take some hours?" And then you can take some hours, because you wanna have some money. So that was not that much planning I actually could do, it was more like sitting there in this flat somewhere in Copenhagen and waiting for the phone to call [mhm, thinking] just to know

that: "Okay, tomorrow, there would be some lessons, can you take them?" And I think that has been a bit [mhm, thinking] a bit more strenuous on me. Because you couldn't plan, and I wouldn't make all this money I actually thought I should make [laughing shortly], because you are still occupied with this job, even though you're not at the job and also I was thinking like: "Okay, why can't they just plan me in more time, so more often?" But I know why, because I also had to consider all the other teachers and so on. But still that was I think that was the worst time. Because it also meant on somehow that I still was hoping for more hours and that would also make me more reluctant to search for other jobs //yeah, sure//. So I was a bit between two chairs. And now we have the third period which went on for one year, I think, more or less. When I finished my masters at Aalborg University I wanted to find a job I and I was without a job, initiations (?). And that was also annoying somehow, but also positive, because all the internships I did, they were really positive. But it was annoying that nobody would really then take me over afterwards. So it was like I felt really exploited kind of, so: "Okay, now they wanna have my knowledge and I gave it to them and then they just let you fall."

[00:18:31] - [00:18:33]

NE: They just don't wanna pay for it.

[00:18:33] - [00:19:03]

IP: Yeah, exactly. And that really annoyed me. And that also was then when I came to the point, where I really told [husband's name]: "So now I will go and find a job in Canada, because I'm really sick of this country." [Laughing shortly]. "And I'm also sick of that everybody speaks about that they wanna have more internationals and blablabla and need an international mind set and I studied this stuff and I could really bring it to them and then they don't wanna have me." So that was //frustration//. Yeah, that was really frustration.

[00:19:03] - [00:19:21]

NE: I see, yeah, I understand. You said you have been in these unemployment programmes. How could the job centre actually help you? Did they help you? How did they treat you? Did you feel comforted or-?

[00:19:21] - [00:20:17]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] They couldn't really help me at all. Because the only thing they said is- they looked at the CV and how I brought my applications and what kind of [mhm, thinking] ideas I had where I could go and where I actually already did internships and they would say: "You do everything correct. So there's nothing wrong with this. So everything is perfect." And I was wondering: "Okay, if everything so perfect, then why can't I find a job?" [Laughing shortly]. So there was not really any help. It was more like: "Okay, now you have to go there again and just fill in these forms and stuff." That was not really helping. So the only thing that was assuring was that I got money from the state. And in that sense, I think: "Okay, then you can go there every month or how often it actually was." But at that time they were also outsourcing it and people were changing, you always had a new person to talk to, that was total crap.

[00:20:17] - [00:20:37]

NE: Yeah, I see //yeah, really [mhm, thinking]//. Apart from being a source of money, what does work mean to you? I mean, work matching your qualification //[laughing]// not- or maybe work in general?

[00:20:37] - [00:22:32]

IP: Yeah. [Mhm, thinking] Besides money, it means [mhm, thinking] very practical stuff like just structuring of the day and the week. But it also means that I can- I don't know, it means that I can

thrive (?), it's really hard to explain. It means that I feel worthy to kind of like be alive and not just a burden to whatever, the system or the husband or friends. It's kind of like self-fulfilling [mhm, thinking] view on life, if you could say this, I can see that ideas I do have, I can make them into practice, if I'm good enough or if I get the chance to do this. And in terms of [mhm, thinking] my job right now as a teacher or what you'll call it, assistant professor with all the teaching, I can also see that sometimes I have a maybe positive influence on some of the students and then they are really thankful for what I've done to them, whatever they think I have (?) for them or to them and that's also, it's really nice it's just the appreciation (?) you got back that you're doing a good job. There is also the other side that some people think that you're a bad job [laughing shortly] but that's, those are just a few and that's a good thing for me. But it's really like- yeah, kind of living out your dreams, your ideas can be used in reality. That's what it also means //okay, yeah// to me.

[00:22:32] - [00:22:49]

NE: The episode of- or the long episode of not being as successful on the labour market as you planned to be //mhm, [laughing shortly]//, did it change you? Your character? Your-

[00:22:49] - [00:24:37]

IP: [Mhm, thinking], good question. Yes, I think so. [Mhm, thinking] it's hard to put in words, but I can [mhm, thinking] I can give you an example. Because [mhm, thinking] I don't know of which kind of like anniversary it was, but the Gymnasium I went to in Germany, they sometimes I think every five years, they have this anniversary meeting. And I went to one of them, because then it just happened to be when we were in Germany, anyway. And I remember that I was kind of like sarcastic, I was really like when people asked me: "So what are you doing?" I was close before just making something up, not to have these people look at you: "So, okay, you're unemployed? So what are you doing all day? And you studied and you never wanted to be, right?" Because when I was at the Gymnasium, I was always going like. "Okay, I will do something good with my life!" And I could never imagine myself just to be married and be a housewife. But that's actually what I was at that time, right? So it was kind of like almost making up stories. I was like: "Okay, yeah, you know, I'm a teacher at a business school and-" [laughing shortly] which was correct, but I didn't tell anybody that it was just a few hours, right? So it was really like lying more or less to them, not to- yeah, to lose face. And I think, yeah, maybe you can call it a little bit being hypocrite or being sarcastic, it was also sarcastic to some other people, kind of thinking: "Oh my god, look what what- they never made it out of this tiny town!" Kind of like being unfair to them in my thoughts, though I didn't tell them but- yeah.

[00:24:37] - [00:24:41]

NE: But you have not been like this before? These-

[00:24:41] - [00:25:57]

IP: No, I don't think so, yeah. That was, that was- that's the change, actually. Yeah. And maybe a more positive [laughing] on that might have changed me is- yeah, I think it's this idea, that- not to give up. Because now I can see that I made somehow. That maybe somehow things always make sense in the end. Because I- due to all this teaching I had, I met a lot of- or I taught of managers who were to be in expatriate for some time, so I also started teaching them, you know like, teaching them culture, the German culture and started already there, thinking about it that cultural stuff, so maybe that's also one of the reasons, tacit, tacit reasons that I decided to study culture and communication in the first place and this international thing. Because back then I already found this quite interesting, so how might that be working for a company abroad and so on. So, maybe that's one of the better stories [laughing].

[00:25:57] - [00:25:57]

NE: You just keep this one [both laughing]!

[00:25:57] - [00:26:03]

IP: No! Both are important I think [laughing]!

[00:26:03] - [00:26:33]

NE: In this phase you have been, can you describe the feelings? Have you felt lower compared to your time in Germany, I mean, when you still finished your degree for instance, did you feel lower when you were here in Denmark and having this struggle, having to go through this?

[00:26:33] - [00:28:03]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Yes, I think so. Because otherwise I wouldn't have made up those stories at this anniversary meeting, right [laughing]? So, and inside, yeah, yeah. Yes, I think so, because [mhm, thinking] those jobs I had, they were not really matching my qualifications at all and also I would have thought it would be much easier to be integrated into the Danish society, so that really means that at some point I would have been sitting, well I sat there and was thinking: "Maybe there's something wrong with you that you can't get integrated and other people are thriving in Copenhagen and we lived in Copenhagen: So many opportunities, right? So if you can't make it there, how will you ever find something else [laughing shortly] somewhere in the countryside?" I thought back then. So yeah, lower in that sense of- yeah, also maybe low esteem, not really low esteem, because I was always kind of like a fighter, but still at some points definitely low esteem, when I was close to saying like: "Okay, this can't go on like this and I have to move somewhere totally different to get a chance." Yeah. I think so. But it's all these ups and downs. But not kind of like a- I don't think I ever had a depression, I never had that [laughing shortly], luckily, yeah.

[00:28:03] - [00:28:17]

NE: Okay, so did you- was there counselling, any counselling? //no// You did not- you didn't feel that low that you felt like: "I need to see a psychologist //no// or a doctor about it or //no//? No //no//, okay.

[00:28:17] - [00:28:55]

IP: But I guess that is also what I said before, like- I met so many people in the kind of like similar //yeah// situation and we were just talking with each other. So maybe we were each others' counsellors //yeah, okay// somehow. And talking things through and: "How is it that you want to precede here, what would you be doing if you were in my situation?" But well, they were in this situation, anyway. Some were even more worse off, because they would come from so called third //yeah// nation countries or- no, third nations. Many from the U.S. for example who really were struggling to get the permit just to //yeah// stay there.

[00:28:55] - [00:28:57]

NE: The regulations are different there, yeah.

[00:28:57] - [00:29:13]

IP: Yeah, so I think that was a good thing, because we were lot of, yeah, internationals who really did a lot together and we still have contact today.

[00:29:13] - [00:29:14]

NE: Yeah, I know that.

[00:29:14] - [00:29:19]

IP: [Laughing shortly] Yeah, I thought you might know that [both laughing].

[00:29:19] - [00:29:30]

NE: This episode did it change your habits and your goals, somehow?

[00:29:30] - [00:31:16]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Yeah, that's- that's tricky. Because I don't know [mhm, thinking] this a whole long process, but at some point I must have had the decision concerning habits that I should- it might sound ridiculous to you, because you are so young [laughing shortly]- but maybe that I should use more online techniques to find a job, for example. Because when we first moved to Copenhagen I was still kind of like fixed on: "Okay, let's buy a newspaper and see what kind of jobs are there." So I used the computer much more actually to try to find a job. And I also started networking, which I- yeah, didn't do in Germany. But it wasn't necessary in Germany, because- I don't know, at least within horticulture jobs were provided at different places, either in the newspaper or some of the Fachzeitschrift, whatever that is in English //I don't know// maybe horticultural journal or- [laughing shortly] there are many of those //things like that//. But here everything was different and I had to find out first how to find a job. And that's actually- now, it's a good question or it's a good question, I ask myself right now, how did I find out that, because nobody told me. So somehow I must have found out that were the jobs are actually [mhm, thinking] where they're visible. Because I don't know how.

[00:31:16] - [00:31:25]

NE: But with habits I for instance also mean meeting people //ah, okay//, you know-

[00:31:25] - [00:31:27]

IP: Okay, more on a private basis habits?

[00:31:27] - [00:32:00]

NE: Exactly. //[mhm, thinking]// Did you feel- I mean, you already said that you have had this international surrounding //[mhm, affirming] where you exchanged you //[mhm, affirming]// basically how you feel and //yeah, yeah// somehow motivated each other. But where there times when you maybe felt not good enough to actually meet them to go out and be in touch with people, was it maybe also a burden to keep the social network, somehow?

[00:32:00] - [00:33:23]

IP: No //no//. That was never the case. But maybe also because I'm a very outgoing person. But in terms of habit, maybe the way how you initiated meetings. That maybe is- yeah, not with internationals. But I mean it's like when we lived in Hanover, we could just visit our friends whenever we wanted to and we wouldn't have to make an appointment like weeks before or months even before. But in Denmark we had to realize that kind of like everybody is so busy and already has their own circle or the Danes have all already their own circle of friends and it's so hard to get in and if you want to meet them you almost have to make an appointment like a month before. And sometimes we managed to get an appointment but when we then came to the day, I just said like I don't feel like going and then I didn't go. But that was totally different in the international community. In Copenhagen. We just dropped by or you just would call them and ask: "So are you home? Should we go for a coffee?" And then we go for a coffee. So it was much more than we were used to, doing it. But with the Danes you kind of like you had to change the habit of making an appointment a long time before.

[00:33:23] - [00:33:36]

NE: But it was more coming from outside //yeah// than from inside? Like: okay, the structures have been like this, this is why you had to kind of adapt //yes// but you didn't have to adapt, because you felt //no// bad?

[00:33:36] - [00:33:37]

IP: Exactly, yeah.

[00:33:37] - [00:34:00]

NE: Okay, I see //no, no//. Okay, I have the last one //oh//. Yes! [Laughing shortly] You have been in a relationship, you said. Has your life with your boyfriend, husband been affected by this phase of underemployment?

[00:34:00] - [00:35:16]

IP: Yes it has. Because as I already said like I of course had episodes where I really felt sad and of course he could feel that and he also had episodes where he was sad about that I felt sad. And made himself a little bit responsible for that, because I followed him //yeah//. So- bit it never went so far that we were [phone rings] thinking of braking up or something like that. So that was not the case. But it was more like that he then became kind of also a counsellor, you could say like helping me and talking things over and trying to find some new ways maybe of trying to find a job or also getting me acquainted to some of his colleagues that might have a job and so on. So it was more like helping a bit more even than he did before. So he was [mhm, thinking] well, he was less (?), he was less influenced by this than I was, but still he was very influenced by it, I think.

[00:35:16] - [00:35:28]

NE: But did it change, for instance, the communication between the two of you or maybe the feelings you had for each other? [Mhm, thinking]. I mean not change forever, but in this-

[00:35:28] - [00:36:37]

IP: Yeah, yeah, I know, what you mean. [Mhm, thinking] I- Yeah, that's a tricky question. I think on one side definitely in some moments I would not hate him for having moved here, but kind of like: "Okay, this is your fault." But then in the next second thinking: "Okay, I shouldn't have- well, he didn't make follow, right, so it was my decision to the (?)" And on the other hand we were getting closer together, because in was just the two of us kind of like in this Island, in Copenhagen at a flat and here in a house fighting against the rest of the society to help get me a job. So it's both- I think it's hard to say how long this was or if it were just something like minutes or seconds or whatever, but small episodes of where I would question: "Was is it I'm doing and why are we together, still together? And maybe I should leave." And then again, well you feel close together.

[00:36:37] - [00:36:44]

NE: Did you also tell him: "Maybe I should leave. Maybe- Why are we still together?" Did you approach him with this or did you-

[00:36:44] - [00:36:57]

IP: I approached him with the idea that I'm no going to write applications to whatever companies in Canada or in Norway I mentioned to him and then I said: "And if they take me, you have to follow me."

[00:36:57] - [00:37:01]

NE: And what did he- how did he react?

[00:37:01] - [00:37:23]

IP: He was- I think if I recall it [laughing shortly] correctly, he was like: "So you think you tried everything here in Denmark?" [Both laughing] Something like that. Bu on the other hand I think he was also open to: "Okay, if you really get something there, then maybe it's my turn to follow."

//okay// So it's not like- because his job he- it seems to be much easier for him to find a job. No matter where, so-

[00:37:23] - [00:37:26]

NE: So it would not have meant the end of your marriage or relationship?

[00:37:26] - [00:40:39]

IP: I don't know, that was hypothetical //yeah, of course// of what had to- what would have happened. But, no I think he would have followed. Yeah, I think so. Especially to Canada, I don't think so much to Norway [laughing shortly], because it's too dark. But, yeah, but no- I confronted him with it, because I was- I told him: "You see, now I have the second education, a masters and I don't met anything and I'm really sick of it and something has to happen now." And, yeah, but then I also told those people who hired me now at the university, that because I- that's actually true because I wasn't unemployed that long, but I was underemployed again, because I got this [Danish]- what is this in English? //no, you just leave it like this, teaching assistant// exactly. for a while, but that was again you know like some hours and so on. And really administrative hassle, really. And I told them: "So I want to make a PhD, like you did, right. I'm interested in it." And I told them all the time again and again and at some point I also told them: "Look, I don't find a job here, I will send applications to Canada and to Norway and I don't know, Sweden." Countries where I just thought they are more open minded for internationals. And perhaps that's also why I got this PhD position then [laughing shortly]. Because then suddenly Marlene would contact me and would say like: "Look, if we would make a position available-" well there were several like these combined positions- "would you then apply for one?" And then I said: "Yes, I would apply for one." And then she said like they will go on and try to find if they can get the money to have the combined positions and then I think they got like three or something like that. And perhaps so many applications and [mhm, thinking] then she just told me: "Okay, you said you apply, then you also have to apply." Of course, they wanted to- I think they wanted to just keep me there. And then I applied to it and- yeah, and it worked out fine, because already I had this internship at [names Danish company] and I asked them already back then: "So would you work together with me on a PhD?" And then they said: "Yes, now today everything is changed." Right, because [names Danish company] went down the drain, more or less. But I had really good cards in my hand, because already I had the company I wanted to work together with and I already had the ideas, so that went very well, so that was really kind of like- I don't know, I think a good point for application, I already had everything set out, so I could start right away. And by then things went differently, but yeah //but still good// Yeah, yeah. So it wasn't my fault that [names Danish company] just- people just vanished a few months after I started my PhD and wanted to [both laughing] the interviews!

[00:40:39] - [00:40:59]

NE: No, it's not your fault, no. You are not to blame! But I have actually one more question //yeah//. You said, you felt sad and not content of course in the situation of being underemployed or unemployed //[mhm, affirming]//. How did you cope with this? Do you have coping strategies?

[00:40:59] - [00:43:04]

IP: Ha! Good question. [Mhm, thinking] Well, one- I think we initiated a lot of things back then. Besides that we moved a lot of times, around in Copenhagen, we also- but that was not due to that situation [laughing shortly], it was due to the housing situation in Copenhagen. But by doing so, we ended at a very nice place. And I think that also helped me coping with the situation. Because we ended at a- very close to a castle, where we got one of those- I don't know- gardening keeper houses. So you had to have some gardening experience in order to get a house there. And that was good, that was where I could use actually my education, right? Otherwise you wouldn't have gotten the house

for rent. And there we lived quite a long time. I think we lived like three out of the five years we lived there, we lived there three years. And maybe you can call it coping strategies, but that was like: Okay, starting gardening again, that was a good thing. Starting a food club, just meeting with those friends we already had and just preparing food. So it was a lot of socializing, much more than I was used to, actually. And organizing those socializing events. And [mhm, thinking] doing sports. I remember, yeah, going swimming again, finally. We started kayaking. So a lot of that stuff. What else did we do, what did I do? I think, it was, yeah, mainly this gardening stuff. To me it is going back to your own education, your old education, perhaps, I don't know what it was. I think that's it //okay//. More or less, yeah. Yeah

[00:43:04] - [00:43:09]

NE: Okay, so we are through. Unless there is something you would like to add.

[00:43:09] - [00:43:16]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No, but I'm interested in your research question [laughing]. What is it you're after?

[00:43:16] - [00:43:20]

NE: We will talk about it. We will talk about it. But this is it?

[00:43:20] - [00:43:21]

IP: Yeah.

[00:43:21]

NE: Yeah? Okay, perfect.

CHRIS

[00:00:00]- [00:00:26]

NE: Now we can start. It's for my master thesis; I want to extend the topic we talked about last time. We talked about deskilling internationals on the Danish labour market //yeah//now I would like to investigate the psychological and psychosocial consequences //okay// people go through and I make a comparative analysis in Germany and Denmark. //okay// Okay?

[00:00:26]- [00:00:27]

IP:] So it's interesting.

[00:00:27]- [00:00:48]

NE: I hope so [laughing]. I had it divided in general questions about your educational background, also about your work experience and then about emotions and all. //okay// I am fully aware that there are several things I already know about you from last year, but I would have to ask them anyway //no problem//. Is that okay?

[00:00:48]- [00:00:51]

IP: Yeah, of course. Sure.

[00:00:51]- [00:00:52]

NE: Okay, how old are you?

[00:00:52]- [00:00:56]

IP: I am (...) God, good question. 32.

[00:00:56]- [00:00:58]

NE: 32 [laughing]. Okay. And your country of origin is?

[00:00:58]- [00:00:59]

IP: Great Britain.

[00:00:59]- [00:01:02]

NE: Okay. And when did you move to Denmark?

[00:01:02]- [00:01:05]

IP: I moved to Denmark in 2004.

[00:01:05]- [00:01:10]

NE: [Mhm]. What were your reasons of moving to Denmark?

[00:01:10]- [00:01:31]

IP: My- at that time girlfriend now my wife is Danish, so it was a//so you met back home?//that's the reasons. We met in this way we were both on Kibbutz [?] a few years before that and then we moved back to our own countries and then she moved to England for a couple of years //okay// and I finished my degree and then we moved here. So, she got studying [?]. So, non-stop.

[00:01:31]- [00:01:35]

NE: Yeah, but interesting [laughing]. And you are still in this relationship?

[00:01:35]- [00:01:37]

IP: Yes.

[00:01:37]- [00:01:40]

NE: Yeah. Okay. Are you currently employed?]

[00:01:40]- [00:01:47]

IP: Yes, I am. //that's fabulous// yes, it's nice. I work as an English teacher at a local business coach [?].

[00:01:47]- [00:01:54]

NE: Okay, [mhm], is it based on your studies?

[00:01:54]- [00:02:14]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No, I wouldn't say that, I would say I got the job partly based on my work experience, because I have worked in an office environment and also with marketing and stuff like that which were educated in these students [?] but mainly because of my mother tongue being English // [mhm]// than [?] sort of, without being qualified to get away with working as an English teacher.

[00:02:14]- [00:02:17]

NE: Okay. And do you like it?

[00:02:17]- [00:02:22]

IP: Yeah. //yeah, cool// It's fun, it's hard, it's challenging, it's [mhm, thinking] yeah, yeah, I [?].

[00:02:22]- [00:02:24]

NE: Is it fulltime?

[00:02:24]- [00:02:46]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] not really. [Mhm, thinking] I first got hired in a [?] which is like an internship //yeah// and now I'm [mhm, thinking] hired on a part time basis until summer. But they sort of keep finding extra hours for me and I also have a job at a second school, so it's, I think, more than fulltime at the moment but I'm not hired at a full time basis.

[00:02:46]- [00:02:51]

NE: Okay, I see. But it's cool // yeah, that's good// it's really a change! Fantastic!

[00:02:51]- [00:02:55]

IP: It's perfect, it's fun, it's nice and it's - yeah - nice to be doing something.

[00:02:55]- [00:02:59]

NE: Yeah, okay. What is your highest university degree?

[00:02:59]- [00:03:02]

IP: It's masters in international policy and diplomacy.

00:03:02]- [00:03:05]

NE: [Okay. And you obtained the degree back home? In Great Britain?

[00:03:05]- [00:03:09]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] From a British university while I was living in Denmark.

[00:03:09]- [00:03:10]

NE: So at distance studies or...?

[00:03:10]- [00:03:12]

IP: Yeah, exactly.

[00:03:12]- [00:03:24]

NE: [Mhm] I see. So you did not work at home, you didn't work in in a job which was study related? No?

[00:03:24]- [00:03:37]

IP: At home in England? //yeah, exactly//No, when I [mhm, thinking] while I lived in England I did a bachelor in geography and I worked as a bartender part time, just to//okay//to get an extra income, but not study related, no [laughing].

[00:03:37]- [00:03:42]

NE: Okay. What does your education mean to you?

[00:03:42]- [00:05:18]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Well, when I took my- it meant a lot of different things over the years. When I first took my education, it was sort of something that was natural to do in my family. We have all been to university pretty much. Both my parents, all my siblings. [Mhm, thinking] So that's why- kind of probably why I first went to university to be honest. And I studied something I was interested in, which was at the time geography. When I took my masters it was to be more competitive on the Danish labour market, because everyone else here had a candidate or a masters degree. And again I chose something I was interested in [mhm, thinking] which I now feel was a stupid decision. I should have chosen something which was more suited to the Danish labour market. [Mhm, thinking] But the economy was different then, there was people or companies were crying out for well educated graduates and I sort of had the impression that with pretty much any degree I could- it was sort of making me competitive. So I took something interested in. So at the time that meant a lot to me and I thought that would help me to get a job. Now, I'm still quiet I did it, because it was interesting and I have a lot of transferrable skills from it. But with regard in getting a job in Denmark I would have probably been better of taking a business degree from Copenhagen Business School //[mhm]// or a degree in English which would have allowed me to teach English at a gymnasium. So now I kind of think it's something that I have and I enjoyed taking it so I don't kind of regret it, but I do wish I had taken a different degree //[mhm], I see//. [?]

[00:05:18]- [00:05:27]

NE: Okay. Did you work in jobs in Denmark not matching your qualification?

[00:05:27]- [00:05:30]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Yeah, I mean when I first came to Denmark I worked as a bartender. Which [mhm, thinking], yeah, it didn't exactly match a degree.

[00:05:34]- [00:05:39]

NE: But then you still only had the bachelor degree?

[00:05:39]- [00:05:40]

IP: Yeah.

[00:05:40]- [00:05:42]

NE: And after the master's degree?

[00:05:42]- [00:06:21]

IP: Well, I took my masters part time while I had a job //okay// and I was working with international student exchange at the time. And- but when I finished my degree I got [mhm, thinking] a position in the same company I was promoted to [mhm, thinking]- I can't remember the exact title, but I was affected [?] to the marketing or sales manager, which you could say that [?] is sort of fits with someone with a masters or a candidate degrees, so I guess, yeah, I mean, it wasn't well off in [?] but [thinking] yeah, I mean that was a sort of level job [?] I was after.

[00:06:21]- [00:06:31]

NE: Okay and you didn't have a job [mhm, thinking] you didn't really like to work in. It was okay to...?

[00:06:31]- [00:06:35]

IP: Yeah, it was fine //okay//. It was good. Yeah.

[00:06:35]- [00:06:37]

NE: Have you been unemployed in Denmark?

[00:06:37]- [00:06:58]

IP: Yeah. [Mhm, thinking] That company that I worked for while I studied and then also when I finished, they underwent some restructuring and sold off some parts of the company and then I became unemployed, yeah. [Mhm, thinking] that was [mhm, thinking] at the end of 2011, I think. Yeah, that's [?].

[00:06:58]- [00:06:59]

NE: And for how long have you been unemployed?

[00:06:59]- [00:07:12]

IP: I was unemployed for [thinking] in total about one and a half years, which was split up by a three month period where I had a project contract.

[00:07:12]- [00:07:15]

NE: How did you feel about being unemployed?

[00:07:15]- [00:08:03]

IP: [Mhm, thinking]. It wasn't much fun. [Mhm, thinking] I have always been the sort of person that enjoyed working and works a lot. I kind of- I put a lot into the jobs that I do and I guess it becomes a big part of your identity when you have a job. That's something we learn [laughing], when I did social sciences at university and I can definitely recognize on myself [?] so being unemployed you miss [thinking] I mean you miss a big part of your identity, you also loose the sort of social network involved in going to work and having colleagues and stuff like that. And the sort of [...] yeah, also you know, sort of what you sort of do on a day to day basis becomes [...] staying at home maybe, writing a couple of job applications, doing the hovering [?] and going for [?] doesn't seem to have that much purpose //[mhm]// compared to going to work.

[00:08:03]- [00:08:13]

NE: [Mhm], okay. Yeah. In this episode of being unemployed, have you been in contact with job agencies, like the Job Centre for instance?

[00:08:13]- [00:08:45]

IP: Yeah, that's kind of [?] to get unemployment benefits, you get- yeah, you make your [?] from them and in Denmark you have to go in and check the suggested jobs they have that week, you have to do that every week to keep getting benefits. So, yeah I was in contact with 'em in that way. and you also get called in to [thinking] meetings once every few month with both the Jobcentre and [?] which is the unemployment insurance //[mhm]//So it's [?]

[00:08:45]- [00:08:47]

NE: Could they help you?

[00:08:47]- [00:09:37]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] no [laughing]. To be honest, they [mhm, thinking] my impression of them was mixed, there was- among all the people I met there was a few that were generally helpful and interested. But the few that were generally helpful and interested seemed to be stuck in a system, that didn't really work. That was just designed to control and make sure, we did what we were meant to do to keep getting our benefits. So their powers to help were limited and there were lot of people that were sort of more interested in just taking the [?]. So it was- my impression of the job agencies, both private insurance, [?] even though I was a member of an academic one and the public Job Centre is pretty negative, to be honest.

[00:09:37]- [00:09:43]

NE: [Mhm] And how have you- how did they treat you?

[00:09:43]- [00:10:30]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] In person- I mean, when you met with people, they were always sort of polite and they treated me fine, but I think sort of the more communication fell [?] into the system, I think that's the problem. When you- I remember the very first letter I got from them [mhm, thinking] which sort of- you know- you might sort of expect- you know- sort of: 'We're your local Job Centre, this is how we're going to help you get a job.'-kind of communication. 'And this is what we can offer you.' But it was obviously sent out- the wording was very much more: 'We're your local Job Centre. This is what you have to do. We're here to control you'- kind of thing. And I mean, I kind of thought that maybe they should hire a communication specialist. I even considered being sarcastic and applying for the job [both laughing].

[00:10:30]- [00:10:32]

NE: Yeah, that would be an option, too.

[00:10:32]- [00:10:45]

IP: Yeah, but my Danish probably wasn't good enough // [laughing]// I could have [?] English communication. But just the whole system was just seemed to be built upon controlling people //[mhm]// not helping people. Which I know all the people I've spoken to feel the same.

[00:10:45]- [00:10:57]

NE: [Mhm] okay. Apart from being a source of money, what does work mean to you?

[00:10:57]- [00:11:56]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Well on a basic level somewhere to go every day [laughing]. Not that there is anything with my house, but you know, it's nice to get out. [Mhm, thinking] A social network, colleagues, friends, [mhm, thinking] obviously in the job I have now I meet a lot of people, because I teach, so I meet my students as well. [Mhm, thinking] But yeah, I mean, meeting people, being social [mhm, thinking] working together with people, to meet some challenges, to achieve something, to do a good job. And I guess also sort of a part of your identity is always sort of- when you meet people, one of the standard questions that uses to come up at some point, is: 'Now, what do you do?' and it's sort of awkward situation: 'I do nothing. I'm unemployed.' It sort of gives you a kind of pretty negative feeling, whereas now- you know- if you can say: 'I teach.' //yeah// So I guess it's an important part of my identity as well.

[00:11:56]- [00:12:03]

NE: [Mhm], I understand. This episode of unemployment, did it change you?

[00:12:03]- [00:12:51]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Yeah, probably. [Mhm, thinking] After a while- and yeah- I got up a bit stressed about it. Partly because I had enough of being at home, and partly because there is a two year limit on unemployment benefits and then you begin to think: 'Well if I don't get anything after those two years, and I've only got six months left. Then I- then I have a problem.' Then you have to liver for your savings [?] and then what you do then?'-kind of thing. //yeah// So yeah, there was some stress involved [mhm, thinking] which I'm pretty sure my family felt. //[mhm]//They were very good [?] [laughing] but I'm pretty sure, they felt it. So, yeah, yeah, let's say it has a pretty negative effect.

[00:12:51]- [00:13:00]

NE: Were there certain characteristics you could- maybe- describe, that were different?

[00:13:00]- [00:13:42]

IP: I probably was [thinking] easy- it probably became easier to irritate me. //[mhm]// And- yeah- got stressed about, you know, sort of- if something brakes, you know, if the car has to go to the mechanic, it costs a few thousands, then it becomes more stressful than- you know- if you have a regular income, you can rely on [?] month, stuff like that. And also, I guess you know, if the kids cloths or whatever are expensed, you feel sort of- it's [mhm, thinking]- you know- it's never that much fun, going spending a few thousand on new shoes, anyway, for both the kids. But if you're unemployed, than this is sort of even less fun.

[00:13:42]- [00:14:13]

NE: [Mhm] yeah, that's true. In this phase, have you felt lower than you did in your country of origin, when you still lived there? Was there a difference? //[Mhm, thinking]// Or did you know feelings like you just described? Did you know those already or were they entirely new to you?

[00:14:13]- [00:15:03]

IP: They were pretty new to me, because I've always at home [mhm, thinking] I think since the age of twelve, I've always had a part time job, while I was going to school. So, yeah, well, I guess, also in that way work is a pretty big part of my identity and I've sort of- I've always done it[?] but there was, you know, sort of full time when not studying or part time when going to school and college and university and stuff like that. So I know, I mean, I've never had a problem getting a job before //[mhm]//. I was used to sort of a luxurious world where you just walked in a place with your CV and then- you know- if they said: 'no' you walked in the next place with your CV and I don't think I was out of work for more than a couple of month. //[Mhm]//. Even with part time jobs. Now I would say,

it's not something I had problems with before.

[00:15:03]- [00:15:08]

NE: Have you felt that low, that you needed a counselling?

[00:15:08]- [00:15:10]

IP: [Thinking] No.

[00:15:10]- [00:15:14]

NE: No. It was not so tough, that you felt depressed or something?

[00:15:14]- [00:15:26]

IP: No, not like that. I'm probably also one of those [?] that [?], you know, sort of: 'Yes, we're dying [?] before you go to the doctor'-guys [both laughing].

[00:15:26]- [00:15:40]

NE: Yeah I see, I see. Would you say that being unemployed changed your habits somehow, could you [thinking]- yeah, I don't know, maybe seeing friends or...?

[00:15:40]- [00:16:40]

IP: [Mhm] well, the day- I mean the habits is in the daily structure of your life- yeah- because- as you know- you don't have to get up at six in the morning, which I guess I see is nice looking back at it [both laughing] but at that time, it didn't seem like, right? So sort of day-to-day habits. But, yeah, I mean, there was pretty a couple of occasions where I have avoided social situations where you sort of meet a lot of new people, because [mhm, thinking] yeah- that's sort of wanted to avoid all the situations, where you have to admit you're unemployed. //[mhm]// On the other hand I was a member of a network for local academics who were all unemployed in the area, so in another wise I got a network out of it and found some positive things. I'm sort of still in touch with them a bit, but now too busy working to //[mhm] yeah// sort of be active in that network.

[00:16:40]- [00:17:04]

NE: You said, you are still with your wife and you have two children, right? //Yeah// And you already revealed that they felt, that you were stressed //yeah// in this unemployment episode. How did it really affect them? Can you narrate this?

[00:17:04]- [00:17:29]

IP: Probably, because I had a,-you know- shorter temper, when I was stressed or if something irritated me, I was probably quicker to get angry and- yeah- I guess if I had less self esteem, than [mhm, thinking], I probably wasn't as happy unemployed as I am when I'm employed.

[00:17:29] - [00:17:34]

NE: Did they tell you, did you talk to your wife about this?

[00:17:34]- [00:17:48]

IP: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I discussed it with my wife. She, yeah- I mean- she [mhm, thinking] she has been with me long enough to know that I'm the kind of person that works a lot and work is important to me. So yeah. Can't keep any secrets to her.

[00:17:48]- [00:17:59]

NE: Okay [laughing], that's good. And was it of help for you, that she knew how you felt about the

situation? Could she somehow motivate you and support you through this?

[00:17:59]- [00:18:03]

IP: Yeah, I guess, yeah, yeah.

[00:18:03]- [00:18:09]

NE: Did the children play a role also for you, that...?

[00:18:09]- [00:18:32]

IP: They're very small, I mean, now the oldest is five, so //okay// so they don't sort of [mhm, thinking] understand, but I mean, obviously they're [...] when they [?] like three and five years old can be, you know. That sort of things, you know, you know. They have unconditional love- you know- they- when you go and pick them up from day care, they run up to you and give you a hug and that makes, you know, most negative feelings go away //yeah// pretty quickly.

[00:18:32]- [00:18:34]

NE: So this kind of helped, too?

00:18:34]- [00:18:43]

IP: [Yeah. Definitely. But I mean they make no conscious effort, they are just being kids, which is great.

[00:18:43]- [00:18:51]

NE: Did you develop any coping strategies?

[00:18:51]- [00:19:31]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] I've always been into running and fitness training and stuff like that. Generally, I mean, being unemployed I had more time to do that, which I guess was kind of [?], it was kind of nice. But it also, I mean, when- if I felt frustrated- you know- couldn't find any jobs to apply to or couldn't figure out about a job application, then going for a run was always a pretty good option to sort of- also now, I mean, when I'm stressed, I need to go and get some fresh air, then I go [?] something to stress out, so that's kind of always been a coping strategy for me //okay// against stress.

[00:19:31]- [00:19:45]

NE: Okay, I mean, I'm done with my questions, but maybe there is something you would like to add? // [Mhm, thinking]// Things that could be necessary or interesting for me, my research?

[00:19:45]- [00:20:32]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] I don't know, hard to think. [Mhm, thinking]. I don't know, I guess kind of what I've said already, I mean, I think work is an important part of your identity. I think that's the same whether you have a high education, and you have an important job or- you know- everyone thinks: 'My job is important'. And everyone's job is important, 'cause, you know, if the bin men don't empty the bins, then our society doesn't run, just same is if //I fully agree, yes// teachers or whatever, don't go to work. So everyone's job is important //it is, definitely//. But yeah, I think people have a- people's jobs are a big part of their identity, so being unemployed will always be a problem. [Mhm, thinking] I can't really think of anything else than that, that would be relevant.

[00:20:32]- [00:20:34]

NE: That's fine, thank you.

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants

[00:20:34]- [00:20:35]

IP: No worries.

JASMIN

[00:00:44] - [00:00:46]

NE: So how old are you?

[00:00:46] - [00:00:47]

IP: I am thirty three.

[00:00:47] - [00:00:51]

NE: Thirty three, me too [both laughing shortly]. And what's your country of origin?

[00:00:51] - [00:00:53]

IP: Iran.

[00:00:53] - [00:00:54]

NE: When did you move to Germany?

[00:00:54] - [00:01:00]

IP: In 2008, end of 2008.

[00:01:00] - [00:01:03]

NE: What were your reasons of coming here?

[00:01:03] - [00:01:08]

IP: Well, I got a job in university as a research assistant, PhD student in Munich. [00:01:08]

[00:01:08] - [00:01:09]

NE: In Munich?

[00:01:09] - [00:01:12]

IP: Yeah.

[00:01:12] - [00:01:16]

NE: When you moved to Germany, have you been in a relationship?

[00:01:16] - [00:01:16]

IP: No.

[00:01:16] - [00:01:18]

NE: No, okay. So you moved alone?

[00:01:18] - [00:01:20]

IP: Yeah.

[00:01:20] - [00:01:22]

NE: Are you currently employed?

[00:01:22] - [00:01:23]

IP: Yeah.

[00:01:23] - [00:01:27]

NE: Okay. Does this position match your qualification?

[00:01:27] - [00:01:28]

IP: Ah, yeah, somehow.

[00:01:28] - [00:01:31]

NE: Somehow, //yeah// okay. Can you explain?

[00:01:31] - [00:02:10]

IP: Okay, I have studied physics and actually what I was doing during my PhD was more statistical physics, but later too biophysics, but before that I had done theoretical physics, solid estate (?) physics, related to semi conductive (?) but more emulation and coding (?) and it was somehow the same during my PhD, but then after I finished my PhD I thought that: "Okay, I want to go towards mobile (?) Industry." So I hired there. So I mean, it's not so related to what I was during my PhD and master, but it's related a little bit to physics, because what I'm doing is more related to thermodynamics.

[00:02:10] - [00:02:13]

NE: Okay, so it kind of fits?

[00:02:13] - [00:02:20]

IP: Yeah, it's not so theoretical like physics, it's more engineering, you know. Things are not so accurate, but ahm, yeah, that's okay [laughing shortly].

[00:02:20] - [00:02:24]

NE: Okay, okay. What is your highest university degree?

[00:02:24] - [00:02:26]

IP: PhD [both laughing shortly].

[00:02:26] - [00:02:28]

NE: Okay, and you studied physics?

[00:02:28] - [00:02:29]

IP: Yeah.

[00:02:29] - [00:02:32]

NE: Yeah, okay. Where did you obtain your degree?

[00:02:32] - [00:02:34]

IP: When?

[00:02:34] - [00:02:34]

NE: Where.

[00:02:34] - [00:02:37]

IP: Where, in Munich, yeah, in Germany.

[00:02:37] - [00:02:38]

NE: But your masters' degree is from Iran?

[00:02:38] - [00:02:44]

IP: Yeah, my master, my master is from Iran.

[00:02:44] - [00:02:52]

NE: Before you came to Germany to go for the PhD, did you work in Iran?

[00:02:52] - [00:03:01]

IP: [Mhm, thinking], well- //after your masters?// after my master, no. No, it was just some kind of private (?) but it's not kind of employment (?).

[00:03:01] - [00:03:13]

NE: Okay, okay, I see. This one is a bit tricky, I'm fully aware of it, but //[laughing shortly]// I will try anyway. What does your education mean to you?

[00:03:13] - [00:03:17]

IP: [Laughing shortly] what does that mean?

[00:03:17] - [00:03:22]

NE: How important is it for you? What did it- why did you decide for it?

[00:03:22] - [00:04:12]

IP: Ah, well I really liked physics, I mean, in the beginning it was pure love, I mean, choosing it. Yeah, I wanted to married it, you know //[laughing]//. But not that much the German physics (?) but, yeah. But I mean in my country it's really important, people- it's really important for people to get some high education degree, you know //yeah, okay//. So it was another- my hair is so bad (?) [Both laughing shortly] so it's another reason. But I really wanted to do a PhD, but I really liked it and I really liked physics, I really liked continuing my studies //yeah// for this reasons.

[00:04:12] - [00:04:19]

NE: Okay. Did you have to work? I mean, here in Germany, did you have to work in jobs not matching your qualification?

[00:04:19] - [00:04:20]

IP: No.

[00:04:20] - [00:04:21]

NE: No?

[00:04:21] - [00:04:23]

IP: No.

[00:04:23] - [00:04:25]

NE: Okay. Have you been unemployed in Germany?

[00:04:25] - [00:04:27]

IP: Yeah.

[00:04:27] - [00:04:33]

NE: Okay. How did you feel about it? About this unemployment?

[00:04:33] - [00:04:58]

IP: Ah, okay. It's a little bit complicated. I was unemployed for ten months //yeah// [mhm, thinking] and I would say, before getting unemployed I was really really horrified about it. But during it it was not so horrible. And my job search didn't get so complicated. Because- should I explain?

[00:04:58] - [00:04:59]

NE: Yeah, sure.

[00:04:59] - [00:06:09]

IP: Because- okay, I had lot's of issues with my professor and he was supposed to prolong my contract to finish my PhD, and he was not doing it and he just said it's for three months, I needed six months and finally I was kind of jobless for two months before finishing my PhD. And one month before submitting my thesis, but okay, I mean, it was not so horrible. I had to defend really fast after submitting and so I was jobless for two months before finishing the study [short interruption]. And then I went to *Arbeitsamt* and I got my *Arbeitslosigkeitsgeld* and it was not so horrible then. And then they helped me to get into a [mhm, thinking] *Sprachschule* to learn German. It was a very intensive course and I- it was eight hours a day, five days a week //okay//, very expensive-

[00:06:09] - [00:06:11]

NE: You had to pay for it?

[00:06:11] - [00:07:13]

IP: No, they paid for it. I mean the whole course was four thousand euro and after that I went to them and told them it was not enough, it is so intensive that I didn't learn anything //okay//. And I mean I started (?) for (?) and I did the C1-Level again, so it was really great. I mean, it was something like- I mean, everyone was saying that supporting the unemployed people in Germany it's really great and I was doing my German course for more than five months and I mean they really paid a lot for it and I was supported. And my *Arbeitslosigkeit* was not finished and I just started searching for a job for two month and I got a job //okay//. It was not so horrible. Yeah, of course before that I was really under very horrible pressure. I was just thinking: "I'm not going through it." But I mean, because of the support I got from *Arbeitsamt* it was really good. But I've heard that they have stopped it. They are not going to do it any more.

[00:07:13] - [00:07:24]

NE: Okay, that's sad. Okay, I see. What does work mean to you?

[00:07:24] - [00:07:36]

IP: Oh, really important. I mean, it's really important for me to have a very good career and be successful in it. It's defining my personality and my happiness.

[00:07:36] - [00:07:58]

NE: Okay, so without work you feel unhappy then //yeah// on the contrary? Okay. I see. The episode, I mean, you said, it wasn't so bad after all, when you were unemployed, did it change you? Your personality? I mean, you say: okay, it changes your personality and it makes you unhappy when if you don't have work?

[00:07:58] - [00:08:37]

IP: About me- maybe during those two or three- first two or three months I was really kind of broken //yeah// and I really needed a kind of maybe a pause to again- you know- recover. Because I was feeling really bad, being unemployed and finishing my PhD it was something like losing everything for it (?) //yeah, okay, I see, I see//it was really horrible. But after that I could recover and really work on myself and [mhm, thinking] and I mean, I got much better then. When I was doing my job interviews I was feeling much better about myself.

[00:08:37] - [00:08:50]

NE: Okay. But could you maybe elaborate the feelings you had in this episode? I mean, you talked about unhappiness, but could you explain a bit more?

[00:08:50] - [00:09:23]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] Well, you know, I was feeling unworthy, I was feeling [mhm, thinking] not really nice about myself. Okay, because, you know, I mean, you have a title and you get a title after your PhD and then you are jobless [laughing shortly] and you feel not really good about what you have done. And I was not feeling really fine about my PhD thesis. So it's something that you always drag (?) with yourself. It's like- I don't know- it's kind of a failing, failure, you know?

[00:09:23] - [00:09:26]

NE: Yeah. Did you feel low?

[00:09:26] - [00:09:35]

IP: Yeah. Yeah, in the beginning yeah, that was really strange, I mean. Everyone says: "Oh, you have got a PhD!" and then you feel just: "Oh, no, let's not talk about it."

[00:09:35] - [00:09:43]

NE: "I do have one, but-" //yeah// okay, I see, I see. Did you need counselling?

[00:09:43] - [00:09:43]

IP: No.

[00:09:43] - [00:09:49]

NE: No, it was not that bad, that you had to seek or help outside?

[00:09:49] - [00:09:52]

IP: Ahm, no.

[00:09:52] - [00:09:59]

NE: Did it change your motivation and your goals somehow, or-?

[00:09:59] - [00:10:20]

IP: It kind of changed me in a way that I really wanted a better price (?) for myself, better [mhm, thinking]- you know- I just wanted to kind of treat myself with a better jobs. Like I really want something better and I () like: "I really deserve something better, because I have suffered so much."

[00:10:20] - [00:10:27]

NE: So it motivated you //yeah//, somehow? Did you get stronger in this?

[00:10:27] - [00:10:50]

IP: Stronger, I don't know, maybe [mhm, thinking] maybe more motivated. I don't know if I got stronger, maybe sometimes those stressors come back to me, sometimes, sometimes I just feel: "I'm going back to that level, when I was really unhappy and unsatisfied with myself. " And I just try to fight it back. But, yeah, sometimes you could say, what (?) you, makes you stronger [laughing shortly].

[00:10:50] - [00:10:53]

NE: Did you feel depressed? Would you say that?

[00:10:53] - [00:11:18]

IP: Ahm, in one point yeah, I mean, before getting employed, yeah. But [mhm, thinking] not during being unemployed. I mean, before I started my German course, maybe the first month, I mean, first three months of my unemployed, maybe, but not after that.

[00:11:18] - [00:11:21]

NE: So the German course somehow dragged you out of it? Or- would you say that?

[00:11:21] - [00:11:30]

IP: Yeah, because it kept me busy and I was thinking that so I have a better chance to get a job. So-yeah.

[00:11:30] - [00:11:35]

NE: Okay, I see. When you were unemployed, have you then been in a relationship?

[00:11:35] - [00:11:40]

IP: Yeah, actually I got married the last year of my PhD.

[00:11:40] - [00:11:41]

NE: Congratulations!

[00:11:41] - [00:12:22]

IP: Thank you. And that- it was kind of support for me //yeah, okay, how?// Okay, my- I mean, first emotionally, I mean, my husband really helped me through the weeks (?). The other thing is that my husband is actually German, yeas, that's one of the reasons, because, you know, when you finish your studies, you should show the *Ausländerbehörde*, that you have money in your account, and according to get to that, you get maximum one year *Jobsuche-Visum*. And I didn't need that.

[00:12:22] - [00:12:27]

NE: Yeah, because you were married also //yeah//? Yeah, okay, I see, I see.

[00:12:27] - [00:12:46]

IP: So I was not so much under pressure, I think my other friends are much more under pressure to find a job within one year or if they don't want a job they get underemployments and you know, being employed anywhere, just to be able to stay in Germany, so it's really bad, yeah.

[00:12:46] - [00:12:50]

NE: So, your husband has been of emotional support for you?

[00:12:50] - [00:12:51]

IP: Yeah.

[00:12:51] - [00:13:01]

NE: Did it have an impact- I mean, your feeling low because of the unemployment, did it have an impact on your relationship, somehow? Did it-

[00:13:01] - [00:13:17]

IP: Yeah //yeah?// We were- both of us where jobless //okay// summer (?) he was few months after me, so we were under very very bad pressure. (?)

[00:13:17] - [00:13:19]

NE: But did it change things between the two of you?

[00:13:19] - [00:13:35]

IP: Yeah, very much [laughing]. //how?// Yeah, we had lot's of fights, you know. Yeah, and- //so it was tensed or-/I don't know, maybe, yeah, it got really tensed, it got really tensed. But it got better after that.

[00:13:35] - [00:13:37]

NE: With the employment it got better again?

[00:13:37] - [00:13:38]

IP: Yeah.

[00:13:38] - [00:13:40]

NE: Or already with the German course?

[00:13:40] - [00:13:51]

IP: No, after employment. A few months after employment it didn't get so fast better. We had to work on it. But- yeah.

[00:13:51] - [00:13:54]

NE: Okay. You don't have children, right?

[00:13:54] - [00:13:55]

IP: No.

[00:13:55] - [00:14:27]

NE: No, okay. I think you've told me. Yeah, I think that's basically it. But another thing: Did it- this low episode, let's say. Did it kind of change your habits when it comes to-you know- keeping the social network somehow. Meeting friends, or I don't know, going to the gym or whatever you do in your spare time. Did it change your habits there?

[00:14:27] - [00:15:04]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] I'm thinking [laughing shortly]. You know, it was three years ago. [Mhm, thinking] Maybe a little bit in the beginning. Because you're always under pressure, you think you should do something and then you don't want to do other things. But at the end, no, I think. My German course was really good, so I met lot's of friends who were just like me, I had problems. But [mhm, thinking] no, actually, I would say no. It didn't change it.

[00:15:04] - [00:15:14]

NE: Okay, so you could-yeah- basically //yeah// do what you have always done in your //yeah// spare time?

[00:15:14] - [00:15:28]

IP: Yeah, somehow. I would say I was more active when I was a student, before getting being jobless, but I can't say it's just because of that period. Just maybe, I'm just now too busy.

[00:15:28] - [00:15:33]

NE: Okay, I see, I see.

[00:15:33] - [00:16:22]

IP: And [mhm, thinking] yeah, maybe I would say the most important impact it had on me was that I always stressed about the job, and want to be the best. Before that I was not so much like this. I would say all the Iranians are looking and they will tell you: "I'm trying to be very good." Because they are all, you know, all (?) and they want to be better and try more. But it has al- I mean, I always carry this fear with myself, that I'm going to be judged, I'm going to be called lazy or not working, so I really I should do my best. I should be always worried for the future what can happen, what can happen to my job, what can happen- I mean, I always have this. Before being unemployed, I definitely was not like that. I was, you know, relaxed.

[00:16:22] - [00:16:25]

NE: So there are changes in your personality somehow?

[00:16:25] - [00:16:28]

IP: Yeah.

[00:16:28] - [00:16:38]

NE: But do you think it has to do with actually being jobless or does it more have to do with leaving university and entering- you know- a new-?

[00:16:38] - [00:16:50]

IP: I think //-life//it had more about being jobless. Because I really don't like that feeling of thinking about being jobless and I really don't like that feeling.

[00:16:50] - [00:16:53]

NE: Were you scared that things maybe won't change?

[00:16:53] - [00:17:20]

IP: Yeah, I would say that, I mean it's my first time that I'm jobless [laughing shortly] I was jobless in Iran, too. And it was not a very nice period, too. But-yeah maybe it was the second time I was having it, so I- I don't know, I just think that I can't (?) deal with it again. So I just try to avoid it in the best way.

[00:17:20] - [00:17:22]

NE: Yeah, I see. That's it.

[00:17:22] - [00:17:23]

IP: That's it.

[00:17:23] - [00:17:33]

NE: That's it, already //ah, okay//, yes. But is there anything you would like to add, maybe. Do you have anything you would like to tell me that I maybe forgot asking?

[00:17:33] - [00:17:34]

IP: Ah, no.

[00:17:34] - [00:17:35]

NE: No?

[00:17:35] - [00:17:44]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No, well. About that [mhm, thinking]. No.

[00:17:44] - [00:17:45]

NE: No.

[00:17:45] - [00:17:45]

IP: I think that's all.

[00:17:45]

NE: Okay, perfect.

AMIN

00:00-00:27

[explanation about the interview structure]

00:28-00:28

Q: Ehm how old are you?

00:29-00:30

A: I'm 29 [29].

00:32-00:34

Q: Ehm what's your country of origin?

00:34-00:36

A: I'm from Iran [Iran, okay].

00:37-00:39

Q: Ehm and when did you move to Germany?

00:40-00:43

A: Almost 7 years. [Really? So long!]

00:44-00:47

Q: And what were your reasons of coming here?

00:47-01:19

A: [...] a cooperation study at my university in Teheran [mhm] had a cooperation, like a contract with Aachen University and then I could do my Bachelor almost all of that and then I could do my Bachelor thesis at Aachen University [okay I see, so you came for study reasons?] Exactly [ja okay]. It was the first three years in English and then it was in German [okay].

01:19-01:22

Q: Ehm when you moved here, did you have a relationship?

01:22-01:23

A: Ah yes.

01:24-01:26

Q: Did you bring her with you, or...?

01:27-01:50

A: No, no, it was a long-distance relationship and it was really hard for us. We had the relationship, actually also one and a half years [okay] and we couldn't make it and then it was over [okay, didn't last, okay]

01:51-01:53

Q: Are you currently employed?

01:53-01:53

A: Yes.

01:54-01:56

Q: And the position, does it match your qualification?

01:56-02:00

A: Yes. [okay. That's good]

02:00-02:02

Q: Ehm what's your highest university degree?

02:03-02:06

A: A Master of Engineering [Engineering, okay.]

02:07-02:09

Q: So you studied Engineering [yes] [both laughing]

02:09-02:14

Q: And you obtained the Master degree here in Germany?

02:14-02:44

A: Yes. [Elaborates further about the cooperation degree he previously obtained]

02:45-02:48

Q: It is a tricky one, but what does your education mean to you?

02:48-03:21

A: During the education, it was that [...] like it made me feel better to develop myself personally [mhm] and also somehow scientifically, but now it is part of my personality, because I work 8 hours per day [...] and I can somehow find myself due to my task [mhm] it's like that [okay]

03:21-03:29

Q: Ehm after obtaining your Master degree, ehm did you have to work in jobs not matching your qualification?

03:29-04:28

A: Ehm uhm, I will explain it that way: I was tutor for many courses. I had like my private students or some groups. Actually it was not at all so bad, but it was so many hours that I should spend a week to do these tutorials, from the money, it was not so bad, but it's like ehm stressful, because I was in the process to get a job and it was not the perfect stuff, because it was really time consuming [mhm ja, okay] but it was actually what I've done in my Master's. The courses I have done as a tutor were relevant to what I've studied. [But this is what you do now?] No, no. I work for [a big German car company] [okay, many people do, right? Yes, okay!]

04:29-04:37

Q: Ehm but apart from that you said it was stressful, did you feel content about it? About working as a tutor?

04:37-06:57

A: Not at all. [Okay] Because my call in the beginning was to work for a big concern, for a big company [ja] and then also to do a career in that field [mhm] and after more like five/six months, I think it was almost seven months, I was asking myself, what's wrong with my profile, because [but that was when you still worked as a tutor] yes [okay] but it was not like in our contract. I had my students via internet or in STUD.IP, in the internet, but then it was not like really fix money. It could be like 500 euros per month or like 700 but it could be also less [so you were paid per hour?] Yes. It's like I don't know 10 bucks or 15 bucks [okay] and it should be many hours to go to 700 € [ja, ja, ja, that's true! And uhm were you employed as a research assistant?] I worked also for my professor for two months [...] during my master's thesis. But it was for them too expensive. [he elaborates his tasks further]

07:00-07:15

Q: Uhm apart from not working, not right away working in a job you aimed to ehm have you'd been unemployed here? [in this period?] After your master's?

07:15-08:29

A: Yes, I was unemployed and as I said, I had my job searching visa after my master and then in these six months, I have been unemployed. I've tried to do something, because I want to earn money but actually, I was unemployed [mhm] like in the documents [mhm okay so you worked, I don't know...] no it is like you can also be employed or unemployed when you have a [?] of 400€ [okay] per month or yearly under I think 7.000€ [mhm mhm ja] [...]

08:30-08:34

Q: In this period, how did you feel?

08:35-10:18

A: Not good, but it was not at all like this that I was so down [mhm] I had like a really hard planning time. This means, it was like, 6 o'clock, I wake up, I had my students and I had one of my colleagues and we had the same situation [mhm] and we sent our applications together and we had dinner together or sometimes like another [?] and then every day was like full. So I didn't have so much time to think 'oh everything sucks and ah I should do something against it', but for sure, in between it was for me like I saw some of my colleagues already started and they get like a monthly 2-3-4000€ [mhm ja] and I was like stuck in my 4-500€. And it's disappointing [mhm] and it was not easy. [But were you still positively thinking?] I am a really positive person [okay] I cannot think negatively, but it was hard [ja] it is like uhm you are positive but you feel it hurts. Now when I think, I think there is funny stuff what I've done. I've tried everything to make money or think how can I use my expertise [mhm] to do something [ja okay, so it was not all bad]

10:19- 10:26

Q: Have you been in touch with the agencies like job centers?

10:26-11:32

A: Because I am not German national and had like my searching visa, nobody cared so much what are you doing exactly [and you didn't contact them?] Eh I asked for this situation but some of my friends told me like 'they will send you to I don't know, just really easy jobs' and I had my small job to earn a bit money [mhm] and I didn't like heard from the government and because of that, it was for me not meaningful [?] but for somebody in emergency it makes sense [mhm] I had like some head hunter companies that were help and companies that

are searching for people for big companies [mhm] but not like the job center but the companies that do this [so you didn't feel that you had to?] I asked, but it wasn't so proper to my situation – what I've heard. [mhm]

11:33-11:39

Q: Ehm now that I already asked you what education means to you: What does work mean to you?

11:39-13:45

A: Oh that is really nice! Good question! I think, before I started, I thought work is something boring that every adult has to do because they need to earn money [okay] but I have now a really different idea about it. It changed. Because I have a really great team, I have a really great boss, we are working together [...] and the people I deal with are really comfortable [...] what I'm doing is really interesting, maybe when I explain to you it's not interesting for you, it's like default car simulation, but it's really interesting for me [mhm] it is something that I really like and because of that, I am really excited to work and I am staying most of the time more than 8 hours because we have so much stuff to do.

13:45-14:08

Q: [...] How does it have an impact on your everyday's life, apart from that you have to go there and spend a lot of time there? But uhm does it make you feel good or does it make you feel stressed or...?

14:08-15:20

A: Generally it makes me feel good. For sure, there is days which are more stressful [mhm] but I can develop myself in a good way [...] it's some soft skills that I've learnt [...] I am a really positive person.

15:22-15:35

Q: Ehm this episode when you couldn't find work but saw your friends and colleagues from university working in really well-paid jobs already, did it change you?

15:36-18:04

A: I can't... I don't know... It's hard, because I didn't see the big change [mhm] maybe it was a small change that I didn't really feel [mhm] but eh it changed me just a bit in this way that I was just before my old studies then really, I thought 'it's so easy to get a job' and because I have no family here and I have basically just friends here, it was really hard, because many people have like a good connection through the uncle, through the family members, [mhm] they just get to know people [...] and I didn't know anybody, it was just myself [ja] and it makes me a bit unhappy, because I have never so missed my country [...] I've never thought in this way of so much that I had in my country [mhm] because of just where I am coming from, my friends, my family, my parents and the whole people that I know. It is not just because of work, but I feel it in a really painful way that it's really, really important [mhm] and that is maybe the one thing that changed in my mind [okay so the recognition of the importance of a network] exactly. Ja, just like the connection, where I'm coming from and which like society level are there. Because in Iran, I had my father that was also a lawyer and we have like many, many friends in many fields, because everybody goes to a lawyer and there are thousands or hundreds of friends or like relatives, people that we know and in every country, we know somebody but here, it here was for me [...] maybe because of

the situation I was explaining, because of what I had and what I could have... but this is one aspect.

18:04-18:05

Q: But did it make you stronger?

18:08-18:45

A: In one way, yes [mhm] Because what I'm doing now and what I have now, that is me. Just me. And nobody else [mhm] and in my country and I could be really, just in an other level rich [mhm] I am not rich now, I am working just normal [ja] but it would be more my father why I could be rich [ja, okay] It feels good, because I do it all by myself [okay, I see, that's pretty good, great]

18:47-19:06

Q: You already revealed that you are a positive person and that you maybe felt a bit insecure, but really low, did you feel low, lower than you felt back in Iran, in this, you know, talking about this period?

19:06-20:52

A: Mhm. It was thousands of thoughts. And also thoughts how can I do something. Many thoughts, because I didn't want to do just a job, I really wanted to do like a career [ja] At that time, I didn't know also what should be a career, but I was just motivated to do something good [ja] And for sure there was moments when I thought 'ah, everything sucks, it won't work, maybe I should think about another study or doing something else or just do something with my language what I can or try something else [mhm] or maybe use my knowledge in another way' [mhm] As I already told you, I thought maybe I can do a start-up, like a company [mhm] I had talked to some friends to like work for me [mhm] and ehm they were more students [mhm] [interviewee explains his idea for the start-up] It means, I was under stress, but I tried to use the stress in a positive way and in doing something [mhm] but it is not that it everytime works [mhm]

20:53-20:59

Q: Did you ever consider to return... home?

20:59-21:43

A: No. [That was not an option?] Ehm it could be an option, but it was like, I just want to do something with my study and I have it here. When I'm in Iran, I could do something with my study, but it is not actually what I want. In Germany, when you are in the automobile industry, it's the best in the world, it's no comparison [...] and I don't want to miss this chance [so you were just as motivated] I've tried to be [mhm I see]

21:44-22:02

Q: Ehm did this, again this episode, did your habits change? Like for instance going out. Meeting friends.

22:03-23:18

A: Yes, sometimes. The point is, when you have not enough money [mhm] you try to do something else, like you do sports, like you go running, I am not a really running person, I play something basket ball, tennis, but it's more expensive, because of that, I tried something, that it's free. [okay] Or like drinking with friends every weekend, it was somehow

expensive and because of that like I tried to have them in my place or do something else or cook more at home. [...] And the biggest thing is, I hate uhm to wake up soon, but in this period, I wake up every day around six, just to push myself 'you're not unemployed to sleep till 10, you should do something with your time' [...] [so it basically motivated you?] Ja But it was hard, I was not like 'ja I was so happy', no, it was stress and then I should handle it and because of that I tried to have some discipline for my life.

23:18-23:24

Q: Would you say that you basically gave yourself a structure with this? Like 'I have to get up and I have to do this and this and this'?

23:24-24:35-

A: Yes. [So you structured the day yourself?] That was the main reason. [ja] Because otherwise, when you do nothing, you can't reach anything [interviewee describes his observations in other people who do not structure their days as he did] ... the whole day they maybe work two hours but that is really not enough to get a good job [mhm] but it was not the case for me. I had days when I had six students [mhm] or let's say yes five students [mhm], that means ten hours of teaching [mhm] and also doing my stuff, that means it's more than 12 or 13 hours of work per day [mhm] ja but it was not every day, like I have also my phase that I couldn't do so much and I was a bit pity about everything [mhm] but generally it was more days on that I could do much.

24:35-24:46

Q: And on those days, when you felt lower, how did you try to re-motivate yourself? How did you get up again?

24:46-25:46

A: Sport, I think [mhm] Most of the things that helped me was sports [mhm] Because when I was out [...] it was like fresh air [...] and then I feel like I'm healthy, I have a great family, I have my girlfriend, I have everything many people just wish to have it [mhm] and why should I be so unhappy and then I tried to reschedule and see 'where is my point that I should maybe change?' [mhm] then I tried to like do operative [?] 'okay, I will change it or, or at least I try to do something about it' [mhm okay ja] But I think, sports helped me [okay]

25:46-25:57

Q: Ehm so in this episode you had a girlfriend? [yes] Did it change, I mean, not the girlfriend, but did the episode change your relationship?

25:59-28:49

A: Good question, I can't answer it. Because it is a person involved, she could answer, but [but maybe you can say that it changed your communication or maybe she has been supportive or not understanding or...] Ja. I think generally, I can say my girlfriend was so supportive and she was also on my side, tried to help me. For sure, what sometimes complicated the relationship is sometimes I asked her to change like one of the CVs or small things in German or English and she also had like a masters thesis and so couldn't find the proper time [mhm] and it made me really upset [...] She is German, she can generally speak better than me in German and her English is also good and she also lived also in Australia. And we sometimes had this discussion 'come on, let's try to find the time' then we have time, like I said, she was generally really supportive, but sometimes when I was down, I was a bit angry [mhm], not angry, but upset about the whole situation, that she couldn't help much. Or

sometimes, I thought that she is not spending so much time on my resume [mhm] or something like this, but generally, what I am saying now, she tried to help me and she was generally in this time also really supportive [mhm] in this way that she was every day or every week like 'come on you will the job you want, you're great, you can do this or this and you understand your study, it's not what you do, because you do it in the way your parents want it, you really are an engineer and you will find a job'. I don't know, we had days that we cooked together and it was just, she motivated me [mhm] cause I feel okay I am not alone, I get also support from someone and it feels good [mhm okay, so she has been very helpful?] yes, yes [most of the time] Like I told, she wrote also her master thesis [ja] and it's hard to concentrate in many points [of course, of course]

28:49-28:57

Q: Ehm ja, that's it actually. Unless, you'd like to add something?

28:57-29:28

A: No. Actually as I told you, what you're doing is interesting [thank you!] and it good for sure your research for many people in the future, but it's a hard period for everybody that have this or do something like this in a foreign country [mhm] it makes people think about many things.

STEFANO

00:00-00:15

Interviewer explains the roadmap of the interview.

00:15-00:16

Q: How old are you?

00:17-00:23

A: I am 30 years old. [Most people have to think actually.] [both laughing]

00:24-00:25

Q: What's your country of origin?

00:25-00:27

A: Ehm Italy. [mhm]

00:27-00:28

Q: When did you move to Germany?

00:29-00:32

A: One and a half years ago. [okay]

00:33-00:39

Q: An ehm what were your reasons for moving? [repeating the question] ehm to Germany.

00:40-01:08

A: Because in Italy there was the crisis, not so many jobs [mhm] well, not good jobs [mhm] and so I decided to try Germany, because at the moment [mhm] it is the best country in Europe [I see] and it was easy to come here, because I don't need the Visum (German: visa) [mhm] and so I tried [okay.]

01:09-01:13

Q: Ehm when you moved here, have you'd been in a relationship by that time?

01:13-01:14

A: Ehm ja.

01:14-01:15

Q: Are you still in it?

01:15-01:31

A: Ja. [Okay. We will get back to that later] [both laughing] My ehm... but okay [no, no, just tell me, it's fine] the relation, so my girlfriend is in Germany, too .[okay hmh] [?]

01:31-01:32

Q: You moved together?

01:32-01:38

A: Ehm ja [okay] [?] [okay]

01:39-01:40

Q: Ehm, are you currently employed?

01:40-01:43

A: Ja. Since two months.

01:43-01:48

Q: And is this position matching your qualification?

01:49-02:13

A: Mmm quite [mhm] Ja, so I studied Mechanical Engineering [mhm] with a Schwerpunkt (German: specialisation) [mhm] ehm logistics [okay] and I am making some logistic [mhm] so it's quite good [it kind of fits, ja] not perfectly my job but [it's okay] ja, kind of [mhm]

02:13-02:14

Q: What's your highest university degree?

02:14-02:18

A: Master of [pause] [Master of Science probably] Master of Science, ja. [mhm]

02:19-02:29

Q: And ehm ja you already told me what you've studied and you obtained your degree back home in Italy [ja] mhm

02:30-02:37

A: I did an internship in my master's thesis in Hamburg [okay] and then I tried to find a job [okay]

02:37-02:42

Q: So you didn't work back home in Italy based on your master degree?

02:42-02:44

A: Ehm no.

02:44-02:50

Q: Mmm that's a tricky one: What does your education mean to you?

02:50-04:11

A: [I told you] Uhm, so can you repeat the question? [What does your education mean to you? How important is it to you?] My education [mhm] quite important [mhm] ehm in which sense? [I mean, personally, that you say 'I worked so hard to obtain the degree' or I don't know, maybe in your family, everybody has a university degree or...] Ah okay so in my family ehm the is me [mhm] I have a university degree [mhm] and a my parents pushed me a lot [mhm] to obtain it [mhm] but it was also from myself, I worked hard, it was really difficult for me [mhm] and ehm I took more years [mhm] than other students [okay] but I also worked in my university, just for earning money [mhm okay]

04:12-04:20

Q: Ehm, when you came here to Germany, did you have to work in jobs that did not match your qualification?

04:21-05:11

A: Ehm ja. I worked as a barman [that was after your masters?] eh ja, but not so many months, but four months [mhm] but ehm I needed money and then it was not so easy to find a job to earn money in meinem Bereich [in my field] [mhm] and ehm so I tried to find a job just for earning some money [mhm] to pay my German course and to pay my [?] so for four months, I worked as a bar man [okay] without [?]

05:12-05:21

Q: Okay and ehm how did it make you feel to work in such a field that did not match your qualification?

05:12-06:12

A: Mmm [was it okay or...?] it was okay, ja. [ja] I knew it was just for some months [mhm] I said okay, so I need some money, I need to practice in German [mhm] when talking with customers [mhm] so I said, it could be useful for the future, so I did it [so you thought it was just temporary?] yes. [okay] That was a bigger reason, not something that push me to work these months, but I said 'okay, it's temporary' [mhm okay]

06:12-06:17

Q: Ehm have you also been unemployed here?

06:18-07:34

A: Ja. Ja for three months [for three months, how was that?] it was, so in the beginning, I thought, it was really easy to find a job [mhm] because I always heard about Germany needs engineers since really a lot of years [mhm] so I came here with a lot of expectations [mhm] but then I saw that it was really important to know German and not only English [mhm] and so I figured out that it was not so easy to find a job and so I tried to improve my German or to learn because I didn't learn it in school [mhm] and I studied for six or seven month, every day five hours and then finally, I found something [ja okay]

07:35-07:42

Q: In this episode of unemployed, how did you feel? Were you still motivated you'd find something or?

07:43-11:30

A: In the beginning, I was really, really motivated [mhm] then after 400 Bewerbungen, applications, it was a little less [yes, understandable] but I said 'okay, I could find something' and in the end, in January this year, I was not so motivated and I was also thinking about flying back maybe in a couple of months, because I couldn't wait so much time without having a job [mhm] but finally, I found something and that was really good [mhm] because I was a little stressed in the end [ja] [can you, can you elaborate a bit more?] [laughing] [maybe?] I could try. So elaborate a bit more... [I mean, did you feel low? Or still okay?] Not so okay, in the end, there was a little stress, I don't know, I was kind of uhm upset, but, how to say, I felt a little low [...] [Okay so you didn't feel very well in this episode?] No, no. [okay] In the end, it was the worst time [mhm] and uhm it was also, I haven't had so many interviews. One was in the beginning, then a lot of time without any kind of good answers from the companies and then I made a couple of Messen, Jobmessen (job fairs) but it the companies don't pay attention, so it was not so successful [mhm] and then a couple of interviews in January and then finally this job [mhm] but I still have to commute [mhm] and I

still have a trainee contract, it is not really what I wanted in the beginning and it's also not paid like a normal mechanical engineer [mhm okay] So I am still searching.

11:30-11:36

Q: Okay so beside what you are doing, you're still looking? [Ja.] How long will this contract last?

11:36-11:51

A: Uhm 18 months. It is 6 months Probezeit [ja]

11:51-12:09

Q: Mmm you already said that because of knowing that this bartending thing was only temporary, you didn't feel so bad about it, but if you compare both episodes, the unemployment and the underemployment that didn't match your skills, what felt worse? And what was different?

12:10-12:40

A: Worse was unemployment [mhm ja] the underemployment was not so bad [okay ja, because you had the goal still] ja it was kind of a way to use my time [ja], to send applications, so it was a little (?)

12:41-12:47

Q: In this period of unemployment, have you'd been in touch with the job center?

12:48-14:16

A: Ja. [Was that okay? Or helpful in any way?] Mmm they tried to be helpful, I think [mhm] so more helpful than in Italy, I think, because in Italy, I find them not helpful [ja] you can apply but then they normally don't say anything. Here, I was there one morning and I talked with three persons [mhm] in specific for my field [mhm] and then at least every week, I got three or four emails from them and they suggested me to apply in this or this [mhm] this was really good but I, I didn't find a job [but still, you found this was helpful, kind of?] Ja. Because when you send an application suggested by the Arbeitsamt [job center], the company was a little ehm more, I think, the company was a little more interested [mhm mhm] or paid more attention [ja okay mhm]

14:16 -14:23

Q: Ehm did you, by the staff of the job center, did you feel treated well, when you communicated with them? [Ja.] Ja. Okay.

14:28-14:46

Q: What does work mean to you? [What?] What does work mean to you? I mean, having a job, working in the field you want to work in, what does it mean? [Uhm sorry?] How important is work for you? [This work I am doing now?] No, in general.

14:46-16:41

A: Ah, ah in general, so it's not the most important thing in life [mhm] I think, but for me it's always a way to earn money, to have a good family [mhm] or something [mhm] if you like it, it's better [ja, okay] mmm what to say? So, for example, my parents work in ehm one is a secretary [mhm] and the other works in a factory, so they sure don't like it, but they still do it to earn money and so on [ja] and so I think, with my education, I thought I would get a job for

sure, better than them and ehm better also and I've been studying, I am happy that I have studied but ehm it's not the most important thing in my life, work. So it's always kind of something you need, because you have to pay things and so on...

16:41-16:50

Q: But apart from work being, from work paying your bills, does it mean anything else to you?

16:50-17:57

A: So uhm [pause] It's not just to pay the bills, [?] that you like it and that you can also [pause] like everybody, I'm working eight hours a day, so it is a big part of the life [mhm] so if you like it, it's sure better than if you don't like it [mhm] uhm it's difficult to say uhm in which sense it is important for me.

17:57-18:15

Q: I mean, if you compare working now with the episode of unemployment, what changed for you somehow? Can you...?

18:17-19:16

A: If I am independent, I can do what I want [mhm] I don't have to ask my parents [mhm] or somebody for money and I feel also useful, because I do something that I can [mhm] and ehm it's really not comparable with unemployment [mhm] because that period was really not nice [mhm] and ehm ja, it's really different because now I feel I can do what I want [mhm] I feel free, it's a good sensation [mhm]

19:20-19:29

Q: Ehm being unemployed ehm, did it change you? Your personality, somehow? This experience.

19:34- 20:50

A: Maybe yes. Because in this period, I could learn a lot of [?] so it was bad in some ways but it was not so bad, because I could give all my time for [?] and learn German [mhm] so in the end, it was not so unuseful [mhm] I found ways all the time and I think I made some decision [mhm] because if I were in Italy in this period when unemployed, I would not use this time, I would just make parties [mhm] and so on and I would've wasted some months [I see.]

20:51-20:54

Q: Would you say that you are still the same person you've been before?

20:56-20:58

A: Yes.

21:00-21:21

Q: Ehm ja, have you, I mean, compared with the time you still were in Italy, did you feel lower when you were unemployed [...] did you know feelings like these from your time in Italy? Or was it completely new to you?

21:21-23:32

A: No, I felt the same in Italy [mhm] Because between Bachelor and Master [ja] Uhm I was thinking about finding a job and not going for the Master [I see] I so tried to send not so many

applications, but like 10 or 15 [mhm mhm] this period and ehm I could not find a good position and I waited a couple of months between this. [So the feeling was similar?] Ja, it was similar. [mhm] But with the master in the end, I expected to have less time to wait [okay ja, ja] but in the end, I had to wait anyway [okay, yes] But I told a lot of my friends in Italy who have been in the same university and at least they waited also five, six, seven months [ja] and they started with something that was not the right thing [mhm] and not really paid in comparison with mine here in Germany [ja] and so I am still happy [okay] even though I am just unemployed or underemployed [ja]

23:32-

Q: [...] When you moved to Germany, did you already have a social network, circle of friends?

23:40-24:44

A: Ja. [Ja?] Ja. Uhm, so me and my girlfriend, we came here to Hamburg, because a friend of hers asked her if she wanted to send her CV to the company where he worked [okay] so when we came to Hamburg, there were already some people we knew [mhm] not friends, but just someone [mhm] to ask for example [mentions questions regarding the everyday's life]

24:45-24:55

Q: And when you were unemployed, did your contact to them change? I don't know, did you meet less frequently or contact them less frequently?

24:55-26:55

A: Ja. [Ja.] I tried to meet frequently people from other countries and from Germany, but always with Italian [but this was an Italian community?] Ja. [Ja, I see.] An Italian group of people [mhm] they usually always go together [mhm] they tried to go out every weekend, something like that. But it was not so useful for me. [mhm] it was easy because I could speak Italian [ja okay] so we had something in common [...] but I felt if I go on with them, it was really better to stay in Italy, there is my family [mhm] from Italy [so you wanted to either be in a more German community or at least in an international community?] Ja. [I see.] It was really easy to find friends in my German course, because there were a lot of people from other countries who didn't know anybody [mhm] so I had known a good group of friends [...]

26:55-27:12

Q: Ja, you already told me, you have been in a relationship in this period when you were unemployed and you also said that you felt low. Did this situation change your relationship or had an impact on it?

27:17-28:40

A: It didn't change, but sure, it had an impact. I was at home and she went to work every day [mhm] that was not so nice. Because also, I asked my parents to pay the flat or something, because I couldn't pay it by myself [mhm] and then she offered to pay something for me. It was really nice from her, but for me it was something really not so nice, because I was kind of angry because I couldn't pay by myself [mhm] [Could she understand these feelings?] Ja, I think. I hope she understood.

28:41-28:42

Q: Did she motivate you? Did she support you?

28:43-29:40

A: Ja ja, she supported me really a lot finding the right place [?] all the possibilities in Hamburg or in other cities. She also helped me for example, writing the CV, because she learnt German in school [okay] so when we came here, she was already about to speak German [mhm] not so good but [ja] so she helped me a lot.

29:41-29:55

Q: Is your relationship different today than it was in this episode? Or like you said, there were no changes? [No, no, there were no changes.] Mhm.

29:56-30:04

Q: Did you talk to her about how you felt or was it more that you tried to deal with it alone?

30:05-31:20

A: I tried to do it by myself [mhm] I am not so, not so ehm not really good in speaking about myself. I prefer to speak about everything but [but you're doing good – both laughing] it's really difficult for me to explain why I feel or what I think and before a decision, it is very difficult for me to evaluate or to explain [ja] and so sometimes I end up not talking about myself and prefer to have everything inside [mhm]

31:21-31:30

Q: But was it okay for her, because she already knew you and it was fine or did it lead to, I don't know, maybe struggles between the two of you?

31:30-33:44

A: Sometimes ja, there were some struggles, but not deep but because, for example sometimes I knew I had to do something to find a job [...] for example, during an interview, I am shy and I am not showing the best way [mhm] what I studied or what I've done in my life [mhm] or something like that and ehm so tried to motivate me in this field [mhm] but it's not so easy and sometimes I feel like I've made the best but it's not, maybe she told that I haven't made the best [mhm] [...] but it's difficult to explain a person what has happened during an interview [mhm] I think that sometimes it's normal because we are human and so on [sure]

33:46-34:16

Q: Did you, I mean, in this period, did you kind of develop coping strategies? How did you deal with this? How did you deal with everything? [With everything – both laughing] I mean with feeling low and not finding work. What did you do about it, I mean, except from trying to find work.

34:16-35:30

A: Uhm, what did I do. I tried to do the best in every field. For example I tried to do the best in studying German, I tried to do the best at home, I washed the plates, I washed the clothes [mhm], I ironed [mhm okay] everything, just to feel useful [okay] also when I was at home in fact [mhm] and I made a lot of sports [mhm] I was in a fitness center [...] That was useful.

35:33-35:37

Q: And meeting people? [also] I mean, except from the language school...

35:38-36:28

A: Ja, I try to. For example, my first German school made every week a "Stammtisch", so I tried to go there every week [mhm] then I tried to push this group of people just to meet

The impact of underemployment and unemployment on the well-being of highly educated immigrants

frequently [mhm] so I organised parties at my place [mhm] or just to have dinner together [mhm]

36:28-36:31

Q: Did this help you?

36:33-37:06

A: I think, ja. Because when you are not alone looking for a job, not alone, not speaking German, [...] but if you meet other people in the same situation, it could be useful [you felt less alone?] ja. [Ja. I see.]

37:07

Q: Okay. That's it. Is there anything you'd like to add? [...]

[Interviewee underlines how difficult it is to seek a job in Germany without knowing the German language just based on the mother tongue and English. In some fields it might be easier as companies might have to pay less, however, it'd be still very attractive for foreigners or Italians in particular. He talks about wage gaps between foreigners and Germans]

HELENA

[00:00:00] - [00:00:05]

IP: Do you need my full name, my last name?

[00:00:05] - [00:00:23]

NE: No //okay// it doesn't matter. I will start off with some general questions //okay// then ask about your educational background, about your work experience and then about your experience of being underemployed or unemployed //okay// and your feelings about it. I don't need your name or whatever //okay// it doesn't-

[00:00:23] - [00:00:24]

IP: My age maybe?

[00:00:24] - [00:00:25]

NE: Your age, exactly, how old are you [both laughing]?

[00:00:25] - [00:00:30]

IP: I'm 31 now.

[00:00:30] - [00:00:31]

NE: What's your country of origin?

00:00:31] - [00:00:34]

IP: [I come from Greece.

[00:00:34] - [00:00:37]

NE: Okay, and when did you move to Germany?

[00:00:37] - [00:00:40]

IP: 2009, October 2009.

[00:00:40] - [00:00:43]

NE: I see. What were your reasons of moving here?

[00:00:43] - [00:00:51]

IP: I came to do a master degree //okay//. A two years master degree.

[00:00:51] - [00:00:52]

NE: What did you study?

[00:00:52] - [00:00:56]

IP: Here I studied water resources, engineering and management.

[00:00:56] - [00:01:04]

NE: Okay, wow //yeah//. When you came here to Germany, have you been in a relationship?

[00:01:04] - [00:01:06]

IP: Yeah.

[00:01:06] - [00:01:06]

NE: Are you still in it?

[00:01:06] - [00:01:10]

IP: No [both laughing].

[00:01:10] - [00:01:13]

NE: Okay. And you are currently employed, right?

[00:01:13] - [00:01:14]

IP: Yes, now I am.

[00:01:14] - [00:01:18]

NE: And the position you are working in //yeah//, is it matching your qualification?

[00:01:18] - [00:01:32]

IP: Exactly. This position was the best description of my qualification ever, yeah //okay//. It was like a dream job //okay//. But only considering the [mhm, thinking] my (?) is not the payment, that's another[...]-

[00:01:32] - [00:01:39]

NE: Okay. Okay, we will talk about that //yeah// [both laughing]. So your highest university degree is a master of science, right?

[00:01:39] - [00:01:45]

IP: Yeah, exactly. But I already had a diploma before, so that was [mhm, thinking]-

[00:01:45] - [00:01:50]

NE: So you basically have two master degrees? //yeah, exactly//. What is your first master degree?

IP: [00:01:50] Chemical engineering. [00:01:52]

[00:01:52] - [00:02:03]

NE: Okay, I see. And your first [...] diploma//yeah// you got in Greece and the second one in- I don't know in- //in Germany// in Germany //yeah//. In Hanover, or...?

[00:02:03] - [00:02:07]

IP: In Stuttgart. In the University of Stuttgart.

[00:02:07] - [00:02:16]

NE: I see, I see. Before you moved to Germany, did you work in Greece?

[00:02:16] - [00:02:27]

IP: No. //no//. No. Not [mhm, thinking] not in a proper job, okay. Had some part time job, but in completely different [mhm, thinking] sectors, let's say.

[00:02:27] - [00:02:29]

NE: And it didn't have to do with your first masters?

[00:02:29] - [00:02:44]

IP: No, nothing. But it was just [mhm, thinking] to cover my expenses. Between my studies in Greece and my coming to Germany. I mean it was in that year (?) doing nothing, so I did some random jobs, let's say.

[00:02:44] - [00:02:52]

NE: [Mhm] I see. That's a bit of a tricky question but //yeah// we will try: What does your education mean to you?

[00:02:52] - [00:04:07]

IP: [Mhm, thinking]. Well. Starting from my diploma, I did it- I was too young when I decided to become a chemical engineer I was 17 years old. So back then the reason was that I liked chemistry //mhm// and being just a chemist was not good enough, so I thought being an engineer in chemistry that would be more interesting //mhm//. So the reasons are not that I [mhm, thinking] had a (?) searching the job market or anything. It was just like I wanted to walk on in chemistry. Then when I did the master in Germany the [mhm, thinking] idea was again not to find a good job after, but to study in a good university, in a programme in that I could meet other people from other countries, live the experience of being alone abroad, studying abroad. So that were the reasons that I did the two studies //mhm//. Yeah, it was not that I focussed on the subject, rather than that I focussed on what I want to do as a person in general.

[00:04:07] - [00:04:24]

NE: And now that you have obtained both degrees, how is it for you to have them? Is it //mhm, thinking// that it doesn't matter, is it- of course, it matters somehow, but is it //yeah// very important? Do you feel that you identify yourself now with the subjects a bit more or-?

[00:04:24] - [00:04:49]

IP: Yeah, definitely, definitely. I would say that. First of all it was a really good decision both of my degrees. But secondly they have changed me as a person //mhm//. I learned how to be more structured //I see//, I learned how to corporate with people that I have nothing in common, so in a way studying those subjects had an effect on my character, also.

[00:04:49] - [00:05:00]

NE: [Mhm], I see, okay. [Mhm, thinking] Here in Germany, did you have to work in jobs not matching your qualification?

[00:05:00] - [00:05:03]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] No, I would say, no.

[00:05:03] - [00:05:07]

NE: No, okay. But have you been unemployed?

[00:05:07] - [00:05:40]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] actually I was never totally unemployed, because I had a small HiWi (?) in the university when- after my graduation. So there was no time that I was employed, but okay, let's say I was working for forty hours per month, so I would say that earning 400 Euros is not like having a job //mhm// or something. So officially I was not totally unemployed, but I was- //you were kind of underemployed// yeah //because of the-//highly underemployed.

[00:05:40] - [00:05:45]

NE: Because you didn't get the amount of working hours you would like to have?

[00:05:45] - [00:05:55]

IP: Yeah, after the first year I got more hours, but still the maximum that I could earn was [mhm, thinking] 800 Euros.

[00:05:55] - [00:06:01]

NE: I see, I see. How did it make you feel, that you couldn't get full time employment, somehow?

[00:06:01] - [00:07:57]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] In the beginning it was okay, because I had the time to sit down and think if I want to stay in Germany, if I want to move to another country, so just having a small job was okay. After the first six month I would say then it started being a problem, because I could not support myself totally. I had to depend on my parents. And that I didn't like, because I was I had two degrees, I was old enough, so I should have been in the position to support myself alone. That didn't happen, so that made me a bit angry and stressed. Angry about myself that maybe I didn't do the right choice // [mhm] //, stressed that I could not see that change in the future, because I had already sending applications in jobs and [mhm] all I could find was nothing. So, yeah, it was really a big- tough period // [mhm] // for me. And that was the period that I broke up with my boyfriend, also. Yeah, because he had a job, I could not find a job, so I was really stressed. And there was crying a lot and that was I think, I had a small cata- [mhm, thinking] depression. // I see // Just because of that, because I had the degrees // yeah // and I had everything and I applied in positions, but I could not find anything. Not even an internship. Because for internships I was [mhm, thinking] overqualified and I was old and I was not a student anymore, and I even proposed to go work for companies without payment // [mhm] //. Free [laughing]. But they even said: no. Even to that. So I could not find, but then I could not think of a way getting out of my situation. And that was really dramatic. So for six month I had [mhm, thinking] a bad time, had tough times.

[00:07:57] - [00:08:09]

NE: Yeah, I understand, yes. I see. Have you been in contact with job agencies in this period? // [mhm, thinking] well // Maybe the Job Centre?

[00:08:09] - [00:08:35]

IP: Yeah, yeah. I had a couple of interviews for some small (?) I would say. I also had a talk with some people here in HAIS(?), you know, HAIS(?) is a big recruiting company for engineers // okay //. Anyway, but I didn't see any results from that. Probably it was because I didn't have a working experience or I don't know. // [mhm] I see // Probably that my German wasn't good enough, I have no idea.

[00:08:35] - [00:08:37]

NE: What does work mean to you?

[00:08:37] - [00:09:49]

IP: [Mhm, thinking] First of all the obvious thing that-// apart from that // [both laughing] Apart from money, that may- actually it's a big thing. It's not only how much you earn (?), it's how it makes you feel that you are- you can support yourself and that you can depend only on yourself. And that gives you much confidence. So that has a big influence on your [mhm, thinking] emotions and everything. Okay, that's the first and most important thing. The second is that you feel that you are not useless // [mhm] //, that someone needs you and your qualification and your brain and everything that you can offer. You're not just [mhm, thinking] someone- you're not a random person, you have real responsibilities, you are meaningful to some people, some [mhm thinking], yeah. You feel productive, I mean- you feel that you have- there is something good that you can do. You are qualified of doing

something important. And that affects everything.

[00:09:49] - [00:10:23]

NE: When you only had those forty hours per month, [mhm, thinking] if you- if you compare, now that you are high and that you have a full time job //yeah//, [mhm, thinking] yeah, how did it change- I mean, did this period of not succeeding the way you wanted //yeah//, did it change you somehow, I mean, you already told me, that you felt depressed and that you //yeah// felt low. But did it change you really, your personality?

[00:10:23] - [00:11:25]

IP: I think. But [mhm, thinking] after I found the job I felt stronger as a person. But- [mhm, thinking], yeah, that I could overcome the depression and all these bad feelings and I could- I succeeded on what I wanted. I fulfilled my requirements //[mhm] yeah//. So yeah, I think that made me a bit stronger and a bit more motivated in everything that I do now. And it changed me another way also that when you don't have a proper job, when you don't have proper responsibilities, you tend to think like a child more. I had a more childish behaviour towards everything //[mhm]//. Now I feel a bit more (?). I don't know if it's the job or the age, but I think it's the job I got (?). That when you have more responsibilities, you have to be more responsible. And you are- the you're responsible to everything. //[mhm]//. Yeah.

[00:11:25] - [00:11:46]

NE: I see. You already told me, you felt depressed in this phase. Did you experience feelings like depression, yeah, like- did you experience them before, also? I mean, were you- I don't know //I had- // have you had episodes like this back home in Greece, maybe?

[00:11:46] - [00:12:18]

IP: No, no, no. The only thing that I can remember was during my thesis in [mhm, thinking] the university in Stuttgart //[mhm]//but I didn't have a depression, I had a burn-out at some point, because I had huge pressure from my supervisor. I had to work maybe ten hours per day. And while you work in a laboratory, ten hours per day means, that you have to stand for ten hours. So that was really really huge. But that was I think overload of work. It had nothing to do with a depression.

[00:12:18] - [00:12:30]

NE: Okay, I see [mhm]. In this- still in this episode, when you felt depressed, did you seek for counselling? For- I don't know, psychological help?

[00:12:30] - [00:13:15]

IP: No, because I had no idea- I had no idea- (?) right expression. I felt that it's a problem that will be solved only when I find a job. But now that I see it from a distance, no. I- it was something that I should have asked for- for help //yeah//. Yeah, because that affected everything. I didn't want to go out, I was only saying that I don't have money, I don't have money to go for drinks, I don't have money to buy clothes, but I had money, I mean- but I felt insecure. That maybe something tomorrow and then I have nothing. Yeah, so I think it was a bit- //[mhm]//tricky and maybe, maybe I could have spoken to someone more specialized in these situations.

[00:13:15] - [00:13:26]

NE: Did this, you know that you- just said you didn't want to go out, you didn't want to go for drinks and you found excuses to //yeah// not do this. Did it affect your friendships?

[00:13:26] - [00:14:09]

IP: No. Because the people understand that I'm going through tough periods. And another thing is that (?) all of the people that- most of the people that I hanged out with were people with similar education as mine, but they had jobs. So maybe that also made me feel bad, that I went out with people who were like me, but they succeeded. So I felt like a loser. Being among people who already had jobs and have their careers and everything. So I thought that I was [mhm, thinking] less than them. And not so good as them. So maybe that was another reason that I didn't want to go out a lot.

[00:14:09] - [00:14:19]

NE: I see. Did you still try somehow to distract yourself? I mean even though you say: 'Okay, I didn't really want to meet them or to meet people'?

[00:14:19] - [00:14:57]

IP: No, no. Though- I remember particularly the last three month before I broke up and everything, that I was just thinking of staying in the house and do up (?) and send applications. Only that. I mean I had [mhm, thinking] I could do other things, I could go for one-day for instance, I could do (?) but I said: 'No, I have to stay at home and do applications'. But didn't even do that //okay//. Because I felt bad, that I will send another application then I receive another 'leider nicht'. So I said: 'No, I will not send'. And that was like a circle I could not brake easily.

[00:14:57] - [00:15:25]

NE: So you became- I don't know- resistant somehow- //yeah// I see. Did your motivation or your habits change? I mean, you already said, okay, you didn't go out that much anymore, because you felt ashamed, but maybe were you less motivated?

[00:15:25] - [00:16:09]

IP: Actually I was less motivated. My (?) after a month I was sure that I would not find a job, ever, in Germany. And I was less motivated for that reason, because when you feel-you get so many rejections, then you feel like there is no [mhm, thinking] there is no point in sending more applications. And I know that at this point the right thing is to send even more. But it's not how it works. And saw there is not only myself, but also another friend who had the same problems (?) me. After a while I could not apply more. Because I could not receive more rejections. I couldn't handle it. Yeah.

[00:16:09] - [00:16:26]

NE: I see, [mhm]. You already told me, that you have been in a relationship in this episode //yeah//. Would you like to talk about it, or- //yeah, yeah, of course// or not? And you already told me that you also broke up and //yeah// that the situation itself has been the reason for it or reason-

[00:16:26] - [00:16:30]

IP: It was a big reason, yeah. Of course there were other reasons, too, but-

[00:16:30] - [00:16:42]

NE: Could you maybe describe how your- the failure let's say on the labour market- how this affected your relationship, could you explain this?

[00:16:42] - [00:18:57]

IP: Yeah, first of all my ex-boyfriend was a successful person. So he had done his diploma in Greece, he has- he had done a master here in Germany and then he found really easily a job. A really good job

in a very good company. So at this time he was successful in my eyes. Maybe he could not understand how I felt, because for me it was much more difficult. The difference between us was that he was raised in Germany so he spoke fluently German //I see//. So he didn't have any issues in finding a job. And the fact that he could not understand my situation even that he tried made me feel like he rejects me also. So I don't get rejected only from the companies but also from the person that I love //I see//. And that made me [mhm, thinking] angry with him and then the fights start. When you feel that the person just tells you the right thing, which was to send more application. Try harder. But he could not understand that trying harder means that they I get more rejections and that means that I feel bad and bad and worse all the time. Yeah. And actually the- after all this months of being unemployed and being in a bad mood, I said: 'Okay, what if I don't find a job? What if my parents say: Okay, we will not support you anymore, you have to do something, you have to come back to Greece.' I asked him: 'Are you willing to support me financial until I find a job? Totally, I mean I will be totally dependent on you.' And then it's like he wasn't really sure about that. And then [laughing shortly] //okay// then I exploded (?) - I mean he was like: 'Yeah, you will stay in my house, you will not pay any rent, yeah, I wouldn't go to supermarket.' I said: 'Yeah, but are you gonna pay my make up and my clothes?' And that was the point of [laughing shortly] no return for us. Yeah //I see//. I don't know it was okay of me to ask, but it's something that I want. I'm not sure if it's the right thing that someone asks from a boyfriend, but for me it was.

[00:18:57] - [00:19:05]

NE: Well, it was a rather insecure situation and //yeah// you probably needed to figure out //yeah, decided-// what to do next, right?

[00:19:05] - [00:19:25]

IP: Yeah //yes, I see//. So I want to see if it makes sense to stay in Germany //yeah// and continually looking for a job even if it was very hard for me or just leave it and do something else. Of course I stayed. But back then I wasn't sure that I want to stay //[mhm], I see//.

[00:19:25] - [00:19:44]

NE: You said, you were fighting a lot //yeah// - apart from this, did the communication between the two of you change, I mean, was it often a topic that you were unhappy with your situation, did you try to talk to him about it? //yeah, yeah// Did he-

[00:19:44] - [00:20:08]

IP: He said: 'I understand.' But he could not understand that, actually. He tried, he tried to help me with my CV, with my cover letter, with everything. But I don't think he could understand how hard it was for me. Because he didn't go through the situation. So he thought that I do something wrong. So I don't try hard enough. Yeah.

[00:20:08] - [00:20:21]

NE: [Mhm] I see. Okay. How did this make you feel additionally. I mean, you already said you felt so depressed and then your relationship //yeah// also failed. How was that, how did you deal with that?

[00:20:21] - [00:21:17]

IP: Actually I wa- it was [laughing]- no it's funny! But after I broke up and then I found out that he didn't mean (?) //okay//, yeah. That is what happened. When you fight a lot, then someone else comes to the picture, always. Then I had a really bad month. One month of crying [laughing shortly] and being really really sad. And then I had a huge support from my friends and then I went to Greece for one month and I did f(?) then I came back and said: 'Okay, now I have to find a job.' And then I was

motivated to find a job. Then I did everything that I should have done one year ago. So I felt bad for being a loser in every aspect of my life. Failing to find a job and failing to keep a relationship. But then I said: 'Okay, yeah. Now I have to make it.'

[00:21:17] - [00:21:20]

NE: And that worked then? //yeah, yeah, after six month-// This is how you got this job?

[00:21:20] - [00:21:44]

IP: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I attended many- [mhm, thinking] what's the English word- Messen //yeah// Jobmesse //exhibitions// exhibitions, yeah, exactly [laughing shortly]. I attended exhibitions. Not only job-exhibitions, but also generally exhibitions that were related to my subject to water treatment and stuff. I talked to many people, I sent far more applications and then I got a job.

[00:21:44] - [00:21:52]

NE: Okay. But did you get the job through connections or was it an announced job or-?

[00:21:52] - [00:22:49]

IP: No, it was- I was in a Messe that- it was not a Jobmesse, it was proper Messe in Munich //yeah// that is a big Messe [mhm, thinking] for water treatment and everything. So I printed 20 CV's and I went there //okay//. Yeah, so I talked to some people like: 'Oh, wow, I like your company, I'd love to work for you' and 'is there an opening or-' and then I left my CV's and one or two of the companies replied, I had two interviews and yeah I got the one job here //okay//. Yeah //nice//. And I think there reason that I got the job is that they saw that I'm really motivated to work. Nobody goes to a Messe and says: 'Hello, I want to work for you.' Normally they meet customers, they don't meet potential //mhm// employees. So maybe that's why they liked me.

[00:22:49] - [00:23:04]

NE: You said earlier, that the job is good but- //the payment is not so as expected, yeah//. What do you mean- I mean you don't need to tell me what you earn //yeah//, I don't care- but what do you mean by that?

[00:23:04] - [00:23:50]

IP: I think, I don't think(?), I am sure I earn less than I would have earned if I was- for sure- German //okay//. Yeah, that's- but I understand it in on a way, because I don't speak fluently German. Of course, that doesn't affect my job. As a job. It affects my relationship with my co-workers //mhm, mhm//. But I don't see how this is related to my- to the money that I get. But, yeah. I accept it, because it's how it is. In small companies- in small companies that you don't get paid by Tarif //mhm// these things happen. So, yeah //mhm// I see//. And now I need the working experience, so I don't care how much I earn, I just need-(?)

[00:23:50] - [00:23:56]

NE: Do you have a- it's a full time job //yeah//, right? And is it a limited contract or is it unlimited?

[00:23:56] - [00:23:58]

IP: No, it's unbefristet, unlimited, yeah.

[00:23:58] - [00:24:06]

NE: Wow that's good //yeah//. And do you have the opportunity to earn more at some point?

[00:24:06] - [00:24:12]

IP: I think, yeah. After the first year it will be a negotiation of the money //okay, cool//.

[00:24:12] - [00:24:27]

NE: Congratulations //Thanks [laughing shortly]//. I'm done with all the questions, actually. No, I have- I actually have one more. When you felt so bad, did you develop some coping strategies for your self to get through this?

[00:24:27] - [00:25:43]

IP: No, no. //you felt so-// I felt just bad. And I was thinking all day and all night: 'How can I get a job?' It was like an obsession. I felt really really bad. Because it's the idea about Germany that you are an engineer in Germany, you should find a job really easily and earn a lot of money immediately. And it's not the case. Maybe in really specific engineering sectors that happens. But not for every engineer. Especially not for a foreign engineer who can not speak German. Especially for a woman foreigner engineer who can not work in every department of a company because first was it a woman and said only: 'Well, I am not the huge, the big woman who can-' [mhm, thinking] say to a worker something and then the worker will listen to her. So yeah, that was also another factor that made me feel stressed. But no, I didn't [mhm, thinking] I didn't want to find a way to cope with all the situation. I felt that this is good I feel bad so that I am more motivated. But it didn't work out like that, no.

[00:25:43] - [00:25:54]

NE: Okay. Well, I am done //okay//. But- is there anything you would like to add? Is there anything you still think of, that you would like to tell me, maybe?

[00:25:54] - [00:26:39]

IP: Well. What we discussed before, the language is huge barrier in finding a job- in keeping a job. In everything. And I think that [mhm, thinking] in Germany like in every county you find a job easier with connections. I mean in the company that I work right now, I am the only person that got hired without having a previous connection with this company. So I didn't have any friend who was working there. I didn't have any relative who was working there. I didn't do my thesis or my internship or anything there. So, yeah. As I see, especially in small companies it works like that. You need someone to get you in //yeah//. Yeah.

[00:26:39] - [00:26:42]

NE: But do you feel good there? Do you feel welcome?

[00:26:42] - [00:27:22]

IP: Yeah. The people are really really friendly with me. But I think that's the point (?) to the the company also that we are a small fa- a big family here, so yeah. So the work is done better. // I see// But they are friendly with me and really [mhm, thinking] helpful with me. I mean they found me the apartment because in the beginning I had problems even finding an apartment. Because when you are [mhm, thinking] you start a job you have the Probezeit, so the owners don't give you an apartment. And especially for a stra- foreigner [laughing shortly], even worse. So yeah. Extremely difficult to [laughing shortly] be a foreigner.

[00:27:22] - [00:27:31]

NE: [Mhm], it is, definitely, yes, it is. It is. But now you feel better //yeah// and settled also?]

[00:27:31] - [00:27:57]

IP: Yeah- settled I would not say that, because //[laughing shortly] not exaggerating// not exactly

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settled. No, because I can't see myself staying in [names small town] forever. It's a big- small city for me. Yeah. //[laughing shortly] it is//. I wouldn't say that I feel settled down, no [laughing shortly]. But definitely I feel that I am in the right path //okay, that's really fantastic//.Yeah.

[00:27:57] - [00:28:00]

NE: Okay, cool, so we're done.

[00:28:00] - [00:28:01]

IP: Great.

[00:28:01] - [00:28:03]

NE: Thank you so much. //You're welcome//.