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The influence of perceived economic downgrading on commitment system change: A narrative study on first-generation Afghan refugees in the Netherlands

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Student: Jeroen Lenssen

Student number: S1063669

Email:

Supervisor: Annabel Buiter, MA

Second examinor: Dr. Sofija Pajic

Preface

Before you is the thesis, titled 'The influence of perceived economic downgrading on commitment system change', displayed. This thesis was written between February 2022 and June 2022 as part of the master's program in Strategic Human Resources Leadership at the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

While writing the research proposal I had the opportunity to participate in the Community of Practice (CoP). The theme of this CoP was community, work, and the integration process of refugees. Engaging with these topics helped me to orientate myself in the research fields and determine the direction for this thesis.

During the writing of this thesis, I received support from various people. Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Annabel Buiter, MA for her guidance during this project and the writing process of this thesis. Moreover, I have received plentiful feedback from Annabel Buiter, MA and Dr. Yvonne van Rossenberg during the thesis circle meetings for which I am grateful. Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Sofija Pajic for her time and valuable feedback on my research proposal.

I am also very grateful to my fellow students of the thesis circle. Firstly, Kelsi van Rozendaal and Daphne Graham have supported and encouraged me over the past months for which I am very thankful. Secondly, I am also grateful for Shabnam Shanurkeyl and Ana Molina Aragon, as this study would not have been possible without them.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my partner, family, and friends for the endless support I received.

Thank you for taking the time to read this thesis.

Jeroen Lenssen

Abstract

Refugees downgrade after they arrive in the host country, which entails the devaluation and concurrent lower returns for their education and skills. Consequently, some refugees start working in lower-level occupations, resulting in overqualification. While it is known that overqualification alters work commitment, limited commitment research is done in the context of refugees. Consequently, this study adopted the Commitment System Theory (CST) to study multiple commitment bonds of first-generation Afghan refugees in the Netherlands, specifically to work and to the core family. The findings contribute to the Migration field by adding micro-level perceptions about the experiences of difficulties and how refugees cope with them. Moreover, contributions are made to the Commitment field of how commitment systems of refugees are influenced by perceived economic downgrading. To do so, the thesis circle obtained 29 life stories of first-generation Afghan refugees through interviews. Consequently, the narrative analysis was applied to 14 life stories of participants with prior education and work experience.

The findings demonstrate that core family commitment is an important element in the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees, despite significant career changes. These career changes did not influence commitment to work, as most Afghan refugees in this study found employment to which they feel committed. On the other hand, due to the inability to realize work-related dreams, some refugees experienced changes in their commitment system. This signals the importance of supporting refugees in finding meaningful work in the host country. An important limitation is that this study only focused on the commitment bonds to work and the core family, thus excluding other commitment bonds. As such, this could have influenced interpretations drawn from this study due to the interrelatedness of commitment bonds.

Keywords: refugees, economic downgrading, commitment system change, narrative research.

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1. Introduction

A refugee was asked in a case study of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) why the experiences of obtaining work in the Netherlands with a foreign diploma for electricity were difficult. The following response was given:

"Yes, that diploma I have is not valid here. And the job center and the municipality, they just want to see how they can get you out of benefits. But I have experience, I have worked as an electrician for fifteen years, but he does not listen whether I have experience or not. No, I just have to work..." (Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2020, p. 76).

Meaningful and sustainable employment are increasingly recognized as significant outcomes for a positive refugee settlement (Loosemore, Alkilani, & Hammad, 2021; Newman, Nielsen, Smyth, Hirst, & Kennedy, 2018). However, difficulties arise when refugees attempt to draw upon their home country's human capital to obtain employment, as was indicated in the above-mentioned quote. The statement indicates that prior credentials and work experience obtained in the home country no longer guarantee refugees access to related professions in the host country. Consequently, migration researchers (e.g. Baker, Due, & Rose, 2019; Chiswick & Miller, 2001) have argued that obtaining host-country human capital is an important condition for refugees in finding employment in the new society. While understandable from a macro-level perspective, it would be worthwhile to investigate factors that impact refugees' lives on other levels, (e.g. the inaccessibility to work in occupations they once aspired or took up). Therefore, this thesis will study how difficulties in finding meaningful and sustainable employment impact the lives of refugees in the new host country.

1.1 Background

Migration literature has abundantly addressed the disadvantaged position of refugees in the host country's labor market. Frequently discussed in this type of literature are so-called employment barriers (Suto, 2009), such as the non-recognition, or devaluation of foreign credentials and work experience by institutional validation processes or employers (Akkaymak, 2016; Verwiebe et al., 2018). Conversely, some researchers note that the foreign credentials and work experience of migrants are racialized in the host country context (Joseph, 2019; Li, 2008). Nonetheless, the non-recognition of foreign credentials signals a devaluation of the relative economic value of education (Araki, 2020). As a consequence, refugees are 'downgraded' in the host country (Dustmann, Schönberg, & Stuhler, 2016). Downgrading indicates that their position is lower than the position of the host country's citizens who have similar education and

work experience. This hinders refugees from pursuing suitable work that aligns with prior education and work experience. To avoid unemployment, refugees are directed to obtain host country education or find alternative work. If alternative work is pursued, it often results in employment at lower occupation levels, compared to the host country's citizens (Reitz, 2007).

As a result of being employed in lower-level occupations where higher-level education is not required or utilized (Kalfa & Piracha, 2017; Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Martinez, 2015), refugees often find themselves in overqualified employment positions. It is known that overqualified employees tend to be less committed (i.e. attached or bonded) to their organization (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012; Lobene, Meade, & Pond, 2014). While a widely studied topic, research has yet to delve deeper into the perceptions of overqualification and concurrent commitment in the context of refugees (Bakker, 2015).

Commitment generally implies that the individual is connected or bonded to something or someone. A more specific definition for commitment is "*a volitional bond characterized by dedication and the felt responsibility for a target*" (Klein et al., 2012, p. 137). As a result of several decades of commitment studies, the organizational commitment conceptualization has been studied most widely. However, it is not the only target employees can be attached to. Employees can also be committed to other work-related targets, such as their occupation or profession, or targets outside the organization such as their family (Cohen, 2004; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Yet, commitment studies that consider multiple commitment targets of refugees in the Dutch context have been limited so far. To do so, Commitment System Theory (CST) will be applied to study multiple commitment bonds inside and outside the boundaries of the organization. This theory defines commitment systems as the interrelated commitment bonds to a set of targets (Klein, Solinger, & Duflot, 2022, p. 117).

Aligning the above-mentioned theoretical concepts to refugees in the Dutch context, Bakker (2015) argues that refugees who obtained a higher-level qualification in the country of origin are more likely to be employed in occupations that would leave them overqualified. These refugees tend to be more often overqualified in their current occupation, compared to those who obtained their highest degree in the Netherlands. Bakker's study focused on several refugee groups and found that especially the Afghan refugee group tends to be overqualified. More specifically, 71% of the foreign-educated Afghan refugees are overqualified, compared to 32% of those who obtained their degree in the Netherlands (Bakker, 2015). This discrepancy could be attributed to the relatively high level of education first-generation Afghan refugees

received in Afghanistan (Hessels, 2004), which makes them a valuable refugee group to study economic downgrading, overqualification and commitment.

First-generation Afghan refugees in the Netherlands are part of a larger group that fled Afghanistan from the 1980s till the 2000s. Political unrest and the civil war in Afghanistan, which was caused by the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 and the hostile takeover of the Taliban in the 1990s, were significant motives for their flight (Barfield, 2010). During this period, around four million Afghan citizens sought safer havens abroad, which resulted in 36,305 first-generation Afghan refugees living in the Netherlands by 2021 (Barfield, 2010; Dutch Council for Refugees, 2021). Hessels (2004) states that most Afghan refugees who came to the Netherlands were not able to achieve the professional status they aspired to. Many Afghan refugees accepted less-qualified work, regardless of it being perceived as less favorable. Consequently, some accepted less-qualified work which was often paired with frustration. This makes work a valuable commitment target to study, due to the difficulties Afghan refugees faced in suitable finding work (Hessels, 2004). The core family is another noteworthy commitment target of first-generation Afghan refugees, due to the shift in centrality from the larger family to the core family. These insights induce relevancy to study first-generation Afghan refugees as a significant group in terms of economic downgrading, overqualification and commitment to work and core family through CST.

1.2 Research aim and question

This thesis explores how first-generation Afghan refugees perceive their economic downgrading in terms of status in the Netherlands and how this influences their commitment bonds towards their work and core family. By doing so, this study draws from the fields of Migration and Commitment, while applying theoretical insights from the literature on overqualification.

Aligning the above-mentioned theoretical concepts gives rise to novel understandings regarding the study topic. Firstly, studying perceptions such as economic downgrading and concurrent overqualification would fill research gaps in how refugees perceive and overcome difficulties (Loosemore et al., 2021; Ryan, 2019), while simultaneously giving them a voice (Joseph, 2019). These findings will be relevant for current and future migration research (Bakker, 2015) because migration literature has largely focused on advancing the current understanding of macro-level occupational challenges that skilled refugees face (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020). Secondly, examining changes in the commitment to work and the core family in commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees contributes to a better

understanding of how economic downgrading, and concurrent overqualification influence commitment towards multiple targets (e.g. work and the core family) (Van Rossenberg et al., 2018).

Aligning the above-mentioned theoretical concepts also entails societal relevance. This is because the number of people fleeing from war and violence doubled to 82,4 million refugees globally, whereby the number of refugees taken in by the Netherlands increased to 79,000 by 2021 (Dutch Council for Refugees, 2021). In turn, the economic downgrading of refugees likely results in overqualification, or worse, unemployment. This poses organizational and policy-level concerns (Kulkarni et al., 2015). More insights on how downgrading influences commitment might petition for a more inclusive approach, based on a fairer evaluation of foreign credentials or work experience. This is especially important, as more recent refugees from Afghanistan (Mulholland, 2022) will enter the Dutch labor market in the coming years. Therefore, it is likely that increasingly more Afghan refugees will face difficulties while attempting to find meaningful and sustainable employment.

Hence, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: *How does the perceived economic downgrading by first-generation Afghan refugees influence the commitment system change?*

This study applies a qualitative, narrative approach to answer the above-mentioned research question. First-generation Afghan refugees who arrived in the Netherlands between 1980 and 2000 will be interviewed. Narratives will be collected about stories that entail experiences and perceptions about integration, work experiences, and commitment bonds to work and the family. Consequently, the narrative approach allows for structurally uncovering and analyzing perceptions (Symon & Cassell, 2012) of economic downgrading, overqualification, and changes to the commitment to work and the core family in the commitment system of refugees.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: the second chapter discusses the main concepts of this study, that is economic downgrading, concurrent overqualification, and commitment. The third chapter elaborates on the methodological considerations for the chosen research design. The fourth chapter presents the insights obtained from the narratives of the participants. Chapter five elaborates on the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the induced limitations of this study and possible future research directions. This thesis ends with a conclusion in chapter six.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter provides an outline of the main theoretical concepts applied in this thesis. To do so, prior research on these concepts is evaluated to underpin this study. The first section provides an overview of what is currently known about the economic downgrading of refugees and how current literature relates it to overqualification. Consequently, the chapter proceeds with the commitment construct in the second section. This section concludes with the relatively recent Commitment System Theory. The chapter concludes with the conceptual model applied in this study and discusses how the above-mentioned theoretical concepts are studied simultaneously.

2.1 Economic downgrading of refugees

In this section, the downgrading of refugees in the host country will be discussed. 'Downgrading' occurs when the position of immigrants, such as refugees, is systematically lower than the position of the host country's citizens with the same observed education and experience levels (Chiswick & Miller, 2009; Dustmann et al., 2016, p. 47; Friedberg, 2000). Consequently, these refugees receive lower returns for similar skills, compared to the host country's citizens if these skills were not obtained in the host country. The consequent decrease in returns indicates that refugees are economically downgraded. The definition of economic downgrading corresponds with the quote in the introduction, whereby the refugee indicated the inability to obtain work with his home country credentials and work experience.

The report of the European Parliament and International Organization for Migration (2012) states that non-European refugees in Europe are required to obtain specific credentials, experience, or competencies that are necessary for accessing profession-related occupations. This implies that Afghan refugees, as a non-European refugee group in Europe, are required to obtain specific credentials and work experience that grant access to profession-related occupations. Conversely, it is suggested that their prior education and work experience no longer give them access to profession-related occupations. This corresponds with the statements of several researchers (e.g. Brell, Dustmann, & Preston, 2020) who argue that refugees arrive with limited applicable human capital, such as knowledge and experience, in the host country. Possessing little applicable human capital increases the likelihood that refugees start at significantly lower wages (Brell et al., 2020) and are further hindered obtaining sustainable employment (Loosemore et al., 2021; Olliff, 2010). As a consequence, refugees start in a more disadvantaged position than other migrant groups.

Migration literature and diploma evaluation literature identified several causes for the downgraded position of refugees in the host country. Firstly, refugees are at times unable to bring their credentials to the host country due to their forceful and sudden flights. Consequently, refugees arrive with less locally applicable human capital in the host country which prevents them from drawing upon their home country's education. Moreover, contacting institutions to send a copy is often impossible due to the fear of personal persecution (Bakker, 2015). Consequently, refugees no longer possess their credentials and are thus vulnerable to being downgraded.

Secondly, when refugees manage to take their credentials along, they often encounter employment barriers such as the non-recognition of their credentials (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Suto, 2009; Verwiebe et al., 2018). The non-recognition is an outcome of institutional validation processes in the host country. Souto-Otero and Villalba-Garcia (2015) note that some validation processes primarily identify what foreign credentials are missing when compared to the host country's education system. Consequently, unrecognized credentials hinder refugees from obtaining higher-quality employment, thus indicating economic downgrading.

Thirdly, Bakker, Dagevos, and Engbersen (2013) found evidence that the length of the time spent in refugee camps severely impacts future employment outcomes for refugees. As refugees need to apply for asylum, they often await the decision on their residency status (Bakker, Dagevos, & Engbersen, 2016). Subsequently, long asylum housing decreases the prospect and quality of employment in the Netherlands, because obtaining a residence permit is necessary to be allowed to work (Bakker et al., 2013; Ministry of Justice and Security, 2022). Furthermore, some researchers argue asylum seeker housing prompts the process of 'Othering', as it immediately establishes who is a citizen, and who is a foreigner (Udah, 2019). This causes spatial relationships, such as physical division and segregation between refugees and the host society. Spatial relationships in the form of discrimination from host societies significantly hinder refugees in their integration (Brell et al., 2020). For example, Olliff (2010) argues that suitability ratings of refugees are influenced by the widespread perception of employers. These perceptions entail that those refugees should only be employed in occupations where local labor shortages exist. Thus, both long asylum procedures and negative perceptions by employers decrease the quality of employment and result in an economically downgraded position of refugees in the host country.

Fourthly, several studies found that foreign qualifications and work experiences by refugees are often not recognized by employers (Friedberg, 2000; Loosemore et al., 2021).

These credentials are valued less in terms of earnings when compared to human capital obtained in the host country. Moreover, this corresponds with prior research whereby regulations undervalue foreign credentials (Akkaymak, 2016). Researchers argue that this is caused due to the perceived limited compatibility of foreign credentials and work experience with the host society's labor market (Chiswick & Miller, 2009; De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010). Conversely, it exhibits the mainstream group's tendency to perceive their host country's education and work experience as being most relevant for the labor market. Nonetheless, it causes economic downgrading of refugees, as their home country's credentials and work experience are not considered relevant for the host country's labor market.

Aligning the above-mentioned causes for economic downgrading, refugees are thus prompted to obtain additional host countries' human capital, such as education or work experience. However, refugees are not always able to obtain additional human capital. For example, refugees face uncertainty in their future which reduces incentives to invest in host-country-specific human capital (Brell et al., 2020). This causes economic downgrading to be more severe for these refugees in the years after arrival in the host country, as other migrants typically proceed to acquire complementary skills (Dustmann et al., 2016). Yet, perceptions of the economic downgrading of refugees in literature have been limited so far.

To provide a possible direction for the perceptions of economic downgrading of first-generation Afghan refugees, this study draws a conceptual comparison between economic downgrading and the 'expunged past' experience in the study by Joseph (2019) who studied labor market experiences of migrants in the Irish labor market. The 'expunged past' experience occurs when a migrant's prior learning and skills are unrecognized and denies the existence of their prior achievements. This corresponds with the outcome of economic downgrading, due to the non-recognition and devaluations of prior credentials and work experience.

While Joseph studied the labor market experiences of migrants, no distinction was made between migrants and refugees. This corresponds with the current state of Migration literature, as it only recently started examining the differences between refugees and other migrant groups in terms of income and employment (Bakker et al., 2016). Applying the Geneva convention of 1951 as a reference point, refugees are defined as individuals who have a substantiated fear of persecution based on race, nationality, membership in a specific social group, or political opinion (UNHCR, 2010). Consequently, refugees live outside their former residences and are unwilling to return due due to this fear of persecution. This sets refugees further apart from other migrant groups, as they arrive less prepared in the host country and often suffer from

traumatic experiences (Bakker et al., 2016). Moreover, not obtaining additional host country human capital likely increases the risk that refugees continue to suffer from economic downgrading.

As such, it is conceivable that refugees will have accepted employment less desired by them in the new host country. This is even more applicable for the first-generation Afghan refugee group in this study. As aforementioned, Hessels (2004) notes that some have accepted occupations that require fewer qualifications, regardless of perceived suitability. Consequently, Bakker (2015) found that 71% of the Afghan refugees employed in the Netherlands are at risk of overqualification. Therefore, studying perceptions of Afghan refugees on economic downgrading will result in novel findings. On the other hand, the findings of Bakker imply that some participants in this study will likely have remained overqualified due to their initial economic downgrading.

2.1.1 Overqualification

In this section, the concept of overqualification is discussed. Overqualification is referred to in the literature as *"the surplus of skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required or utilized in their current work"* (Kulkarni et al., 2015, p. 530). Yet, the overqualification field is divided on the outcomes of overqualification which results in various perspectives. The liability perspective assumes that detachment and boredom occur when the employee is employed in an overqualified position. This affects job attitudes such as organizational commitment, but also job satisfaction, and lower physical and psychological health (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Conversely, the asset perspective assumes that both the employer and the employee will benefit from overqualification if the overqualified situation was chosen freely (Kulkarni et al., 2015). Regardless of the perspective, research to date has not been successful in fully understanding the potential negative effects of overqualification on productivity-related outcomes, such as commitment (Kim, & Ryu, 2017; Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, 2014).

However, it is currently known that overqualification hinders career progression. Here, meager career opportunities increase the likelihood of commitment being affected negatively (Blenkinsopp & Scurry, 2007; Wickramasinghe, 2018). This implies that some first-generation Afghan refugees likely have had work-related aspirations, or filled certain occupations in Afghanistan, but have not been able to be employed in similar occupations in the Netherlands. Consequently, Afghan refugees may compare their current occupation with subjectively chosen comparisons such as their ideal self and previous occupations. These subjective comparisons

form the basis of overqualification and drive employee reactions, such as commitment to work (Ahmad, 2018; McKee-Ryan, Virick, Prussia, Harvey, & Lilly, 2009). This implies that the economic downgrading of Afghan refugees could influence their commitment to work through overqualification.

2.2 Commitment

In this section, the concept of commitment is discussed. When it is stated that someone is committed, it implies that the individual is committed to someone or something (e.g. committed to their family or committed to a project) (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the context of employees, committed employee behavior became a more central feature at the heart of HRM at the end of the 20th century. The employee commitment conceptualization was viewed here as the employee's psychological reaction to the offering of the organization (Ahmad, 2018). However, research on commitment was inconsistent at the time, as it did not seem to be guided by a consistent and specific model (Coopey & Hartley, 1991). Consequently, the three-components model (TCM) emerged for conceptualizing commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

TCM and the conceptualization of organizational commitment have been studied widely to date. Prior research attributed increased motivation, well-being, overall performance, job satisfaction, and a lower intention to quit as some of the individual and organizational outcomes of commitment (Becker, Klein, & Meyer, 2009; Bishop & Scott, 1997; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Yet, Klein et al. (2012) argue that conclusions drawn from commitment studies may not warrant these positive outcomes. This is due to the conceptualization of commitment only targeting the organization. Here lies the main criticism of organizational commitment conceptualization, as the organization is not the only commitment target for employees within their work. For example, the commitment of individual employees in the workplace can also be targeted to their occupation or profession, career, team, colleagues, or manager (Cohen, 2004; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Yet, prior studies on commitment were predominately focused on the organizational commitment conceptualization.

Accordingly, Klein et al. (2012) felt compelled to reconceptualize the commitment concept. They attributed the following definition to commitment: *"a volitional bond characterized by dedication and felt responsibility for a target"* (Klein et al., 2012, p. 137). Their definition accounts for the possibility that commitment bonds are targeted to actors inside or outside the organization, or towards specific goals. Moreover, the sense of feeling commitment implies a psychological state of being, due to the strength of these commitment

bonds dynamically evolving over time and inside the individual (Solinger, van Olffen, & Roe, 2013). This dynamic characterization implies that commitment is more successive and salient when compared to the organizational commitment conceptualization (Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, & DeShon, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Swart, Kinnie, Van Rossenberg, & Yalabik, 2014; Van Rossenberg et al., 2018).

This thesis applies the commitment conceptualization by Klein et al. (2012) while studying the commitment bonds of first-generation Afghan refugees. Furthermore, this study considers the warning by Klein et al. (2022) that examining a single commitment target in isolation likely leads to incorrect predictions. These incorrect predictions are caused by the interrelatedness of multiple commitment bonds. Therefore, this study needs to consider the multiple commitment targets of first-generation Afghan refugees, such as commitment to work and the core family. To do so, this study applies the Commitment System Theory (CST) (Klein et al., 2022).

2.2.1 Commitment System Theory

In this section, the relatively recent Theory of Commitment Systems is elaborated on. Framing multiple commitment bonds as systems has only recently been addressed in the literature. Yet, prior research already established that less committed employees to the organization tend to change their commitment to other targets (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As this study focuses on multiple commitment targets of first-generation Afghan refugees, CST is applied. Klein et al. (2022) define commitment systems as *"a network of interrelating commitments to a set of targets"* (p. 117). They have drawn from General Systems Theory, whereby a commitment system is based on atomistic parts and associated temporal dynamics (e.g. changes in the commitment system). Like other systems, are the number, the strength, and the coupling of the elements the parameters of a commitment system.

When a commitment system takes a centralized structure, it becomes dependent on the self-centeredness of the individual. Self-centeredness relates to the degree of importance to self-concept and self-esteem (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Klein et al., 2022; Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Here, the importance of self-concept and self-esteem corresponds with refugees comparing their current occupation with subjectively chosen comparisons such as their ideal self, or previous occupation. However, as CST is relatively new, changes in the commitment systems are largely unexplored in the context of refugees. Yet, prior research does suggest that the commitment systems of refugees change after they transition into the host country.

The study by Itzhaky and Ribner (1999) found the commitment of refugees changed after they transitioned to the host country. Itzhaky and Ribner argue that during the transition from the home country to the host country, women had significantly higher levels of workplace commitment than men. The researchers attribute this to the transfer of a sense of responsibility. This responsibility was previously in the family and shifted to the workplace in the new context.

Applying the more recent commitment conceptualization by Klein et al. (2012), this shift of commitment can be explained due to the trade-offs in time and attention made by these refugees. As such, these trade-offs favor the new commitment target to the workplace. Consequently, the transition from home country to host country may change older commitment bonds for new bonds. This shift between commitment targets would suggest a change in the commitment systems of refugees, as the commitment to work became more important.

Yet, this does not mean that older bonds are always replaced with newer commitment bonds. Hollenbeck and Klein (1987) argue that positive commitment bonds, positively relate to the reluctance of letting go of that commitment bond. The reluctance of letting go of a commitment bond may also be applicable in the context of refugees. For example, refugees may have held on to commitment bonds to targets in the home country, such as their families that continued living in the home country. Consequently, commitment will be affected negatively if refugees have experienced economic downgrading through meager career opportunities (Blenkinsopp & Scurry, 2007). This would have hindered re-engagement in host country occupations (Suto, 2009), and implies that changes of older for newer commitment bonds did not occur in the commitment system of refugees. However, as prior studies have approached workplace commitment as a timeless state of being (Klein et al., 2012), it remains unknown how changes in the commitment systems apply in the context of refugees.

2.3 Conceptual model

Previous research has shown that refugees downgrade due to the context of their migration, long asylum procedures, institutional validation processes, and bias from employers. Consequently, economic downgrading prompts the inaccessibility of occupations in the host country, which were accessible in the home country. To avoid unemployment, some Afghan refugees will have accepted work that does not fit their prior credentials and work experience. This leads to involuntary overqualified positions, which likely affect commitment to work negatively. On the other hand, some refugees will have obtained additional host country education to mitigate their downgrading. Nonetheless, it implies the possibility of changes in the commitment systems of refugees.

For the current study, it is therefore valuable to explore changes in the commitment to work and core family of first-generation Afghan refugees, considering their economic downgrading. Taking a system perspective on commitment allows exploring the dynamics of multiple commitment bonds. As such, narratives will uncover perceptions of economic downgrading and commitment. Analyzing these life stories allows examining how commitment to work and core family by first-generation Afghan refugees has dynamically changed over time (Klein et al., 2022). Here, perceptions of commitment are a suitable direction for the current study, as it correlates with overall commitment (Rusu, 2019). Hence, the conceptual model in figure 1 is presented below:
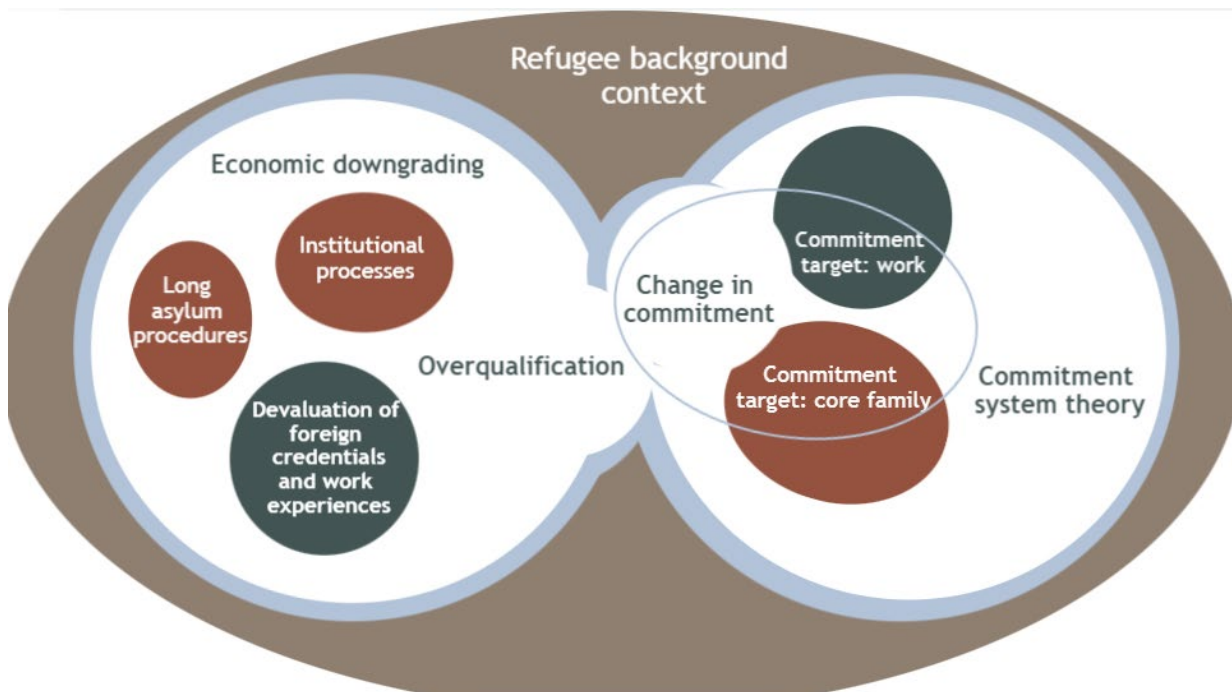
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the influence of economic downgrading on the commitment system change in the context of refugees.

The following sub-questions will support answering the research question:

- How is economic downgrading perceived by first-generation Afghan refugees?
- How is overqualification by first-generation Afghan refugees perceived in the alignment between qualifications and work experience, and their current work?
- How have commitment bonds to work and the core family changed in the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees?

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological considerations that supported answering the research question of this study. This chapter starts by elaborating on the chosen research approach and design. After this, the participant sample is described. This is followed by an explanation of the data collection method and data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with the limitations induced by the methodological applications and the ethical considerations that were considered

3.1 Research approach and design

In this section, the philosophical foundation and design of this study are discussed. The required empirical data from Afghan refugees required a more qualitative approach to research. Qualitative research allowed uncovering of the experiences and feelings (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013) of members of the refugee group. As such, it allowed for the exploration of perceptions and experiences of first-generation Afghan refugees on economic downgrading and its influence on commitment system change.

This study explored the stories, experiences, and feelings of first-generation Afghan refugees. Therefore, the relativism ontology corresponds with the chosen research approach. Relativism assumes that finite subjective experiences constitute reality, and that reality is not distinguishable from the subjective experiences that compose it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Because this study assumed that human experience is reality, and reality is a human experience, it means that two individuals experience their worlds differently, rather than having different experiences in a single world (Bayley, 1995). Continuing in the context of this study, its purpose was to delve deeper and understand the subjective experiences of reality and multiple truths (Levers, 2013) of Afghan refugees. Consequently, this study sought to increase understanding of how Afghan refugees perceived economic downgrading and its influences on changes in their commitment to work and the core family.

To do so, the study has taken a subjectivist stance to research (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Subjectivism believes that knowledge is constantly processed through lenses, such as language, social class, and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, it was assumed that it is inevitable to influence what is seen while observing the world. An example of subjective knowledge is Rubin's Vase as mentioned in the article by Levers (2013). This vase can either be interpreted as a white vase on a dark background or as two persons facing each other. How the vase is perceived depends on the person perceiving it, equivalent to how overqualification can be perceived differently. Accordingly, the subjectivist stance contradicts the assumptions

of the positivist stance. Positivism assumes that it is possible to objectively or neutrally observe the social world and test theoretical predictions. Here, it was understood that notions of truth and objectivity are outcomes of practices that concealed, rather than eliminated the researcher's partiality. Therefore, this research assumed there is no right or wrong, as all knowledge is value-laden (Levers, 2013).

Because all knowledge is value-laden, this study followed the interpretivism paradigm to understand the perceptions of first-generation Afghan refugees about economic downgrading and changes in their commitment systems. Moreover, it accepts multiple meanings, such as the meanings Afghan refugees attribute to the research topic. By doing so, this study focused on narrating the experiences and actions of first-generation Afghan refugees (Fossey, Harvey, Mcdermott, & Davidson, 2002; Levers, 2013).

To narrate the experiences and actions of first-generation Afghan refugees, the narrative approach was applied in this study. The application of the narrative approach allowed the voices of the Afghan refugees to be included that otherwise would have been missed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Riessman, 2008). This is also due to narrative research drawing upon different kinds of narratives, including stories that are 'out there', and those that researchers create from parts or sets of narratives that are collected (Symon & Cassell, 2012). To do so, narratives need valued endpoints and sets of events and characters that make the endpoint more or less accessible or lively (Gergen, 1999) and support structuring the human experiences of first-generation Afghan refugees.

Yet, the process of reading narratives varies (Czarniawska, 2000). Consequently, the aim of narratives was considered. The Hermeneutic triad conceptualizes three ways of reading text, namely explication, explanation, and exploration (Hernadi, 1987). As this study aimed to explain how perceived economic downgrading influences changes in commitment systems, the triad suggests placing all explanatory efforts in the same context, and disassembling how the text was made (Czarniawska, 2004; Hernadi, 1987). To do so, data collection methods were needed to facilitate story-telling that maintained a close distance to actual life events of first-generation Afghan refugees, rather than qualitative research methods that would have prompted singular explanations (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

The study achieved this by conducting semi-structured interviews that allowed for the creation of narratives that contained stories and experiences about integration, work, and commitment. Moreover, these stories involved temporal sequences of events and actions. Asking for stories and experiences was necessary to activate, stimulate, and cultivate the

interpretive capabilities and awareness of first-generation Afghan refugees. This allowed the study to move beyond explication, thus achieving explanation. More specifically, the creation of multiple meanings on how perceived economic downgrading influences commitment system changes, as perceived by first-generation Afghan refugees, became more important than the meaning of these concepts themselves (Czarniawska, 2000; Iser, 1978).

3.2 Participants

This section discusses the participant sample that supported answering the research question and concurrent contributions to science. In this study, first-generation Afghan refugees were selected due to their size amounting to 36,305 individuals in 2021 (Dutch Council for Refugees, 2021). Moreover, it is the largest refugee group that experiences overqualification in the Netherlands (Bakker, 2015) which supports this study to attain insights on economic downgrading and commitment system changes in the context of refugees. First-generation Afghan refugees who came to the Netherlands between 1980 and 2000, currently fall in the age category of 30 and 60 years. Therefore, the participants in this study were selected based on their current age. In total, 29 interviews were conducted due to the collaborative structure in the thesis circle. A detailed overview of the participants is included in Appendix I.

A large part of the participants came from the personal network of one of the thesis circle members. Therefore, convenience sampling was applied, which involves using participants that are the easiest to access for a sample (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Consequently, the usage of snowball sampling allowed access to other participants. For example, participants were asked after each interview if they were acquainted with first-generation Afghan refugees who would be willing to participate in the study. Here, initial participants accessible by convenience sampling identified other participants from the same population. These participants have likely forwarded other participants who share high similarities, thus resulting in a homogeneous sample (Lee, 1993).

Self-selection sampling was applied to mitigate the development of a homogeneous sample. Online media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and general digital letters such as e-mails (Symon & Cassell, 2012) were used to advertise the need for participants. Moreover, the researcher directly called and visited companies owned by Afghan entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. As a consequence of self-selection sampling, several participants have identified the desire to take part in the research. This was because they had strong feelings or opinions about the research, and therefore considered the importance and willingness to devote their time

The number of participants is within the range of the aimed amount. This number corresponds with recent studies that applied the narrative approach, such as the articles by Noon and Ogbonna (2020) (25 participants), Kanstrén (2019) (27 participants), or migration-related studies by Joseph (2019) (32 participants). Achieving the aimed number of participants was necessary to be able to provide a detailed description of the specific research that would support the transferability needs of readers. Here, the readers can assess whether their situation would be informed by the findings of this study (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

3.3 Data collection procedure

For the data collection, several procedures were considered beforehand. Firstly, an interview script was developed during the Community of Practice. This script focused on studying refugees' integration into the workplace. Consequently, an adjusted version of this script was applied while conducting the interviews for this study. The adjusted script supported collecting narratives about stories, perceptions, and feelings about integration. Moreover, the script contained questions regarding the perceived commitment bonds of the participants to work and family. It also included different topics for the other thesis circle members. As such, the interview script supported constructing the life stories of the participants during the interviews. The adjusted interview script (i.e. in English and Dutch) is included in appendix II of this study. Besides the adjusted interview script, a timeline was applied during the interviews. Timelines supported recalling sequences of personal events (Gramling & Carr, 2004) to aid the participant in sharing experiences and feelings.

Secondly, the interview location was considered before the data collection phase. Here, the preferred location of the interview was in person. Yet, as Symon and Cassell (2012) state, travel time and costs associated will be considered. Therefore, it was expected beforehand that some interviews would be conducted online. During the data collection phase, most participants interviewed by the researcher communicated the desire to be interviewed online. While this is not the preferred medium for narrative research, a trade-off decision to conduct several interviews online was necessary to attain the aimed number of interviews. The absence of social signals in online interviewing could be seen as problematic (James & Busher, 2006). However, it did not affect the enthusiasm of the Afghan refugees to participate in the study. This was seen in the willingness to answer the questions about their experiences and feelings.

Thirdly, once the date and time of the interview were agreed on between the interviewer and the interviewee, the participants were invited to online meeting programs, such as Zoom

and Microsoft Teams. Moreover, participants were asked for permission to record the interviews. Informed consent of the participants was guaranteed with a signed consent form and allowed the researchers to transcribe the interviews. The consent form can be found in appendix III of this study.

Fourthly, reflection reports were made after conducting the interviews. This reflection entailed a priori constructions of economic downgrading and observed changes in commitment. Moreover, a reflection was made on emerging constructs of what was learned. Furthermore, it focused on revealing the biases and preferences of the researcher. Keeping a record supports monitoring progressive subjectivity (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Consequently, it allowed examining if original constructions had been challenged or changed through considerations of the participants' constructions.

3.4 Data analysis method

In this section, the method of the narrative analysis is discussed. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to facilitate the data analysis. Since the interviews were conducted in Dari (Persian dialect spoken in Afghanistan), Dutch or English, all non-English transcripts have been translated into English. This ensured the possibility for all thesis circle members to analyze the data for their studies.

The narrative analysis was applied to analyze the life stories of the participants. This type of analysis aims to uncover common themes or plots in the data (Polkinghorne, 1988). However, Symon and Cassell (2012) state that temporally specific interview data tends to be chaotic. While the date of the encounter is known, respondents often shift backward and forwards in time in their account of events. This requires careful positioning of the comments within a chronology, as well as the recognition that all memory-based accounts are reconstructions. Therefore, the first analysis phase included mind-mapping the life stories of the participants. The transcripts were read extensively to mind-map the life stories of the participants. Mind-maps in qualitative research allow showing the bigger picture of how ideas are linked around central themes (Crowe & Sheppard, 2011; Mazzetti & Blenkinsopp, 2012), such as economic downgrading and its influence on commitment. Therefore, mind-maps supported the construction of a narrative of meaning that supported the research needs (Crowe & Sheppard, 2011). This simultaneously accounted for a prolonged engagement with the interview data and supported going beyond superficial observations by spending enough time (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Furthermore, it allowed for structuring a general timeline of stories

and events. Moreover, it maintained chronology between stories or events and clarified how the events were sequenced in the participants' life stories. Based on the transcripts of the interviews, 22 timelines (see figures 2 and 3) were constructed which have supported the second phase of the narrative analysis.
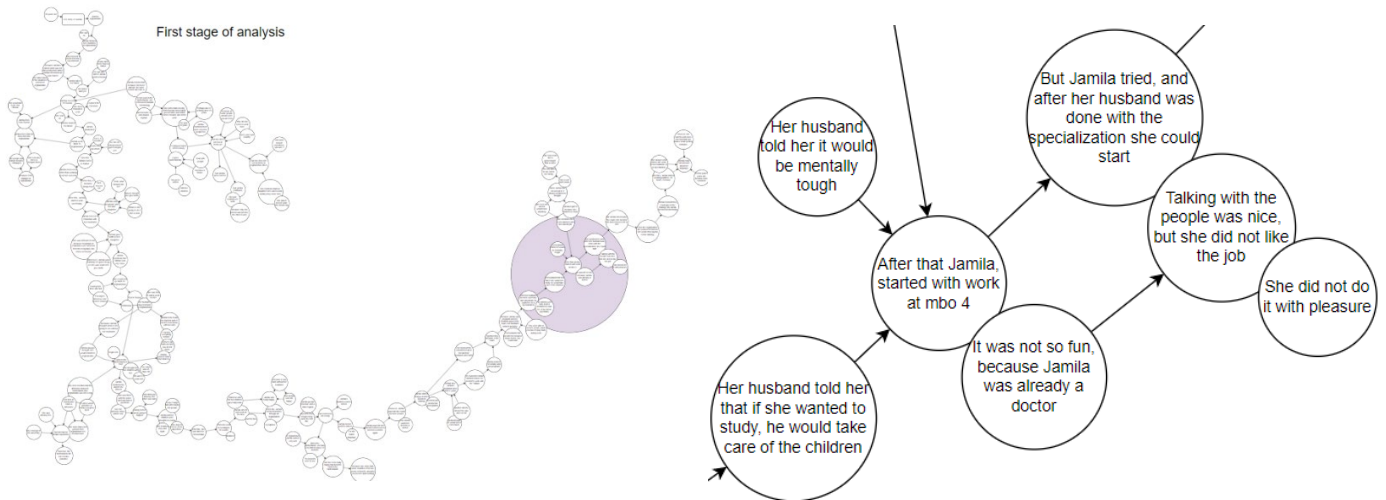
Figures 2 and 3. Exemplary timeline first phase of the narrative analysis.

During the second phase of the narrative analysis, similarities and differences in the patterns of the stories were identified, while keeping the individual narratives of the participant as complete as possible (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008). However, the first analysis phase included participants who were children at the time of their arrival in the Netherlands. Consequently, their narratives on perceived economic downgrading diverged from participants who were teenagers or adults at the time. The narratives differed because teenagers and adults have studied or worked at the time of their flight. Therefore, the interview data of eight participants were selectively omitted from the narrative analysis. The second analysis phase continued with 14 participants to identify similarities and differences in the narratives. This was achieved by structuring the events into timelines that focused on perceptions of economic downgrading and commitment. Moreover, it allowed placing all narratives in the same context for explanatory value (Hernadi, 1987). The timelines also included quotes by participants of significant events and arrows signal how the events are sequenced (see figure 4). Furthermore, it included temporality and context aspects (e.g. in Afghanistan or the Netherlands).

Two themed commitment system change trajectories and three themed sub-trajectories emerged from the narratives after comparing the different timelines of the participants. However, reiterating through the data analysis was necessary to move beyond superficial findings (Symon & Cassell, 2012). After re-iterating, three commitment system-themed patterns emerged which are presented in the following chapter. The following chapter provides

each themed pattern with a detailed description and is complemented with illustrative quotes from the interviews to affirm the researcher's interpretations.
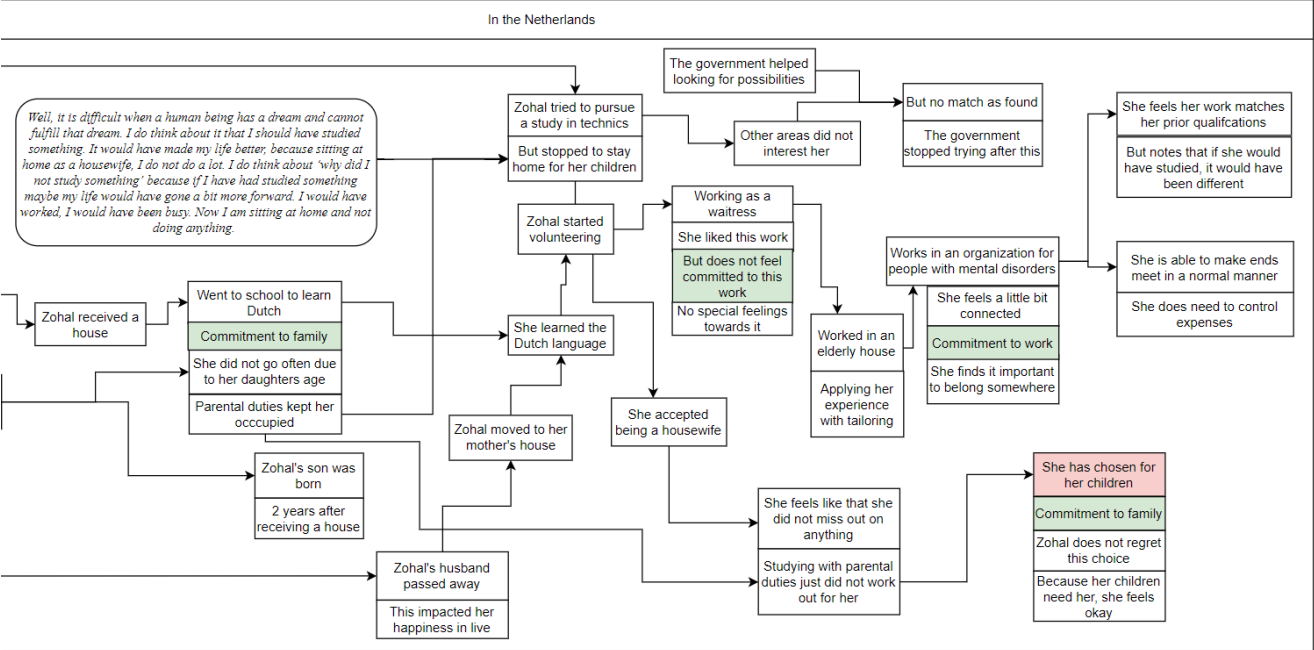

Figure 4. Exemplary timeline second phase narrative analysis.

Based on these methodological considerations, several limitations were considered beforehand. This study applied a qualitative research direction despite research in the commitment field having a high tendency to be quantitative (see Ahmad, 2018; Kim, & Ryu, 2017; Lobene et al., 2014). However, Van Rossenberg et al. (2018) refer to the work of Moran (2009) on how processes of shaping commitments and their interconnected phenomena may also be explored by methodologies that are more inductive, interpretive, and qualitative. Yet, at the time of this study, qualitative research has not been widely adopted as an approach to studying changes in commitment systems. This made it more difficult to assess the effectiveness of exploring commitment system changes through qualitative research methods beforehand.

Furthermore, translating an interview from Dari or Dutch to English came with restrictions. Cultural richness and meaning were lost during the translation of interview data. This was an issue, as translation converts ideas expressed in Dari or Dutch by the Afghan refugee group, to English. This was necessary to make the translation understandable for the general reader but prompted the process of cultural decoding (Halai, 2015; Torop, 2002). This made it more difficult for the researcher to keep both the target social group and readers of the research in mind while translating the interview transcripts.

Moreover, because the transcripts were divided among the thesis circle members, differences in transcription layouts and types of interactions have occurred (Lapadat & Lindsay,

1999). Moreover, variations in volume, quality of voice, and length of silence would typically be lost in transcriptions (Gorden, 1980). These restricted the interpretations that were able to be drawn from each life story.

3.5 Ethical considerations

As this study was conducted under the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the thesis circle researchers had the responsibility of maintaining integrity in science and scholarship. These principles are laid down in the Dutch Code of Conduct on Scientific practice and are endorsed by the Radboud University (Nijmegen School of Management, 2021). There are six principles of proper scientific practice relating to honesty and carefulness, reliability, controllability, impartiality, independence, and responsibility. Here, compliance with principles of professional academic conduct was always sustained.

Firstly, the researchers must respect individuals who are involved in the research. To do so, participants were told at the beginning of each interview that they had the option to stop the interview and were able to withdraw from the research at any given moment. Furthermore, the aims of the research were shared with the participant, thus per article 1.2 under honesty and carefulness (VSNU, 2014).

Secondly, research among participants was only possible in the case informed consent has been obtained. With this consent form, the participant agreed that the data from the interview would be kept for a minimum of 10 years, per article 3.3 under reliability (VSNU, 2014). Simultaneously, the researchers commit to the protection of the privacy and anonymity of the participants. For example, the names of research participants are substituted with pseudonyms while referring to the interview data. Furthermore, strict protection measures were taken to protect research-related documents that entailed the personal data of participants, such as password protection and sustaining accessibility to thesis circle members only.

Thirdly, this study only included data collected from participants who have had previous work experience or education in Afghanistan. Consequently, some data collected from participants did not meet these requirements and were selectively omitted. Arguments were provided in the methodology chapter about selectively omitted research data, thus per article 2.1 under reliability (VSNU, 2014).

Lastly, the choice for the research question, design, choices of proposed methods, and references to consulted sources were documented with great care. Therefore, all sequences in the research can be assessed, thus in line with article 3.1 under reliability (VSNU, 2014).

4. Results

This section presents the insights obtained from the narratives of first-generation Afghan refugees in the Netherlands about their perceived downgrading and its impact on their commitment system. In total, 29 interviews were conducted by the thesis circle members. As previously mentioned, the narrative analysis was performed on transcripts of 14 participants that have either worked or studied in Afghanistan.

Based on the narrative analysis, key patterns have been identified that contribute to answering the research question. More specifically, the patterns relate to the commitment to work and commitment to the core family. The following three patterns were identified based on the experienced economic downgrading by first-generation Afghan refugees: (1) continuance of felt commitment to work, (2) hindrance in feeling committed to work, and (3) the unchanged commitment to the core family. What follows is an analysis of quotes that affirm the research question of this study.

4.1 Economic downgrading & the continuance of felt commitment to work

A common feature of the life stories of most refugees in this study relates to a sense of being committed to their current employment, despite their perception of being economically downgraded in the Netherlands. Here, most refugees went through occupational changes in the Netherlands. Despite these occupational changes, work continues to be an important commitment target. Some refugees were quite clear in expressing a feeling of responsibility towards their employment. Other participants demonstrated their dedication to their current employment, as they would feel energized after a good day at work. The life stories imply that economic downgrading did not influence commitment systems for most refugees. Consequently, work continued to be an important target in the commitment system of the majority of first-generation Afghan refugees in this study. This led to the identification of the first pattern: *'economic downgrading & the continuance of felt commitment to work'*.

4.1.1 Career changes

The overarching characteristic of this pattern is that most first-generation Afghan refugees went through career changes after they transitioned to the Netherlands. These career changes were caused by initial economic downgrading as experienced by the participants. For example, participants were housed in asylum seeker facilities and were inhibited to work. Moreover, some Afghan refugees recognized that their prior credentials would not grant them access to prior work. Consequently, the participants either obtained additional host country

education or started working in different, lower-level occupations. After these career changes, most participants became employed in occupations to which they feel committed.

First, a description will be provided as to how perceived economic downgrading emerged in the narratives of Afghan refugees in this study. After the participants arrived in the Netherlands, their life stories have shown that all were initially housed in refugee camps, asylum seeker centers, or other reception facilities. Some first-generation Afghan refugees in this study indicated that felt safe, as they experienced safety concerns for themselves, their children, and their partners in Afghanistan. However, their residence in the Netherlands was also characterized by uncertainty. This uncertainty was caused due to not knowing whether they or their family members were allowed to stay, or because they were restricted to work in the Netherlands. Morsal reflects on the inability to work:

"When I was in the refugee camp, all the people wanted to work. But they were not allowed, and that was the, that was the reason that they would not, uh. They were worrying, and they were stressing, and they, they got depressed because they were just waiting" (Morsal, 50 years).

From Morsal's life story it becomes clear that alongside herself, other refugees faced mental issues due to the prohibition to take up employment in the Netherlands. Eventually, most participants were able to receive their residence status, which allows them to work in the Netherlands. Consequently, the narratives indicate a shift in the participants' lives concerning the reflection on their transition into the Netherlands.

During the first years after receiving their residence status, most participants started encountering the effects of economic downgrading, which occurred in most of the narratives. However, it was unique how economic downgrading emerged in every life story. Some participants did not expect that they would be able to continue their profession in the Netherlands, as Ramin notes: *"Basically when I came to the Netherlands, I had absolutely no expectation that I would become a doctor here" (Ramin, 57 years).* Ramin was a surgeon in Afghanistan and attributed his economic downgrading due to the expectation that a degree from Afghanistan or Russia would not be valid in the Netherlands.

Moreover, economic downgrading emerged in the reconstructions of participants about their desire to work with their credentials from Afghanistan. Exemplary is the following statement expressed by Dunya:

"I thought, yes, I would like to work. But with my own diploma I could not do anything with it in the Netherlands. I asked if I could start somewhere with my own diploma, and then she said we have nothing in this direction. You can not, you can not do anything, I thought yes, what should I actually do, then I wanted to, because I have studied. I do not just want to, I have a degree, I would like to use it" (Dunya, 53 years).

Her telling experience was shared by other participants, whereby it became clear that more participants were unable to work with their credentials from Afghanistan or Russia. Due to the inability to work with their host country credentials, most participants opted to pursue additional education in the Netherlands. However, the extent to which they desired to pursue host country education depended on their work-related dreams and ambitions.

In some cases, the refugees who were interviewed indicated that they obtained education that was not necessarily aspired. This sequence of events seems to be rather common in the life stories of the participants, as many of whom recalled they were also not able to finish their education in Afghanistan. While several participants had some degree of freedom in the choice of education, others felt they were forced to obtain a degree in a specific direction in the Netherlands. For example, Arian wished to attend a regular school, but was pressured to obtain a degree in mechanics:

"I wanted to just go to a regular school to make sure that I take the small steps and go and study. I was sixteen years old at the time, but was sent to a school to be trained in technics. You know that when I came to the Netherlands I, I started as a mechanic worker, so the first five years I worked as a mechanic worker. Because, you know, I did not speak the language and they actually pushed me to do a more technical study because otherwise the language will be a big barrier. So I was just working, working in a workshop (Arian, 40 years)".

Like Arian, several participants had similar experiences of being pressured to choose a particular type of education by municipalities and job coaches. The narratives thus described how economic downgrading initially hindered most first-generation Afghan refugees in this study to pursue work, and in particular work that corresponded with their prior education and work experience in Afghanistan. This caused participants to change their careers.

Despite their career changes, most participants in this study feel committed to their occupations in the Netherlands. When participants were asked if they would consider themselves connected to their work, several participants mentioned that work '*energizes'* them.

Ramin, who worked as a surgeon in Afghanistan, says that his current work as a psychiatrist, and his colleagues at work, energize him:

"Yes, with my work with my colleagues. The work goes basically like that, and therefore I am also someone who is very loyal, a team player. And that relates if you are at work, so that is what I actually like to go to every day (...) It is actually the first thing that energizes me" (Ramin, 46 years).

Similarly, Arian, who was an entrepreneur in Afghanistan, notes that his current work as a trainer energizes him when he sees the personal growth of his trainees: *"I see the transformation, personal transformation of the trainees, and this really inspires me, but it also gives me a lot of energy" (Arian, 40 years).* The narratives of several participants describe how work after their career changes would energize them, despite initial economic downgrading.

Other examples of commitment to work were expressed by participants who changed their career trajectories after some years. Khaled, for instance, decided to fulfill his childhood dream which entails working with literature. He realized this after 12 years of work as a civil servant and eventually started working as an interpreter and translator. Besides the content of the work, he enjoys being self-employed: "*So that is just diverse and that, I am self-employed and freelance. So I am my own boss and I have felt very fulfilled from that*" (Khaled, 58 years).

Morsal, in a similar vein, became self-employed as an interpreter. Before, she obtained a degree in pedagogy in Afghanistan but never wished to become a teacher. Yet, with her work as an interpreter, Morsal indicates that she would never quit her work: "*No, this job I have now. I will never quit, because it is a job that I really like*" (Morsal, 50 years). As such, self-employment emerged in several life stories of the participants in this study and was often accompanied by a sense of commitment to that work.

The narratives in this pattern specify that economic downgrading hindered most refugees to continue their studies or professions in the Netherlands. Some life stories also indicate that economic downgrading was mitigated by obtaining education, while other participants decided to find alternative employment. Most participants found work to which they feel committed, after changing their careers. As a result, it seems that perceived economic downgrading did not change work as a commitment target in the commitment system of most first-generation Afghan refugees in this study.

4.2 Economic downgrading & hindrance in feeling committed to work

As became clear from the past section, the majority of the participants went through career changes as a consequence of economic downgrading. Consequently, some refugees became employed in lower-level occupations. Such experiences meant they could not realize their dreams, which hindered them to feel a true commitment to their work. The interviews show this amount to a clear pattern in hindrance to feeling committed towards the current employment. This led to the identification of the second pattern, which is *'economic downgrading & hindrance in feeling committed to work'.* The pattern seemed to cause a shift in their commitment systems. As such, it is essentially the opposite of the first pattern.

4.2.1 Unrealized dreams

A predominant characteristic of this pattern is the inability to realize work-related dreams in the Netherlands. As such, several first-generation Afghan refugees holding an Afghan degree or who were educated in Afghanistan felt obstructed in fulfilling career aspirations in the Netherlands. Moreover, some of the participants had to discontinue their work or education due to the political unrest in the 1980s and 1990s in Afghanistan. After arriving in the Netherlands, these participants attempted to obtain the desired education but were unable to do so due to perceived economic downgrading.

First, a description will be provided of how the unfulfillment of career ambitions was caused by perceived economic downgrading. Zohal, for instance, aspired to become an engineer, but realized her opportunities in the Netherlands were limited:

"I really liked technics, so I really wanted to pursue an education in technics. Other things did not really interest me. People would advise me to do other things such as working in health care, in the catering industry, or as a seller. But these things did not interest me. I was very set on doing something with technics. But the opportunities to do something in technics were very few. So I could not do it" (Zohal, 46 years).

Shahim, in a similar vein, was unable to enter his preferred education program. In Afghanistan, he was a medicine student, aspiring to become a doctor: *"Well I tried to pick up my studies right away, but unfortunately it was not possible (...) and, I did, yes. That has determined my life" (Shahim, 55 years).* From Shahim's life story it becomes clear that he was not selected to start studying medicine, despite having followed additional language courses and pre-university subjects. Consequently, this obstructed him from pursuing his dream profession.

As shown in the examples above, some Afghan refugees in this study could not satisfy their aspirations in terms of employment. Moreover, some participants found themselves working in lower-level occupations. Consequently, some felt they were overqualified. Yasmin, for instance, studied child care and journalism in Afghanistan and Russia. Yasmin indicates her job coach prevented her from pursuing a degree in child daycare. As a consequence, Yasmin had to settle for attaining a degree in health care. Yasmin subsequently worked in various elderly homes. When she was asked to assess the continuity of her employment with her prior education, she responded the following: *"No, it does not fit my background"* (Yasmin, 57 years). Due to her inability to work due to health issues, Yasmin seems to consider her past education while assessing the fit with her employment in the Netherlands. Other participants perceived a similar discontinuity of their current employment with prior education and work experience.

Zohal, however, expresses a balance regarding her current work at an organization for individuals with mental problems: "*Yes, it matches. If I would have studied, I would have thought differently. But now, it does match. It is on my level*" (Zohal, 46 years). Zohal acknowledges that if host country education was obtained, it seemed she would have considered herself overqualified.

Due to the inability to fulfill their career aspirations in the Netherlands, it seemed that several participants felt obstructed from feeling committed in subsequent employment. Shahim, for instance, reflects on his transition from a medical student and graduated physical therapist to his current profession as an interpreter. Shahim described this transition as a 'downgrade: "*Yes it was, yes it was taking several steps back for me. To give up my dream of working as a doctor. But to work as an interpreter, that was also a very big difference professionally*" (Shahim, 55 years). Thus, Shahim's unfulfilled dream of becoming a doctor and concurrent downgrade is felt on the personal and professional levels. However, Shahim only sensed this downgrade later in life, as he initially considered his work as an interpreter as engaging. Yet, it seemed that a sense of misfit grew over the years:

"*In the beginning, translation was new for me and well, I am going to be okay, good. But along the way, you feel that there is still, I can not get used to it honestly, yes. It does not fit me, it does not fit my character*" (Shahim, 55 years).

From some life stories, it seemed that comparisons were made by the participants between the current employment and dreamed perception of the self. This applied to Shahim as

well, as he senses that his character corresponds more with the profession of a doctor. Here, Shahim feels that his personality aligns more with the active role of a medical specialist, instead of the passive role of an interpreter.

Jamila, who was employed as an intern gynecologist in Afghanistan, narrated a similar feeling. She made several attempts to continue her profession in the Netherlands. Due to language barriers, she was unable to pursue her desired education in medicine. As such, Jamila eventually opted to work as a nurse and reflects as follows:

"That is very difficult to, to say, yes accept. But still, I have no other choice, But I do, of course. I find these (colleagues) nice people to talk to, But I find it really not nice work. I do what is expected of me, but not with pleasure" (Jamila, 58 years).

This implies that Jamila feels hindered to feel committed to her current work, despite it being an occupation in health care. She is further hindered in feeling dedicated to her current work as a nurse because she has studied a lot and feels she has not accomplished anything. This struggle becomes clear in her perceived professional identity, due to identifying herself as a gynecologist.

In the above-mentioned examples, it seems that the participants feel hindered in feeling a sense of commitment to their current employment. This reflection is sometimes accompanied by comparisons of the ideal self or prior occupation. As such, the narratives of these participants imply that work is currently not an important target in their commitment systems.

Consequently, the participants responded in varied ways when asked how they reflect on their inability to pursue work-related dreams. For some, it felt not fair due to the willingness of being a part of Dutch society. Other participants still feel troubled, like Jamila: *"Yes, that is the only trouble I have. But there is, yes, family, yes. Everyone is happy, calm and safe, my husband and children. The only trouble I have is, yes, with myself"* (Jamila, 58 years). Yet, her resilience shows as she continues to work despite the hindrances she experienced in her life.

Some more participants were able to come to terms with their situation, or even attempted to realize their work-related dreams in different ways, like Shahim: *"That's why I decided two years ago to study acupuncture so that I could take control, determine it myself, and help people get rid of their complaints"* (Shahim, 55 years).

Thus, economic downgrading obstructed some first-generation Afghan refugees from pursuing host country education that would allow them to fulfill their work-related dreams. The

narratives also reflect a mental strain that hinders feeling committed to their employment. This also seems to be attributed due to being employed in lower-skilled work, which was not necessarily desired, or not being able to currently work due to health problems. Yet, the commitment to the core family continues to be an important target in the commitment system of most participants in this study.

4.3 Economic downgrading & the unchanged commitment to the core family

As became clear from the past sections, it seemed that economic downgrading influences commitment systems in some instances. Yet, the narrative analysis indicates that perceptions of economic downgrading does not influence commitment to the core family. This is due to the prevalent pattern that the core family remained important in almost all life stories of the first-generation Afghan refugees in this study. However, the commitment to their core family seems to have influenced decisions by participants that could have mitigated their initial economic downgrading in the Netherlands. In these cases, their commitment to their core family conflicted with other targets, such as obtaining an education to pursue work-related aspirations. On the other hand, some life stories of the participants indicate that commitment to work and commitment to the core family interrelate at times.

4.3.1 Importance of the core family in the commitment system

This section describes how the importance of the core family emerged in the life stories of the participants. The narratives of most Afghan refugees indicate that their migration caused them to start living apart from other family members. Some family members continued to live in Afghanistan, while other family members started living in other countries. Consequently, the majority of the first-generation Afghan refugees in this study consider themselves connected to their core families, such as their children or their partner. This applied as well to some participants whereby commitment to work was hindered. Yasmin, for instance, considers her daughter as her first commitment target: *"Of course, first of all, I feel most committed to my daughter"* (Yasmin, 57 years).

Besides the children, are the partners often included as a core family commitment target in the commitment system of the participants. The importance of the partner in the commitment system applied to Shahim as well: *"I think my wife is the most important person, made sure I stayed here, and also gave me the feeling that I was starting to feel at ease. Yes, and that I also felt settled, like okay, I'll stay here, and then we will start a family"* (Shahim, 55 years).

From his life story, it seems that Shahim's partner, and later his children acted as metaphorical 'anchors'. These anchors helped him become more calm, despite his inability to become a doctor: *"So she was my first anchor. And then I got my two sons and two other anchors, so they made sure that the restless boat of my thoughts came to rest (Shahim, 55 years)"*. His telling experience was shared by other participants. More specifically, the core family has acted as a supportive function to help some first-generation Afghan refugees to come to terms with their career changes due to economic downgrading. Yet, their strong connection to the core family sometimes seems to have influenced subsequent decisions about pursuing education.

4.3.2 Commitment conflicts

In this section, it will be described how multiple held commitment bonds conflicted in the commitment system of some Afghan refugees. The narratives of some participants in this study indicate that it was not always possible to obtain additional education. Here, it suggests that the multiple commitments bonds held by the participants conflicted with each other.

In some life stories, it seemed that the commitment to the core family conflicted with decisions that could have partially mitigated the effects of the initial economic downgrading. Conflicts emerged in the form of decisions between parental duties and pursuing host-country education in the Netherlands, as was the case for Nafisa: *"Yes, really, I really did not, I really regret that. (…) But you know, I have been with my child and my father, I have to take care of both, so that" (Nafisa, 50 years).* Nafisa felt she had to take care of both her child and her father, which made it impossible for her to obtain an education in the Netherlands.

Zohal, for instance, indicated that she had to take care of her children alone, as a consequence of the passing of her partner. From Zohal's life story it seemed that her willingness to obtain additional host country education conflicted with the parental duties of a mother with two children:

"No, not really. I was always at home. I spend time with my family and my children. I was a housewife that was busy in the house. It is not like I missed out on anything. At that time, I wanted to study, but that did not work out because of my children. I really wanted to do it at that time, but it did not work out. This is the only conflict I can think of" (Zohal, 46 years).

Here, it seems that Zohal needed to decide between her professional needs and the needs of her children. Yet, Zohal feels no regret when she reflects on her decision on prioritizing her children:

"On the one side, the children needed me, so it was ok. I needed to raise them and give them love. There was just no other way. I have no regrets. I had to make a decision and I chose to raise my children" (Zohal, 46 years).

The above-mentioned examples indicate the felt responsibility and dedication to the core family. This simultaneously signals the importance of the core family in the commitment systems. Consequently, the emergence of conflicts in the commitment system of female participants often occurred earlier in their lives. However, male participants recall similar clashes in their commitment systems at a later point in their life.

Tamim, for instance, wanted to become an orthopedist in Afghanistan, yet became a dental hygienist in the Netherlands. While Tamim feels committed to his work as a dental hygienist, he often thinks about starting a study in dentistry. From his life story, it seems that his felt responsibility to his core family conflicts with his professional aspirations of obtaining additional education: *"I said I am a go-getter. So if I get the opportunity that I can give my family enough, and for myself that I also receive the opportunity to continue studying, I am just going to start from tomorrow" (Tamim, 46 years).* Here, his dream of obtaining a university degree conflicts with his felt responsibility to continue providing for his core family. Tamim confirms this strife because he would start as soon as 'tomorrow' with a study in dentistry.

It seems that Tamim currently experiences this conflict. Yet, the life story of Shahim indicates that he experienced a similar struggle ten years ago. From his narrative, it becomes clear that he considered obtaining a degree in medicine, but only if he could continue to provide for his family:

"But okay, now I am too old. But ten years ago, I was really serious about studying. But yes, because I have two children, yes, you have to make a living so the children also have, to make sure they have work dreams, so the children can also realize their dreams" (Shahim, 55 years).

From his statement, it seems that Shahim felt he needed to make a living to support his core family which signals his felt responsibility. Moreover, making a living would enable his children to realize their dreams in the Netherlands. As such, it indicates his dedication to his children as a father. Yet, because Shahim ended up not continuing his study in medicine in the Netherlands, it signals a trade-off decision between his work dreams and the importance of his core family in his commitment system.

The above-mentioned quotes are exemplary of how participants experienced conflict between commitment targets. However, other life stories indicate that commitment to work and the core family interrelate at times in the commitment system of the participants.

4.3.3 Interrelated commitment bonds

In the previous section, it became clear from the life stories of the participants that multiple-held commitment bonds sometimes conflicted. In this section, it will now be described how a commitment bond to the core family was interrelated with a commitment bond to work. Some narratives of a few participants seemed to stipulate that the commitment to the core family mediated their commitment to their work. As such, participants expressed that they work to improve the situations of their children in the Netherlands. Marwa, for instance, feels committed to her work despite the hardships she and her husband face while running a restaurant. Consequently, Marwa expressed she feels she needs to work to be able to support her daughters:

"If you are depressed or have a bad home situation or with the family, then it makes working very difficult. But I have to, my daughters have to study and I need to help them with their studies and everything else financially" (Marwa. 51 years).

Dunya's life story seemed to indicate, like Marwa, that her commitment to work is interrelated with her commitment to her children. She reflects that it is her goal in life to set a good example for her children*:*

"I worked very hard there, and I thought I have a goal now that I must achieve. I must move on with my life and I must set an example that I thought was very important that I was educated myself. And I also want to set a good example for my children because they can also build a future here, go in the right direction and then you also must get good education, so that was my goal in life" (Dunya, 53 years).

Dunya felt she had to persevere in the Netherlands, despite her initial setback due to her economic downgrading and consequent hardships in her working life. Thus, she feels she has an exemplary role as a mother to her children to inspire them to build their futures in the Netherlands. As such, the above-mentioned examples indicate how commitment to work and commitment to the core family interrelate at times. Here the commitment to work seems influenced by the felt responsibility to the children. Moreover, given that Afghan culture emphasizes education, it emerges here in the felt responsibility to enable and motivate their children to study.

The narratives in the third pattern indicate that commitment to the core family continued to be an important target, despite initial economic downgrading. In some cases, it seemed that commitment to the core family conflicted with other commitment targets, such as their aspiration in work or work-related dreams. In other cases, commitment to the core family and work are suggested to be interrelated. Yet, commitment to the core family remained an important target, regardless of how the bonds dynamically interacted in the commitment system.

In summary, most participants found work despite initial career changes due to economic downgrading. After these career changes, most participants felt committed to the employment they found. This suggests that their commitment system was not influenced by initial economic downgrading. Yet, it seemed that only a few participants' commitment systems were influenced by economic downgrading. These life stories often entailed feelings of not having been able to pursue work-related aspirations in the Netherlands. Moreover, most participants indicated that they felt committed to their core family. This implies that economic downgrading did not seem to have influenced the commitment systems of participants through the commitment to the core family. These commitment bonds to the core family would sometimes conflict, or be interrelated with the commitment bond to work. The implications of the findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Discussion

In the previous chapter noteworthy findings have been formulated which will now be discussed more thoroughly. Concerning the findings as described in the patterns, most participants felt committed to their employment, despite having gone through significant career changes. Due to these career changes, some participants indicated that they have been unable to realize their work-related aspirations. These participants often experienced a hindrance in feeling committed to their current occupations. Moreover, the vast majority of first-generation Afghan refugees in this study continued to feel committed to their core families. This implies that commitment to the core family is a center of mass in the commitment systems of participants in this study, despite the experienced economic downgrading and concurrent career changes. Based on these findings, the model in figure 5 visualizes the influence of perceived economic downgrading on commitment system change of first-generation Afghan refugees in this study.
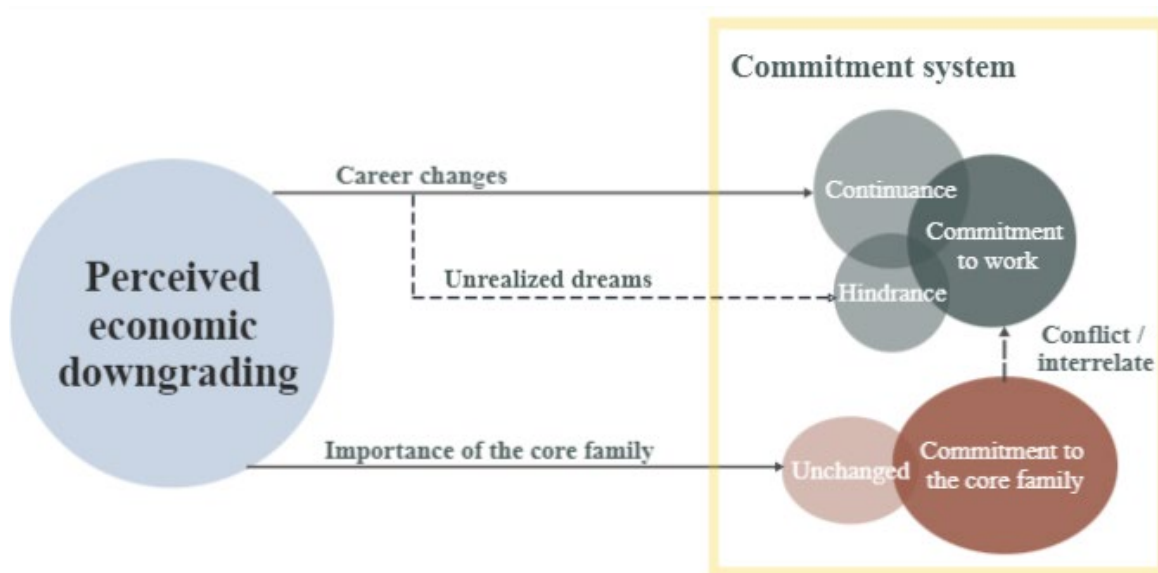
Figure 5. Influence of economic downgrading on the commitment system change.

5.1 Theoretical implications

The following paragraphs will discuss the implications of the findings of this study. To do so, the findings are considered in terms of their contribution to existing literature and how it relates to prior research. The sequence of the discussion aligns with the sub-research questions formulated in chapter two.

5.1.1 Economic downgrading

In this section, the contributions of the findings regarding perceived economic downgrading are discussed. Downgrading was defined as a process whereby refugees systematically obtain lower returns when education and experience were not attained in the host

country (Dustmann et al., 2016). As such, this study examined economic downgrading as perceived by first-generation Afghan refugees. To do so, this study has drawn upon the 'expunged past' labor market experience (Joseph, 2019), as it encompasses the non-recognition of refugees' prior learning and skills. Yet, based on the findings in this study, the life stories of only a few participants fit with the 'expunged past' experience.

An explanation for the discrepancy found in this study is that participants mostly emphasized obtaining additional education, which progressed some in line with re-established career goals. Similarly, participants who discontinued their studies in Afghanistan sometimes attained higher levels of education in the Netherlands. This correlates with the findings of Hessels (2004) who states that the willingness to obtain additional host country education and the relatively young age during their arrival in the Netherlands supported improving initial disadvantaged positions. Instead, the trajectories of several participants were more attuned to the progressive mobility labor market experience as described by Joseph (2019). This particular experience is characterized by upward mobility, recuperated social capital, and adopting the host country's cultural traits.

However, not all participants in this study were able to attain the desired host country education. Some participants settled to receive a lower-level education than their highest pursued education in Afghanistan. The trajectories of these participants aligned with the 'marking time' labor market experience (Joseph, 2019) whereby migrants first need to renegotiate their career objectives, and eventually settle for minor improvements. Thus, participants were able to partially mitigate downgrading through education. This is consistent with the argument by Chiswick and Miller (2001) that host-country human capital is of importance in attaining employment in the new society.

Yet, there are participants in this study who continue to be affected by economic downgrading and subsequent career changes. As aforementioned, these participants were unable to realize their work-related aspirations in the Netherlands. Occasionally, participants compared their current employment with their prior occupations, or connected work-related dreams with their personality. These findings follow observations made by Adversario (2021) who applied the Possible Selves Theory to understand how migrants make sense of occupational downgrading. Adversario's study indicated that the barriers faced by participants delayed or hindered them to realize their full potential as professionals. The participants in Adversario's analysis were highly critical when reflecting on their challenges and successes. This particular critical analysis is in line with the findings in this study, whereby Afghan

refugees seriously reflected on their current employment or situation. Thus, this study has contributed by uncovering perceptions of difficulties encountered by first-generation Afghan refugees, which provide valuable insights into the current understanding of micro-level occupational challenges faced by refugees.

5.1.2 Perceived overqualification

The implications of perceived overqualification will now be discussed briefly in this section. This study referred to overqualification as "a surplus of skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience, and other qualifications that are not required or utilized in their current work" (Kulkarni et al., 2015, p. 530). It was assumed that perceived overqualification would influence commitment to employment, as was conceptualized in chapter two of this study. Therefore, this study examined the perceived alignment of qualifications and work experience with the current work.

The above-mentioned concepts are consistent with the findings in this study. The life stories of some participants described the sequence of economic downgrading which caused them to find themselves in lower-level occupations. Consequently, refugees did not experience much continuity between their current occupation, and prior education and work experience. These findings correspond with the assumption by Liu et al. (2014) whereby overqualification is undesirable for employees as it is not freely chosen. In this study, Afghan refugees did not opt for economic downgrading and subsequent lower-level employment after their flight. Moreover, Maynard and Parfyonova (2013) argue that especially employees with high levels of personal need for competence and growth often perceive overqualification as undesirable. Similarly, this study found that participants with unfulfilled work-related dreams responded more often unfavorable when asked about their perceived fit between current work and prior education and work experience.

On the other hand, other participants responded in varied ways when asked how the fit between their current work, and prior education and work experience was perceived. While their responses varied, no clear patterns of perceptions emerged. Therefore, more qualitative research is needed to find distinctive patterns between voluntary and involuntary overqualification among refugees (Liu et al., 2014).

5.1.3 Commitment system change

In this section, noteworthy theoretical implications of the findings regarding the commitment system change are discussed. This study understood commitment systems as a network of interrelating commitments to a set of targets (Klein et al., 2022). As such, this study

examined how commitment to work and the core family changed in the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees.

Foremost, almost all participants continued to feel a sense of commitment to their core family. The findings in this study also demonstrate that career changes does not influence the commitment to core family in the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees. However, commitment to the core family conflicted or was interrelated with the commitment to work at times. These observations in the findings follow the core assumption of Commitment System Theory (CST), whereby commitment bonds are interrelated to a set of targets inside the commitment system (Klein et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that participants found employment, often in different occupations, where they felt committed to their employment despite their career changes. Conversely, several participants were hindered in feeling a sense of commitment to work after these career changes. Klein et al. (2022), as they apply CST, suggest that the more self-centered the commitment target is, the greater the impact of changes following a disruption. They argue that changes in the commitment system could occur due to events such as job loss and drastic career changes. Thus, if central commitment targets are disrupted, a redefinition of the commitment system as a whole is expected. Similar changes were found in the life stories of the participants in this study. The participants had been working or studying in Afghanistan and, in turn, had serious aspirations regarding their careers. Yet, their flight from Afghanistan disrupted their lives and careers. Here, economic downgrading yet again could be seen as a root cause for an inability to find suitable employment. However, CST currently does not offer an explanation why some participants were able to feel committed to work, while others were not committed. Therefore, this study suggests the theoretical concept of career anchors by Schein (1996) as an explanation for why the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees were influenced differently.

Both self-centered commitment systems and career anchors depend on the self-concept, such as the self-esteem or the self-concept of a person's career. As such, Coetzee, Schreuder, and Tladinyane (2014) argue that congruence between career anchors, work environments, and the jobs determine the extent employees feel energized and dedicated which, in turn, influences commitment. Career anchors also reflect people's long-term preferences regarding employment, which could be related to the work-related dreams first-generation Afghan refugees have about their careers. For example, some participants found work in which they felt energized, or thought they would never leave. Moreover, most participants in this study

were able to re-engage in different occupations which fit their needs, which would align with Schreuder and Coetzee's (2011) notion that individuals can develop more than one career anchor. Meanwhile, the participants who experience hindrance in feeling committed to their current work could imply that new career anchors have not been able to form. Yet, because career anchors currently have no place in CST, it is difficult to assess their compatibility based on the findings of this study.

Lastly, the life stories of the participants suggested that commitment is not a static state of being, as Klein et al. (2012) already assumed. The narratives of some participants imply that commitment to employment became a less important target at various points of life. Consequently, the narratives indicate that commitment to work varies within individuals over time and correspond with findings of the study by Banks and Henry (1993) who argue that commitment is not a stable concept as previously assumed.

5.2 Methodological contribution

In this section, the contributions of the narrative approach to examining perceived economic downgrading and its influence on commitment system change are elaborated on. The findings in this study support the value of the narrative approach when studying reconstructions of experiences and feelings of refugees, such as perceptions of economic downgrading. In particular, using the narrative approach revealed how the perception of commitment to work and the core family behave over time. Yet, only by keeping the narratives 'whole', was this study able to identify three commitment system-themed patterns in the narratives of Afghan refugees. Focusing narrowly on single commitment targets in the life stories would have hindered understanding the stories of participants. Furthermore, it would have prevented placing all narratives in the same context, thus achieving the explanatory value of how economic downgrading influences commitment system change.

Moreover, the application of the narrative approach has been valuable for this study's aims. It allowed for the inclusion of the voices of understudied social groups, such as refugees, that are often precluded in literature (Joseph, 2019; Riessman, 2008). Examining the experiences and feelings of first-generation Afghan refugees allowed for the inclusion of these voices. This is all the more necessary, as some of the more severe stories demonstrate that some refugees continue to be conflicted with the consequences of their flight and concurrent downgrading in the Netherlands. Yet, the limitations of this study need further consideration, despite these novel findings.

5.3 Limitations and future research directions

The following limitations need to be taken into account while considering the implications of the findings of this study. The researcher reflected on his role during this study, and could be considered as a limitation. More specifically, the researcher has taken his status as a situated cultural subject seriously during the research process with other cultural subjects, such as the participants. Because of the researcher's limited prior knowledge about the subject, and not having a refugee or Afghan background, it could have hindered the interpretation of the findings, such as the cultural context. This limitation is further reflected in the research design not allowing to reaffirm the interpretations with the participants. Accordingly, this study presents the interpretations by the researcher based on the multiple meanings of first-generation Afghan refugees.

Another limitation of this study is the chosen scope. This study solely focused on perceived economic downgrading, and changes in commitment targets to work and the core family. While following the advice of Klein et al. (2022) to include multiple commitment targets, the research design precluded exploration of other commitment bonds, such as the family that continued living in Afghanistan. The inclusion of two commitment bonds could have hindered a more complete understanding of how commitment bonds interact and change. Therefore, the same caution should be applied while assessing the findings in this study about the influence of economic downgrading on changes in the commitment system.

Moreover, among these limitations belongs addressing the homogeneity of the participant's sample on which the findings are based. The thesis circle members found the participants based on convenience, snowball, and self-selection sampling techniques. However, the stories applied in the narrative analysis were mostly attained through convenience sampling and focused solely on the older participants in this sample. While often considered arbitrary in qualitative research (Symon & Cassell, 2012) it was necessary to address the specific research aims for this study. Consequently, it resulted in valuable insights into economic downgrading and changes in the commitment system.

The last important limitation is to recognize that past commitment bonds to work are reconstructions of psychological states by the participant. In that sense, applying the narrative approach only allowed a limited overview of how commitment has changed, and after disruptive events that cause career changes. Yet, longitudinal-oriented research in the host country could allow the measurement of how different commitment targets in the commitment

systems behave over time in the context of refugees. For example, it would allow for the replacement of the explorative nature of approaching this study's topics with more related questions regarding the parameters of commitment systems, such as the strength and coupling of the bonds. As such, it could increase understanding of how disruptive career events as perceived by refugees, dynamically affect commitment targets over time. Moreover, it is particularly interesting to study additional commitment targets besides work and the core family, such as the aforementioned commitment to family that continued living in the home country.

Another direction for future research is conducting narrative research among other refugee groups in the Netherlands. Based on the results of this study, it was found that commitment to work and the core family remained important in the commitment system of most first-generation Afghan refugees. However, it is currently unknown how similar disruptive events, such as career changes, affect the commitment systems of other refugee groups after they transitioned to a host country. For example, if different refugee groups did not emphasize obtaining additional host-country education to mitigate economic downgrading like most Afghan refugees in this study have, perhaps it would result in different insights regarding commitment system changes. More research would be beneficial as it increases the current understanding of how different refugee groups are affected after economic downgrading and consequent career changes.

The last suggestion for future research would be to investigate how commitment systems redefine after drastic career changes. This research proposed the notion of career anchors by Schein (1996) as an explanation of the continuance of commitment to work in the commitment system of most first-generation Afghan refugees. Therefore, future research could examine other factors that support the continuance of commitment in commitment systems. More research into this would increase current knowledge of how commitment systems redefine as a whole after disruptive events, such as drastic career changes.

5.4 Practical implications

This study has implications for practice. First, this study shows that refugees found employment that was considered positively, despite its unrelatedness to prior work experience or obtained education in the home country. As a consequence, most refugees in this study felt committed to their employment. Yet, refugees often felt hindered in feeling committed to their employment if a misfit is perceived. Based on the findings in this study, participants made subjective

comparisons between their current employment, and their ideal self, or prior occupation. Naus, van Iterson, and Roe (2007) already found that these cognitive analyses typically include identity threats that cause lowered self-esteem and various stress symptoms. Therefore, helping refugees in finding sustainable matches to host country occupations should be emphasized by job coaches, municipalities, and society as a whole. Emphasizing this is necessary, as it was found that some participants in this study felt pushed in certain education directions. It is only conceivable that an undesirable course of education hinders engagement in subsequent employment. Therefore, supporting refugees in finding meaningful employment could allow them to engage to host country occupations. Here, a balance should be sought by acknowledging the uncertainty refugees often face after their transition and helping them identify their long-term goals in the new society. This could steer concurrent commitment in a more positive direction and would ease future refugees in their integration into the host country. Consequently, it could contribute to a more positive refugee settlement (Loosemore et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2018; Solinger, Hofmans, & van Olffen, 2015).

6. Conclusion

This thesis explored how economic downgrading influences the commitment systems of first-generation Afghan refugees. By doing so, this study answered the following research question: *How does the perceived economic downgrading by first-generation Afghan refugees influence the commitment system change?*

The findings in this study demonstrate the resilience of Afghan refugees who arrived in the Netherlands in the 1980s and 1990s. This resilience is evident in their ability to find and re-engage in employment, despite the forced migration from Afghanistan having disrupted their lives, careers, and dreams. While literature identified political unrest as the primary motive for their flight, were the participants in this study predominantly concerned about their children, their partners, and their family. This commitment to the core family remained strong over the years, as the findings testify that even economic downgrading and concurrent career changes did not seem to have impacted most participants' commitment systems.

On the other hand, when the sense of feeling committed to employment was hindered, it was often accompanied by the inability to realize their work-related dreams due perceived economic downgrading. The life stories in this study justify the purpose of narrative research, as these voices will increasingly be missed in this day and age. As the number of displaced individuals continues to increase globally, more refugees will likely encounter these problems. While influence on political stability abroad is limited, society has agency over how refugees are supported. But to do so, furthering the current understanding of the micro-level occupational challenges faced by refugees is imperative. This research aimed to contribute, albeit in a small proportion.

In sum, this study contributes to the relatively new theory of commitment systems and whether economic downgrading and concurrent career changes influence the commitment system in the context of first-generation Afghan refugees. But more research in the refugee migration context is necessary to increase understanding of how commitment systems change after substantial career changes. Thereby, research should aim to attain insights that would contribute to positive settlement for refugees in which their voices are continued to be heard.

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Appendices

Appendix I Participants overview table

Participant #	Pseudonym	Age	Interview duration	Worked / studied before arrival in the Netherlands	Included in the first round of analysis (22)	Included in the second round of analysis (14)
1	Jamila	58	00:38:56	Worked/ studied	1	1
2	Tamana	36	00:49:52	N/a		
3	Parnian	41	00:30:59	N/a	2	
4	Mustafa	36	01:00:09	N/a	3	
5	Suria	30	00:26:39	N/a	4	
6	Nafisa	50	00:59:02	Worked	5	2
7	Nawid	36	00:35:11	N/a	6	
8	Samim	30	00:36:06	N/a	7	
9	Laila	30	00:34:43	N/a	8	
10	Khaled	58	01:01:58	Studied	9	3
11	Shahim	55	00:49:52	Studied	10	4
12	Aria	30	00:57:40	N/a		
13	Sahel	35	00:29:39	N/a	11	
14	Shahin	55	00:41:39	Studied	12	5
15	Ramin	57	00:54:18	Worked/ studied	13	6
16	Shirin	62	00:38:57	Worked/ studied	14	7
17	Dunya	53	00:46:03	Studied	15	8
18	Marwa	51	00:33:57	Studied	16	9
19	Tamim	46	00:50:53	Studied	17	10
20	Zohal	46	00:26:28	Studied	18	11
21	Yasmin	57	00:37:33	Studied	19	12
22	Milad	30	00:41:20	N/a	20	
23	Masood	31	00:40:44	N/a		
24	Morsal	50	00:53:18	Studied	21	13
25	Arian	40	00:38:15	Worked	22	14
26	Hila	34	00:42:37	N/a		
27	Omar	29	01:15:00	N/a		
28	Yalda	29	00:59:04	N/a		
29	Hosna	33	00:48:30	N/a		

Appendix II Interview script

<div align="center">

Interview script – English version

</div>

Since the interviewees consist of participants that have prior work experience / education in their home country and participants that have no prior work experience / education before their arrival in the Netherlands, the interview script is adjusted for both types of participants. In the table below, it is clarified what each color means in the interview script. This way, the interview script is clear during the interviews to avoid confusions.

Black	Red	Green	Blue
Applicable to all participants	Signal to ask/do something	Applicable to participants with prior work experience / education	Applicable to participants with no prior work experience / education

CONSENT FORM

Before we start, I would like to ask you for your permission to record this interview. This recording can only be accessed by me, four other students of this research and our supervisors. This interview will be transcribed afterwards, but you will be given a fictitious name and therefore, you will remain 100% anonymous.

[SIGN CONSENT FORM]

INTRODUCTION

My name is (...), I am a researcher at Radboud University and I am part of a group that is studying the trajectories of Afghan refugees from Afghanistan to the Netherlands. In today's interview, I would like to hear your story. Specifically, I would like to hear your story of migration to the Netherlands, with a focus on your work-related experiences, social relations and changes.

PART 1 – SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (1)

Before we start with the interview, I would like to ask you some general questions regarding your age, gender, highest achieved education (if applicable, what area), travel trajectory (countries), and how long you have been in the Netherlands.

[ASK THESE GENERAL QUESTIONS]

NARRATIVE

To start, I would like for you to think of your life as a long story. When you look back, you find smaller stories, or plots, inside of your life story, some related to your work, some related to your family, or community etc. These plots may be sometimes connected, and some of them may change the course of your life.

PART 2 - PREPARATION

[Explain that you will share your screen and show a timeline].

Here, we have a timeline for you to use, but it is almost empty at this moment. The only event we have added here is the arrival in the Netherlands, but the rest of the timeline is still empty. We would like you to tell us about two remarkable work experiences that were important for you: one that happened before your arrival in the Netherlands, and another that started after you arrived. These events are made of people, like characters, settings, actions, emotions. Feel free to describe them, and I will take notes [only keywords and time periods] on these blue cards and add them to your timeline.

Here, we have a timeline for you to use, but it is almost empty at this moment. The only event we have added here is the arrival in the Netherlands, but the rest of the timeline is still empty. We would like you to tell us about two work experiences: the work experience that you have had after your arrival in the Netherlands and the work experience that you always had dreamed of doing, expected yourself to pursue, or aimed at becoming. These events are made of people, like characters, settings, actions, emotions. Feel free to describe them, and I will take notes [only keywords and time periods] on these blue cards and add them to your timeline.

[Interviewer note - If you cannot identify if it is formal or informal, ask if they were/are registered]

Could you describe a bit more about these work experiences?, e.g. what you liked or disliked about them, what were your work conditions and routine, how you felt or how you still feel about them? I am going to show you this yellow card with some actions that you can use in your answer if you want.

Could you describe a bit more of these work experiences? Could you describe what you like/dislike about your current work/occupation, what your work/occupation conditions/routines are? Could you describe what you dreamed as a profession/occupation and

how you feel about that now? How do you feel about what you had dreamed/aimed to do/become?

PART 3 - TRANSITIONS AND QUONDAM COMMITMENT

Thank you. Would you now tell me the story of the transition between this first work to this later work, your journey from one to the other?

If the interviewee does not reflect on the decision-making-process:
Do you intend to stay [in the host country]? Why did you decide this?

If you want, you can keep referring to these yellow cards while telling me your story, and also to these purple cards [Scroll the screen to the left - till the end]. They might remind you of people and actions that were part of your story. Of course, you don't need to stick to them, and you can add other people and actions besides these ones.

Thank you. Would you now tell me the story of the transition between this work that you dreamed of doing and to the work/occupation that you currently have? Your journey from one to the other?

If the interviewee does not reflect on the decision-making-process:
Do you intend to stay [in the host country]? Why did you decide this?

PART 4 - ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

I would now like to ask you to focus on the moment after arrival in the host country.

1. Can you elaborate on the events and experiences you had from the moment you arrived in the Netherlands until you got paid work, or a work that you liked, if that happened? I would like you to mention things and people that helped you to get work, but also mention things and people, or other people's actions that prevented you from getting work or a better work condition. You can once again use the prepared cards in your story, if that helps, and add what you feel are important.

[Interviewer note - If the interviewee says something about their home-country work experience, ask them to elaborate on that. If the interviewee says nothing about that, ask them about moments they remembered their home-country work experience]

1.1 Were there moments in which you would remember the remarkable work experience from your homeland that you told me about? [If so] May you tell me when, or what would make you remember it?

1.1.1 If needed: Would you say you still feel connected/bonded to this first work experience you mentioned, like you still care about that organization/work?

[Interviewer note - If the interviewee says something that suggests commitment-conflict (like feeling conflicted, feeling tension, feeling a lot of different responsibilities), please ask about this. Interviewee: "I remember having trouble with my family" Interviewer: "Can you elaborate on that? How did it make you feel?]

1.2 When you look back to the trajectory you just told me, to whom did you feel committed? Like the work itself, family, community, culture…

1.3 [And/or] From your descriptions, I can understand that you had many relationships to manage during this period. Were there any times when you felt that your commitment to your [family? work? community? culture?] conflicted with each other? If so, what would you do in these situations, if you can give me examples?

'how did you manage these situations?'; 'how did it make you feel?'; 'what were your responses to these situations?'.

[Interviewer note - If the interviewee already mentioned some experiences of discrimination, ask them to elaborate on that topic. If they did not say anything about this topic, ask them (gently!!!)

1.4 Were there situations in which you felt that your work conditions were affected by reactions to your nationality, ethnicity, race or gender? [If so] Would you elaborate on that, give examples, if you feel comfortable to?

PART 5 - SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Thank you. In this part of the interview, we would like for you to tell us the story of living in a new society. Please elaborate on your experiences and feelings since you arrived in the Netherlands until you felt home here, or connected to the Dutch community. I would like to focus on things and people that helped you to feel home, but also on things and people, or

other people's actions that prevented you from feeling at home or connected to the Dutch community.

[Interviewer note - If the interviewee says something that suggests commitment-conflict (like feeling conflicted, feeling tension, feeling a lot of different responsibilities), please ask about this. Interviewee: "I remember having trouble with my family" Interviewer: "Can you elaborate on that? How did it make you feel?]*

When you look back to the trajectory you just told me, to whom did you feel committed? Like the work itself, family, community, culture…

[And/or] From your descriptions, I can understand that you had many relationships to manage during this period. Were there any times when you felt that your commitment to your [family? work? community? culture?] conflicted with each other? If so, what would you do in these situations, if you can give me examples?

'how did you manage these situations?'; 'how did it make you feel?'; 'what were your responses to these situations?'.

[Interviewer note - If the interviewee already mentioned some experiences of discrimination, ask them to elaborate on that topic. If they did not say anything about this topic, ask them (gently!!!)*

Were there situations in which you felt that your integration to the host community was affected by reactions to your nationality, ethnicity, race or gender? [If so] Would you elaborate on that, give examples, if you feel comfortable to?

PART 6 – SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (2)

Thank you! Now we will move to the last part of the interview in which I will ask you some questions regarding socio-demographics.

1. Do you believe that your current work (e.g. or salary, wage, earning, effort) matches your education, qualifications, etc...?

2. Do you still have family in your home country? [If so] Do you support them or help them? Or do you get support from them?

3. How easy or difficult can your household make ends meet with your income?

- O Very difficult
- O Difficult
- O Rather difficult
- O Neither difficult or easy
- O Rather easy
- O Easy
- O Very easy

4. Do you feel your income and work conditions are better or worse than the ones you had in your home country?

And then my last question:

5. Do you think that your current work fits with your educational background?

[Ending part 6]

So now I am going to stop recording. Would you like to add anything else I did not ask, but you would like to bring? I really appreciate your contribution to this research. If you would like to hear more about the results, feel free to contact me through [email/phone?]

Interview script – Dutch version

Aangezien de geïnterviewden bestaan uit deelnemers met eerdere werkervaring/opleiding in hun thuisland en deelnemers die geen eerdere werkervaring/opleiding hebben voor hun aankomst in Nederland, is het interviewscript op beide type deelnemers aangepast. In onderstaande tabel wordt verduidelijkt wat elke kleur in het interviewscript betekent. Op deze manier is het interviewscript duidelijk tijdens de interviews om verwarring te voorkomen.

Zwart	Rood	Groen	Blauw
Van toepassing voor alle deelnemers	Signaleert om iets te vragen/doen	Van toepassing op deelnemers met eerdere werkervaring/ opleiding	Van toepassing op deelnemers zonder eerdere werkervaring/ opleiding

TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER

Voordat we beginnen, wil ik uw toestemming vragen om dit interview op te nemen. Deze opname is alleen toegankelijk voor mij, vier andere studenten van dit onderzoek en onze begeleiders. Dit interview wordt achteraf getranscribeerd, maar u krijgt een fictieve naam en u blijft 100% anoniem.

[TEKEN TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER]

INTRODUCTIE

Mijn naam is_____, ik ben onderzoeker aan de Radboud Universiteit en maak deel uit van een groep die de trajecten van Afghaanse vluchtelingen vanuit Afghanistan naar Nederland bestudeert. In het interview van vandaag wil ik graag uw verhaal horen. In het bijzonder zou ik graag uw verhaal horen over migratie naar Nederland, met een focus op uw werk gerelateerde ervaringen, sociale relaties en veranderingen.

DEEL 1 – SOCIODEMOGRAFISCHE INFORMATIE (1)

Voordat we met het interview beginnen, wil ik u graag wat algemene vragen stellen over uw leeftijd, geslacht, hoogst behaalde opleiding (indien van toepassing, welk gebied), reistraject (landen), en hoe lang u al in Nederland bent.

[STEL DEZE ALGEMENE VRAGEN]

VERHAAL

Om te beginnen zou ik willen dat u uw leven als een lang verhaal beschouwt. Als u terugkijkt, vind u kleinere verhalen, of plots, in uw levensverhaal. Sommige gerelateerd aan uw werk, andere gerelateerd aan uw familie, of gemeenschap enz. Deze plots kunnen soms met elkaar verbonden zijn, en sommige kunnen de koers veranderen van uw leven.

DEEL 2 - VOORBEREIDING

[Leg uit dat je je scherm gaat delen en laat een tijdlijn zien].

Hier hebben we een tijdlijn die u kunt gebruiken, maar deze is op dit moment bijna helemaal leeg. Het enige evenement dat we hier hebben toegevoegd is de aankomst in Nederland, maar de rest van de tijdlijn is nog leeg. We willen graag dat u ons vertelt over twee opmerkelijke werkervaringen die belangrijk voor u waren: een die plaatsvond vóór uw aankomst in Nederland en een andere die begon nadat u arriveerde. Deze gebeurtenissen zijn gemaakt van mensen, zoals personages, instellingen, acties, emoties. Beschrijf deze gerust, dan maak ik aantekeningen [alleen trefwoorden en tijdsperioden] op deze blauwe kaarten en voeg ze toe aan de tijdlijn.

Hier hebben we een tijdlijn die u kunt gebruiken, maar deze is op dit moment bijna helemaal leeg. Het enige evenement dat we hier hebben toegevoegd is de aankomst in Nederland, maar de rest van de tijdlijn is nog leeg. We willen graag dat u ons over twee werkervaringen vertelt: de werkervaring die u hebt opgedaan na uw aankomst in Nederland en de werkervaring waarvan u altijd al heeft gedroomd, verwachtte na te streven of te worden. Deze gebeurtenissen zijn gemaakt van mensen, zoals personages, instellingen, acties, emoties. Beschrijf deze gerust, dan maak ik aantekeningen [alleen trefwoorden en tijdsperioden] op deze blauwe kaarten en voeg ze toe aan de tijdlijn.

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als je niet kunt bepalen of het formeel of informeel werk is, vraag dan of ze geregistreerd waren/zijn]

Kunt u iets meer beschrijven van deze werkervaringen? Bijvoorbeeld wat u er wel of niet leuk aan vond, wat waren uw werkomstandigheden en routine, hoe u zich voelde of hoe u er nog steeds over denkt? Ik ga u deze gele kaart laten zien met enkele acties die u in uw antwoord kunt gebruiken als u wilt.

Kun u wat meer over deze werkervaringen vertellen? Kunt u beschrijven wat u wel/niet leuk vindt aan uw huidige werk/beroep, wat uw werk/beroepsomstandigheden/routines zijn? Kun u

beschrijven waar u van droomde als beroep/beroep en hoe u daar nu over denkt? Hoe voel u zich over wat u had gedroomd/ wilde doen/ worden?

DEEL 3 - OVERGANG EN QUONDAM-COMMITMENT

Dank u. Zou u nu het verhaal willen vertellen over de overgang tussen dit eerste werk naar dit latere werk, uw reis van het een naar het ander?

> Als de geïnterviewde niet reflecteert op het besluitvormingsproces: Bent u van plan [in het gastland] te blijven? Waarom hebt u dit besloten?

Als u wilt, kunt u blijven verwijzen naar deze gele kaarten terwijl u mij uw verhaal vertelt, en ook naar deze paarse kaarten [Scroll het scherm naar links - tot het einde]. Ze kunnen u herinneren aan mensen en acties die deel uitmaakten van uw verhaal. U hoeft er natuurlijk niet aan te houden, en u kunt naast deze nog andere mensen en acties toevoegen.

Dank u. Zou u me nu het verhaal willen vertellen van de overgang tussen dit werk waarvan u droomde om te doen en het werk/beroep dat u nu hebt? Uw reis van de een naar de ander?

> Als de geïnterviewde niet reflecteert op het besluitvormingsproces: Bent u van plan [in het gastland] te blijven? Waarom hebt u dit besloten?

DEEL 4 - ECONOMISCHE INTEGRATIE

Ik zou u nu willen vragen om u te concentreren op het moment na aankomst in het gastland.

1. Kunt u wat meer vertellen over de gebeurtenissen en ervaringen die u hebt gehad vanaf het moment dat u in Nederland aankwam tot u betaald werk kreeg, of werk dat u leuk vond, als dat is gebeurd? Ik zou graag willen dat u dingen en mensen noemt die u hebben geholpen om aan werk te komen, maar ook dingen en mensen, of acties van anderen die ervoor zorgden dat u geen werk of een betere werkomstandigheden kreeg. U kunt de voorbereide kaarten opnieuw gebruiken in uw verhaal, als dat helpt, en toevoegen wat u belangrijk vindt.

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als de geïnterviewde iets zegt over zijn/haar werkervaring in het thuisland, vraag hem dan om daar nader op in te gaan. Als de geïnterviewde daar niets over zegt, vraag hem dan naar de momenten waarop ze zich hun werkervaring in het thuisland herinnerden.]

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als de geïnterviewde iets zegt dat een verbintenis-conflict suggereert (zoals een conflict voelen, spanning voelen, veel verschillende verantwoordelijkheden voelen), vraag hier dan naar. Bijvoorbeeld: geïnterviewde: "Ik herinner me dat ik problemen had met mijn familie" Interviewer: "Kunt u dat nader toelichten? Hoe voelde u zich daarbij?]

1.2 Als u terugkijkt op het traject dat u me net vertelde, met wie voelde u dan verbonden? Zoals het werk zelf, familie, gemeenschap, cultuur…

1.3 [En/of] Uit uw beschrijvingen begrijp ik dat u in deze periode veel relaties moest onderhouden. Waren er momenten waarop u voelde dat uw toewijding aan uw [familie? Het werk? Gemeenschap? Cultuur?] met elkaar in strijd? Zo ja, wat zou u in deze situaties doen, als u mij voorbeelden kunt geven?

'Hoe heeft u deze situaties aangepakt?'; 'hoe voelde u daarbij?'; 'Wat waren uw reacties op deze situaties?'.

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als de geïnterviewde al enkele ervaringen met discriminatie heeft genoemd, vraag hem dan om dat onderwerp nader toe te lichten. Als deze niets over dit onderwerp heeft gezegd, vraag dit dan (subtiel!!!)

1.4 Waren er situaties waarin u het gevoel had dat uw werkomstandigheden werden beïnvloed door reacties op uw nationaliteit, etniciteit, ras of geslacht? [Zo ja] Zou u dat nader willen toelichten, voorbeelden geven, als u zich daar prettig bij voelt?

DEEL 5 - SOCIALE INTEGRATIE

Dank u. In dit deel van het interview willen we graag dat u ons het verhaal vertelt van het leven in een nieuwe samenleving. Beschrijf uw ervaringen en gevoelens sinds uw aankomst in Nederland tot u zich hier thuis voelde, of verbonden was met de Nederlandse gemeenschap. Richt hier ook op dingen en mensen die u hebben geholpen om u thuis te voelen, maar ook op

dingen en mensen, of andermans acties waardoor u zich niet thuis of verbonden voelde met de Nederlandse gemeenschap.

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als de geïnterviewde iets zegt dat een verbintenis-conflict suggereert (zoals een conflict voelen, spanning voelen, veel verschillende verantwoordelijkheden voelen), vraag hier dan naar. Voorbeeld: geïnterviewde: "Ik herinner me dat ik problemen had met mijn familie" Interviewer: "Kunt u dat nader toelichten? Hoe voelde u zich daarbij?

Als u terugkijkt op het traject dat u me net vertelde, met wie voelde u dan verbonden? Zoals het werk zelf, familie, gemeenschap, cultuur…

[En/of] Uit uw beschrijvingen begrijp ik dat u in deze periode veel relaties moest beheren. Waren er momenten waarop u voelde dat uw toewijding aan uw [familie? Het werk? Gemeenschap? Cultuur?] met elkaar in strijd? Zo ja, wat zou u in deze situaties doen, als u mij voorbeelden kunt geven?

'Hoe heeft u deze situaties aangepakt?'; 'hoe voelde u zich daarbij?'; 'Wat waren uw reacties op deze situaties?'.

[Opmerking van de interviewer - Als de geïnterviewde al enkele ervaringen met discriminatie heeft genoemd, vraag hem dan om dat onderwerp nader toe te lichten. Als deze niets over dit onderwerp heeft gezegd, vraag dit dan (subtiel!!!)

Waren er situaties waarin u het gevoel had dat uw integratie in de gastgemeenschap werd beïnvloed door reacties op uw nationaliteit, etniciteit, ras of geslacht? [Zo ja] Zou u dat nader willen toelichten, voorbeelden geven, als u zich daar prettig bij voelt?

DEEL 6 – SOCIODEMOGRAFISCHE INFORMATIE (2)

Dank u. Nu gaan we naar het laatste deel van het interview, waarin ik u nog een aantal Soci-demografische vragen zal stellen.

1. Vindt u dat uw huidige werk (bijvoorbeeld salaris, loon, verdiensten, inspanning) overeenkomt met uw opleiding, kwalificaties, enz.?

2. Heeft u nog familie in uw thuisland? [Zo ja] Steunt u hen of helpt u hen? Of krijgt u steun van hen?

3. Hoe gemakkelijk of moeilijk kan uw huishouden rondkomen met uw inkomen?

- • O Zeer moeilijk
- • O Moeilijk
- • O Redelijk moeilijk
- • O Noch moeilijk, noch gemakkelijk
- • O Redelijk makkelijk
- • O Gemakkelijk
- • O Zeer gemakkelijk

4. Vindt u uw inkomen en werkomstandigheden beter of slechter dan die in uw eigen land?

En dan mijn laatste vraag:

5. Vindt u dat uw huidige werk past bij uw opleidingsachtergrond?

[Einde deel 6]

Dan stop ik nu met opnemen. Wilt u nog iets toevoegen dat ik niet heb gevraagd, maar wat wel mee zou moeten worden genomen? Uw bijdrage aan dit onderzoek stel ik zeer op prijs. Als u meer wilt weten over de resultaten, neem dan gerust contact met mij op via [e-mail/telefoon?]

Appendix III Consent form

Radboud University

CONSENT FORM

For participation in the scientific research study: *Refugees: Community, Work and the Integration Process*

Statement of participant

The aim of the research study has been outlined to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research study. I participate voluntarily in the research study. I understand that I can stop at any point during the research study, should I wish to do so. I understand how the data of the research study will be stored and how they will be used. I consent to participating in the research study as described in the information document.

In addition, I give permission to (please check all that apply):

Yes No

☐ ☐ process the following personal data: *gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, education, age, income*

☐ ☐ have *audio* recordings made of me

☐ ☐ use these *anonymous* recordings for scientific purposes (for example in a conference)

☐ ☐ use these *anonymous* recordings for educational purposes (for example in a lecture)

☐ ☐ have the audio recordings transcribed

☐ ☐ use the anonymized transcripts for scientific research

Name: ……

Signature: …………………………………………………   Date: ………………………………………………………………

Statement of executive researcher

I declare that I have informed the above-mentioned person correctly about the research study and that I abide by the guidelines for research as stated in the protocol of the Ethics Assessment Committee Humanities.

Name: ……

Signature: …………………………………………………   Date: ………………………………………………………………