

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

Melitka Križman

Quality of life and work in Denmark
Kvaliteta življenja in dela na Danskem

Diplomsko delo

Ljubljana, 2009

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

Melitka Križman

Mentorica: izr. prof. dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela

Somentorica: prof. dr. Margareta Bertilsson

Quality of life and work in Denmark
Kvaliteta življenja in dela na Danskem

Diplomsko delo

Ljubljana, 2009

The four years of my studies in Sociology did not simply change the amount of knowledge I had, they changed much more: they changed me, and helped me become a person I have always wanted to be!

Life fascinates me! How do we make our lives meaningful and find a purpose? How do we cope with the pain and anguish of loss, and how do we discover pleasure and joy? The sociological response to these questions is to point towards relationships, shared culture, and social location. Life is found in relationships, real and imaginary. Describing the social processes that make life meaningful is in the heart of good qualitative research.

Four months ago I heard and collected ten stories. Ten individuals shared with me their own perceptions, achievements, wishes, reasons, and meanings. Sometimes I still take those interviews that I typed and read them. I often think of what one of the participants in my survey told me about his quality of life. "Quality is when you are in balance and when you are positively looking forward to what is going to happen and maybe stop once in a while and just think... 'hey, this is actually pretty good and cannot be better'. Like Sunday for example. I was sitting with my wife and two children in the garden and the sun was shining and ... well, in that situation we were literally asking the question to ourselves – can this be a lot better? And it probably cannot be!"

I would like to thank all the participants of my study for what they shared with me, and, even more, I would like to thank those who taught me how to use what I hear, and to listen as objectively as possible.

Quality of life and work in Denmark

The quality of life and the quality of work are two topics which have gained, especially lately in the field of social research, a lot of attention. They were also the main interests of this work. In order to learn more about them, the grounded theory approach was used. According to that, the aim of this work was not to test the hypothesis but instead to establish a theoretical framework about what actually the phrases of quality of life and quality of work could mean to people. What kind of perceptions do people have about them and what meanings do they attach to them? In other words, what matters to people for their own quality of life and work. The practical work consisted of conducting ten, semi-structured interviews with five females and five males of different ages, educations, occupations and other characteristics, who were all Danes. The theorizing of the collected data led to establishing the core findings presented in this thesis, and pointing out the meaning of abilities for having, doing, being, and accomplishing in someone's overall quality of life and work.

Key words: quality of life, quality of work and grounded theory approach.

Kvaliteta življenja in dela na Danskem

Kvaliteta življenja in kvaliteta dela sta temi, ki postajata vse bolj pogosti subjekt družboslovnega raziskovanja. S pomočjo tako imenovanega pristopa "grounded" teorija, po katerem cilj raziskovalnega postopka ni testiranje hipotez temveč oblikovanje teoretičnega okvira, sem poskušala odgovoriti na vprašanja o tem, kaj pravzaprav besedni frazi kvaliteta življenja in kvaliteta dela pomenita za ljudi in njihovo vsakodnevno življenje. Natančneje, kakšne so individualne percepcije ter pestrost pomenov obeh področij kvalitet za ljudi. V ta namen je bilo opravljenih deset, pol strukturiranih intervjujev, s petimi osebami ženskega in petimi osebami moškega spola različnih starosti, stopenj izobraženosti, poklicev in drugih značilnosti, pri pogoju, da je bila oseba Danec oziroma Danka. Po končanem postopku zbiranja podatkov, je sledila njihova analiza ter ugotovitve, ki so prikazane v tem delu in pojasnjujejo kvaliteto življenja in dela kot področja, za katera je še posebej pomembno imeti, početi, biti ter dosežati, da jih posameznik označi za kvalitetne.

Ključne besede: kvaliteta življenja, kvaliteta dela in "grounded" teorija.

Contents

| | | |
|--------|--|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 2 | THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK | 9 |
| 2.1 | Quality of life, quality of work and their relation | 9 |
| 2.2 | Grounded theory | 17 |
| 3 | PRACTICAL PART | 21 |
| 3.1 | Measuring quality of life and work | 21 |
| 3.2 | Pre - research phase and the operation | 22 |
| 3.3 | The sample and its sociological explanation | 24 |
| 3.4 | The qualitative interview procedure: the value of listening to the “Other” | 27 |
| 3.5 | Results | 30 |
| 3.5.1 | <i>Male 1</i> | 30 |
| 3.5.2 | <i>Female 2</i> | 31 |
| 3.5.3 | <i>Male 3</i> | 32 |
| 3.5.4 | <i>Female 4</i> | 33 |
| 3.5.5 | <i>Male 5</i> | 34 |
| 3.5.6 | <i>Female 6</i> | 36 |
| 3.5.7 | <i>Male 7</i> | 37 |
| 3.5.8 | <i>Female 8</i> | 38 |
| 3.5.9 | <i>Male 9</i> | 39 |
| 3.5.10 | <i>Female 10</i> | 40 |
| 4 | FINDINGS, ASSERTIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS | 42 |
| 4.1 | Quality of life and importance of having for doing | 42 |
| 4.2 | Quality of work and importance of having for doing | 45 |
| 4.3 | Being happy with life and being satisfied at work: Quality of life and work in terms of happiness and satisfaction | 49 |
| 5 | CONCLUSION | 52 |
| 6 | POVZETEK | 55 |
| 7 | LITERATURE | 60 |

1 INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is an area of social studies that has attracted an increasing amount of interest over the past two decades, particularly in the areas of health studies, social services, medicine, education and work. The increasing interest in the concept of quality of life and quality of work has expanded its epistemology. By developing new methodological approaches not only valuable but also very interesting assertions and conclusions about different values, perceptions, feelings and views that people have, shared or not, about their own qualities have been discovered. Although the studies about quality related to specific area of our lives are designed to understand what really matters to people, in their essence they mainly answer one question: how good is their life for themselves.

The studies of quality of life are an examination of influences upon the goodness and meaning in life, as well as people's happiness and well-being. Even more; they are also the process of defining the goods people appreciate in their life; in different age and different stages, as well defining important relations with others. In other words, they are about searching answers on the questions about what people value the most or rate the highest in their life, both private, and public. Nevertheless, the process of defining the goods and relations is never ending. Its expansion varies not in the different stages of life an individual is in, but also depends upon the socio–economical micro as well as macro positions, social context and psychological state.

Researching quality of life does not mean coming to know one day what quality of life actually is, it means to gather information on individual images about it. It is about defining the attitudes people have towards life, work, or other areas of everyday life. However, as sociologists we have to ask ourselves, how these attitudes shape areas of quality and if they are adequately perceived by policy makers, whose primary aim should be to meet the needs of the ones they are governing. The fundamental sociological goal is to understand the phenomenon, taking into consideration its context, and to influence upon our conduct.

Denmark as one of the 28 countries participating in first European Quality of Life Survey (Wallace and others 2007), which focused on quality of work and life satisfaction,

scored pretty high in overall quality of life. But what exactly does “pretty high” mean? What defines high quality of life and what defines low quality of life?

The concept of quality of life is not an important topic only in the health field but recently has been so in social welfare and political debates, and more and more in public topics of society’s issues. However, after living in Denmark for one and a half years and listening frequently about quality of or in life, I have started wondering, what exactly people mean by having a high quality of life? And because of my particular interest in working culture, what do people mean by having high quality of work?

Therefore the topic of my final thesis was not hard to pick. It took me half a year of sampling, conducting conversations, typing the interviews, and analyzing them. It was half a year when new knowledge was gathered, however it was also the time, when I was able to justify to myself why I had studied hard for the previous four years. It was because of previous knowledge that I was able to enter into ten perspectives of quality of life and work, and assert them.

Nowadays, quality of life is believed to be understandable in terms of being, having, doing and loving. Many scholars claim these three components to be the major explanatory elements of quality of life. But what exactly do people have to have, or have to be in their life or at work, that they label it as “Quality”? Or even more; is it possible that these three key elements should be expanded to some others as well? Is variety of explanations a possibility, or maybe even a need for better understanding and addressing quality of life and work?

The core topic of my work was namely to understand what actually do the phrases “*quality of life*” and “*quality of work*” mean. My search for the answer was made in three steps. First, deciding the relevant theoretical as well as methodological tool, which was, in my case, the grounded theory approach, and semi-structured, face-to face, individual interviews. Secondly, conducting conversations with ten Danish individuals with diverse demographic and socio-economical positions. Finally, to make assertions and drive conclusions based on my topics of interest.

This paper work is divided into two main parts, theoretical and practical. The first one is focused mainly on presentation of quality of work and life and how scholars perceive

them nowadays while the second part focuses mostly on my own survey processes and assertions about these two phenomena, followed by discussions.

The process of this paper work consisted of different literature from different scholars; Martha Nussbaum, James Griffin and many others, especially their work done on quality of work and quality of life. However, my main methodological sources came from writings done by Douglas Ezzy, Barney Glasser, Anselm L. Strauss and others.

2 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical and methodological framework is divided into two main sections. In the first one I present the theoretical perspectives of quality of life (QL) as well quality of work (QW), and the relation between them according to the literature. The second part focuses on the grounded theory approach and presents its methodology.

2.1 Quality of life, quality of work and their relation

Quality of life (QL) is a concept, which has elicited much interest and stimulated much research for decades. The pioneer of surveying the quality of life if I can call him this was, Angus Campbell (Campbell 1976) did much of empirical work on QL during the 1970s. And he was not alone in his interest. Seriously involved in investigating a quality of life in Campbell's time was also Andrews, whose theoretical approach focused mainly on link between QL and time. "*Quality of life is a time-related phenomenon - specifically in the use of time, and the effects of age, period, and cohort*" (Andrews 1986, 10).

Quality of work (QW) studies, have gained a lot of attention especially lately, because of their believed importance for someone's overall quality of life. Namely, empirical researches on QL have frequently showed the correlative relation between both.

The First European Quality of Life Survey (Wallace and others 2007), which results were published in 2007, focused on quality of work and life satisfaction. The research addressed the level of importance of quality of work for people's overall quality of life. More specifically, the study was examining the correlation between work-life balance and life satisfaction and discovered correlation between overall life satisfaction and working conditions. Namely, it showed strong correlation between working conditions and job satisfaction, which in turn is shown to affect people's overall life satisfaction.

QW is often the case of being part of quality of life. It is possible to define the quality of life as an overall, subjective idea, perceived as a sum of how good specific areas of someone's everyday life are. But again, the number of quality of life or work definitions can be as high as the number of people we ask. However, the subject of interest is degree of correlation between quality of life and work, and people's own preferences over which has

higher importance. In addition, the question is also what quality of work consists out of? How can it be explained? And most importantly, can we really explain the whole variety of quality of life or work perceptions?

What we have learned about QW so far, is the importance of many different factors, which affect positively or negatively work satisfaction. According to Andrews (Andrews 1986), work satisfaction most often increases with job enrichment, with worker's participation in decision making, with worker's perception of personal development through work, and when workers are able to set their own goals. On the other hand, the existing literature shows that work satisfaction decreases with role ambiguity, and role conflict (Andrews 1986).

Nowadays, the concept of QL has expanded to the level, where different scholars talk about *global* quality of life (Andersen and others 2005). They claim that usage of various scopes of social indicators can potentially lead to defining global QL. In order to test their hypothesis, they carried out the social survey (Andersen and the others 2005) including 2000 representing indicators, which they claim to be "*all aspects*" of life. And although they came to the conclusion, that quality of life is associated with personal attitudes towards life, rather than objective factors, they finalize QL can be developed independently as one among social phenomena and thus be used as a global tool for social policies, trying to improve QL.

Forming a consensus on any conceptual definition within any academic field is not an easy task and QL is not an exception. It is possible to differentiate two levels of approaching QL (as well QW), which I call basic and advanced. To explain it further, basic level covers mainly the questions on "how good is the life of population?", while advanced one seeks for the answers on "how good is the life of individual?" In other words, how good is your life really for you or how good my life is really for me?

The central interest on the first level can be investigated on a massive sample, and can consider mainly quality of health services, educational services, state services, etc. This level examines what different scholars call objective side of the concept (Wish 1986, Megone 1990, Greenley and others 1997). The hypothesis confirmed on this level, can be used for further analysis, or even comparison on a global level, since they relate to the objects, which are perceived to be "*the basic rights of any individual*" (Andersen and

others 2005, 117). But as soon as one reaches the second level, the global validity of the concept seems hardly possible to me.

When we inquire about the prosperity of a nation, or region of the world, or social group, individual or any other social entity, and want to use results for further social applications, the issue of which criteria are truly relevant escalates. In order to improve conditions of social environment we need to know about health care and medical services. We need to know about education. We need to know about labor. We need to know what political and legal privileges the citizens enjoy. We need to know how family relations and relations between the people are constructed. But what we also, perhaps above all, need to know is how people imagine, wonder, feel and attach the meanings to situations they are facing on everyday life basis, and these perceptions are not universal.

Especially QL does not have a ubiquitous unified nature in social reality, because of its second dimension - subjective one. Campbell's work mirrors especially attitudinal thrust, suggesting that "*the quality of life is a person's sense of well-being, his or her satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life, or happiness or unhappiness*" (in Andrews 1986, 13). Wish goes even further claiming the comparison of subjective dimension to be impossible. "*Researches from different fields have maintained an interest in investigation and measuring the quality of life in various geographic areas. They have sought to compare the Quality of life in the cities as well as among nations. However there are very little relations. Measuring adequately Quality of life means to redirect research effort in also its subjective dimensions and those are incomparable by the definition*" (Wish 1986, 94-95).

To measure these certain phenomena on individual level, one must be aware of functions of two different but often interdependent input categories – physical inputs which are objectively measurable and transferable, and the psychological inputs which are subjectively, ordinally differentiable but usually not interpersonally comparable. The QL and QW basic ingredients are its environment, associated with objective dimensions, and a psychological milieu, on the other hand associated with subjective dimensions.

Yet, measuring the second type of ingredient, subjective one is not completely impossible and should not remain an unexplained field, but it demands special treatment, especially in terms of methodology. However, the issue of its comparability is probably the reason, why most researches have totally neglected the psychological aspect, so to say half

of the concept, according to Wish (Wish 1986). On one hand the rationalization of the concept makes it easier to compare, but on the other hand puts its validity in doubt.

QL and QW can be clearly explained also via gap theory approach. What is considered to be a gap is the difference between what one actually has and what is ideal for him or her to have. Yet what occurs in the process of decision-making is that individual acts rationally and decides consciously about his or her own wants, his or her own preferences, and fulfilling them means for the individual to be satisfied. To be satisfied means also to minimize the gap concerning what is the individual's case now and what one expects or expected to be the case in the future (or was in the past). This situation Andrews calls the *expectation-reality gap* (Andrews 1986), and perceives the gap as the space between what one wants or wishes for the future or already had in the past, and what one has now.

The implementation of social reality and social environment in which individual lives, is an on- and open- going process, which affect individuals differently, but constantly as they play different roles at different stages in their life. What individual wants is usually what individual values the most. However, the hierarchy of values that people adopt in orienting and justifying their actions can be and usually is (at least to some degree) determined also by social environment. According to the congruence theory (Bauman and May 2001) the individual is in the constant process of balancing personal and environmental requirements.

According to the literature, most social surveys done on QL understand its concept in terms of having, being, doing or loving (Nussbaum 1993, Mickel and others 2008). Having refers to the material resources and living conditions, loving refers to the social relationship that a person develops, while being refers to the need to integrate into society and includes feelings of belonging and alienation. Looking strictly from linguistic point of view, all four above mentioned key words are objective measures, while the things people value, goals they want to reach, relations they want to obtain are subjective measures, and vary from person to person, and are part of the everyday process of constructions of meanings. However, subjective meanings can depend on the age, life stage the individual is in, gender, education, economical status, etc. Yet, they can be also reflection of social environment.

The key word of both concepts is *quality*. According to social constructivists (Ezzy 2002) quality can be understood as a linguistic model, which emerged from an (usually inductive) analysis of survey respondents' language. The model includes a collective picture of factors representing quality. Yet, in contrast with public opinion, QL is not simply the sum of most frequent answers researchers get, when surveying. QL has very strong, already mentioned subjective dimension. Of course the question of objectification rises from the last written statement. The objectification needed in the process of making social surveys is an academic demand per se; however objectification of such concepts as QL and QW is not possible without investigating subjective dimensions due to its poor validity, which may occur if this dimension is not considered.

When trying to define the quality one must search for its expressions. Many scholars claim that most often it is expressed in terms of satisfaction, well-being and happiness (Campbell 1976, Andrews 1986, Griffin 1988, Nussbaum 1993). The two indexes of satisfaction and happiness are also most frequently used in quality of life surveys.

As quality also satisfaction can be classified as a socially constructed phenomenon and its meaning can vary from individual to individual as much as any other meaning. Andrews explains it as a gap between different times and wants. "*It is the goal-achievement gap, which is itself explained by some social comparison gaps, the gap between what one has now and the best one has had in the past*" (Andrews 1986, 66). But what he sees as the gap is the gap which is between individual's wants on one side and individual's actual having on the other side. The gap which originates from the lack of having all wants is probably one of the most important psychological factors driving individual to overcome this difference, and to reach the stage of having all the wants. Though this process has an intrinsic disposition of fulfilling the gap, it can be hardly imagined that this would be ever completely possible.

James Fraser also offers an interesting explanatory process of life and work satisfaction. Namely, his approach enables holistic answer on the question about individual perceptions of individual's own QW or QL. He claims, that scientific explanation for personal satisfaction, which varies from person to person, can be best explained from dispositional, structural, or hybrid perspectives (Michalos in Andrews 1986, Fraser 2002).

Dispositional level for QW focuses on the individual characteristics and ideas that people bring to the work or their personal life place (Michalos in Andrews 1986). Structural level in contrast, emphasizes factors that are exogenous to the individual as a worker, husband, father, or any other social role he or she is playing in different social environments (Michalos in Andrews 1986). When explaining, we search the answers in environmental circumstances; to see to what degree they could determine or influence the individual's perceptions. Hybrid arguments examine the interactions of personal characteristics, with the characteristics of work or social life environment (Fraser 2002). So to say, hybrid is mixing dispositional and structural explanation of perceptions of QL and QW.

But who should be the most considerate about how people perceive QL and QW and what matters to them? The biggest interest about these concepts is driven from economical, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. However, due to the lack of triangulation in terms of combining not only methodological approaches and their results, but also the knowledge of scholars belonging to different academic areas, the policies covering wider scope of needs different people have are impossible.

QL is a notion that has been discussed throughout the history also in philosophy. It happened only in recent times that such a notion has been variously employed by economists as well. The term as such can be ambiguous. On the one hand there is the quality of an individual's life, but there is also a broader concept, capturing roughly the quality of the living conditions, but they can be picked independent of how well the particular individual's own life goes. As there is pattern of duality of QL dimensions, we can see, there is also duality of private and public QL. Christopher Magone claims QL being "*entirely a theoretical invention*" (Magone 1990, 29), yet what can be argued is that any theory about social world and its everyday life, can be theoretical inventions, but that does not necessarily imply its usualness. I believe any method which seeks to establish the nature of quality of life by purely quantitative empirical means will in fact employ only evaluative assumptions. Qualitative approach seeks to argue for its understating of all four dimensions. Subjective and objective ones as well as private and public ones.

In philosophical view, quality is explained as something valuable. So to say "*what people value the most*" (Griffin 1988, 10). Furthermore, philosophers as Griffin (Griffin

1988) and Megone (Megone 1990) also consider QL as a necessary equipment for the moral order. The idea behind their perspective is that having non-instrumental values like family for instance, play a crucial role in the grounding of society's moral system, also supplying its central rules, which according to functionalism, help to maintain social order. But the major account of the QL in terms of a list of basic human functions, coming from philosophical area is already Aristotle's claim about social functions not to have the same validity for all human beings (in Megone 1990). According to that, validity of the previously mentioned global quality of life concept is again very small, if perceived holistically. Instead, greater problems about measuring QL are rising. The issues are not only, how to enable people to get what they value in general, but how to enable *all* of the people regardless of their gender, religious or sexual orientation, physical disabilities and so on, to get what they perceive to be important for their QL.

Sociologist, economists and philosophers all face the problems of QL (and QW) assessment and measurement. However, the role of policy-makers for the implementation of results is many times overlooked. Although we all want to share an interest in how people are doing in different areas of their life, we need to know, who should take actions in different stages of social activities. If I label discovery as a social activity of an intellectual nature as a prerequisite for further analysis of phenomenon, and carried out by social scientists, then the implications of the results should be the aim for policy makers.

Existing literature about QW is the evidence suggesting that a high quality of work is beneficial on micro and on macro level. Some scholars have concluded that employees whose personal and professional lives are better integrated are benefited (Mickel and others, 2008).

What we, as scholars have to be aware of is the openness of concepts of QL as well as QW. The importance of subjective meanings for their definition is not the only argument for a non-existing common concept, which would simplify their usage as well investigation. Namely, the nature of social world we live in nowadays is not only diverse and pluralistic, but also vulnerable to everyday turbulent changes, which makes social reality unpredictable and individual lives unstable. In such conditions, unified concept of QL, because of its what I call the three dimensional nature, is impossible to form.

What I mean by three dimensional nature is firstly the influence of individual personal characteristics, so to say his or her own psychology. Secondly, the influence of social structure and social environment. And thirdly, the hybrid influence of the first two factors.

Without discovering the different meanings of QL and QW among the people, we cannot make proposals for new policies considering quality of life (or work) improvement. According to James Griffin “*We cannot make any useful judgments about how to act so as to promote well-being without having a notion of well-being that captures all of these variations*” (Griffin 1988, 74). But discovery is closely related to the methodology, a tool for any discovery. Yet even if properly observed, pure data have its value, but little meaning without its scientific and adequate explanation and understanding.

Any system, on micro or macro level, should be aiming to pursue a goal of quality of life for its members. Quality of life should not be only one of the ultimate goals, but also a norm. As we could read previously, it can even be persuaded as one of the basic human rights. However, it is also on a social scientist to explore what is important for the members of the society and to make proposals on how individuals can obtain, what they consider to be valuable for them. But in order to do that a sufficient methodological tool must be used as mentioned above. And among many, I decided for the grounded theory approach, which is the topic of interest in the following part of this thesis.

2.2 Grounded theory

Liberman claims that *“the craft of a qualitative sociologist consists not of an objective methodology but of hermeneutic practices that permit the researcher to understand the indigenous world close to the way that it appears to the people themselves”* (Liberman in Ezzy 2002, 12).

Intellectual process followed by social scientist may be obtained either by inductive or deductive method or by the combination of both. As a student of sociology I have sympathized with qualitative research methods since the beginning of my studies. My assertion after four years of studies is not that they would be simply better, but that they can offer deeper and broader explanation of the phenomena. Why scientists choose and use a particular method from among all available, is not simply just the matter of the scientist's own preferences, but is dependent upon the phenomena itself. Its nature determines the manner of intellectual thinking, and even if scholars are free to choose the methodological tool they would like to use to pursue their scientific goals, they can do that only to the extent of correspondence of methodology with the phenomenon studied.

My main heuristic drive was curiosity and creativity, which according to Andrew's Abbot should be the main power supply for any student as well scholar (Abbot 2004). He challenges the students by suggesting them to test correlations between objects of social¹ which may appear at the first glance not even indirectly correlated, not to talk about direct correlation.

In search for comprehensive understanding of quality of life, I was mostly interested to find out what does the term quality of life mean to people from their own point of view, their own perspective. And the same question was also raised regarding the quality of work.

In 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss published their work on development of their new qualitative method in the world of social science, called grounded theory. They have continued their work on this new method, and published many writings of the method and its principles of how to conduct grounded theory study.

Discovery is a constant process of dialogue between the already known and the as yet unknown. The grounded theory approach is a qualitative methodological practice used

¹ The objects of social are events, individuals, groups,

in social science inquiry that enables us, via the inductive way of thinking, to discover and to understand social phenomena.

This approach was introduced to me in more details, when I was in my third class at the university. As my studies continued, I kept reading and learning more and more about it. Later on it did not take much for me to decide to explore the grounded theory approach. This approach is based on careful observation of the social world, and leads to a methodological practice that offers data, which is richer, more robust and more useful.

Scientists are not only looking for the most frequent answers, but also for those which may be considered as deviant and unusual compared to the average. I believe qualitative research can be relevant to the public policy making processes, carried out by macro structures like the state. In addition, smaller, but no less important social entities can use them as well in their policy processes. Of course I am not denying that many researches are extremely valuable. However, written and left on the book shelves in silence, it might be questioned how such research actually influences public policy.

The grounded theory approach nowadays comes in two forms, classical and sophisticated, but both of them are inductive methods, which involve specific thinking and working processes. Its classical version², which was developed by Glaser and Strauss, generates the theory based only on the collected data. *“The first step in gaining theoretical sensitivity is to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible”* (Glaser in Andrews 1986, 3). Glaser seems to suggest that researches should not read the literature or develop hypotheses before entering the field. Opposite to the classical approach, sophisticated version argues for the use of pre-existing literature to suggest specific research problems, but the researcher must not allow this preexisting theory to constrain what is noticed.

Whether they come from pre-existing theory or from previous experience, all researches have pre conceptions that shape what they see when conducting research, and the main point of the grounded theory should not be to avoid these pre conceptions, but to actively work to prevent pre conceptions from narrowing what is observed and theorized.

² Nowadays we differentiate the classical version of Grounded theory developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s, drawn on the symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective, determined by simplistic inductive theory building, and a sophisticated model of grounded theory approach, which believes in conclusions drawn on both inductive and deductive methods of theory generation (Ezzy 2002).

The sophisticated version recognizes the influence of pre existing theories, which can help a researcher in his or her sensitivity to particular issues and aspects of the phenomenon being studied. However, what differentiates the grounded theory approach from the others is that it searches for dimensions of the experience not covered by pre existing theory. *“Grounded theory inductively generates new theory through careful observation. These inductively generated theories are then, in turn used to shape further research”* (Ezzy 2002, 12).

The key areas of grounded theory study and its research process, concern the data collection, analysis, and development of a conceptual theory. In contrast to deductive way of thinking, when we make assertions upon already existing theory, the aim of inductive method is to generate new theory that is grounded in data and to present the processes going on in the field of study (Glasser 2005).

Meaning, action, and interaction are central to grounded theory research but its nature is conceptual. It gives a conceptual account of how the participants resolve their main concern. Grounded theory argues that theory can be built up through observation of the social world. The method of observation can be very varied. Its aim must be systematic data collection and analysis of data. I decided to conduct the data with qualitative interview method, which will be explained in details in the next part of the thesis. What was important in my process of using grounded theory was, that the theory, concepts, categories and themes were identified and developed while and after the research was being conducted and not before, as is usual for the deductive model.

The aim of used approach is not to test the theory. Therefore I was not interested in the results of previous research on quality of life and quality of work. I was driven by curiosity about peoples’ own perceptions about their quality of life and work in order to develop a theory about quality of their life and work, which would be grounded in data collected. Despite ignoring the theoretical results of previous studies, their recognition is not avoidable once the data was collected with grounded theory approach. With the purpose of deeper understanding of the phenomena, one has to compare the results with the previous ones, yet importantly, only because he or she as a scientist wants to extend the frame of explanation of the phenomena. For the purpose of my study, I did not understand

grounded theory as a method, which would lead me necessarily to the new theory, but as a way to better understanding of social phenomena regarding quality of life and work.

In contrast to pure induction, I argue it is important to emphasize the role of pre existing theory, so the researcher can be sensitizing the right questions that need to be examined during the research. Which is the *right* question, can, of course be very subjective and decided by the scientist, yet what is important during the grounded theory process is that the researcher is not preoccupied or even constrained with pre existing theory. *“The grounded theorist uses deductively derived theory, but also examines questions and issues beyond what is suggested by deductively derived theory”* (Ezzy 2002, 12).

3 PRACTICAL PART

3.1 *Measuring quality of life and work*

Measuring quality of life and work is a problem area. The major issue is not forming a consensus on its conceptual definition among different scholars as well as disciplines (although many of them are aware that there are as many quality of life or work definitions as there are people) but lack of an efficient, easy-to-use, valid measurement instrument. The problems are its reliability and validity. I believe qualitative social methodology can be one of the solutions to resolve this problem. In order to establish a sufficient measuring instrument, one has to know not only the variety of as many answers as possible, but even more importantly, the variety of as many answers as possible of particular social groups. As Naomi Bailin Wish claims *“in order to compare the quality of life economic, sociological, political and cultural data are often gathered and equally weighted without regard for the way quality of life is perceived by those who live there”* (Wish 1986, 93).

What exactly is a sufficient measuring instrument depends on the object of research; however its insufficiency can be a problem of validity per se. Qualitative interview was a measuring instrument, which was my main tool for data collection. The next section offers explanation in four steps of how the survey about quality of life and work was carried out, from its preparation phase, to its actual data collection phase. First, the focus is put on the pre-research phase and its operations. After that, the part describing the sample and its demographic, as well as socio-economical characteristics follows. Thirdly, one can read about the data gathering process, which consisted of ten semi-structured, individual interviews, of up to sixty minutes' duration. Finally, a short introduction of findings, resulting from interviews conducted and the profiles of the interviewees.

3.2 Pre - research phase and the operation

As was shown previously, the first phase of the process according to the grounded theory approach and its inductive nature is much more “open”, especially compared to the later ones. According to its sophisticated model, my preparation for the phase, during actual data gathering, was limited and based more on learning about sufficient measuring instrument and its usage, Grounded theory approach as such, and grasping the focal points from previous studies done on my topic of interest. The attempt was not to depict the *right* or *most often* used categories, but to generate a range of possible cases, without its closure³.

According to the two core categories⁴ in my study, quality of life and quality of work, I made a list of open questions to be my main guidance for data gathering. My interest was perceptions. My main considerations were individual perceptions of huge diversity from a small sample; therefore the interviews always started with the question “*How do you, yourself, perceive quality of life*”?

The questionnaire was divided into two main foci, starting with questions about individual *perceptions of one’s quality of life*:

- **“How do you, yourself, perceive the quality of life?”**
- “What does a high quality of life mean for you?”
- “What does a low quality of life mean for you?”

Followed by individual *perceptions of quality of work*:

- **“How do you, yourself, perceive the quality of work?”**
- “What does a high quality of work mean for you?”
- “What does a low quality of work mean for you?”
- “How do you perceive flexibility at work?”
- “How do you perceive security at work?”

³ Later on, when interviews were carried out, some categories were also dropped as they were not very useful, or as they were unrelated to the core categories. This situation happens very often according to Strauss (Strauss 1987, 22), and does not imply wrong usage of the theory, but the opposite. It reflects researcher’s non preoccupation with exact models, which he or she is trying to define or prove.

⁴ According to Strauss (1987) there are several criteria for judging which criteria should serve as the core category. The criteria are that it is central in relation to other categories. It appears frequently in data. It also relates easily to other categories, and has clear implications for a more general theory.

- “What is more important for you at work: flexibility or security?”

The participants were first asked to estimate their own quality of life and quality of work, considering the time when the interview was taking place.⁵ Then they were asked to evaluate fitting of their perceptions and their work and life reality:

- “How would you estimate your quality of work?”
 - “Are you actively pursuing quality of life/work according to your perceptions of them?”
- “Why or why not?”

The indicator-concept model of the questionnaire was based on the two core questions, presented above.⁶ However, selectively after conducting two testing interviews,⁷ extra questions related to the core ones were asked as well. Yet the part regarding the quality of work had more extra ones compared to the ones on quality of life. The reason for that was my particular interest in the flexibility and security at work in Denmark, what I consider as being two very remarkable features of Danish working life, but joint together is so called flexicurity model.

“Danes do it best. In a grid plotting EU Member State’s flexicurity patterns, Denmark ends up reaching highest scores for both security of employment and flexibility of its workers,” one can read in a short article ‘All roads lead to... Lisbon’ (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2008). According to the publisher of that quote, more and better jobs can be achieved though flexibility and security, two concepts joint together in flexicurity. But what exactly does flexibility or security at work mean to people? What kinds of conditions must be met at work, that people would be rated as being flexible or secure, in other words, better? What are Danish sample’s perceptions of these concepts? My aim was not to test the hypothesis if flexicurity

⁵ Two participants contacted me after taking the interview and informed that they have lost their jobs. One because of the cancellation of the project he was working on, mainly because of higher demand for savings during the time of financial crisis. The other participant quit his job as a statement of disapproval of the policy of the company he was working for. Further details on both individuals can be found in the results section.

⁶ Marked as bold.

⁷ More information about testing interviews is given in the “How did I do the Interviews?” section.

is really part of my sample's everyday life, but to understand what do individuals consider as flexicurity and how is the concept presented in their perceptions.

Besides the above listed questions, also an issue of the times of financial crisis was raised. Both the testing interviewees mentioned this particular contemporary, social condition as important, therefore I formulated two additional questions:

- “How do you perceive quality of life in times of financial crisis?”
- “How do you perceive quality of work in times of financial crisis?”

Part of this phase was also the selection of the sample, which was done by first asking the questions “*who and why should participate*”? The next part is mainly about my sample, and its characteristics.

3.3 *The sample and its sociological explanation*

The sample of my research was small due to the nature of my survey. My interest was not to test the hypothesis and grasp an average and most frequent answer, but instead search for diversity of perceptions about quality of life and work. My main purpose was to seek meaning and perception to gain a better understanding and to generate a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life and work experiences hold for the interviewees.

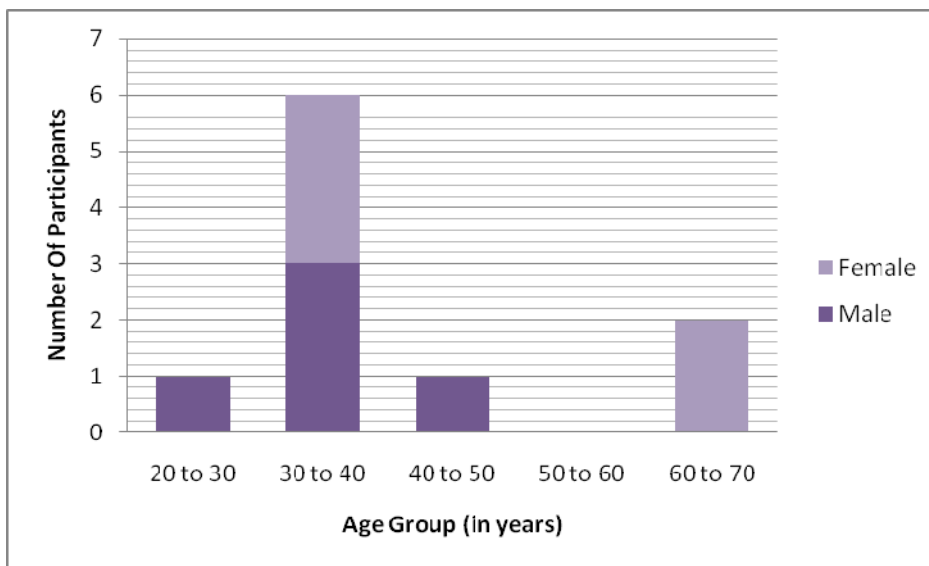
When doing qualitative research, it is important to have a sample of subjects with sufficient engagement in the topic or survey, therefore one of the prerequisites was that she or he must be employed or self employed at the time, and therefore had reliable experiences about working life in Denmark. The second prerequisite was not only Danish citizenship, but also Danish socio-cultural participation and belonging.

The main criteria when deciding about my sample was its diversity in terms of age, socio-economic status and stages of life. My curiosity did not consider only individual perceptions of quality of life and work, but also how they might differ amongst each other regarding specific sex, age, life event, marital status, occupation, and education, of which

some are presented below in the tables. These criteria were decisive when choosing my sample, being balanced in terms of gender and consisting of five males and five females⁸.

Besides sex, demographic variables also include age. In order to get data about participant age, he or she was asked “*What is the year of your birth?*” The range of this variable was from the oldest participant being 64 to the youngest one being 26. However, regarding the data gathered, the following five age groups were formed:

Figure 3.1: Age data about the sample



According to Figure 3.1, the majority of the sample belonged to the age group 30 to 40 years. This age group is particularly interesting because of the possibility of different life events happening. Marriages, as well divorce can be some of them. The next possible event can be reproduction or having children. Among my sample, the most (6 of 10) individuals having children, were in the age group 40 to 50. The number of children varied from one to three in this age group.

The importance of life events in someone’s quality of life as well work can be tremendous. Alex Zautra and Joseph Maio argue that “*subjects experiencing life crisis displayed a narrower range of life quality rating than subjects without life crisis*” (Zautra

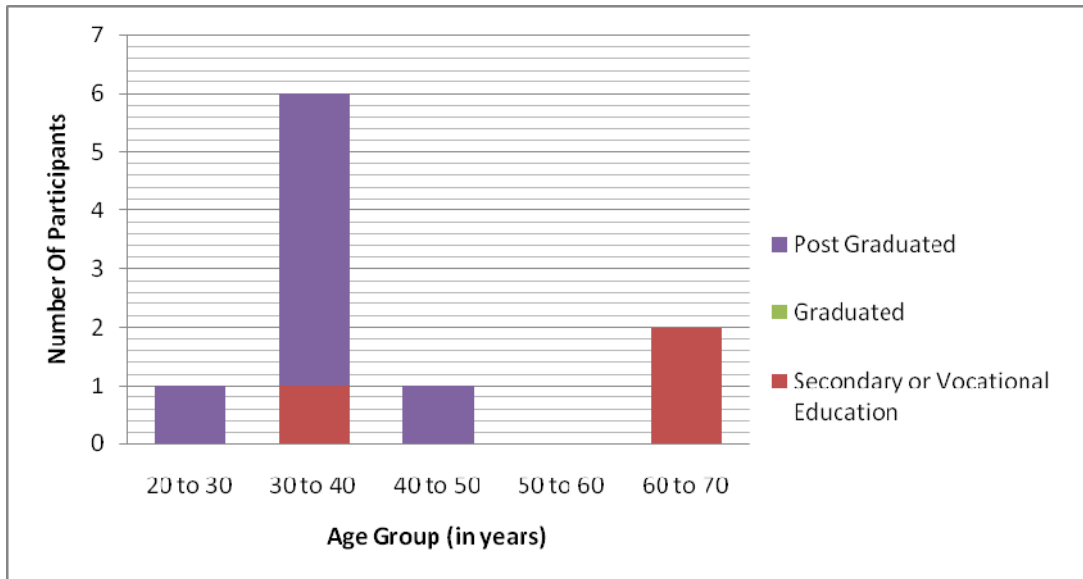
⁸ For the purposes of this study, each participant was given a numerical number from one to ten and named upon his or her sex as male or female.

and Maio 1981, 148). In general marriage, divorce, getting children, getting or losing a job, completing education, are considered to be important cutting points in one's life. However, I assert their importance is mostly dependant on individual perception and meaning attached to them. While one of the sample members, female 7 expressed her divorce as "*a big change in my life*", male 9 claimed divorce not to be an important event in his life at all.

Eight of the 10 participants were employed, and two self-employed, both females, when conducting interviews. Their reasons for self-employment were different. Female 2 quit her job "*to be around the kids. And be there when they have troubles and stuff. I think that is my most important job*", while female 10 has always been self-employed, though trying different types of businesses. As she explained, "*...I was never able to see the point of having to be in an office for eight hours.*"

What is important to notice as well regarding the employment status and its types, is also the loss of job in two study cases. Namely, two participants, both males lost their job after the interview conducting. Male 8 contacted me three weeks after taking the interview, telling me he had just lost his job due to financial crisis and offered me the possibility to redo the interview for the purposes of my study, which I did gratefully and one can read more about it in result section. Male 1 contacted me only recently, informing me he quit his job, because his personal visions did not match any longer with the company's policy.

Figure 3.2: Level of education of researched sample



As we can see in Figure 3.2, most of the participants obtained post graduate educational level. Interestingly, the oldest members of the study obtained secondary or vocational education only. Further data about the sample can also be found in the results section, which is the next part of the thesis.

3.4 *The qualitative interview procedure: the value of listening to the “Other”*

Any social survey is engaged in search for the understanding of social phenomenon, and many scholars probably would not deny – in search for the realness and reality, which is often a subject of epistemological considerations⁹. Despite that, social survey procedure still remains an intellectual process the aim of which is to adequately report or represent researched reality. *“The social world is divided into parts which can be differentiated according to a criterion and between these abstract categories (“parts of reality”) exist real connections. Individual thoughts and feelings have also “causes” or conditions that are included in the above-mentioned “parts of reality” or in the relations between them”* (Konecki 2008, 7).

⁹ Yet, what Marilyn Strathern points out, and what social scientists should be aware of is that one can both see what it is and not see what is. *“You will register the color, texture, know it is a shell, might have to be told the vase is made of bark, just as one might interpret the contours of an ultrasound scan or the colors of a costume or figures on a graph. But can all really offer a total understanding and complete understanding?”* (in Mruck and others 2002).

Qualitative researched methodology is a device to listen, observe and record the perceived reality. In my research processes I used the Grounded theory approach as the main guidance for scientific presentation of reality, but in my path to pursue that goal, I used the qualitative interview technique. The crucial aspect, from the perspective of such studies, is access to the individual's life and the acceptance of the researcher to share the reality of the intimate world, filled by individual's own perceptions, which she or he might never have shared before or might never have been asked to share.

Eight out of ten participants in my study, expressed they have never thought about quality of life or work per se. They expressed different degrees of interest in the core topic, claiming it was interesting and beneficial for them to think about it and put their thoughts in spoken language, which was a subject of my analysis once data was collected.

I could define the research interviews I conducted as an institutionalized form of talk, which has been popular since the eighties. Unlike the highly structured survey interviews and questionnaires used in quantitative social practice, in the field of qualitative research practice we examine less structured interview strategies in which the person interviewed is more a participant than a conduit from which information is retrieved. The conversation between interviewer and participant is not just informal talk, but usually guided by questions which are open-ended. However, there are also other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee not only to get further and deeper information from but also to make conversation fluent. The relationship between interviewer and interviewee has an exclusive value in making interviews. To fulfill this need, the contextual characteristics are important parts of any qualitative interview. Contextual information is also an important part of a survey report, since it can have a great impact on validity and objectivity of gathered data, therefore one can read more about it below.

In my survey process, I used individual¹⁰, semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interview which seeks to foster learning about individual experiences, perspectives and

¹⁰ All the interviews, but two, were made in the presence of an interviewer and interviewee. Two interviews were conducted in the presence of a third person, in both cases, the husbands of the interviewees. There are two interesting points to mention about these two interviewees. First, they were the oldest among my participants and they both expressed the wish that their husbands be presented. Further details can be found in the result section.

perceptions on a given set of issues¹¹. They were all scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events and organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, which were listed previously. All interviews were individual and scheduled few days in advance, taking place either at the participant's home or at the participant's work place or, exceptionally, in virtual space.¹² After making individual appointments, all participants received also an email notification about the interview schedule with clear and exact details about the core topics and purposes of survey.

The interviews were of varying lengths, 38 minutes being the shortest and 60 minutes being the longest one. Before the actual interview started, the purpose of the study as well the method of conducting the interview was repeated to the participants. They were asked "*would you mind if I would use Dictaphone to record our conversation in order to make my analysis later on easier*" and all of them agreed. All participants were also aware of the usage in the analysis of all original names they would be given during the interviews¹³ but their own.

The participants were often asked about what kind of feelings were evoked by different situations happening in their lives or at their work place. Additionally, they were also instructed and asked to explain situations in as much details as possible. However, these types of questions were emerging from the dialogue, but were mostly limited to the requests for details, additional explanation, or feelings, as mentioned. Yet, sometimes participant was asked also to explain their perceptions in particular, as we can see in the case of participant number 10. When he talked about his quality of work and importance of relationships at work for him, I asked him to explain "*What do you mean by having a good relationship? How must they be for you in order to be good?*"

It is important to mention that before the interviews with real participants would actually begin, I made two testing interviews with two randomly chosen individuals, both working students, one on a half time basis (female) and the other one of full time basis (male). The testing interviews were made in order to test the adequacy of the questionnaire,

¹¹ The language on the interviews was English, which did not turned out to be an obstacle at all.

¹² Eight of ten interviews were conducted at the participants' homes. One took place at interviewee's work place, and one was taken via Skype due to long absence of the interviewee, which made face to face interview impossible. When this interview was conducted, both interviewer and the interviewee were able to see each other via web camera.

¹³ This was especially valid in cases when talking about their current or former employer.

and to formulate additional, more specific questions, relating to the two core questions “*how do you yourself perceive the quality of life*” and “*how do you yourself perceive the quality of work*”.

Once all interviews were conducted, the typing of the recorded conversation began. In this phase I formulated a short, quantitative questionnaire in order to gather data on the participants’ demographic as well socio-economic profiles. They were sent to the participants via e-mail and returned to me after being filled in successfully and used for the purposes of this work.

Methodology as such was a big part of my preparation for conducting the interview, which I seriously believed would raise many valuable data for what I consider the most important part of my research – the findings and its analysis.

3.5 *Results*¹⁴

Results section offers shorter descriptions of all individuals in the order that the interviews were conducted, and broader perspective of their quality of life and work perceptions. This section is not only the closure of practical part, but also an introduction into what I consider to be the most valuable part of my work: analysis of results and discussion about assertions and findings.

3.5.1 *Male 1*

Male 1 is 34 years old, married, and has two kids. At the time when conducting interview he was employed as a Chief financial officer. But just recently he quitted his job because of his personal disapproval with the policies of the company he worked for.

He talked about quality of life in terms, which can be associated with being, having and loving quality of life terminology and implied that quality of life is simply not just *is*. Instead, its composition consists out of something bigger and broader, as we read in his answer: “*It is... It is a big and difficult question that I have not really thought that much*

¹⁴ All the quotes in this thesis are written without any language corrections. In other words - literal.

about. *It is... It is... I see it as being happy, really.*” And then he continued: *“Then, what is being happy? I think, for me is... It is very important to have a good family life, it is very important to have a good and interesting job, it is very important for me to have a financial independence in a way that I can acquire most things that I want to.”* As we can see, he bridged being and having, which implies the possibility of correlations between both, and can lead to a question to what degree can they imply quality if not presented together at the same time in someone’s life.

When the analysis moved to quality of work perceptions, Male 1 mostly talked about quality in terms of being. *“That I enjoy going to work. That I am happy when I go to work. That I want to go to work.”* And later as the interview continued and he talked about his job, he implied also the having terminology. *“I have a lot of responsibility. I have a lot of influence.”*

What is interesting is that participant’s first sentences about both core questions associated with being first, and only later also with having. What is remarkable of Male 1 is his differentiation between quality of life as such and satisfaction with life. When asked if he is actively pursuing quality of life according to his perceptions of it he answered: *“Maybe not. Probably, because I am rather satisfied. The way things are at the moment is probably ok.”*

Male 1 attached meaning to work and life situations mostly in terms of being terminology. The analysis of this interview implies the range of possible beings, organized hierarchically. As we could see above, according to him *being happy* means more than *being satisfied*. Yet, his perceptions imply one more hierarchy. Namely, *being* comes before *having*, which was not the case in the next interview conducted with Female 2. However, being before having was presented also in some other cases of my sample interviewees.

3.5.2 Female 2

Female 2 is 35 years old, self employed, married, and has two kids. She answered on the core questions in terms of having - *“Hmmm... It means that you have the freedom to choose what to do and what not to do and you have the possibility to make choices for*

yourself” and continued in terms of doing *“That you do what you want”*. Her having terminology strongly associates with what I call ‘*immaterial having*’. If I quote her, she even emphasizes quality of life is not just about having money. *“Quality of life... It’s not much about money. It is more about having and being around people that you love and to have the freedom to make the choices of your own life, so you can decide what direction you want to go to.”*

The situation about her perceptions about quality of work replaced having with being - *“That the job is not the same everyday and that it is new and exciting”*, but only in the beginning. It soon became a matter of having as well but again, in an immaterial manner - *“And it means to have nice colleagues.”*

What is clear about Female 2 is also her value of her family, especially her children. She explained many of her perceptions in terms of “for the kids”. When asked about her quality of work as being self-employed she replied: *“ It is better because it is more flexible. I was typically more stressed before, when I was employed, because when I had to do something when I was on my way out going to pick up the kids, I was like “uuuhhh”. Now I can sometimes work at night when the kids are in bed.”* Or when asked about quality of life: *“Quality of life it is just to be together with my children and be around them and see them grow older and help them with their stuff.”*

When asked about overall quality of life, Female 2 like Male 1 associated it with being satisfied. But what is interesting if we compare both these persons is their perception of ideal quality of life being never reachable, which according to them, is an expected and good situation. While Female 2 said: *“It will always have some negative sides because when you achieve something you lose something else, and I think that is how it works in all situations. You just have to figure out what’s most important for you”*, Male 1 said *“So, if I would already have whatever I wanted that would probably be... That would probably be an issue actually. Because then I would be too satisfied and too complacent with everything. That would probably be a bad thing.”*

3.5.3 Male 3

Male 3 is 35 years old, in a relationship, and has one child. He is employed as a pilot. As Female 2, also Male 3 started to talk about quality of life in terms of having, and like her, his “having” relates to having family, having spare time. He also implies an important link between having and doing. *“Quality for me is to do the things I want to do, but also have time to do it.”* He raised the problem of resources, although implicitly, which may on first glance crucially influence one’s quality of life. However, we have to differentiate between material and immaterial resources. Male 3 continued, *“But quality things for me are family first of all.”* Similarly Female 2 added: *‘Especially my kid. She is number one.’*

When Male 3 talked about quality of work he reflected the having and being perspective. *“Quality of work is about having good job and it is a big thing in a sense I need something that motivates me. When you start to count the minutes at work it is awful.”* But for him *“quality of life is more important”*. And his is *“very good actually. It is really good.”*

This individual talked about quality of work also in the financial crisis context, and expressed that his quality of work is *“quite good, but going down.”* And even if his perceptions of having the work he wants to have are met, he expressed lowering of quality of work, which implies that quality per se is not a product of individual aims and attempts, but a mixture of personal expectations and options as well as conditions given by the others.¹⁵

3.5.4 Female 4

Female 4, 64 years old, married, with two children and is employed as accountant and bookkeeper. This participant is particularly interesting because she belongs to the age group older than 60 years old. Namely, she reflected a lot on her own history when talking about her own understanding of quality of life, as well as work. She noticed the shifts of her perspectives about core topics through life. *“Quality of life has changed through the years. For me my family and my friends are the most important. I met my husband when I was 16. There were several times when we have not been together and I felt it was not so good time*

¹⁵ The others can be either micro or macro identities like the company, the municipality, state, etc.

because I like to be with him. And that is quality for me. But I do not have my parents anymore and I miss them.”

Family and friends are the main factors in the overall quality of life for this participant and are also considered to be the most influential for her overall assessment. The quality of life for her is, as we saw in the previous cases, still about being and having, however, they are mostly presented in immaterial form according to her.

Similar to quality of life perspective, also her quality of work perspective has changed over the time. *“When I was 20 years old I worked for Danish post, and at that time it was about security. Because you know you have your work, and you can put money in the box and take it out if needed. But when I got children, flexibility was very important, and I did not work any longer the whole day, because for me it was to take care of the children.”* Getting older and becoming involved in parenting, did not reflect only in the change of her quality of work as such, but also resulted in a shift of quality of work compared to quality of life, the former becoming of lesser importance than the latter.

What is important to stress in this participant’s case is again the importance of others in her quality of life and work and in this case the importance is bigger compared to previous ones. This individual no longer talks about importance of doing, but only of having and lesser of being. When she spoke about quality of life she argued, *“If I should be on my own somewhere. And alone. Away from my family and friends. This would really be a problem for me.”* The question arises about growing importance of the others, especially in case of quality of life, through the years. Is it possible that people, start valuing and pursuing quality of life differently as they grow older? And if so, is this issue addressed enough in public and pursued in public policies on programs for different age groups? Nevertheless, this individual opens up a sociological and philosophical discussion about how well quality of life is actually understood, and how much do we know about it regarding different age groups, different sex groups and so on.

3.5.5 Male 5

Male 5 is a 26 years old student, in a relationship, without any children and employed as a student analyst. His uniqueness among my sample is his youth and his status

as a student. But does he differ because of that from other samples? First he refers to quality of life as having. *“It is something about having harmony in your life and that you have a work life balance in some way.”* Although 6 of 10 interviewed people listed the work as part of their quality of life perceptions, only Male 5 and Female 6 mentioned work at the beginning of the conversation. Moreover, Female 6 answered the question about quality of life right away as *“That would mean a challenging job.”*

Furthermore, Male 5 also spoke distinctively about the effects of financial crisis on his quality of work, and claimed it has lowered because of it. For him security at work was never important, however in the time of financial crisis *“Of course I will prefer security high. You can see there are different things, which became suddenly very important, like security for example”* and job security according to him is *“that you are sure you can be there tomorrow”*.

The sample I used, expressed their considerations regarding financial crisis differently, however it was only this individual, who claimed that his quality of work was directly affected by it. Others felt the financial crisis did change the social conditions, but not theirs. *“Financial crisis has definitely changed quality of work. We have many people being afraid of losing their jobs. The company is exploding. But not against me as a pilot, but against the cabin crew. Their quality of work changed.”* argued Male 3.

What the youngest member of the sample implies here is the possibility that some age groups of people can be more vulnerable and more affected by social conditions like financial crisis. Yet, what other participants feel that the most decisive factor for vulnerability in the times of extreme socio-economical conditions. Is there a hidden pattern, which heightens or lowers the risk for job security, and depends mostly on someone's position in the working life or is the prediction about keeping a job, a total impossibility? If the answer to the latter is “yes”, why is it that only one out of ten people claimed his quality of work has lowered because of financial crisis while others expressed high degree of certainty? How is the security of the other nine maintained? This is a subject that can be a thesis on its own. I offer my explanations to that later, in the discussion part.

3.5.6 Female 6

The Female 6 is 36 years old, in a relationship, and has one child. She is employed as a HR Director. She is distinct from others in her perceptions of life, namely for her, quality of life is *“a challenging job”*. She was the only participant, who mentioned it in her first statement about quality of life, although others also talked at some point of time about quality of work being part of their overall quality of life.

Her quality of life is mostly about having, as well as being - *“high quality of life is being able to spend time with my family”*. And then she adds, *“It means a lot to me I can work from home sometimes.”* She was also the only member of the sample, who did not separate quality of life and quality of work. *“It is very difficult because I value both.”* However, if she should for some reason have to choose then - *“but no doubt if I were to choose, my daughter comes first.”* Yet, she hopes she will never have to.

Conversation with her was unique because of her perceptions about work. *“I work 45, 47 hours per week at work. I know, it is not a lot but... Then I always work in the evening, I always work during the weekends from home.”* The thought of losing a job, would mean being *“very unhappy”*, but *“decreasing quality of life would be worse for me”*. Her overall assumption of her quality of work *“is very good. Very good.”* and associates mostly with *having* terminology and includes both, immaterial as well as material aspects. *“I have a boss, who leaves me alone. I have good colleges. I have challenging tasks. I am seen as a talent at work. I make good money.”*

What also makes this individual interesting is her explanation of being a woman, and being a mother in business world. Sociologically speaking, she brought up an example of gender dimensions in working life for my thesis. *“It is fine I have to ask my mom to pick up my child from the daycare, because I do not get off on time. I feel ok about it. But it is difficult for me to tell people at work: no, it is not so good for me to meet up at 4pm for a meeting.”* I asked her if she could explain a bit more in details, why *it would not be so good* and she answered: *“Because they would look differently at me. It is not very career oriented. Because I used to be the one to call people for a meeting at 7p.m.”* She also talked about her decision to have a child as *“Well, we wanted a child. At that time I still work for Deloitte, so when I told them that I was pregnant, they were very surprised because they thought I would only and forever focus on my career.”*

3.5.7 Male 7

Male 7 is 34 years old, married, and has three children. At the time, when the interview was taken, he was employed as a manager. However, after three weeks of taking interview, he contacted me, telling me, he had just lost his job. I asked him why, and he explained because of financial crisis. He offered me to retake an interview if I think it would add any value to my thesis. I decided to take his offer, and made one more interview with him. He found his new job four weeks later.

He talked about quality of life in terms of satisfaction. *“Well, quality of life is a matter of to be able to achieve a feeling of satisfaction.”* He minimized the explanation of the main indicator for quality of life to a feeling, but explained, the feeling is influenced by a number of things like *“how well your family life is functioning, how well your work life is functioning, what are your prospects for the future.”* *Quality of life for him is having “a good work life balance”*, which I heard from five sample persons, among whom four were men. However, it seems to me that candidates who valued work high, valued high also at the same time work life balance, while those valuing family life high, did not care so much for work life balance, because work was for them of much less importance than quality of life, which they perceived as having a family, children and friends.

Male 7 explained low quality of life as *“financial insecurity”*. Additionally, he talked also about health as *“if someone would be ill, that would of course result in very poor quality of life.”* Health was perceived as being very important part of quality of life in my survey. Six out of ten participants, claimed health having big impact on their quality of life. Yet, having health is immaterial having.

Let's take a closer look at Male 7's assessments of overall quality of work before and after he lost his job. When the first interview was conducted, he assessed quality of work as *“very high. I have a job, which is interesting and challenging.”* In the second interview, I asked him how you would describe your work quality suddenly and he replied, *“Well, the quality of work... Well, I always knew it was a risk. Well, it happened. There is not much you can do about. What you can do is to determine what you are going to do*

about it. But knowing that you were working and now it is over, that is not very motivating.”

We read above, financial security mattered for Male 7 and his quality of life, however when redoing the interview, he did not perceive the loss of the job as a threat for financial security. Instead -*“You need to go out and take action and do something and find out what is available on the market.”* During the first interview he talked about security as *“being probably not that important. Because if I felt something was going wrong, I would probably just head somewhere else and leave the problems behind.”* There is a noticeable presence of security perceived as *“not that important”* in my sample. As we saw above, only Male 4 rated security at work as very important, while Female 4 implied changes in work security perceptions through time. But not *“that important”* compared to what? According to my sample, compared to flexibility.

3.5.8 Female 8

Female 8 is 35 years old, divorced, and has two children. She is employed as a postdoctoral researcher. She perceived her quality of life in terms of being, and having. *“For me is to have kids. To do, what makes me happy.”* But what is that which makes this individual happy? What is that which makes some other individuals happy? How do things that make me happy differ from the things that make you happy? For Female 8 *“walk in a park or something makes me happy”*. For Female 6 -*“To eat good food, and drink red wine on Saturday and Sunday. Spending time with my family. It is extremely down to earth.”* For Male 1 *“being able to travel or to buy new shirt or a jacket or whatever food, that I like. Good wine.”*

As we can see above (and it will be discussed more in details later), how to become happy involves satisfaction of individual perceptions, which differs not only from person to person, but from being material and immaterial in nature.

Female 8, like Female 6, also talked about the gender dimension in her life, but is private in variation to Female 6. When she talked about her ex husband, she stated, *“I was the one, who was at home with the kids. We never discussed it but just did it like that. My ex husband was working and studying. He had also a lot of time at home, because he was*

studying at home. It is would be today, I would ask him to take some time off to be together with the kids.”

She perceived the absence of a partner in her life as lowering her quality of life. “I think a good life is also if you have a boyfriend or husband to share it with. So, that is definitely the missing point in my quality of life.” But interestingly, she added then “but comparing to what I had before divorce, I think it is better now. My husband did not like my friends, so I stopped seeing them. But because friends are very important for me, that was a big loss.” What she implies, and it was also recognized already before in other cases, is the importance of the “other” for one’s quality of life or work and in her case, life.

3.5.9 Male 9

Male 9 is a 44 years old, executive director, married, and has two children. To him high quality of life is about *accomplishing*, which was heard also in other interviews. “*I think high quality of life is to see that you have accomplished something.*” Again, the meaning of that ‘something’ can be very diverse and personal but according to him be able to accomplish “*is a lot about the influence.*” And to accomplish goes for “*your work situations and to private as well.*”

For Male 9 different perceptions of work and life qualities are not necessary. He related to a single quality as such in our conversation, which can be further applied in different areas of life, as it is already possible to see above. However, he continued his explanation with “*If the company has resources then it helps a lot in the ability to do what you think is needed and the same thing for private life again.*” Or another example, “*When I talk about people working with you it is about the people that work for you and people that are your bosses and are able to work together with you and listen to you and react. But in the family sense is the same thing that you have good relations to your children, that you have good relation to your wife. I think that is the key thing to interact with them and basically feel well.*”

Male 9 significantly differentiates in the above finding from the others to a degree, where he perceives interaction as such and not something which would rely on the social context, defined as public or private.

Quality of work to him is about having, and here he is very specific and determinant. Namely, he stresses few times that it is about *“people you have round you in your company”* or *“to have people, who are open and have knowledge and are able to go into a good discussion. That is extremely helpful at work”*, and then *“I would have a harder time working in an environment where people are not centralized. So that would be an issue for me”*.

If we compare Male 9 to Female 8, who expressed the influence of the “other” on her quality of life, we can clearly see the importance of “others” also in this case, only that now regarding the work. The ‘other’ may either lower or heighten quality of life as well work. However, the other’s identity raises an important question, and this issue needs to be addressed properly, especially since it is indicated how influential it can be.

3.5.10 Female 10

Female 10 is 63 years old, who is married and has one child. She is self-employed and is working as a manager in charge. She also belongs to the older than 60 years age group. Therefore she can be compared to Female 4. When compared we found out, they have both changed their views of security at work over the time. *“Of course nowadays, I prefer flexibility. Security is that you do not lose a job, so you know there is always money coming in. For me that has never been something that I wanted to have. But sometimes in your life you have to have security because you have family and you have responsibilities.”*

Quality of life to her is mostly, *“To have freedom to do what I like to do”*, yet she mentioned two dimensions of freedom; *“Physical freedom and mental freedom.”* She associates physical freedom in terms of *“time”*, *“money”*, and *“health”*. So we can see the importance of having health raised again, therefore the question of possibility for quality’s (life or work) preconditioned dimensions, cannot be avoidable. Could that mean that some social activities happening on daily basis in society should have higher priority than others, because failure of not addressing them would imply broader consequences?

As a self-employed, she also does not separate quality of life from quality of work. *“When you are self-employed, it is the same thing. I am self-employed, I have my own company, and therefore it influences my life totally. And everything I do in my life has got*

to do with my work, and everything as my work has to do with my life.” Work per se being part of quality of work, is a relation found also in other conversations. However, would it be possible that type of employment determines the relations between work and life and to what extent? Furthermore, what kind of effects does this have on someone’s life? Positive or negative?

The next part of the thesis presents the perspectives and answers on the issues raised above, during the presentation of collected conversations. Additionally, it offers also discussions about findings during the survey and their possible implications for further studies, and evaluation of quality of life and work based on a small sample in Denmark.

4 FINDINGS, ASSERTIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 *Quality of life and importance of having for doing*

In the theoretical part, the mentioned terminology in terms of perceiving quality of life as having, being, doing, and loving, was partly presented also in my sample. Ten interviewed individuals are approaching their quality of life in terms of their ability to do valuable acts or to reach valuable states of being. Additionally, they also value the capability approach¹⁶ to do various things they value as valuable. But what is a distinct feature is the division between material and immaterial in terms of having and doing in both cases, quality of life as well as quality of work.

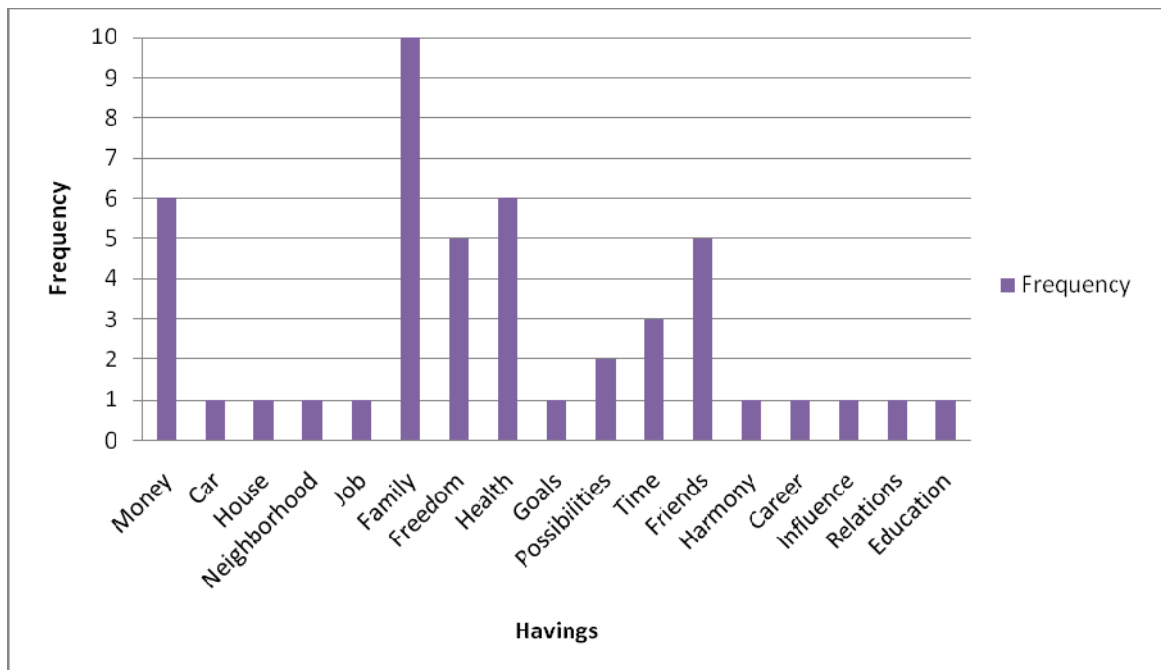
Focusing on analysis of quality of work first, I assert that among ten individuals, nine of them expressed their quality of life in terms of having. Having is differentiated from each other in their nature, categorized as material and immaterial, which are represented in Table 4.1 on the next page:

¹⁶ Capability approach is concerned with evaluating one's abilities to achieve various valuable functions as a part of living. (Nussbaum 1993)

Table 4.1: Material and immaterial havings of quality of life

| Material havings | Immaterial havings |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Money</i> | <i>Job</i> |
| <i>Car</i> | <i>Family</i> |
| <i>Nice house</i> | <i>Freedom</i> |
| <i>Nice neighborhood</i> | <i>Health</i> |
| | <i>Goals</i> |
| | <i>Possibilities</i> |
| | <i>Time</i> |
| | <i>Friends</i> |
| | <i>Harmony</i> |
| | <i>Career</i> |
| | <i>Influence</i> |
| | <i>Good relations (with your children, wife)</i> |
| | <i>Education</i> |

Figure 4.1: Material and immaterial havings of quality of life



It is clearly shown above, that family plays a key role in someone's quality of life. Analysis of family indicates that there are two types of families of key importance. Individual's own families consist of their children and partner and individual's parents as well as siblings. Family is also perceived as having someone "to call", "to get help", "to do things with", "to get support" etc. However both types of family interestingly do not differentiate regarding their roles. They both serve the same purpose listed previously.

Second importance of "having" belongs to money and health. Individuals explained they need to have money "to travel", "to buy clothes, food, good wine, a car". Female 10 understands having money as "to do what you want to do". Again, the correlation between "having" and "doing" is obvious. In order to do valuable things, one needs resources which can be either material or immaterial. Therefore, when evaluating quality of life, capability approach seems to be important, playing an important role for individual quality of life. Yet, the fact that health rated as high as money is an interesting case. This indicates the equalization of a material and an immaterial having.

Six participants believe having health is an important aspect of quality of life. Female 10, health even distinguishes mental and physical health. According to Male 7 illness would result in "in very poor quality of life". And it is not only individual health which matters, but according to five participants of those who rated health as an important, also the health of their friends or family matters. This in turn is again considering also other havings.

What is most remarkable above all is the importance of immaterial havings in comparison to material ones. Taking into consideration Maslow's need hierarchy according to which there are different levels of needs, arranged in a hierarchical order, based on the postulate that "a higher set of needs come into play once lower-level needs are satisfied. This means that survival needs take precedence, but once these are satisfied, social needs,, ego needs as well as self-actualism become more important" (Wallace and others 2007, 2), I assert analyzed sample does value immaterial havings for overall quality of life more in comparison to immaterial ones. Immaterial havings are, according to my sample, seen as more important than material ones and also as more important as havings for quality of work.

The question of the social context is raising, implying what if there is something about Denmark, which is different and special? According to Matt Mabe, Denmark has some distinct features, which imply “*a model of social harmony*” (Mabe 2008, 1). These are economic factors related to health care, standards of living, and access to basic education which are the determining characteristics of a national overall attitude. Denmark is also the country with one of the highest GDP¹⁷s in the world (Mabe 2008, 2).

GDP is an incomplete measure of quality of life. Yet it is widely used and the importance of sufficient GDP for quality of life cannot be denied. It is possible Danish strong economical base and welfare model enables people to desire more for immaterial havings.

I can observe that in many cases having is a prerequisite for doing. According to Figure 4.1, freedom is ranking third in immaterial havings. It is mostly expressed in terms of “*to do what I like to do*”. So to say, freedom is needed in order to do, what one wants to do. The correlation between having and doing was similarly to quality of life case, found also in quality of work case as presented in the next section.

4.2 *Quality of work and importance of having for doing*

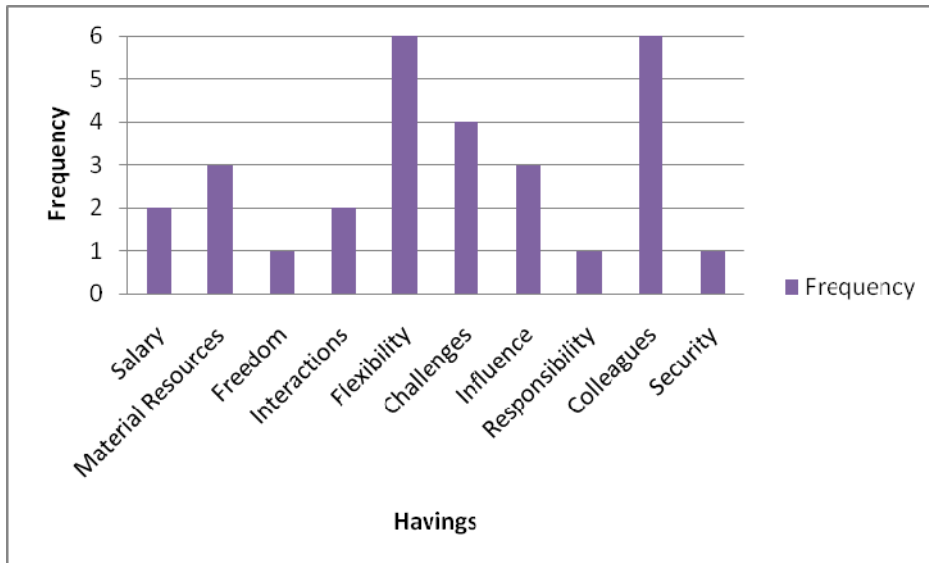
The quality of work is similar to quality of life in a way that it is also resulting in material and immaterial havings as it is shown below:

Table 4.2: Material and Immaterial havings of quality of work

| Material havings | Immaterial havings |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Salary</i> | <i>Freedom</i> |
| <i>Material Resources</i> | <i>Interactions</i> |
| | <i>Flexibility</i> |
| | <i>Challenges</i> |
| | <i>Influence</i> |
| | <i>Responsibility</i> |
| | <i>Colleagues</i> |
| | <i>Security</i> |

¹⁷ Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Figure 4.2: Material and Immaterial havings of quality of work



The importance of immaterial havings for quality of work is clearly shown in Figure 4.2. It is important to have a “*decent salary*”, “*good table*”, and “*paper and printer*”, yet importance of immaterial havings is much higher, as it is easy to observe in a Figure 4.2. The most valuable immaterial havings are colleagues and flexibility. It was also observed during the interviews, that social environment at work has a big impact on one’s quality of work, which can be either positive, or negative, therefore taking it into consideration should be ranged as a high priority.

Why does the quality of work actually matter? Who benefits from it? High quality of work can mean a win - win situation for an employer and an employee. It has been proven many times that people satisfied at work, perform better. However, being more satisfied means to have what one values the most. According to Figure 4.2 it means, having material and immaterial needs covered. Nevertheless, covering the need for valued havings of employees also matters in order to keep them in a company. As Male 7 indicates “*it is me, who is responsible for my own high quality of work. Because I can always just reject a job and find another one.*”

Working organizations are social entities filled with different perspectives, expectations and personalities. The amount of interaction at work is enormous and according to Figure 4.2 of significant importance. But which type of colleagues is

considered to be desirable by people? According to my sample, colleagues must be “nice”, but what exactly is implied by being “nice”?

For Female 2 to have nice colleagues means “*they help each other to achieve*”. According to Male 5 ‘nice’ means to have “*colleagues, who know how to collaborate to achieve good results*”. Female 4 claims “*if people I am working with would not be nice to me, then my quality of work would lower.*” Just like Female 4, Female 7 also talked about the possibility of negative colleague effect at work: “*I had a colleague, who was not a very nice person, and was complaining a lot. So I can say my Quality of work definitely decreased. And it definitely had a high impact of my Quality of life. I was very angry when I came home and then of course it had an effect on my husband and my children.*”

The last statement, by Female 7, indicates another argument for having desirable quality of Work, that there is a correlation between the qualities of life and work. The correlation is found also in other cases. According to Male 5 “*Quality of work is like one-third or maybe a bit more of Quality of life.*” According to Male 7 “*it is to high extent prequalification for high Quality of life. Because, well at the end of the day, you spend – what, probably 30% of your life at work.*”

The relation between quality of life and quality of work is mutual. Among ten participants in my study, six said both qualities were of the same importance for them, while four would prefer quality of life over quality of work. However, among those four, only two said choosing quality of life over quality of work is an easy task.

One of the highly preferred features of work is also flexibility, according to Figure 4.2. As it was indicated during the interviews, flexibility at work plays a key role for one’s quality of life. It enables especially immaterial havings, preferred for quality of life. Flexibility is understood mostly in terms of being able to influence *when* one works, so she or he can still “*pick up the children*”, “*spend time with your family*”, etc.

Most of the participants also chose flexibility at work over security. The explanations according to them, is quite simple. “*You can always find another job.*” If one considers the fact that the interviews were taken in April 2009, at the time when financial crisis was one of the main topics in world media, the preferences for flexibility over the security¹⁸ needs further explanation. Again, the question of Danish specialties arises. Is it

¹⁸ According to ten interviewed individuals only two preferred security over the flexibility.

possible to claim that the Danish welfare model has a strong impact on people's preferences when it comes to job flexibility and security? The prevalent Danish model of the so - called flexicurity could be a possible explanation of such a phenomenon.

The aim of flexicurity model is to create more and better jobs while still maintaining and promoting social cohesion. This approach gives employers more flexibility in reacting to market changes, and, on the other hand, it provides social security for workers so that they do not substantially reduce their income. Furthermore, flexicurity also emphasizes the need for a smooth transition between work and non-working life. Nevertheless, it also encourages the workers to engage in a process of lifelong learning. Denmark is one of the European countries, pioneering in flexicurity, yet distinct in the fact *“There is a heavy reliance on government investment in both active labor market policies and generous social security systems, as well as close and ongoing dialogue between social partners, to create an atmosphere of trust”* (Mabe 2008, 2).

One of the participants, Female 2, talked about Danish system as *“yes, of course it is easy to get fired but usually companies need to pay you. And I think it is very secured in Denmark especially because you will always get something from the state if you get fired.”* This individual even implies the importance of such a model, especially in the times of financial crisis saying *“I like there is some kind of security especially in these days... Then it becomes important that people do not need to sell their houses and stuff like that when fired.”*

Finally, quality of Work, according to the sample, is shaped also by the challenges and degree of influence one possesses at work. Yet, when analyzing the influence, it is possible to identify that the influence the sample talked about, is very horizontal. What I mean by horizontal influence is its final goal. Namely, it is not used to impose the individual's own ideas and perspectives on the others to expose hierarchy, but instead to shape the nature of one's own work. *“Not having influence for me means that I am told what to do, have to ask for permission for this and that, and that everything needs to be checked.”* explains the situation without an influence as pointed out by Male 1. According to him, not being able to influence one's own work results in lowering the quality of Work.

I suggest covering the needs for havings, material as well as immaterial at work, results not only in individual quality of Life, but also in the quality of the company's

production. Therefore taking into consideration social survey results, and implementing them into everyday life of working organizations, is of great importance. As it was previously defined in the analysis of quality of Life, having correlates with doing also in the case of quality of work. Additionally, it is also possible to recognize Maslow's hierarchy of needs - material havings at work must be covered to satisfy basic functioning needs. However, once basic requirements are satisfied, the importance of relations as well as organization of work plays the key role.

4.3 *Being happy with life and being satisfied at work: Quality of life and work in terms of happiness and satisfaction*

Some of the interviewees did talk about quality of life and work in terms of being happy or being satisfied. Male 7 referred to quality of life as "*to be able to achieve a feeling of satisfaction.*" Explaining quality in terms of satisfaction therefore seems convenient; as long as one considers that the feeling of satisfaction is influenced by a number of things. It would be wrong to refer quality to satisfaction directly. It is necessary to investigate different areas of importance for one's quality in order to establish a sufficient measuring instrument.

Male 1 understands quality of life as "*being happy*". Yet again happiness consists of different indicators like *good* family life, having a *good* job, having financial independence. Having quality of life does not necessarily mean also being happy. Being happy is a subjective indicator, while indicators related to "havings" are much more objective¹⁹.

The *being* terminology was mostly used when talking about quality of life as it is shown in the next table:

¹⁹ However, it must be stressed that material havings are more objective indicators than immaterial ones.

Table 4.3: Quality of life and work in terms of being

| Quality of life is being: | Quality of work is being: |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <i>happy.</i> | <i>happy when going to work.</i> |
| <i>at home.</i> | <i>inspired.</i> |
| <i>yourself.</i> | |
| <i>with people you love.</i> | |
| <i>together with family and friends.</i> | |

According to the data collected, the presence of perceptions listed in Table 4.3 is the following: four participants perceive quality of life as being happy or as being together with family and friends, while other options were presented only once each. Being terminology was used when talking about quality of work only in one case.

Finally, in the time of analyzing the data, one more dimension was formed. Five of ten participants talked about quality of life and quality of work also in terms of accomplishing, which is one remarkable feature of my survey. What differentiates this feature from the others is that among all ‘accomplishing’ is the most subjective indicator. It refers to something that individual dreams about, and is a matter of the far away future, according to expectation-reality gap theory by Andrews (Andrews 1986).

Table 4.4: Quality of life and work in terms of accomplishing

| Quality of life is to accomplish: | Quality of work is to accomplish: |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i>the dream house.</i> | <i>a change.</i> |
| <i>old vintage jaguar to travel with it around Europe.</i> | <i>discoveries.</i> |
| <i>helicopter license.</i> | |
| <i>a feeling of satisfaction.</i> | |
| <i>making a difference.</i> | |

In the table 4.4 is presented, what kind of things the individuals wants to achieve. Achieving itself is also perceived as a process, according to three participants, and never ending. “It can be of course to acquire the dream house; it can be the dream car. Whatever. That is a process. I am 34 years old. So, if I would achieve everything that I wanted, that

would probably be... That would probably be an issue actually. Because then I would be satisfied. Too satisfied...I think I will never get to the stage here you are where I would be just satisfied with what I have, because then you set new goals for yourself.”

Accomplishing is perceived more in personal terms. As Female 2 explained, *“I have my family and I feel... and I feel secure and safe in their company with them but I also need to have my own space where I can accomplish things that I dream of, that I want to get out of my life. It is not only the family and to be together with the family. It is to do the things that you dream of.”* It is directed only by the individual and does not need to be relevant for anyone else but for her or him.

Considering this fourth dimension of quality of life or work terminology is an idea, which completes Maslow’s scale of needs even more. Namely, this level comes after basic, survival needs, and after social needs. And now an unavoidable question appears. If first levels of needs imply physical and social survival of individual, which necessarily requires the need of others in this process, what about the last level then? Is not that level purely individualistic, depending strictly on accomplishing what the individual wants and values only for himself or herself?

The meaning of achievements differ among people, yet no matter how many roles they are playing, to achieve is considered as having one’s own space to achieve things that one dreams about or labels as self realization.

The four dimensions of having, doing, being, and accomplishing are the ones identified during data analysis. While the first three were already mentioned in other literatures, the last one is of this research finding. Quality of life and quality of work may seem hard to measure and, being conceptual, very difficult to form. However, it is of an enormous importance to research on, in order to meet needs on an individual, as well as societal level. Quality of life as well as quality of work can be macro concepts, yet their self actualization is mostly possible only on individual level. Surveying quality of life and quality of work may be difficult; however it is totally impossible to avoid it if we claim that individuals are the heart of the society. It is for society survival purposes (especially according to philosophers as Megone is for example) that scholars must investigate these topics in order to know, what people need, wish, or desire.

5 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this thesis was to explain and understand the quality of life and the quality of work of a Danish sample consisting of ten participants. In order to explore my interests grounded theory approach was applied, according to which the aim of this work was not to test any hypothesis in order to accept or reject them, but instead to formulate the theoretical framework, which can be used in further studies.

One of the main assertions of the gathered data analysis is the importance of having for both qualities. Having plays a key role for evaluating individual quality of work or life for nine of ten individuals, participated in the survey. Additionally, I argue according to the data gathered, there is a clear division between material and immaterial havings.

The most desired having among all material and immaterial ones, for quality of life, is family. The second rank belongs to money (material) and health (immaterial), and then the freedom and friends follow (both immaterial). However, in the case of havings for quality of work, the most valued are colleagues and flexibility, both immaterial in their nature.

The importance of immaterial havings in comparison to material ones in both cases of quality is remarkable in my study. That does not mean that the material havings are without a value. Nevertheless, the importance of having money, which I consider to be material having for someone's quality of life is as high as the importance of having health labeled as immaterial having, according to the data. Yet the participants values immaterial havings for overall qualities more and even claims in the case of overall quality of life the precedence of material ones even not to be crucial.

The next important conclusion is that there is some kind of hierarchy or at least conditional relation between having and doing. Doing is relevant for my sample only after the needs for having are met. For instance, freedom ranking as the third most desired immaterial having for individual quality of life is mostly expressed in terms "*to do what I like to do*". One can *do* things once he or she has the means for them, material or immaterial ones.

This research also showed the importance of different life stages according to the interviews collected. Namely, they demonstrate individual perceptions of quality of life or

work are not something fixed, but depend especially on the life situations individual is in, age, and also gender.

Noticeable is the shift between security and flexibility at work. In the reproductive age, people value flexibility more than security. Security instead plays a key role in the years before establishing one's own family. This characteristic was noticed in the cases of the older participants. Also to conform to that, the youngest participant, who does not have a family yet, rated security as more important than flexibility. Interesting thing to notice here about the rest of the sample, who are in their reproductive age, is that they desire having flexibility at work (more than security), even in the days of financial crisis. They believe that "*one can always find another job.*" Flexibility at work for them is a having factor from the quality of work which also helps them to maintain the immaterial havings of quality of life.

Furthermore quality of life and quality of work are also perceived in terms of being, and accomplishing. Quality of life is mostly expressed in terms of being *happy*, but the quality of work in terms of being *satisfied*. It is also possible to recognize subjectiveness in being happy indicators, while indicators related to havings mentioned above are in contrast more objective, and therefore easier to measure. People can be happy in different situations, yet depending on their own preferences. They can be happy with *a job*, with *a family*, with *watching the flowers grow*, etc.

What I consider to be the most important conclusion of this work is the fourth dimension of quality of life and work – the accomplishing, which so far has not been represented in quality of life or work surveys (at least not in the most commonly referred literatures for this field of study). Yet, this dimension implies the highest level of Maslow's hierarchical list of needs connected to self-actualization. To accomplish according to the collected evidence can mean even such abstract desires like achieving "*dream things*". Nevertheless, again it is up to individual to decide what these "*dream things*" actually are.

It is also very crucial to remember the importance of cooperation with other people, which according to my sample is vital for obtaining the havings (especially the immaterial ones), doings, and beings. The presence of the partners, children, friends, colleagues and above all people seems to be very crucial in working as well as nonworking environment. In contrast, to obtain the fourth dimension (accomplishing) the importance of others

becomes feeble. It seems to be possible to achieve this alone depending purely on person's wants, wishes, and even dreams.

Finally, it was also shown in this thesis not only that both qualities are in relation, but also some of their aspects being prerequisites for both. Health plays a key role in this field. Six of ten participants claimed the health to be the most important to have in order one can actually do any kinds of things.

To conclude researching quality of work and life is an important academic field. The key reason is not only to understand and explain them, but also to act upon the evidence. Due to such a variety of quality of life and work perceptions, it seems utopian that public policies could ever include every single individual, so that she or he would be able to achieve his or hers quality of life according to personal perceptions. But what public policies can and should do is to make possible for people to acquire at least material objects in their public or personal life depending on their own hierarchy about what is more and what is less important. Namely, it is through this acquiring immaterial havings is possible as well. All four categories of having, doing, being and accomplishing are inevitable related, therefore enabling one, can cause in gaining other as well.

6 POVZETEK

Preučevanje kvalitete življenja ima za seboj več dekadno zgodovino. Oče, če ga lahko tako imenujem, raziskovanja kvalitete življenja je Angus Campbell (Campbell 1976), ki je v sedemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja empirično preučeval ter oblikoval tudi svojo teoretično konceptualizacijo kvalitete življenja. Pomemben avtor, še posebej za to delo, je tudi Frank M. Andrews, ki je kvaliteto življenja pojasnil kot: "Kvaliteta življenja je fenomen soroden s časom. Namreč, navezuje se na specifično obdobje posameznika glede na njegovo starost ali življenjsko obdobje, v katerem se le ta nahaja" (Andrews 1986, 10).

Do povečanega zanimanja tudi za raziskovanje kvalitete dela, je prišlo predvsem zadnja leta. Empirične študije so namreč pokazale korelacijo med obema področjema in ugotovile vpliv, ki ga ima posameznikova kvaliteta dela na njegovo ali njeno kvaliteto življenja. Prva evropska raziskava o kvaliteti življenja (Wallace in drugi 2007), ki se je osredotočila na področje kvalitete dela ter zadovoljstvo z življenjem, je tako poudarila pomembnost kvalitete dela za posameznikovo kvaliteto življenja. Natančneje, ugotovljena je bila korelacijo med zadovoljstvom z življenjem in pa delovnimi pogoji.

Bistveni sestavini obeh konceptov sta objektivnega in subjektivnega značaja (Wish 1986, Megone 1990, Greenley in drugi 1997). Zaradi slednjega, torej subjektivnega značaja, sta oblikovanje merskega inštrumenta in aplikacija rezultatov težavna. Še večjo težavo pa predstavlja sama primerljivost subjektivnih dimenzij posameznikov, pridobljenih na različnih vzorcih. Wish (Wish 1986) celo označi primerljivost subjektivnih dimenzij kot povsem nemogočo. "Raziskovalci različnih znanstvenih disciplin imajo že dolga leta velik interes za merjenje kvalitete življenja v različnih geografskih območjih. Tako primerjajo kvaliteto življenja v mestih in kvaliteto življenja držav. Toda obe imata malo skupnega. Ustrezno merjenje kvalitete življenja pomeni preusmeritev raziskovalnih naporov v subjektiven dimenzije in te so že po definiciji neprimerljive" (Wish 1986, 94-95).

Med objektivne indikatorje uvrščamo kazalce, ki merijo npr. zdravstvene servise ali pa možnosti šolanja, medtem ko za subjektivne velja, da jih je lahko toliko kakršno je število prebivalcev.

Oba koncepta Andrews pojasnjuje s pomočjo tako imenovane teorije vrzeli (Andrews 1986). Kar Andrews razume kot vrzel je razlika med tem, kar posameznik dejansko ima in

kar zanj predstavlja idealno sliko o tem, kaj bi rad imel. Zato, da bi vrzel čim bolj zmanjšal, posameznik ravna racionalno ter se odloča o svojih preferencah, željah in hotenjih, zato da bi bil zadovoljen. Biti zadovoljen, tudi pomeni zmanjšati vrzel med posameznikovimi stanji imetja v sedanjosti, s tistimi, ki si jih zeli imeti v prihodnosti (ali pa jih je imel v preteklosti). Slednje, Andrews imenuje vrzel med pričakovanji in realnostjo (Andrews 1986).

Navezujoč se na literature, večina raziskav kvaliteto življenja razume v okviru štirih situacij in sicer imeti, biti, početi in ljubiti (Nussbaum 1993, Bowling in Windsor 2000, Mickel in drugi 2008). Imeti se navezuje na materialne dobrine in življenjske pogoje, ljubiti na osebne odnose, ki jih posameznik razvije, biti pa na posameznikovo vpetost v družbene odnose ter občutke pripadanja ali pa odtujitve.

Štirje zgoraj navedeni indikatorji se lahko zdijo na prvi pogled enostavni, toda stvari, ki jih ljudje cenijo in si jih želijo imeti, cilje, ki jih želijo doseči in odnosi, ki jih želijo ustvariti so subjektivne narave in lahko variirajo od posameznika do posameznika. Prav tako pa so lahko subjekt vsakodnevnih procesov posameznikove konstrukcije realnosti in njenih pomenov.

Subjektivni dejavniki pogosto variirajo glede na starost, posameznikovo življenjsko situacijo, spol, stopnjo izobrazbe, ekonomski status, itd. Pogosto so lahko tudi posameznikov odziv na njegovo družbeno okolje. Implementacija družbene realnosti in okolja, v katerem posameznik biva je odprt in nenehen proces, na katerega se posamezniki sicer odzivajo različno, toda nenehno v skladu z vlogami, ki jih imajo skozi življenje.

Kvaliteta življenja je področje raziskovanja, ki je še posebej zanimivo za sociologijo, ekonomijo, filozofijo, psihologijo ter politične vede. Triangulacija v smislu ne le kombiniranja metodoloških temveč tudi disciplinskih pristopov ter sama integracija rezultatov do katerih prihajajo različne discipline, pogosto predstavlja veliko oviro za enotno delovanje v skladu z znanstvenimi rezultati.

Kvaliteto življenja zlasti filozofi razumejo kot posameznikov poskus doseganja nečesa, kar le ta vrednoti. V skladu z lastnim vrednotnim sistemom si posameznik oblikuje lestvico preferenc, ki pa so lahko le njemu lastne in posledično subjektivnega značaja. Griffin (Griffin 1988) ter Megone (Megone 1990) kvaliteto življenja smatrata za pomembno orodje družbenega reda. V ozadju le tega je ideja, da ne instrumentalne vrednote kot so npr.

družina, igrajo pomembno vlogo za moralni sistem družbe ter jo oskrbujejo s centralnimi pravili, kar po zgledu funkcionalizma ohranja družbeni red.

Namen mojega dela je bilo razumevanje konceptov kvalitete življenja in dela na praktičnem primeru vzorca desetih oseb na Danskem. Raziskovanja sem se lotila s pomočjo *grounded* teorije. V skladu z njim, namen mojega dela ni bilo testiranje hipotetičnih izhodišč, temveč oblikovanje teoretičnega okvira, ki bi služil za razumevanje obeh kvalitiet. Moja največja zanimanja so bile individualne predstave in razumevanja kvalitete življenja ter dela in posameznikove preference za doseganje le teh.

V ta namen sem izvedla deset kvalitativnih, pol strukturiranih intervjujev z desetimi intervjuvanci, vsemi Danci. Vsi intervjuji so potekali v angleščini, kar ni predstavlja ovire. Njihova dolžina je bila različna in časovnega razpona od 38 minut ter do 60 minut. Raziskovalni vzorec je bil sestavljen iz petih oseb zenskega ter petih oseb moškega spola ter razdeljen v pet starostnih razredov in sicer stari med 20 in 30 let, 30 in 40 let, 40 in 50, 50 in 60 ter stari med 60 in 70 let.

Vseh deset udeležencev je bilo v času intervjujev delovno aktivnih in sicer osem kot zaposlenih ter dve samozaposleni. Dva udeleženca raziskave sta potem, ko je bil intervju že opravljen z mano se enkrat navezala stik ter me obvestila, da je bilo njuno delovno razmerje prekinjeno. Prvi je izgubil svoje delovno mesto kot posledica finančne krize, drugi pa je odpoved dal samoiniciativno v znak nestrinjanja s politiko podjetja.

Največ udeležencev raziskave je bilo starih med 30 in 40 let in sicer šest. Ta starostni razred je še posebej zanimiv za preučevanje kvalitete življenja ter dela, saj spodbuja vprašanja povezana tako s posameznikovimi preferencami v javnem kot tudi zasebnem življenju. Kot vzorčno vprašanje služi preferiranje fleksibilnosti ali varnosti na delovnem mestu. Ali je posamezniku v letih, za katere je značilna reprodukcija, pomembna bolj fleksibilnost na delovnem mestu zato da lahko ustrezno usklaja javno in zasebno ali varnost delovnega mesta v smislu, da bo imel, delovno mesto, ki ga opravlja danes tudi jutri in pojutrišnjem.

Posebnost danskega sistema je tako imenovana varna fleksibilnost (visoka fleksibilnost na delovnem mestu tako za delodajalca kot za delojemalca ter ustrezni socialni transferji in angažma države blaginje pri iskanju novih delovnih mest in nudenju različnih pomoči v obdobju nezaposlenosti), ki je najbrž pomemben razlog, da je moj vzorec, ki je pripadal

starostni skupini med 30 in 40 let preferiral fleksibilnost veliko bolj kot pa varnost delovnega mesta. Intervjuvancem je veliko bolj pomembno usklajevanje javnega z zasebnim kot obratno in nezadovoljstvo z delovnim mestom jim ne pomeni ovire, pač pa indikator, da si najdejo drugo ter boljše delovno mesto.

Na podlagi rezultatov vzorca je tako kvaliteto dela kot kvaliteto življenja moč razumeti ter razložiti s štirimi ključnimi dejavniki. To je imeti, delati, biti ter doseči. Navezujoč se na rezultate raziskave je *imeti* v razdeljeno na dva področja in sicer materialna ter nematerialna imetja, pri čemer se med materialna npr. uvrščajo denar, avto, (lepa) hiša in (prijazna) soseska, med nematerialne pa družina, svoboda, zdravje, prijateljstvo ter druga.

Pomembnost materialnih in nematerialnih imetij je bila ugotovljena tudi v primeru kvalitete dela. Med prvimi je bila omenjena zlasti plača ter materialne dobrine, potrebne za opravljanje delovnega procesa, med drugimi pa potreba po imeti sodelavce, fleksibilnost, vpliv, itd.

Ena izmed pomembnih ugotovitev raziskave je bila bistveno večja pomembnost nematerialnih imetij v primerjavi z materialnimi in to v obeh primerih, kvalitete življenja in kvalitete dela. Ne samo, da je bil seznam nematerialnih imetij daljši ter bolj raznolik, tudi njegova vrednost je bila za intervjuvance manjša v primerjavi z materialnim. Posamezniki so namreč trdili, da bi se v primeru situacije, v kateri bi morali izbirati med nematerialnimi ter materialnimi, odločili za prve.

Naslednja pomembna ugotovitev je bil vsaj pogojni, če že ne hierarhičen odnos med imeti in početi. Zadnje je bilo za moj vzorec relevantno šele potem, ko so bile zadovoljene njihove potrebe po imeti. Kot primer navajam svobodo, ki je bila tretje najpomembnejše nematerialno imetje za kvaliteto življenja. Njena funkcija je bila opisana kot "*imeti svobodo, da lahko počneš tisto, kar si želiš.*" Posameznik lahko počne stvari šele takrat, ko ima vse potrebno zanje, materialno in nematerialno.

Za kvaliteto življenja in dela, sta poleg zgoraj že omenjenih imeti in početi, pomembni še dve stvari in sicer biti ter doseči. V okviru biti, je kvaliteta življenja najpogosteje pojasnjena kot "*Biti srečen*", kvaliteta dela pa kot "*biti zadovoljen.*" Kar se tiče indikatorjev zadnjih dveh indikatorjev, sta slednja manj objektivna od prvega para ter zato tudi težje merljiva. Ljudje so lahko namreč srečni v različnih situacijah, kar pa je

odvisno predvsem od njihovih lastnih preferenc. Tako so lahko srečni *s službo, z družino, z opazovanjem, kako rastejo rože, itd.*

Kar štejem za najpomembnejšo ugotovitev tega dela je četrta dimenzija kvalitete dela in življenja, to je doseči. Ta dimenzija pomeni doseganje različnih ciljev včasih celo tako abstraktnih kot so posameznikove lastne sanje in vizije, kar igra pomembno vlogo za posameznikovo samorealizacijo in samo aktualizacijo ter posledično kvaliteto življenja.

Glede na podatke raziskave, je mogoče zaključiti, da je prisotnost *drugih* ter sodelovanja z njimi bistvena za doseganje percepcij o imeti, se posebej nematerialnih. Posameznik si ne more ustvariti lastne družine, ki na nastopa kot eden izmed predpogojev za kvaliteto življenja. Prisotnost partnerja, otrok ali drugih individuumov je nujna. Podobno je bilo identificirano tudi v primeru kvalitete dela, kjer sta prisotnost sodelavcev ter sodelovanje z njimi nujna pogoja.

Prav tako pa je to delo pokazalo da sta si oba področja kvalitet ne le v sorodnem odnosu, temveč da so nekateri izmed njunih pogojev predpogoj za obe. Kot zdravje npr. Šest izmed desetih udeležencev je trdilo, da je imeti zdravje najbolj pomembno imetje in hkrati pogoj, da nekdo lahko sploh kaj počne.

Za konec bi rada poudarila pomembnost raziskovanja obeh kvalitet. Ne le za boljše razumevanje njunih konceptov temveč tudi za primerno oblikovanje javnih politik. Zaradi množice variant kvalitet življenja in dela se zdi seveda utopično, da bi lahko javne politike kdaj vključile v svoje programe vsako posamezno osebo, tako da bi le ta lahko dosegla kvaliteto življenja po lastnih predstavah. Toda, kar bi javne politike lahko in morajo narediti je, da omogočijo ljudem dosegati najmanj materialne objekte za njihovo javno ter zasebno življenje glede na to, kar jim je manj ter kaj bolj pomembno. Namreč, le na ta način je možno doseči potem tudi nematerialna imetja. Vse štiri kategorije imeti, početi, biti in doseči so si medsebojno sorodne, zato omogočiti prvo lahko nadalje rezultira v pridobivanju tudi druge ali katerekoli ostale.

7 LITERATURE

- Abbot, Andrew. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. United States of America: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Andersen, Jørgen, Søren Ventegodt, Michael Nielsen, Morad Mohammed and Trine F. Madsen. 2005. Global quality of life (QOL), health and ability. *Social indicators research* (71): 87-122.
- Andrews, Frank M. 1986. *Research on the Quality of Life*. Michigan: Institute for Social Research University of Michigan.
- Bauman, Zygmunt and May Tim. 2001. *Thinking Sociologically*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Berg, Harry. 2008. Reanalyzing qualitative interviews from different angles: The Risk of Decontextualization and Other Problems of Sharing Qualitative Data. *Historical Social Research*. (3): 179-192.
- Campbell, Angus. 1976. *The Quality of American life: Perceptions, evaluations, and satisfactions*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Denzin, K. Norman and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2008. *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. United States of America: Sage publications.
- Ezzy, Douglas. 2002. *Qualitative Analysis: Practice and innovation*. London: Rutledge.
- Fraser, James. 2000. Organizational culture as contested ground in an era of globalization: works perceptions and satisfaction. *Sociological spectrum* (22): 445-471.
- Greenley, R. James, Steven J. Greenberg and Roger Brown. 1997. Measuring Quality of Life: A New and Practical Survey Instrument. *Social work* 42 (3): 244-254.
- Griffin, James. 1989. *Well-Being: Its Meaning, Measurement, and Moral Importance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Glasser, Barney and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine publishing company.

- Glasser, Barney. 2005. *The grounded theory perspective: Theoretical coding*. California: Sociology Press.
- Konecki, Krzysztof T. 2008 Triangulation and Dealing with The Realness of Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 4 (3): 7-28.
- Mabe, Matt. 2008 There is something about Denmark. *Business Week* (8): 9-11.
- Megone, Cristopher. 1990. *The Quality of Life: Starting from Aristotle*. London: Rutledge.
- Mickel, E. Amy, Elise J. Dallimore and Carolyn Nelson. 2008. What does the pursuit of high quality of life entail? Grounding a theoretical model in lived experience. *Community, Work and Family* 11 (3): 313-336.
- Mruck, Katja, Roth Wolff-Michael and Franz Breuer. 2002. *Subjectivity and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research I*. Available on: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/issue/view/22> (1. April, 2009).
- Nussbaum, Martha. 1993 *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Strauss, L. Anselm. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis For Social Scientists*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1997. *Grounded theory in practice*. London: Sage publications.
- Wallace, Clare, Florian Pichler and Bernadette Hayes. 2007. *First European Quality of Life Survey: Quality of work and life satisfaction*. Available on: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0695.htm> (20.March, 2009).
- Wish, Naomi B. 1986. Are we really measuring the quality of life? Well-being has subjective dimensions, as well as objective ones. *American Journal of economics and Sociology* 45 (1): 93-100.
- Zautra, Alex and Joseph Maio. 1981 Life events and life quality variability. *Journal of community psychology* (9): 148-152.
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. 2008. *Eurofound materials: All roads lead to... Lisbon*. Available on: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2008/862/en/1/ef08862en.pdf> (1.April, 2009).