MASTER THESIS

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

The responsibility for meaningful work

A qualitative study on the perception of the individual as employee on who is responsible for meaningful work and what this responsibility constitutes.

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Abstract

This study adopted a humanist perspective, which is so far less favored in studies on meaningful work, in contrast to the managerial perspective. Herewith the question about the responsibility for meaningful work was examined, which is hitherto rather eluded. Thus, this study deals with the following research question: "*Who is perceived as responsible for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual and what does this perceived responsibility constitute?*" Data was collected among 14 participants with the use of semi-structured interviews and analyzed by the means of a qualitative content analysis. The results show that participants perceive responsibility among various parties such as the organization, themselves, and superior institutions which thus represent perceived areas of responsibility. The way responsibility is ascribed primarily refers to the perception of influence potentials that are then factored into perceived responsibilities of either of the parties. Additionally commonalities are recognized between how participants perceive meaningful work and how they perceive the responsibility for it, which is characterized by an entanglement of objective and subjective dimension of meaningful work in both perceptions. This suggests an inclusive understanding of the responsibility for meaningful work, which is a different consideration given the assumptions and arguments made so far.

Key concepts: responsibility, meaningful work, perception, humanist, qualitative

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

StBA .... *Statistisches Bundesamt*
ADP.. *Automatic Data Processing, Inc.*
CID.. *Corporation Internal Decision*
CMWS .... *Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale*

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Meaningful work is a topic that gained increasing interest in the last couples of years (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Organizations' interest in the topic is fed by "the assumption that meaningful work influences various job and organizational attitudes as well as motivation and performance" (Pratt & Ashforth 2003, p. 309). But not only organizations deal with this matter, also individuals as employees are concerned by the role of work in relation to its significance in life and therefore seek for organizations that share their desires. The ADP Research Institute stated in their report (Mobius & Schoenle, 2006), that spending time working on things that are of personal interest or have a broader impact on society is a trend in today's workplace. Because a person spends a lot of time at work and with work (Van Zyl, Deacon & Rothmann, 2010) the question arises how much of life's meaning is derived from a person's job (Beadle & Knight, 2012). For this reason, various consulting companies already deal with the topic of meaningful work and address it through their practices. McKinsey for example asks the critical questions: "What sort of workplace should we expect? And how can we shape it to produce more satisfying jobs and more healthy and successful companies?" With that they start addressing the need to create meaningful work (Manyika & Taylor, 2018). Geldenhuys, Łaba and Venter (2014, p. 1) additionally argue that "if employees yearn for meaningful work, organizations would benefit in accommodating for this".

These developments led to a literature base primarily shaped by an examination of a large number of sources of meaningful work (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009) and how those are enabling positive work outcomes. Thus, it has already been shown that meaningful work has an essential impact on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction (Cardador, Dane & Pratt 2011), organizational commitment (Farilie, 2011; Geldenhuys et al., 2014), and turnover cognitions (Scroggins, 2008; Fairlie, 2011). Geldenhuys et al. (2014) also describe a positive relation between meaningfulness, work engagement, and organizational commitment. At the same time it is mentioned that there is no coherent understanding of the concept of meaningful work in the current literature (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). This is ascribed on the one hand to the fact that the literature base is considered relatively new (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010) and on the other hand that often individual factors and variables are examined and observed in isolation rather than in context to other factors (Rosso et al., 2010; Lysova, Allan, Dik, Duffy & Steger, 2019).

Looking deeper into studies on meaningful work, it becomes apparent that there are two perspectives on meaningful work with regard to which the focus is set in studies. On the one side a managerial perspective, following work motivation theories, emerged which focuses on the understanding of the connection between subjective motivations and organization

productivity. Thus, the topic of meaningful work is focused on the management of meaningfulness (Dik, Byrne, & Steger, 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003) through leadership or organizational culture (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). On the other side a humanist perspective, assigned to meaningful work theories, exists, which aims at understanding the connection between work and subjective motivations to live a meaningful life. The humanist perspective deals with the fact that human beings have an intrinsic will to find meaning and thus, meaning cannot be provided externally (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). The managerial perspective is preferentially served in literature, focusing on benefits that can be drawn from meaningful work. Consequently, the humanist perspective, which paves the way to frame meaningful work as property of humans rather than as a dimension of leadership, is underrepresented.

In light of the previous statement, that there is a need to create meaningful work, the following crucial question can be asked: Who bears the responsibility for meaningful work? Is the organization obliged to ensure that the individual employees perceive their work as meaningful, or is it up to the individual to choose his or her work in such a way that it is perceived as meaningful?

Responsibility is determined in many different ways (Feather, 1999). Generally it can be said that accountability and intention are fundamental aspects for the ascription of responsibility. While Heider (1958) and Weiner (1995) consider the attribution of responsibility to individuals, there are also authors considering the organization's accountability. More ways will be discussed later in chapter 2. Buchholz and Rosenthal (2006) address the question whether a cooperation (organization) represents a moral agent and should be a focus of moral concern. Danley (1980) represents the opinion that moral responsibility can only be attributed to the individual. This is opposed by French (1979, p. 175ff) who argues for the acceptance of cooperations as "members of the moral community".

The literature dealing with responsibility for meaningful work is currently in an initial stage due to its limitation to theoretical ascriptions of an obligation either to the individual or the organization. Further, articles that address the topic of responsibility for meaningful work often focus on this obligation based ascription to introduce a further need for research into the sources and work related outcomes of meaningful work.

Michaelson (2011) provides a first contribution that goes beyond this obligation based ascription of responsibility. He emphasizes two conceptions of meaningful work: a "subjective" and an "objective" conception (Ciulla, 2000; Michaelson 2011, p. 550), which will be elaborated on in chapter 2. In this study he highlights the need of exploring how meaningful work can be considered a responsibility of individuals and institutions, which is recognized in the present research.

1.2   Problem statement

The literature base concerning meaningful work represents a focus mostly driven by the managerial perspective. This predominant presence of the managerial perspective leads to an adoption of this perspective instead of verifying and investigating its substance. This means that no comprehensive attempt was made to understand the responsibility for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual as employee. Looking at the literature more closely, it becomes apparent that the question of responsibility is eluded and merely used as introductory prerequisites to legitimize and initiate further research into sources and contributors of meaningful work. It is crucial to ask the question about the responsibility for meaningful work to shed more light on the accountability for it. Without the illumination of such, any theoretical assumption would lead to no realistic foundation. The question for the responsibility for meaningful work therefore adds an additional layer onto the topic, since it is asking for constructive areas of accountability and thus provides a realistic assumption about the responsibility for meaningful work.

1.3   Objective

The objective of this study is to determine who is perceived as responsible to explore what responsibility means in reference to meaningful work. This is done in order to contribute clearer notions on who can be held accountable for meaningful work and further what this perceived responsibility entails.

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper insight into the responsibility for meaningful work. This is attempted through the collection of perceptions of individuals on their understanding of meaningful work and the responsibility for it.

1.4   Research question

For this reason the following research question is formulated:

Who is perceived as responsible for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual and what does this perceived responsibility constitute?

1.5   Methodological choices

To approach this research question the following methodological choices were made: This study represents a qualitative research method, entailing an exploratory research, with a theoretical orientation. The reasoning is considered to be inductive. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were used as data collection. All responses were first recorded and then transcribed as basis for the data analysis, which used a qualitative content analysis.

1.6 Relevance

On the scientific level the following contributions are expected: While existing literature is limited to a theoretical discussion, this study provides an empirical attempt towards answering the question of responsibility for meaningful work. The humanist perspective of this study further allows framing meaningful work as a property of human beings rather than of managerial aspects such as leadership or employers. Nevertheless, due to the scarce literature base and the hitherto lack of empirical studies on this topic, neither definite solutions nor ultimate results will be established. For this reason, any contributions from this research are considered as starting points for further extensive research.

In practice this study can provide important implications for several parties. It highlights the need to plan for a future in which multiple aspects and understandings of meaningful work and the responsibility for it should to be incorporated into the processes of organizations such as for instance recruitment to retain and attract the best employees. Further, this study helps to adapt to employees' expectations and needs towards a potential employer, recognizing the current shift in employees' attitudes among generations.

The societal contribution of the present study is expected as follows: The increasing interest of employers and employees in the work-life relation, represented by the topic of meaningful work, shows a current development in research. This development combines the employees' impulse to seek meaning in life through a job as well as organizations' share in such meaning creation. For this reason, this development draws a connection to the topic of accountability and highlights the question of responsibility. This study addresses those developments with its research objective, attempting to bring together those socially reflected impulses and responsibilities to establish a greater unity of work life and private life.

1.7 Structure

This study is structured as following: First, the theoretical overview of this study is set up by pre-processing the existing literature (2). The following section gives an overview on the methodological choices regarding research strategy (3.1), data collection (3.2) and analysis method (3.4). This also includes the description of the operationalization (3.3) and the question of how quality criteria (3.5) and research ethics were addressed (3.6). Next the results of the study will be presented and will be discussed in relation to the theoretical overview in order to establish an overall theory for this study (4). Afterwards the findings will be discussed in reference to the research question (5). The latter chapter is discussing methodological choices in retrospect (6.1), the role of the researcher (6.2), overall contribution of the study (6.3) and gives recommendations for future research (6.4).

2   Theoretical Overview

This chapter will provide an insight into the relevant theoretical aspects of this study. It starts with the current literature on responsibility for meaningful work to create an overview on existing studies (2.1). Afterwards an introduction to different ways of how responsibility can be ascribed by persons is given (2.2), followed by an overview on contrasting perspectives on the ascription of responsibility to organizations (2.3). In order to approach the research question, a detailed review of the current literature on meaningful work is given in the subsequent sections. Here previous efforts to clarify the definition and concept of meaningful work are presented (2.4). Finally, the chapter ends with a conceptual conclusion to highlight the focus of the present study (2.5).

2.1   Responsibility for meaningful work

The literature dealing with meaningful work is characterized by two perspectives for meaningful work. On the one side research focused on work motivation theories, trying to understand the connection between subjective motivations and organization productivity. In this perspective theory "flows from individual to institution" (Michaelson 2009a, p. 41). This perspective was preferentially served in the previous years, focusing on benefits that can be drawn from meaningful work. On the other hand meaningful work theories emerged which aim to understand the connection between work and subjective motivation to live a meaningful life. According to Michaelson (2009a, p. 41) these theories "flow from institution to individual".

When it comes to literature concerning responsibility for meaningful work the literature is scarce. This is because most attention was so far given to identifying the sources and clarification of meaningful work. Currently the field contains controversial arguments about obligations for meaningful work which are either ascribed theoretically to the individual or the organization. For instance, Michaelson, Pratt, Grant and Dunn (2014) say that individuals have an ethical obligation to perform work that is meaningful. On the other side it is claimed that organizations have a moral obligation to provide meaningful work (Yeoman, 2014) and even have the moral obligation to build supporting structures for living a fulfilled life (Vriens, Achterbergh, & Gulpers, 2016).

The paper of Michaelson (2011), called "Whose responsibility is meaningful work?", provides a theoretical discussion on the topic. He leans on meaningful work theories and derives the idea that the responsibility for meaningful work is affected by one's definition of meaningful work (Michaelson, 2011). He justifies this statement by emphasizing that there are two conceptions of meaningful work: "a subjective" and "an objective" conception (Michaelson 2011, p. 550), a distinction he derives from Ciulla (2000, p. 225). She describes meaningful work as sum of an objective and a subjective dimension. The objective dimension includes

working conditions, while the subjective dimension describes the perception of the worker. Ciulla (2000) defines the objective dimension of meaningful work as "moral conditions of the job itself". This includes the handling of employees with respect and dignity and further with honesty, fairness, and justice. Muirhead (2004, p. 159) supports this definition by describing the objective conception of meaningful work as "social fit" which refers to the correspondence of the individual's talent and the needs of society. Werhane, Radin and Bowie (2004, p. 126f) refer to this conception as the "employer perspective". Additionally, Michaelson (2009a) lists certain objective elements of meaningful work. Those elements are working conditions and compensation which make meaningful work possible (Michaelson, 2009a). These conditions "meet some minimum standards of physical freedom, respectful treatment, intellectual challenge, due processes, etc." (Michaelson 2009a, p. 33). Compensation is linked to working conditions because compensations support working conditions by attenuating poor working conditions and therefore act as a work motivator (Michaelson, 2009a).

Further, Ciulla (2000, p. 225) defines the subjective dimension of meaningful work as the "outlooks and attitudes that people bring with them into the workplace". Therefore, the capability of an individual to find meaning derives from "personality, life experience and the things we value" (Ciulla 2000, p. 225). The subjective conception is referred to by Muirhead (2004, p. 159) as "personal fit" which he further describes as the correspondence of work and the best purposes of an individual. Werhane et al. (2004, p. 126f) call this conception the "personal dimension". As with the objective conception Michaelson (2009a) also lists subjective elements of meaningful work, including work motivation factors such as job design, quality of work, job attitudes and stress, job satisfaction or reward, and punishment systems as well as work and life. Work and life specifically relate to the degree of their entanglement and further to the possibility of restriction on life (Michaelson, 2009a).

Following Ciulla's (2000) view of meaningful work, Michaelson (2009a, p. 41) states that meaningful work is understood on the one hand as an "institutional obligation" and on the other hand as an "individual choice". Therefore, the objective element of meaningful work is a matter of institutional obligation, making the subjective element possible, thus the subjective element is a matter of "individual choice" (Michaelson 2009a, p. 41). Accordingly, the institutional obligation here refers to making meaningful work possible, primarily by ensuring working conditions. And the individual decision describes the obligation of the individual to choose work that is perceived as personally meaningful (Michaelson, 2009a) and thus is focused on the perception of work by the employees.

Based on Cuilla's (2000) description of meaningful work through a subjective and objective dimension, Michaelson (2011) describes an objective and subjective conception of meaningful work which allows him to formulate two assumptions regarding the responsibility for meaningful work.

From the conception of objective meaningful work Michaelson (2011, p. 552) argues "that there is a negative duty on the part of the employer not to deprive the worker of the possibility" of meaningful work. He further argues, that the party in control is the one who is responsible for meaningful work. And since it is the employer who is in control of preserving conditions, allowing the employee to choose meaningful work, the responsibility for meaningful work falls to the employer (Michaelson, 2011).

Regarding the concept of subjective meaningful work, Michaelson (2011, p. 553) asks "whether it is a moral responsibility at all to pursue meaningful work when the only stakeholder is oneself". Thus, he argues that it is not the question of who is responsible but rather "whether the worker is responsible for choosing meaningful work when he has the wherewithal to choose" (Michaelson 2011, p. 553). Accordingly, Michaelson (2011, p. 554) states that "when we have the capacity to choose work, we have a positive moral responsibility to choose work that is meaningful to our own and others' interests". Thus this positive moral responsibility falls to the employee.

2.2 Persons and responsibility

This research focuses on the perceived responsibility for meaningful work. According to Feather (1999) a broad and complex literature field on perceived responsibility exists that includes different ways of defining it. The following sections will present perspectives in the field, sensitizing the researcher.

Heider (1958, p. 114) states that "the issue of responsibility includes the problem of attribution [sic] of action". For this reason he thinks that "it is important which of the several conditions of action – the intentions of the person, personal power factors, or environmental factors – is to be given primary weight for the action outcome" (Heider 1958, p. 114). While personal causality necessarily includes an intention to cause something, impersonal causality lacks this intention. Accordingly, intention is seen as the key aspect that relates the "person-action-outcome sequence" (Feather 1999, p. 30). Heider (1958, p. 113) thus describes the assignment of responsibility by stating that "it varies with the relative contribution of environmental factors to the action outcome; in general the more they are felt to influence the action, the less the person is held responsible". Consequently there are different degrees to which causes are related to a person or the environment, accordingly he proposes five levels of responsibility. Those can be reviewed in appendix I.

Weiner (1995) distinguishes, like Heider (1958), between personal and impersonal causality. He states that either a human or a personal cause has to be involved in an action in order to be judged with regard to responsibility. And since not all causality is personal, he argues that the ascription of responsibility requires the attribution of an internal controllable cause. According to Weiner (1995, p. 8) "controllability refers to the characteristics of a cause" and

"responsibility, on the other hand, refers to judgment made about a person". Consequently he sees responsibility rather as a judgment than an attribution.

The legal philosopher Hart (1968) approaches responsibility from the corners of common sense and legal aspects. A core idea of his legal philosophy is that the essential meaning of responsibility is related to the notion of accountability (Feather, 1999). Correspondingly Hart (1968) distinguishes between four types of responsibilities, referring to accountability: Role, capacity, causal, as well as legal and moral liability responsibility. See appendix II for a more detailed explanation.

Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy and Doherty (1994) describe three key elements that are linked together in a triangle model of responsibility. The first element is called prescription and refers to what guides an actor's conduct. Second is the event that occurred or is prepared for and is relevant to the prescriptions. The third is called identity images and refers to the actor's "roles, qualities, convictions, and aspirations" (Schlenker et al., p. 634). The linkages in the triangle are subject to evaluation by audiences who form a societal perspective. Schlenker et al. (1994, p. 639) further argue that if an actor has personal control, then the person is liable to any positive or negative sanctions coming along with the conduct. Thus they state: "as personal control decreases, so does the actor's responsibility" (Schlenker et al. 1994, p. 639).

2.3 Organizations and responsibility

Danley (1980) represents the perspective that moral responsibility can only be attributed to the individual. According to him "cooperations should not be included in the moral community; they should not be granted full-fledged moral status" (Danley 1980, p. 140). He builds this statement on the argument that since the ascription of responsibility depends on a certain physical and mental property of entities, which a cooperation does not meet, such an ascription is not possible. Additionally, he argues that cooperations lack the ability to intend, which would be fundamental for the ascription of responsibility.

This argumentation is opposed by the perspective of French (1979, p. 175ff) who argues for the acceptance of cooperations as "members of the moral community, of equal standing with the traditionally acknowledged residents - biological human beings". And further contends that "cooperations should be treated as full-fledged moral persons and hence that they can have whatever privileges, right, and duties as are, in the normal course of affairs, accorded to normal persons" (French 1979, p. 175ff). In order to use this argument he ascribes a certain intention to the cooperation. He legitimates this intention by drawing a relation between the individuals' behavior in the cooperation to the reason for this behavior, factoring in a "cooperation internal decision structure" (CID structure) (French 1979, p. 175ff). By the means of this CID structure French (1979) redefines the actions of individuals as actions of

the cooperation. The elements in this structure provide on the one hand a responsibility flow chart including stations in the corporate power structure. On the other hand they enable a certain logic through corporate decision rules, serving as intention baseline.

Buchholz and Rosenthal (2006), similarly to Danley (1980) and French (1979), deal with moral agency and additionally argue for a reassessment of corporate moral agency. But, in contrast to Danley (1980) and French (1979), they refrain from deducing either the role of the whole or of the individual by the presence of one. They rather argue for a consideration of both from a moral point of view, by having in mind that the individual cannot be extracted from a certain community (in this case a cooperation). Consequently, Buchholz and Rosenthal (2006) present the idea of a cooperation as community. This idea ends with the proposition that the cooperation is not a moral person but rather may be a moral agent. This is fed by the argument that since the cooperation acts through decision making processes (politics, rules and policies), which then affect people, this qualifies for the status of a moral agent. Based on this argumentation Buchholz and Rosenthal (2006) arrive at the conclusion that cooperations can be held morally accountable for moral dimensions of their policies and actions. Nevertheless, they mention that individual responsibility is still viewed as important and it must be highlighted that it is not neglected. Still, all individuals must hold themselves and others morally responsible in order to contribute to a corporate responsibility.

2.4 Meaningful work

Currently, the literature on meaningful work does not provide a comprehensively used understanding of meaningful work (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). This inconsistent understanding of the concept of meaningful work might be related to simultaneously existing, diverse approaches of clarification.

In order to approach the concept of meaningful work, efforts were made to clarify meaning and meaningfulness. Rosso et al. (2010) argue that the distinction between meaning and meaningfulness, which are interchangeably used in literature, is fundamental in order to understand their relation to work. Meaningful work is used as some kind of umbrella wording for either the kind of meaning workers get out of their work (meaning), or the significance related to that job (meaningfulness) (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Consequently, the connotations of the two terms are distinct and refer to different implications, but are still related (Rosso et al., 2010). Meaning is the output of sense making and relies on individual interpretation on the meaning and role of work in a life context such as work as a pay check, a calling, oppression or an activity (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). The understanding of meaning is affected by the individual but also by surroundings and the social framework (Wrzesniewski, 2003). Meaningfulness, on the other hand, indicates the degree of significance a certain type of work has for an individual (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), which still can vary extremely from one to

another. Accordingly, meaningful work is work experienced as especially significant (Rosso et al., 2010).

May, Gilson and Harter (2004, p.14) define meaningfulness as "the value of a work goal or purpose, judged to the individual's own ideas or standards". Steger, Frazier, Oishi and Kaler (2006, p. 81) define "meaning in life as the sense made of, and significance felt regarding, the nature of one's being and existence". Meaningless work, on the other side, is often referred to with "apathy and detachment from one's work" (May et al. 2004, p.13). These definitions are rooted in a humanist stance, since the personal experience of work is described as a "subjective experience of the existential significance or purpose of work" (Lips-Wiersma & Wright 2012, p. 657).

The above discussed differentiations of meaning and meaningfulness lead to the need to clarify what exactly contributes to meaningful work (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). Thus various studies exist that investigate factors regarding their impact on meaningfulness in work.

The organizational research on meaningful work, following work motivation theories, focuses on positive work outcomes as a consequence of perceived meaningfulness at work (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). The job characteristics model, established by Hackman and Oldham (1976), represents the most fundamental research. They argue that core characteristics like skill variety, task significance, and task identity result in a psychological experience of meaningful work. Accordingly Michaelson, Pratt, Grant and Dunn (2014) argue that such experienced meaningfulness at work leads to positive organizational work outcomes. Consequently, factors such as working engagement and organizational commitment (Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Cardador et al., 2011; Fairlie, 2011), organization citizenship behaviors (Tyler & Blader, 2003; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), job crafting (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2013), as well as intrinsic motivation (Fried & Ferris, 1987) are investigated. Additionally it is argued that experienced meaningfulness at work results in decreased turnover intentions (Scroggins, 2008), keeping of key employees (Holbeche & Springett, 2004; Milliam, Craplewski & Ferguson, 2003), and enhanced organizational change efforts (Avey, Wernsing & Luthans, 2008).

Furthermore it is discussed how job enrichment, work role fit, and co-worker relations collude and contribute to psychological meaningfulness (Brief & Nord, 1990; Shamir, 1991; May et al., 2004). Baumeister and Vohs (2002) also deal with the impact of relations at work and conclude that connection among colleagues is the core of meaning. Besides arguing for such conditional factors, they further highlight that such connection goes hand in hand with benefits for the organization and the individual. Looking at the studies on meaningful work, investigating those factors, it becomes apparent that the substantial interest in sources for meaningful work is mainly managerial. According to May et al. (2004, p. 15) this is because

"the restoration of meaning in work is seen as a method to foster an employee's motivation and attachment to work". Further it is considered to contribute to positive employee outcomes, benefitting the organization, such as job satisfaction (Cardador et al., 2011) or organizational commitment (Farilie, 2011; Geldenhuys et al., 2014). This managerial interest is based on the assumption that leadership and organization culture can provide employees with meaning (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009) and thus that meaning can be managed (Dik et al., 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003).

In contrast to this stands the humanist perspective. Following meaningful work theories, it proclaims the idea that humans have an intrinsic will to find meaning and thus meaning cannot be provided externally (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Accordingly, Chalofsky and Cavallaro (2013) argue that there is more to meaningful work than job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement. They submit a model describing how one's sense of self and work overlaps with one's perception of meaning in life. This model contributes to the thematization that focuses on the fit between personal and organizational values, resulting in schemes like work-role fit and self-concept, allowing individuals to express themselves through work (May et al., 2004). Because of that, efforts are made to approach the concept of meaningful work through personal calling (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). By that a moral imperative to do work leads to the perception that this work is profoundly meaningful (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). This is because it is assumed that "work done solely for economic or career advancement reasons, is unlikely to inspire a sense of significance, purpose, or transcendent meaning" (Bunderson & Thompson 2009, p. 32). Accordingly, it is argued that work as calling provides the "strongest "(Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton 1985, p. 66), "most extreme" (Dobrow 2004, p.6), or "deepest" (Hall & Chandler 2005, p. 160) way to meaningful work. Consequently, Wrzesnieski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz (1997) argue that persons that perceive their job as a calling are more satisfied with their work and career. With reference to these arguments Weeks and Schaffert (2017) state that the humanist perspective distances itself from the idea that meaning can be facilitated through money or career promotion. This is critically considered by Wrzesniewski (2002) who emphasizes that the choice for a job, a career, or a calling indicates disparate motivations for meaningfulness in work. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that work meaningfulness is "a broader concept than calling" (Vuori, San & Kira 2012, p. 233) because it can result from any positive experience rather than merely participating in a system.

Taking into account the overview of literature regarding meaningful work, presented above, it can be stated that it does not seem to be guided by a comprehensive theory (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017). Few contributions were made to integrate most research into one context in order to achieve clarification. One of them is the formulation of dimensions of meaningful

work by Rosso et al. (2010). They established two axes: Self versus other and agency versus communal as sources for meaningful work, resulting from a literature examination. Lips-Wirsma and Morris (2009) also established a theoretical model on meaningful work, called the "Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale" (CMWS). This model includes similar quadrants than the model of Rosso et al. (2010), but the axes include self versus other and being versus doing. These two axes build the four quadrants called: Developing and becoming self (Self/Being), unity with others (Being/Others), serving others (Others/Doing), and expressing full potential (Doing/Self). Additionally this model incorporates the components of inspiration and reality, both referring to all quadrants.

Even though both models are often quoted and used in literature, no consensus was found on which model is preferable. According to Weeks and Pledger (2017, p. 2) this is due to no consensus on "how to define meaningful work, and therefore, it is difficult to argue for what employees should be searching for in order to achieve it or what employers should feel an obligation to provide". Further, they state that "it really is not clear if there are universal definitions of meaning" (Weeks & Pledger 2017, p. 3). Beadle and Knight (2012), in contrast, argue that a comprehensive idea of meaningfulness in work is more important than a subjective perception of it. This is in line with Rosso et al. (2010, p. 117), arguing that there is a "common assumption […] that there exists a shared, generic sense of work common to all types and levels of work". Even though Rosso et al. (2010) claim that most researchers agree that elements like purpose and significance contribute to the definition of meaningful work, it can be concluded that a lack of comprehensive theory exists.

2.5   Conceptual conclusion

The following section represents a conceptual conclusion, showing the state of the art literature on the subject of meaningful work and responsibility for it as well as corresponding limitations. In addition this conclusion is used to work out the focus of this study, based on existing literature.

As already mentioned several times, there is no coherent understanding of the concept of meaningful work (see 2.4). This is partly due to the different approaches to the concept and terminology and also due to the one-sidedness of the field in terms of managerial interests. In addition, it was noted that the question about the responsibility for meaningful work has so far been omitted. But this question is considered to be important because it is based on the argument that any theoretical assumption and understanding of meaningful work will not lead to a realistic foundation, if there is no empirical investigation. Furthermore, this study adapts the humanist perspective and thus counteracts the hitherto one-sided interest of the literature. The claim of Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) that exactly such studies, that adopt the perceptive of the individual worker are lacking, supports this course of action. Thus, this

study has set itself the task of viewing meaningful work as less the belonging of institutions and employers, but rather as the belonging of the individual employee.

For this reason, the following research question was formulated in the introduction of this research: *"Who is perceived as responsible for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual and what does this perceived responsibility constitute?"*

In order to fully consider this research question, it is necessary to clarify what the perceived responsibility in relation to meaningful work means. For this reason, the present study attempts to examine the following: On the one hand, the perceived responsibility for meaningful work should be examined, and on the other hand, the subjective understanding of meaningful work from the individuals' point of view is investigated. Taken together they can tell us more about to what exactly the responsibility perceived by the individual relates to, when talking about responsibility for meaningful work. This is because additionally an insight on what meaningful work entails or how it is constituted for individuals is achieved, by this way of investigation. This in turn gives further insights on how the responsibility for meaningful work is constituted.

3   Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of this research will be provided. First, the general research strategy of the paper is presented. This includes the explanation of core choices made for the research regarding nature and type of research (3.1). Second, the research methods, which refer to the decisions made on data collection, is elaborated, by clarifying the use of research type, semi-structured interviews, participants, and the process they were exposed to (3.2). Afterwards a section on the operationalization, which refers to the elaboration of the aspects that are considered to answer the research question and how those are linked to the theoretical overview and data collection methods, follows (3.3). Subsequently, the analysis method for the evaluation of the collected data is illustrated, contributing to the representation and sense making of the data (3.4). The chapter on methodology closes with two additional subchapters regarding how quality criteria (3.5) and research ethics (3.6) were addressed.

3.1   Research strategy

This study focuses on the perception of the responsibility for meaningful work and seeks to examine this perception from the perspective of the individual. For this reason, this study needs an approach which centers on the understanding of words, opinions, and experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2013). The phenomenon researched in the present study is not measureable by numbers and thus depends on the contact with people (Silverman, 2006). For the above mentioned reason to focus on the individual perspective, a qualitative method was chosen for this study (Mayring, 2010).

In order to classify the research method used, it is also helpful, beside the decision for a qualitative research, to determine the underlying epistemological assumption (Myers, 2013). For this reason, Myers (2013, p. 36) argues that "it is important for all those who are intending to use qualitative research methods that they should understand the grounds of their knowledge" and also "need to understand the limit of that knowledge". This study adopted an interpretivist epistemology, which is further elaborated on in 3.5 about quality criteria.

Furthermore, the orientation of this study is theoretical. This means that the primary angle of this research is related to theory rather than to practice. The present study reviews the existing literature, framing the state of the art, to build its research. The research question of this study incorporates two related topics that are, however, differently formed regarding existing literature. While the literature regarding meaningful work already shows a larger reference base and various perspectives, the literature concerning responsibility for

meaningful work is limited to few theoretical discussions. The research question thus concerns primarily a research problem, building upon a relatively new topic which has not been previously researched immensely. In order to gain a better understanding of the addressed research problem and to further explore the topic in more detail, this research represents an exploratory research. Consequently, this study aims at the provision of a basis for further research rather than offering final and conclusive solutions.

Taken into account the above, as well as statements from chapters 1 and 2, both on the exploratory character of this study and the existing limited literature base, this study considers its reasoning overall as inductive. Accordingly the present study will contribute to the existing literature by establishing a theory, emerging from the collected data. How this will be achieved in detail will become apparent more clearly in the subsequent sections.

3.2   Data collection

The following sections display the decisions made regarding the data collection for this research. First, the choice of qualitative semi-structured interview is explained. Second the requirements for the participants are elaborated, including the explanation of the process they were exposed to.

3.2.1   Semi-structured interviews

This study used as data collection method qualitative semi-structured interviews. In view of the to date non-existent consensus on a concept for the determination, measurement, and usage of meaningful work (Martela, 2010), as well as the lack of a coherent understanding of a meaningful work concept (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009), a difficulty was derived regarding deviant interpretations as well as misunderstandings. This difficulty is further lined by the unique situation of this study, resulting from the translation of the term meaningful work into German language to "sinnvolle Arbeit" (see 3.3.2). Correspondingly, it was found to be legitimate to consult existing literature regarding questioning methods in order to mitigate these difficulties (see 3.3). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were considered as most suitable due to the flexible character and the option of asking open questions. Those characteristics are further seen as consistent with the interpretive epistemology as philosophical assumption, underlying this research. The semi-structured interviews allow gaining insight into the participant's opinion and experiencing (Bryman, 2008). And since this study is exploratory, a less structured way of proceeding is considered suitable (Silverman, 2006). The interviews are guided by an interview guideline (see 3.3.1 and appendix III, IV) that provides orientation during the interview (Pole & Lampard, 2002). Consequently it is ensured that certain topics are covered, while a flexible character is preserved. Thus, the researcher is still able to ask additional probing or follow up questions regarding topics that seem particularly important.

3.2.2 Participants

Due to the exploratory character of this research, there is a great interest in attaining fundamental knowledge. For this reason, the intention is to ensure credibility and confirmability, representing the experience of those being researched and by providing rich descriptions of the sample selection. For this reason the sample is selected in such a way that the population is reflected in it to a certain extend. Consequently, a systematic sample is chosen as the sampling method. Such a systematic sampling involves a conscious selection of target subjects. This is considered as a purposive non-probability sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) by at the same time approaching a representation of population, that has been chosen to be investigated (Symon & Cassell, 2012). This overall approach is brought about by establishing quotas on certain characteristics (derived from secondary statistics see appendix V).

Because this study deals with various perceptions on the responsibility for meaningful work, all participants need to be employed individuals rather than independent workers (self-employed). In this position the participant is able to experience the potential influence of the organization. Furthermore, it was seen as important that all participants are German citizens and work and live in Germany. This should help to decrease skewness due to origin.

To formulate a quota related to sex, the annual survey of the Statistische Bundesamt[1] (StBA) (2018a) on population and employment was consulted (see appendix V). According to this study 52% of the employed persons in 2017[2] were male, while 48% were female. After translating this distribution to a quota for this sample, seven female and seven male participants were included in the study. To comply with the age structure of the population, again figures by the StBA (2018b) were used. The study states five age groups proportionately forming the total number of employed persons in 2017. The age group mainly forming the work force was used as a frame for the sample. Therefore, seven participants were between 20 and 40 years old and seven were between 40 and 60 years old. An overview on the participants is given in appendix VI.

Furthermore, participants were chosen who were not working in the same organization. Reasons for this lie in the assumption about the research position of this study and the best possible achievement of credibility. In order not to allow the coloring of the responses by the sectorial reference or by the culture or corporate identity of a specific organization it was decided in the present study to not set a focus on a particular organization by means of the methodological approach. It was also seen as critical to conduct the interviews under the umbrella of an organization because responses tend to be compromised by external factors

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[1] Federal Statistics Office
[2] The key figures for the year 2018 were not issued yet.

(Pole & Lampard, 2002). Consequently, this was attenuated by excluding a specific organization background.

Due to the consideration that expectations towards certain occupational fields differ with regard to meaning, this research decided to not focus on a certain occupational field. This is because some occupations are considered to fall into the concept of "a calling" and thus are investigated with regard to meaningful work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). On the other hand low status occupations are considered regarding their relation between self-definition and work. Thus, the potentiality that results are colored by a certain occupational field with regard to the understandings of meaningful work and the responsibility for it, are decreased.

3.2.3   Interview conduction process

All interviews were conducted in the time frame of nine weeks and each covered approximately between 40 to 60 minutes. Each of the participants went through the same procedure of interviewing. Each of the participants received the interview consent form (see appendix VII & VIII) prior to the interview. In this way they were able to familiarize themselves with the purpose and scope of the interview. Only if a signed interview consent form existed, further procedures were started. All interviews were conducted in German language since this contributed to an ensured comprehension of researcher and participant because none of the participants were native English speakers. Each of the interviews was recorded with a recording device to document all questions and responses. These records were the basis for the written transcription subsequent to the interviews (see appendix IX). Those transcripts then were used as the basis of the data analysis method, which will be described later in 3.4.

3.3   Operationalization

In order to gain a deeper insight into the understanding of responsibility for meaningful work, two main perceptions are investigated: the perception of individuals on meaningful work and the perceived responsibility for it. Both perceptions need to be adequately addressed in this operationalization. Further details and additional information accompanying the operationalization are explained in the section on the interview guideline (3.3.1).

The perception of individuals on meaningful work was already studied. The literature concerning this aspect shows a relatively larger reference base including various perspectives. Nevertheless, no consensus on a concept for determination, measurement, or usage of meaningful work (Martela, 2010), nor a coherent understanding of its concept (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017), was established. And since this study seeks to understand responsibility in reference to meaningful work, this concept is accompanying this research goal fundamentally.

In order to operationalize this first perception, the existing literature on this aspect was considered with regard to appropriate examples for conducting the present study. The study of Weeks and Schaffert (2017) represents such an example. They conducted a qualitative study using the "method of asking about the participants' current job versus their ideal job and focused on what things they valued in a meaningful or ideal job" (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017), which was adopted from Michaelson (2009b).

The present study adopted this method of question asking. This method sets the focus on the practicality of meaningful work, which is considered as suitable to the subjective approach of this study by asking individuals about their personal perception. Thus, the following questions used by Weeks and Schaffert (2017, p.6) were adopted: "How important is it to you that your job has meaning?", "Please describe your ideal job", "What would a meaningful job look like?". Additionally, the study by Michaelson (2009b, p. 55), which was referred to by Schaffert and Weeks (2017), was consulted and the following question was retrieved: "What kind of job contributes in your opinion the most to your general well-being?" Further, open questions, based on this idea of questioning, were formulated and can be reviewed in the final interview guideline appendix III (English) and IV (German).

The perception of individuals on responsibility for meaningful work is addressed with an additional set of questions on the perceptions, experiences, and thoughts of participants. Since the literature dealing with the responsibility for meaningful work is limited to theoretical discussions, no appropriate examples for the operationalization exist. For this reason, open questions were formulated, which are considered to be in line with the exploratory character of this study.

3.3.1   Interview guideline

As already explained in section 3.2.1, semi-structured interviews were considered as suitable for this research. Consequently, an interview guideline was developed, serving as leading frame (see appendix III (English) and IV (German). Within this interview guideline two main parts as well as an introductory part can be identified. The two main parts result from the logic that was presented in the section on the operationalization (see 3.3). However, these parts are not seen as fixed but rather as flexible contents in the sense of the inductive approach of this study. Thus, this interview guideline represents a flexible sequence of questions.

The introductory part of the interview includes so called warm up questions, serving as confirmatory questions for the participants' requirements (see 3.2.2) and as smooth introduction into the interview. The interview guideline closes with a final part, giving the participant opportunity to add anything or ask questions. The reasoning and advantage of

this choice are stated in 3.3.2 on the pre-tests. It should be noted that all interview questions remain the same in content throughout all interviews but are adapted in form and formality to the age of the participant as well as the present circumstances, if necessary.

The questions included in the first part of the interview are mainly derived from the idea pursued in the study of Weeks and Schaffert (2017), following the concept that a participant's description of his or her current and ideal job gives insight into what a person values in a meaningful job. The second part could not be inspired, as the first part, from existing studies, since the literature concerning responsibility for meaningful work is very scarce. Because of that, open questions were formulated. Further, it was generally considered as important that those questions are open ended in order to not be leading or restraining by any purpose and thus enable unconstrained responses.

3.3.2 Pre-tests

This study performed two pre-tests prior to conducting the interviews, each having its own purpose. The first pre-test was conducted to counteract potential misconceptions of the translated term meaningful work into German language und thus tested if this term is also suitable in the questioning of participants. The extensive examination of the German literature revealed that the term used is: "sinnvolle Arbeit" (Hardering, Will-Zocholl & Hofmeister, 2016; Voswinkel, 2016). For this purpose six individuals were confronted with this term and asked to share associations. Naturally, none of these six were included in the actual study. The pre-test revealed that participants tended to describe the usefulness instead of the perceived meaningfulness of their activities or jobs. Thus, the following consequence was implemented: Before each interview the participants received a rough verbal description, clarifying the context of "sinnvolle Arbeit".

The second pre-test was performed on the full extent of an interview and required the full duration of time. Therefore a 49 old female participant employed as accountant (Interview O) and a 56 old male participant employed as tax consultant (Interview 1), were chosen. The following insights were drawn from this pre-test: First, the adjustment, derived from the first pre-test, was considered as helpful due to more balanced responses. Second, it was detected that the introductory questions were not yet leading to a tensionless start into the interview. For this reason, additional introductory questions were included to smoothen the interviews' beginning. Furthermore, it was considered fruitful to give the participants the opportunity to freely express thoughts at the end of the interview (not explicitly on a question) and thus this was consistently integrated into the process. Because of those changes the two participants of the second pre-test were not included into the final sample of this study. The different versions of the interview guideline can be reviewed in appendix III (English) and IV (German).

3.4 Data analysis

After conducting and recording the interviews, the audio was transcribed into written form in order to prepare them for the subsequent analysis. The transcripts were produced in form of a full verbatim, reflecting the transcription guideline given by Dresing and Pehl (2018), who established a transcription system based on guidelines given by Kuckartz, Dresing, Rädiker and Stefer (2008) and Kuckartz (2010). Rubin and Rubin (2012) describe the choice for the transcription system as the first step of data analysis, since it can influence the examination of the data. In order to be consistent with the pervious methodological choices, a full verbatim was chosen as transcription method. This allows in principle interpreting statements in context or in the way something was said because it includes breaks in speech, reception signals, filler sounds, and corresponding description of its emphasis. An overview of the symbols and markings used, according to this transcription guideline, can be found in appendix X.

3.4.1 Qualitative content analysis

A suitable method for the data analysis is the qualitative content analysis by Mayring (2010). How this method was applied in this research will be described in the following section.

Mayring's content analysis aims at the analysis of communication material, such as transcribed interviews, in a systematic way (Mayring, 2010). Since this method builds on the strengths of quantitative analysis such as guidance by rules following quality criteria of confirmability and credibility, it was considered as particularly useful. Those strengths are transformed by Mayring (2010) in a purposeful way for the qualitative.

There are three types of approaches within content analysis: Conventional, directed, or summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For the present qualitative content analysis an inductive category application, using a so-called conventional content analysis that "codes categories derived directly from the text data" (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p. 1277), is adopted.

Following the suggested steps of Mayring (2010) for qualitative content analysis, this study defined the gathering of the source material, described participants, and sample as well as the interview conditions (see 3.2). Furthermore the theoretical background, resulting into the research question and object (see sections 1 and 2), was formulated and incorporated into the operationalization (see 3.3) of this research and thus is incorporated in the interview guideline (3.3.1) and coding process (3.4.2).

The techniques for qualitative content analyses cannot be completely standardized. Thus, those need to be linked to the individual material and the specific research question of the present research. For this reason, it seemed appropriate to modify the chosen method and instruments in order to verify them accordingly throughout the process (Mayring, 2010).

3.4.2 Coding process

The existing literature base and the theoretical discussions sensitized the researcher and thus are seen as guide to decide what information and aspects of the collected material might be relevant. Accordingly, this allowed the formulation of two thematic blocs in advance to the data analysis. Those thematic blocs reflect the research question and the objective and thus a category definition for each bloc is formulated to specify the level of abstraction of initial codes (see appendix XI). This definition was then used to first start the analysis according to Mayring (2010) by structuring the relevant content out of the collected material, resulting in initial codes in an inductive way.

This study seeks to gain a deeper insight into the understanding of responsibility for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual as employee. Thus, one bloc refers to all perceptions on responsibility and the second bloc refers to all perceptions of meaningful work (see appendix XI). In the first step of the data analysis all statements that fit into one of the two blocs were marked in different colors (green or blue). Thus, only a rough distinction was made between perceived responsibility (green) and perception of meaningful work (blue). In this way tentative codes emerged, guided by the material. All other information was given different color codes. This process was then continued the way Mayring (2010) suggests. Now all codes were revised regarding a formative check of reliability in reference to the research question and objective. In a second step each of the thematic blocs were looked at in more detail. Accordingly initial codes were structured into categories, integrating overlapping aspects.

This was continued for each of the blocs throughout the final working though of the material, until final categories were formulated. This included again a summative check of reliability with regard to research question and objective (Mayring, 2010). The final categories thus resulted from a step by step process, incorporating feedback loops, enabling revision and reduction of categories in reference to their reliability. Throughout the process it was ensured to specify the categories very carefully as close as possible to the material and always considering the emergence of new categories due to data outside the former categories. Different versions of the code tree can be reviewed in appendix XI.

To support some steps of the text interpretation within the qualitative analysis Mayring (2010) states that several computer programs are helpful. He argues that such programs work as assistance, offering helpful tools to handle the text and further serve as documentation center. Accordingly, MaxQDA was chosen as such supporting computer program for this research.

3.5 Quality criteria

This study adopted the philosophical assumption of an interpretivist epistemology. Researchers taking on this underlying assumption "assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments [sic]" (Myers 2013, p. 39). Further, this assumption puts its focus on human sense making and the understanding of situations through the assignment of meaning by people (Myers, 2013). Thus, meaning, intended to derive from questions, is viewed in relation to context, since this context and the understanding of it defines the meaning.

Guba and Lincoln (1985) present a relativistic research approach, which is in line with the underlying interpretivist epistemology adapted in this study. They formulate four assessment criteria called credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. How those criteria were taken in consideration in this study and how limitations were recognized, will be explained in the following section.

Because Guba and Lincoln (1985, p. 237) state that credibility appoints to "try(ing) to demonstrate a good fit between constructed realities of respondents and the reconstructions attributed to them", this study included member checks of the transcribed interviews. Those checks involved the checking of the transcribed interviews by the participants to enable a correction regarding the reproduced content. In addition, a research notebook (see appendix XII) was kept by the researcher, documenting changes in the construction of the study and thoughts of the researcher, in order to be able to question those afterward. The researcher also discussed thoughts and data with the supervisor of the study, which represents a feedback ground for the research. It has to be mentioned that the credibility of this study might be compromised by the fact that the data analysis was conducted by only one researcher because Burla, Knierim, Barth, Duetz and Abel (2008) argue for multiple researchers for the interpretation.

The criterion on transferability refers to the fact that it is not claimed that the results of the study are generalizable to all contexts, but instead argue for a provision of detailed information about the research through thick descriptions. This should enhance the judgment of the reader if the results of this study can support comparable situations (Symon & Cassell 2012). Further details about how this criterion was taken on are given in the discussion section of this study (see 6.1). Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that, due to the limited time for this study, it includes a relatively small sample of participants (total 14), and thus represents a challenge to the transferability of this study. It is clear that a larger sample of interviews would have improved the comprehensive insight of the study, but still the actual sample is seen as an adequate insight for the scope of this study.

The dependability of the qualitative research is referred to by Guba and Lincoln (1985, p. 242) as how "methodological changes and shifts in constructions have been captured and are made available for evaluation". In order to achieve this quality criterion, notes on methodological decisions and reasons for changes in the research construct were taken throughout the process in a research notebook (see appendix XII).

The last criterion is called confirmability and deals with the gathering and analysis of the data and the transformation of such into findings (Symon & Cassell, 2012). In this way the reader of the study can be clear about how the findings came about and is able to retrace the findings to actual responses rather than to the researcher's imagination (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). As already described in the section on data collection (see 3.2), it is made clear that this research conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews which were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Those transcripts then built the basis for the further data analysis, including coding and structuring the text, leading to the final interpretation of the data (see 3.4). A critical point in this study, referring to confirmabilty, is that while conducting the interviews, biased or skewed positive responses might be elicited because the participants tend to provide socially desirable answers. In order to counteract this critical point, enough time and space was provided to respond. Further, participants were informed about the nonexistence of wrong answers and additionally they were assured that all data was collected in an anonymized way and that they should give their responses based on personal experiences (see interview consent form appendix VII). For completeness it should be mentioned that this latter critical point also applies to the quality criterion of credibility and is only for reasons of convenience solely mentioned here.

3.6   Research ethics

Holt (2012, p. 90f) states how important of a concern the consideration of a researcher's influence on others through harms and benefits is and thus how crucial conducting "proper" research is. Accordingly, he formulates a number of propositions which help out with assessing the ethical quality of a study. Some of these are considered in this research and will be elaborated on in the paragraph below in order to realize "the use of practical reason" (Holt 2012, p. 100).

The use of a "deliberate conversation" with the requirement to "talk clearly and openly about the ideas" (Holt 2012, p. 103) of the study were taken into account in the present study by elaborating on methodological and theoretical choices and further explicitly explaining the process and extent of the interview to the participants. Further, this proposition was incorporated by providing a situation as comfortable as possible for the participants during the interview process, allowing them a free space to express their experiences and feelings. For this reason, the interviews were always conducted in a location familiar to the

interviewee, such as their office or living space. Additionally, each of the participants was given the opportunity to ask questions or express uncertainties during the interviews.

In order to have a "constancy of language and behaviors within different […] settings and through time" (Holt 2012, p. 103), identical procedures and methods were used in the study while conducting the semi-structured interviews. Consequently, all interviews were conducted by the same researcher using the same interview guideline (see appendix III (English) and IV (German)). Additionally, it was made clear that if any incomprehension emerged for the participant, he or she would be free to ask for clarification at any time.

To apply "sensitivity in handling participant relationships/data", certain degrees of confidentiality, anonymity, and a "sense of solicitude and involvement" (Holt 2012, p. 103f) were ensured. The procedures and methods used to obtain information in this study were all designed not to cause physical or mental harm or stress to the participants. Consequently, all participants were informed about the purpose, the scope, the duration, and consequences of involvement in the research, prior to the interview. Based on that they were able to decide to take part in the study or not and were also made aware that they would participate on a voluntary basis and that no monetary benefits would follow from such participation. Further, it was explained to them that they had the right to ask questions and withdraw their participation before conducting the interview and that no consequences would follow from the use of those rights. In this way the autonomy of the participant was ensured during the research. All data was collected and made anonymous. Consequently, the consent forms were stored separately from the interview recordings and transcripts on two different hard drives, locked at different secure places. Hence, the ability to connect the identity of the respondents to their responses by third parties was decreased to a minimum. The collected data was not shared with any third party beyond the researcher and the examiners of this master thesis. All this information was provided to the participant in written form via the interview consent form (see appendix VII) that additionally ensured the permission of the processes by the participants.

The proposition of "honesty" refers to "a willingness to disclose intentions to participants and employers, as well as all data and thoughts germane to the objects of inquiry" (Holt 2012, p. 104). In order to comply with this, it was made sure that the topic, the purpose, the aim, and the methods used (semi-structured interview, briefing, member check, recording of responses) of the study were mentioned to the participants. Because one was aware that "full disclosure can mitigate against access" (Holt 2012, p. 104), it was decided to deliberately not inform the participants about the theoretical background of the study. This study relies on highly subjective responses of individuals that should not be compromised by information given though this study. Nevertheless, it was made clear that each of the participants could receive a version of the final study, if requested.

4 Results

This chapter presents the results and findings of the present study. Those emerged from the coding process explained in 3.4.2, supported by code trees representing the product of coding (see appendix XI). Further, this chapter includes the established theory of the present research emerged from the collected data.

For this reason, the following chapter consists of three parts, each dealing with partial results of the study, leading to partial theories which then emerge as overall theory. The first part shows where responsibility is perceived (4.1). The second part deals in detail with these perceived areas of responsibility and examines their substance (4.2). The third part focuses on the perception of the individual of meaningful work and thus describes aspects that are associated with meaningful work (4.3). As already mentioned above, the overall theory is presented in the end (4.4), incorporating the partial theories.

4.1 Perceived areas of responsibility

When participants talk about the responsibility for meaningful work they often mention multiple parties. Thus, some participants, on the one hand, associate responsibility with the organization and justify that by stating "my boss is responsible for that he gives me this activity, also compensates properly and gives me the utilities for it" (Interview 6, para. 83). On the other hand some mention a perceived involvement of the state in the responsibility for meaningful work and argue as follows: "it is of course the case, that theoretically always a ähm government […] so some kind of superior institution ähm sets conditions" (Interview 4, para. 59). Also, it often happens that participants associate a responsibility with themselves and express the following "yes the responsibility for meaningful work [..] I primarily bear with me" (Interview 14, para. 72).

Often these associations of responsibility with certain parties are not made in isolation but rather simultaneously. Participant 13 underlines this with the following statement:

> "That is not a single person it's several. So that is on one hand oneself, and on the other hand also the organization one works for and third also the state or ähm the governing body that ensures that/ ähm which conditions exist, because there are certain […] fields within the activity which you have to do because there are certain regulations and conditions of state. Thus not one but it is rather several. And I/ in the narrower sense I would say these three." (Interview 13, para. 83)

This means that participants rather associate various parties with responsibility for meaningful work than one specific. In particular they associate a responsibility with the organization, with the state as superior institution, and also with themselves. By ascribing the responsibility to these various parties simultaneously, this further suggests that participants perceive a shared responsibility among those parties.

For this reason, it is theorized that individuals perceive a shared responsibility for meaningful work among three parties rather than with one specific. Those parties thus represent perceived areas of responsibility which are from now on referred to as: organizational responsibility, individual responsibility and institutional responsibility.

This is in contrast to hitherto existing assumptions which ascribe, on a theoretical basis, an obligation for meaningful work invariably to either the organization, arguing for a moral obligation of the organization to provide meaningful work (Yeoman, 2014), or the individual, arguing for an "ethical obligation [of the individual] to perform work that is meaningful" (Michaelson et al., 2014).

Now in the following the areas of responsibility, just defined above, will be presented in more detail, beginning with organizational, then followed by individual and ending with institutional responsibility.

Participants mention that "of course the responsibility lies with the people who assign the work" (Interview 15, para. 92) and "the employer, of course […] [he] has to contribute his own thing" (Interview 2, para. 77). Further, participant 10 (para. 66) supports this by stating that "it is definitely the employer [having responsibility for meaningful work]". Correspondingly, most participants base the responsibility they perceive with the organization on the fact that superiors distribute and supervise tasks. They state that they are "dependent on what work is assigned" (Interview 15, para. 92) and that the boss "provides the job […] and describes the workplace" (Interview 6, para. 71) and "determines the task or line of action" (Interview 12, para. 76).

Also participants express the relation between their superiors' actions and corresponding outcomes by associating them with a certain authority and explain that they can "determine what the contents are" (Interview 11, para. 54) and highlighting that "if you have a boss who promotes you as a person […], then I think this can give quite a lot meaning" (Interview 12, para. 66).

Further, they state that they associate a power of influence with the employer or superior by expressing that the "boss can influence how meaningful my doing is" (Interview 7, para. 56) or that "bosses can influence quite a lot how you like your job" (Interview 3, para. 57).

At the same time participants express a responsibility with themselves by expressing that they are "personally responsible for doing their work meaningful" (Interview 9, para. 75) and further that they have "a big part in doing it [work] meaningful" (Interview 11, para. 64).

Also, they directly state that they feel able and thus perceive the responsibility to improve conditions in a proactive way. Accordingly, they state that "I think I can influence that" (Interview 6, para. 66), "I think I have an influence on that" (Interview 9, para 67) and "I can

control it to a certain degree" (Interview 11, para. 50). Furthermore, an awareness regarding own actions and outcome is expressed by participants stating that they are "the architect of […] [their] own fortune" (Interview 13, para. 75)" and that "I can change something, if I want" (Interview 6, para. 66). Participant 13 supports that by stating:

> "Ultimately, in many things I am of the opinion that one has to make sure that the things one is doing, and considers as meaningful and if necessary simply pass on, [..] to his supervisor or whoever, when one is of the opinion that activities are not meaningful or can be automated or [..] being replaced by more meaningful things." (Interview 13, para. 81)

Furthermore, participants express a perceived influence of superior institutions on employer and employee. Such influence is described as "setting circumstances for the organizations […] and protecting the employee in the system" (Interview 13, para. 85) and as "creating a reasonable environment, that the company can act properly" (Interview 6, para. 64). Such institutions are referred to as "state" (Interview 13, 6), "legislation" (Interview 11) and "government" (Interview 4).

Looking at each of the perceived areas of responsibility and the way responsibility is ascribed to them, the following becomes apparent: On the one hand the individual perceives an influence by the organization on work due to its action of assigning work and having a part in meaningful work. On the other hand they perceive an influence with themselves by expressing a potential to influence to which extend work is perceived as meaningful. Additionally, they perceive an influence of superior institutions on the organization and the individual due to the potential of setting circumstances for both. The responsibility associated with superior institutions is based on a direct link between perceived influence potentials and the setting of circumstances for employees and organizations. In contrast to the area of organizational and individual responsibility, here participants do not provide examples for circumstances in detail, nor explain aspects forming this area of responsibility.

Taking the above in consideration, it can be theorized that the way individuals ascribe responsibility builds upon influence potentials that they perceive with each of the three parties. From these perceived influence potentials thus individuals derive responsibility. Consequently, the influence potentials, individuals perceive regarding their personal perception of meaningful work, factor into their perception of responsibility.
Here parallels to previous assumptions regarding the ascription of responsibility can be drawn. The perceived influence potentials and the associated impacts reflect an awareness of the individual about a "person-action outcome sequence", as it was formulated by Heider (1958). This sequence describes the relation between "personal power factors" (Heider, 1958), relating to factors in the control of the alleged responsible person and an outcome.

Accordingly, influence potentials are analyzed with respect to this sequence in order to ascribe responsibility. Furthermore, the perceived influence potentials can be compared with an "internal controllable cause" and with "personal control", as it was formulated by Schlenker et al. (1994), because control and influence are attributed to the parties in order to derive areas of responsibility.

Beside the above mentioned areas of responsibility, further influences are expressed by the participants. Those influences neither refer to a responsibility perceived with the organization, the individual, nor a superior institution. They express influences that are perceived as impacting "the choice of job" (Interview 3, 4, 7). Such influences are referred to as on the one hand "education as opportunity giver" (Interview 6, 7, 11) or being in a "relationship of dependence" (Interview 4, para. 65; 3, para. 57). On the other hand these are described by participants through making statements regarding societal influences and work circumstances such as "acceptance of working weekends" (Interview 11, para. 54), "family values" (Interview 4, para. 57), "consumer behavior" (Interview 2, para. 63; Interview 3, para. 57), customers as "biggest critic" (Interview 11, para. 30), and "colleagues" (Interview 9, para. 55; Interview 12, para. 66), which are perceived to have an effect on meaningful work.

These further influences represent concrete examples besides the setting of circumstances for such influence potentials. But in contrast to the other areas of responsibility (organizational, individual and institutional) no specific ascription to a party is made.
Nevertheless, it can be stated that these results support the theory that responsibility for meaningful work is ascribed based on perceived influence potentials. In addition, with regard to the little data density, particularly in the case of institutional responsibility (see also discussion on this in 6.1), the following is assumed: The lack of detailed descriptions and examples could be due to a likewise lack of knowledge and direct experience of superior institutions' influence potentials.

The way participants ascribe responsibility to superiors is significant in the choice of words and focus set in the statements. Most of the time participants ascribe responsibility to particular members of the organization superior to them, by at the same time highlighting their difference to themselves. Accordingly, most participants mention an influence or responsibility they see with their "boss" (Interview 2, 3, 6, 14, 15), the "employer" (Interview 5, 9, 13) the "management" (Interview 8, 10, 12), or the "general company" (Interview 4, 7, 11). This highlights a felt distinction between the participant as employee and the superior referred to. Further this association of responsibilities to these specific superiors is related to perceived influence potentials (as described above).
Here parallels can be drawn to French (1979, p. 175ff) who ascribes intention to

cooperations by relating the individuals' behavior to the reason for this behavior through a CID structure. The perceived influence potentials can be seen as actions driven by a CID Structure and thus are considered as intention loaded actions of the organization through the superior as individual person. Consequently, the superiors are perceived as part of the organization and thus are recognized as a representative of such.

For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that the participants treat the responsibility associated with individual superiors as equivalent to the responsibility of the whole organization. Particularly because of this assumption it was decided to name the responsibility perceived by participants with superiors: Organizational responsibility (see above).

When participants talk about the responsibility for meaningful work they perceive with themselves, they often first resort to general terms that incorporate the entirety of individuals. This is expressed as follows: "one is mainly responsible for what oneself does" (Interview 7, para. 54), "one has to look for oneself, that one finds a topic which one supports" (Interview 3, para. 57), and "everyone is responsible for doing work meaningful" (Interview 9, para. 75). At first, some general terms seem to sense a certain moral consciousness regarding the individual responsibility, incorporating the entirety of individuals. In the further course, however, a more self-centered perception emerges that is expressed through perceived influence potentials. Correspondingly, most participants explicitly express that they believe that they have an influence on how meaningful their work is and refer to themselves as being the "driving force" (Interview 11, para. 64) and needing to "look at ourselves" (Interview 13, para. 73). For this reason, the statements support the relation, already described above, between perceived influence potentials and the perceived responsibility.

Looking at the way participants ascribe responsibility, the following can be theorized: A closer look at the statements reveals that there is no concrete mentioning of an ethical obligation (Michaelson et al., 2014) or a moral obligation (Yeoman, 2014), in all three areas of responsibility. In most cases, participants talk about the setting of circumstances for or by organizations which are attributed to perceived influence potentials rather than a perceived moral motive.

4.2   Aspects building areas of responsibility

This section will first present the aspects, building the responsibility perceived by the individuals, with the organization (4.2.1) and then with themselves (4.2.2). In this way these perceived areas of responsibilities are explained, showing their substance. It has to be mentioned that the responsibility perceived with superior institutions and the further factors, presented before, are labeled as areas of responsibility but nevertheless do not show further

specific detail within the data. For this reason, the focus of the following section is set on the areas of organizational and individual responsibility. Nevertheless, it was considered as necessary to further discuss this discrepancy in data density in 6.1, reflecting on its cause and effect.

4.2.1 Aspects organizational responsibility

As explained above, organizational responsibility refers to the perception of the individual that the organization holds a potential for impact. This potential for impact is recognized, by the participants, in conditions that are provided by the organization. Such conditions are either referred to as "challenges that you have to live with" (Interview 13, para. 67), or as representation of constraining circumstances or conditions "enabling meaningful work" (Interview 10, para. 66).

Accordingly, many participants mention the need for a provision of basic circumstances facilitating meaningful work, such as "work equipment" (Interview 2, 6, 9), "functioning structures" (Interview 5), and "improvement processes" (Interview 2). Furthermore, such circumstances were referred to with work conditions. Participant 3 (para. 77) gives explicit examples for such work conditions: "decent salary", "vacation days", and "overtime hours". Participant 11, on the other side, describes such work conditions as so called "hygiene factors", influencing comfort at the workplace.

> "I think when talking about meaningful working is a big point where you can pinpoint that that you examine the exact opposite. So unmeaningful [sic] work and one becomes clear about many such factors. So such hygiene factors I would say, well, so to speak things […] hm [thinking] that would just disturb me directly although they first of have nothing to do with my job. Well that for example/ are the office spaces too loud?, are/ sit too many people in there? Can I never concentrate on my topics? Do I have a bad meeting culture? How is information dis/ provided? Do I know what is going on in my company? Don't I feel left alone by the bosses because they always dash away with the info that I have?, that would be for me so structural conditions that a company could give, that could so to speak subconsciously and implicitly ähm, yes increase the meaningfulness of the work definitely." (Interview 11, para. 54)

In line with that, participants express that the conditions given by an organization or their superiors influence the scope within which they are able to make decisions or act. Participant 7 for instance, directly states that priorities or guidelines influence own actions.

> "Because I get also given priorities or have to move in the frame of certain requirements. Ähm this, of course, has a an influence, yes." (Interview 7, para. 56)

Accordingly, participants state that their perceived freedom in decision making or task responsibility and independence (Interview 8, 9, 10, 15, 12) is either limited or benefitted by such conditions. How the personally perceived meaningfulness of actions is perceived as

restricted by some task ascriptions of the boss, is highlighted by participant 15 in the following statement.

> "For example if my boss is currently restricting me in some sort of thing and sais "this has to be done this or that way", then it is because it makes sense for the company [.], for him. But that is not my [.] area. For me it would be more meaningful [.] I would do things differently." (Interview 15, para. 74)

Beside the provision of such circumstances, participants mention the responsibility of the organization to show their employees a certain amount of attention or sensitivity. This attention includes the understanding of the participants that employers should "show interest in the employees" (Interview 5, para. 57) and to "recognize that something does not work" (Interview 6, para. 64). This is for instance described by the following participant's statement:

> "Well responsibility for meaningful work, if I were management level I would ähm for/ well yes see me responsible for, to know ähm [soughs] or to know my employees and so to speak [..] which kind of work [..] or also which cognitive abilities my employees have in which area to A lead them meaningful but also to ascribe them with meaningful work or activities." (Interview 12, para. 82)

This suggests that the responsibility perceived with the organization refers to certain basic circumstances, factors influencing comfort at work, conditions enabling freedom in decision making, task responsibility and independence, as well as impacting felt scope of action. And further refers to the expectation of a shown employer's attention towards the employee.

For this reason, it is theorized that the perceived organization responsibility includes the provision of work conditions, exceeding basic circumstances, and an active consideration of the individual's subjective perception of work.

Work conditions are associated with the objective dimension of meaningful work, while the active inclusion of the individual's perception is associated with the subjective dimension of meaningful work (see Ciulla, 2000). Accordingly, it is further theorized that the perceived organizational responsibility includes both dimensions simultaneously and further is ascribed to various parties rather than to one distinct.

This is in contrast to Michaelson's (2011) assumption because rather than building organizational responsibility solely on aspects representing objective elements, the present study suggests an ascription of aspects representing both elements (subjective and objective). Consequently, this study suggests that Michaelson's (2011) assumption needs to be exceeded and thus indicates a more extensive responsibility of the organization, since findings show a responsibility exceeding the primary insurance of work conditions.

For this reason, it is theorized that instead of deriving organizational responsibility from distinctive subjective and objective elements of meaningful work, organizational responsibility

should be thought more holistically and thus has to be rather understood the following way: In order to not deprive meaningful work as an organization and thus make meaningful work possible, aspects have to be fulfilled including basic work circumstances, as well as the subjective perceptions of the individual.

4.2.2 Aspects individual responsibility

Most participants describe the awareness of an influence on the perception of meaning in their work through their own personal attitude in or towards work. This attitude is expressed by participants in several ways. Some participants refer to this personal attitude as their "individual way of thinking and dealing" (Interview 4, para. 61), others express it as their "individual perspective" (Interview 7, para. 52) or "personal evaluation" (Interview 15, para. 86).

As a basic principle, the findings show that participants are aware that their personal attitude towards work has an impact on the perceived meaning of work. Thus, they state that "first of all, a lot comes from my own perspective, as I feel about it [work] myself" (Interview 7, para. 52) and that it depends on "my own way of handling things" (Interview 4, para. 63) and "how I approach work […], with which attitude I get to my work" (Interview 15, para. 80).

Furthermore, responses show that the responsibility the individuals perceive with themselves mostly relates to options of influences that they can take on in order to facilitate meaningful work. Accordingly, most participants explicitly express that they believe that they have an influence on how meaningful their work is and refer to themselves as being the "driving force" (Interview 11, para. 64) and needing to "look at ourselves" (Interview 13, para. 73), as already mentioned before.

This aspect is further represented by two sub-aspects. The first sub-aspect indicates that the employees are aware of their responsibility to influence meaningful work by expressing discontent or commenting on felt discrepancies. Thus, participants mention that they "definitely say if I do not like something" (Interview 10, para. 58), "try to change it with my boss, so that it works for the company and me" (Interview 6, para. 71), and would "discuss with the boss about changing my work" (Interview 15, para. 96).

The second sub-aspect is expressed by participants regarding a change of job. Therefore, participants mention that if one has the "feeling that it [work] is not meaningful, I can still change the job" (Interview 8, para.72) and "if one has the feeling to be not pleased with the job […], one has to look for something else" (Interview 13, para. 75).

To conclude, it can be stated that the responsibility that is perceived with the individual consists of the strong belief of the participants in their own influence on the meaningfulness of their work. Accordingly, they express on the one hand a felt responsibility regarding their

own attitude towards work. On the other hand this responsibility consists of the expression of the participants to improve conditions in a proactive way. Such improvement of conditions is described either through expressing discontent and discrepancies or through the option to change the job.

For this reason it is theorized, that the responsibility that the individual perceives in oneself includes beside the awareness of ones' subjective perception of work, also the awareness of the active shaping of conditions for meaningful work.

In contrast to Michaelson's (2009) assumption that the responsibility of the individual simply refers to an individual decision to choose work that is perceived as personally meaningful, the present research suggest an individual responsibility that exceeds this assumption. Because the individual responsibility for meaningful work includes subjective and objective dimensions of meaningful work (see Ciulla, 2000), individual responsibility also needs to be thought in a more holistic way.

Accordingly, the following is theorized: The responsibility ascribed to the individual for meaningful work has to be rather understood the following way: In order to choose work that is personally perceived as meaningful by the individual, conditions and subjective perception of meaningful work need to be actively shaped by individuals as employees.

4.3   Perception meaningful work

The responses of the participants reveal that they foremost associate with meaningful work the urge to do things that they personally perceive as meaningful. Participant 9 expresses this accordingly in the following way:

> "And I have to consider it as good I would say. If I do not consider it as good, [..] it would not be/ for me personally not good, meaning not meaningful for me, does not make, yes does not make sense this job, that I do that." (Interview 9, para. 51)

Correspondingly, participants mention that if work is meaningful "depends on […] personal goals in life" (Interview 8, para. 43), if one has "a certain fulfillment and satisfaction" (Interview 7, para. 34) and "that the job you do fulfills you" (Interview 6, para. 45).

Also participants consider work as meaningful when it includes "topics I am convinced of" (Interview 3, para. 45), "projects where I think that is a good idea, you need that, it makes sense to me" (Interview 15, para. 44), or "it […] somehow represents my […] interests at least" (Interview 14, para. 40).

This would mean that the individuals' perception of meaningful work is primarily characterized by their personal perception. For this reason, it can be theorized that individuals perceive work as meaningful when they are able to do things that are personally perceived as meaningful. Thus, the aspects that individuals associate with meaningful work

are perceived as personally meaningful. This means that the work and the actions that are included in this work are evaluated by the individual with regard to personal standards, believes, and needs.

In the following such aspects associated with meaningful work, as recognized by the participants, are presented.

Most of the participants explain that if they experience variety in their work, this contributes to meaningful work. Such variety in work is described as "to be on the move, always get to know a lot of new things" (Interview 8, para. 58), "having diversification" (Interview 6, para. 34), "each day looks somehow different" (Interview 4, para. 33) and "entail over the years or time again and again new aspects" (Interview 15, para. 54).

In line with that participants express if such variance is not given, work is perceived as less meaningful and state that it is recognized "how unhappy not diversified work makes" (Interview 15, para. 48) and in contrast "that it just makes it exciting that you have variety" (Interview 6, para. 34).

Furthermore, most of the participants associate meaningful work with a certain output related aspect. Thus, most of them describe meaningful work as work that creates or affects something: "I notice that something is progressing" (Interview 8, para. 45), "I have the feeling that the projects I properly conduct move something" (Interview 3, para. 39). This is often related to as a work output or effect of their work. Accordingly, many participants describe meaningful work as work that is measured by its outcome, such as experiencing a "feeling of success" (Interview 9, para. 47; and Interview 12, para. 30) or "achieving something" (Interview 11, para. 32). Relating to the outcome of their work, many participants describe that they need to understand their own purpose and the impact of their work in order to perceive it as meaningful. Participant 11 supports this by highlighting the importance to understand the broader picture of the job.

> "I think an essential component of it is/ well as already said the job should definitely be directed towards a goal that for the one that does it, that he can understand the overall picture of this job. So I think there are often a lot of jobs where, especially now in large organizations, one is doing something very granular and it is not at all clear in which context this is to the whole organization. So that would be for me an essential aspect." (Interview 11, para. 38)

The work outcome referring to ones' understanding of own purpose or impact, is further specifically referred to with a contribution to a greater good. Such greater good can be different for many participants but commonly it shares a contribution that goes beyond an immediate scope, such as a contribution to the ecological environment (Interview 2, 3, 8, 14), charity (Interview 4, 7), or simply being a part of something that is felt greater than oneself. Participant 15 (para. 40) describes this as "to realize something bigger […],

something you believe in" and participant 13 (para. 43) explains it as "you have to have the feeling that the whole contributes to a bigger purpose".

In addition, many participants explain that their work circumstances including colleagues at work represent an important aspect of meaningful work. The interaction and atmosphere with team members and colleagues is described as important impact on the experience of meaningfulness, which can be positive and negative. Such interaction and atmosphere is referred to as "cooperation of co-workers […] being there listening or doing something for you" (Interview 6, para. 39), "team spirit […], so this achieving and building things together" (Interview 14, para. 44), and "meeting people who motivate you, with whom you get along well" (Interview 11, para. 24).

Besides such work atmosphere, participants explain that "meaningful is more or less synonymous or fulfilling with what is fun" (Interview 8, para. 45) and must come to work "with fun" (Interview 4, para. 31), "satisfied" (Interview 6, para. 58) and "willingly" (Interview 10, para. 36).

Also many participants mention that they associate meaningful work with freedom in working. Such freedom in working allows the employees certain independence in decision making and flexibility in work distribution according to personal preferences. Accordingly, participants mention that they need to be "self-determined", "flexible", (Interview 8, para. 58), "unreserved" (Interview 2, para. 57), and "free in actions" (Interview 7, para. 40) within their work. Further, they mention that a "freedom of scope" (Interview 4, para. 55) such as "doing things the way I think is right" (Interview 3, para. 45) and a "freedom to make certain decisions" (Interview 13, para. 67) also relate to a meaningful work.

Most participants explain that their work is perceived as meaningful when abilities and skills are put to action. This is supported by participant 11 (para. 22) explaining that "it [work] has to support certain abilities of mine which I can do well". Further participants explain work as meaningful when they do things that they can do best and when it reflects a personal fit. Accordingly, participant 6 (para. 52) states that work "must first of all fit you personally" and participant 3 (para. 49) describes it as "feel[ing] like I can do what I can do best in my job".

The introduction of abilities and skills in work further is accompanied with a certain expression of the need for a challenge in work. Accordingly, this is referred to as being "encouraged" (Interview 2, para. 43) and that "overburdening is good to a certain extent and also important […] that one learns and is just being spurred on" (Interview 14, para. 50). Such challenges are for instance described as "changing projects" (Interview 8, para. 24),

"demanding" (Interview 13, para. 43), "motivating" (Interview 15, para. 54), and "being challenged" (Interview 12, para. 36).

Taking a closer look at these above presented aspects, associated by individuals with meaningful work, it becomes apparent that those aspects foremost represent work conditions. These aspects represent a commonality among the participants. Nevertheless, the meaning of each of the aspects they associate with meaningful work for the individual might differ in detail.

Furthermore, participants express the awareness of the relation between the aspects they associate with meaningful work and their personal perception of meaningful work. Accordingly, participant 3 (para. 67) highlights that by drawing a relation between an output related aspect and the perceived meaningfulness of the job and thus states that "when I see that I make a difference, that I influence something, only then I think I can make work meaningful".

Such relation is also recognized between the perception of meaningful work and a meaningful life. Thus, participants highlight the significance of work in life by referring to the professional life as being "a big important part of what we do with our lives" (Interview 7, para. 54). Participant 8 supports this by highlighting the temporal significance of work in life, referring to one's perception of meaning in work.

> "But otherwise consists the/ life of a great deal of work. And if that is not appearing meaningful to me, [..] naja as said, you are frustrated and [..] then your whole life can somehow look pretty damn fast like shit." (Interview 8, para. 56)

Thus, it becomes apparent that individuals understand that their personal perception of meaningful work depends on the aspects of such work and further the impact of work on their life. This means that Individuals are aware of the correspondence between their personal perception of work and aspects associated with meaningful work, as well as a meaningful life.

Accordingly, the way individuals understand meaningful work by integrating work conditions and their personal perception of work and at the same time relating those to each other, indicates a correspondence between objective work circumstances and subjective perception of such, through the individual. Thus, this represents a correspondence between the subjective and objective dimensions of meaningful work (Ciulla, 2000).

For this reason, it is theorized that the understanding of meaningful work, that incorporates work conditions personally perceived as meaningful and personal perception of meaningful work simultaneously, represents an inclusive concept of meaningful work. Such an inclusive

understanding of meaningful work reflects Ciulla's (2000) concept of meaningful work as the sum of subjective and objective dimensions commonly forming meaningful work.

On the other side this understanding is contrasting Michaelson (2011). Even though he bases himself on Ciulla's (2000) concept of meaningful work, he derives a more excluding concept of meaningful work by viewing the subjective and objective dimension of meaningful work distinctively.

Furthermore, the aspects associated by the participants of this research with meaningful work relate in most instances to assumptions formulated corresponding with work motivation theories, as well as assumptions expressed in meaningful work theories.

Thus the aspects, associated by individuals with meaningful work, variety, output related, greater good, knowing purpose and impact, and putting abilities and skill to work, can be compared with Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model, defining skill variety, task identity and task significance. Furthermore, the finding of work circumstances and colleagues confirms the assumption by May et al. (2004), arguing for a contribution of positive co-worker relations to experienced meaningfulness. The perception of the individual that meaningful work needs to include things that they personally perceive meaningful doing, reflects Chalofskys and Cavallaros (2013) understanding of meaningful work as overlap of ones' sense of self and work.

Hereby, it can be theorized that not only a holistic perception of meaningful work by the individual can be ascertained, but also an overlap of ideas corresponding with either meaningful work theories or work motivation theories within the statements of the participants, is emphasized.

Moreover, the above presented conclusions indicate that individuals understand meaningful work from a perspective looking at the connection between work and subjective motivation with regard to a meaningful life, rather than subjective motivation and productivity. For this reason, it can be theorized that individuals understand meaningful work in such a way that work is meaningful to them when personal valued aspects are given and further such aspects are contributing to a meaningful life. This corresponds with the humanist perspective, dealing with meaningful work theory, as it was described in section 2.4. This correspondence highlights the discrepancy between the primary focus in the current literature and the constructive approach of this study, as individuals' perceptions of meaningful work emphasize actual needs.

4.4 Overall theory

This section now shortly summarizes the partial theories established in the sections before and by that logically leads to the overall theory of this study. Thus, the formulated areas of responsibility are talked about first, then the aspects that constitute these areas and finally the perception of meaningful work.

Individuals perceive a shared responsibility among three parties: the organization, themselves and institutions. This responsibility is ascribed based on perceived influence potentials, factoring into perceived areas of responsibility for meaningful work. Thus the way individuals see responsibility for meaningful work is focused on those influence potentials rather than on perceived ethical and moral obligations, as so far indicated by Michaelson et al. (2014) and Yeoman (2014). This means that the way we understand responsibility for meaningful work thus has to be further broadened regarding the individual's perception that seems to focus on a rationale that is not dominantly forming on a moral perspective.

The organizational responsibility relates to providing work conditions, exceeding basic circumstances, as well as the active inclusion of the individuals' subjective perception of work. And the responsibility that the individuals perceive with themselves includes the awareness of one's subjective perception of work as well as the awareness of the active shaping of conditions for meaningful work.

Hence, the aspects constituting the perceived areas of responsibility show aspects that throughout combine work conditions and personal perceptions. This suggests an inclusive understanding of responsibility for meaningful work, not deriving responsibilities distinctively from each dimension of meaningful work.

The way individuals understand meaningful work by integrating work conditions and their personal perception of work and at the same time relating those to each other, highlights a correspondence between objective work circumstances and subjective perception of such, through the individual. This indicates that individuals understand meaningful work in such a way that work is meaningful to them when personal valued aspects are given and further such aspects are contributing to a meaningful life. For this reason, it is theorized that the understanding of meaningful work consists of a simultaneous integration of work conditions, personally perceived as meaningful and personal perceptions of meaningful work. Consequently, a more holistic understanding is suggested when looking at the way responsibility for meaningful work is ascribed, in comparison to existing assumptions. This need for a broadened understanding of meaningful work and organizational and individual responsibility originates from the emerging entanglement of subjective and objective dimension of meaningful work in the responses, as described before. For this reason, this is

referred to as an inclusive concept, incorporating the subjective and objective dimension of meaningful work simultaneously.

On the one hand, the results show that the individual thinks of meaningful work as an inclusive concept, that groups objective work circumstances and subjective perceptions. On the other hand it turns out that this grouping also appears in the ascription of responsibility for meaningful work. Here the grouping also describes a connection between work circumstances and personal perception which in turn is based on the perception of influence potentials. Therefore, it can be stated that both perceptions show a similar mechanism of being constituted. Because of this similar mechanism in both perceptions, that a correlation between the way individuals understand meaningful work and how they ascribe responsibility exists, a dependency between perception of meaningful work and the associated responsibility for it is revealed.

This means that in contrast to the current literature, which derives responsibility for meaningful work distinctively from each dimension of meaningful work, the present research suggests an inclusion of both dimensions not only in the understanding of meaningful work but consequently also in the understanding of responsibility for meaningful work. For this reason responsibility for meaningful work has to be rather thought the following way: Due to a correlation in the way individuals understand meaningful work and the way responsibility is ascribed, responsibility for meaningful work is constituted as an inclusive concept.

5 Conclusion

This section will discuss how the research question of the present study was answered. The research question of this study is formulated as follows: "*Who is perceived as responsible for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual and what does this perceived responsibility constitute?".* For this purpose the research objective and research goal were defined, in the introduction of this study, in order to establish an approach to the answer of the research question. In the previous chapter a theory based on the collected data in reference to existing literature was established.

The first component of the research question, which inquires after the "who", can be answered by the areas of responsibility, formulated in this study. Accordingly, the organization, the individual and superior institutions are perceived as responsible for meaningful work. In addition, further influences were identified that affect the choice of job and thus the choice of meaningful work in the further course. Thus, constructive areas of responsibility for meaningful work could be identified on the basis of the perception of the individual as an employee. Hence, based on these results, it is now possible to formulate realistic and clearer notions on the ascription of responsibility.

The second component of the research question is concerned with the clarification what the perceived responsibility constitutes and thus deals with its substance.

The above described areas of responsibility are on the one hand characterized by a perceived shared responsibility. This means that responsibility is perceived simultaneously among all those parties rather than only with one. Further, these areas of responsibility are constituted through the association of various responsibilities, called here aspects. Commonly those aspects of perceived responsibility create the areas of responsibility ascribed to a certain party. The way responsibility is ascribed refers primarily to the perception of influence potentials. Thus, an influence potential is perceived which then factors into a perceived responsibility that is ascribed to the holder of the influence potential. The aspects associated with the parties reflect subjective and objective dimensions of meaningful work. Thus, those two dimensions are grouped in the perception of the individual. This is supported by the consequent association of work conditions and personal perception of work throughout all aspects associated with the areas of organizational and individual responsibilities.

Considering these descriptions of what the perceived responsibility for meaningful work constitutes, it can be concluded that responsibility for meaningful work has to be thought as an inclusive conception, including various parties with correlating responsibilities.

6   Discussion

This chapter first contains a discussion of methodological choices and their implications on the research including limitations of those choices and issues in the process by reflecting on quality criteria (6.1). This is followed by a reflection of the researcher's role on the process of the study, followed by a personal reflection of the research process, considering quality criteria (6.2). Afterwards the overall contribution of this study to science, accompanied by a theoretical reflection, practice, and society is presented (6.3). Accordingly, this chapter closes with a section discussing recommendations for future research (6.4).

6.1   Methodological reflection

In the section on research strategy it was stated that a qualitative method as overall research approach was considered as most suitable due to its capability to center on an individual perspective including the understanding of opinions and experiences. In retrospect it can be stated that this choice is considered as appropriate since it contributed to a detailed description of who is perceived as responsible for meaningful work from the perspective of the individual as employee and it gave insight on what this perceived responsibility constitutes. This conclusion is reached because the qualitative approach allowed collecting individual perspectives and explanations of participants regarding meaningful work and perceived responsibility.

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that some difficulties and issues presented themselves during the study, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The topic of meaningful work and responsibility for it is considered as a highly subjective subject. Consequently, it appeared that it was difficult for participants to respond or express thoughts at times in the interviews. It is assumed that this appeared on the one hand due to the complexity of the term meaningful work and thus leading to difficulties of the participants to think of distinct descriptions of their feelings. On the other hand it is assumed that since all participants perceived their job mostly as meaningful it was difficult to find positive explanations of their perception of meaningfulness. Thus they tended to express their thoughts through negative examples of meaningful work. Similar issues arose with the topic of responsibility for meaningful work, since it appears not to be a prominent topic of the everyday mindset. However, it must be emphasized that precisely for this reason this topic was addressed in the form of an exploratory study. Thus, an open approach was needed to allow the emergence of new mechanisms and themes. For this reason, this study serves as starting point for further research.

Considering the above mentioned difficulties during the interviews, it was perceived as helpful to probe the participants in order to initiate further responses. This was done by either reframing the initial question, or by specific or general inquiry on previous responses. In this

way on the one hand the quality criteria of credibility was improved because of the alignment of the participant's reality and the researcher's construction of it. On the other hand this ensured the criterion of confirmability by visibly illustrating the establishment of findings.

During analyzing the responses of the participants it became apparent that while the data provides clear evidence that participants associate responsibility for meaningful work with superior institutions and ascribe it based on perceived influence potentials, nevertheless the following is noticed: No specific or detailed explanations or examples on what this area of responsibility entails are given in the responses. This is in contrast to the statements given regarding organizational and individual responsibility, in which concrete aspects and examples are given. As already announced in 4.2, this discrepancy in data density must be looked at critically. Retrospectively, this can be traced back to two things: Firstly, it is assumed that the extent of data density was not discernible yet during the conduction of the interviews and thus additional probing was not recognized as useful. Secondly, even though, as explained above, it was generally considered as helpful to probe participants by either rephrasing questions or delving into what has already been said in order to obtain further responses, this was actively avoided in this case. The reason for this lied in the effort to not compromise the quality criterion of credibility. Due to the limited responses on the part of the participants and the retrospectively too easy evaluated extent of data density, only a very small starting point for further probing within the frame of the used technique (see above) existed. Thus, any further probing beyond this technique was considered as too pushing and thus classified as potential risk for compromising the credibility of this study.

This study recognizes the possibility of external factors compromising the interview in order to be able to advance confirmability. Interviews are often compromised by the interview situation due to its socially constructed character (Pole & Lampard, 2002). For this reason, Pole and Lampard (2002, p. 127) argue that because of that, this leads to a simulated situation that is not likely to "uncover the truth or the essence of individual belief, experience or opinion". For this reason, one is aware that the statements made by the participants do not necessarily pass as unconditional truth. By conducting interviews until a certain amount of saturation was recognized, the potential difficulties, described above, are decreased as much as possible. The writing of a research notebook (see appendix XII) further contributed to this by enabling a transparent insight on thoughts and changes.

Additionally, one has to be aware of the fact that six out of 14 interviews were held over the phone rather in face to face conversations. This involved the difficulty that the researcher was not able to see the participants and their facial expressions. Consequently, this contained the risk that the researcher would intervene too early in the participants' speech

flow, misinterpreting a speech break for the end of a thought. This was attempted to decrease by purposely waiting relatively long after statements of participants until another question was asked. This allowed the participant to either finish his or her thought or to precisely indicate the end of the statement. Another issue associated with the phone interviews is the comparably worse quality of the audio recording. This lead to difficulties during the transcription process because a few single words were hard to comprehend. Each of those is appropriately marked in the transcripts so the risk of misinterpretation due to the missing words was limited. In this way the risk of misinterpretations was limited through the accurate marking in the transcripts and thus credibility and confirmability were assured.

All Interviews were held in German language even though the whole study was written in English language. It had to be made sure that the interviewees had the same comprehension and understanding of what was meant by meaningful work and thus a clean translation had to be guaranteed beforehand. This was important in order to assure credibility of the research process and outcome, to decrease the risk of very disparate ideas of the term meaningful work. This is why a pre-test on the understanding of the translated German term of meaningful work "sinnvolle Arbeit", was conducted. This pre-test was already elaborated on in section 3.3.2. Although an introductory explanation was given, still some participants tended to talk about the functional meaning of their job. Thus, it cannot be clearly ascertained whether these participants actually see the meaning of their work for themselves in this functional meaning or whether they were tempted by the formulation of the German term for meaningful work "sinnvolle Arbeit".

In order to increase the quality criteria of dependability in this research it was considered as important to include all versions of the interview guideline (see appendix III and IV) as well as the code trees (see appendix XI). In this way shifts in the construction of the study are made visible and accessible for evaluation. This is further accompanied by the insights made available through the research notebook (see appendix XII).

One is aware that the transferability of this study is very limited because it cannot be assumed that the results of this study can account for any employee. By providing detailed descriptions on data collection method, including sample selection and size, and data analysis, a basis for judgment is set. The sample of this study represents seven male and seven female employees with an average occupational period of 12 years. Five of the male participants were between 40 and 60, thus two were between 20 and 40. Five of the female participants were between 20 to 40 years old, while two were between 40 and 60 years old. All employees lived and worked in Germany. Such and further descriptions of the methodological choices (see section 3) can be used by readers to make sense of it and

further decide if it can be transferred to further contexts or not. Nevertheless, the reader should be aware not only of the choices made within this research but further take in consideration the below presented experienced challenges and contextual circumstances.

6.2   Role of the researcher

The researcher of the present study is highly aware of her own role in this research. Consequently, this role and its potential impact on the study will be discussed in the following paragraph. Subsequently, this section will also include a personal reflection on the research process.

The perspective taken on in this research is considered to refer to the humanist perspective as introduced in 2.4. This perspective results from the scientific gap which emerged in the current literature on meaningful work and the responsibility for it. Moreover it has to be mentioned that the researcher herself is personally inclined to this view. Thus, the totality of this study in its way of conduction and all choices made are implicated by this view. This is not seen as an issue of this study but rather as an assumption implicit, which should be considered while reading the present study.

Furthermore, one has to be aware that this research included only one researcher conducting all processes. Consequently, the researcher's skills for example on interviewing became central, since no other researcher of equal rights was involved in the study to check the process. Also, the researcher can be subject to bias during the analysis process. Such bias could be for example a so called confirmation bias which describes the situation that the researcher emphasizes information confirming of ideas and theories introduced in the theoretical overview of the study rather than emphasizing information disconfirming or exceeding such theories (Mynatt, Doherty & Tweney, 1977). In order to counteract this situation and to assure the credibility and confirmability of this study, the researcher consequently asked the same questions to each participant to create a comparable base in each interview. This was assisted by the formulation of an interview guideline (see appendix III (English) and IV (German)), describing themes for the interview and serving as frame for the conduction of the interview. Furthermore, member checks and a research notebook (see appendix XII) were included in the process to decrease the potential of mistakes and to detect meanderings. The interview guideline and research notebook can also be helpful for researchers conducting studies in similar topics.

During the research process various difficulties and challenges emerged. Due to the scarce and at the same time incongruent literature base on meaningful work and responsibility for it, it appeared to be challenging not to be tempted to use the already existing descriptions of

literature as unconditional basis and thus compromise the credibility of this research. Concurrently an open perspective on the topic had to be maintained, while building a theoretical background as substance for the research objective. Consequently, in all phases of this research shifts in the approach and process of the study emerged which is ascribed to cognitive shifts of the researchers understanding and perspective. This also resulted in various changes in the methodological approach, understanding of theoretical background, and interpretation of results. Each decision made in the process of the study resulted in feedback loops, reallocating previous decisions and choices. For this reason, the research process was experienced as iterative. The continuously appearing alterations and leading ideas were noted in a research notebook (see appendix XII), keeping track of daily activities. All shifts in perspective and alterations were not only kept track of in the research notebook but further discussed with the supervisor of this study in order to assist the organization of thoughts and perspectives.

6.3 Contribution of study

The scientific contribution of this study foremost results from two identified gaps in the current literature. Most former literature regarding meaningful work focuses on benefits for work outcomes and thus takes on a managerial perspective, following work motivation theories. This perspective focuses on the management of meaningfulness (Dik et al., 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003) through leadership or organization culture (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Consequently, the humanist perspective, which deals with the fact that human beings have an intrinsic will to find meaning and thus meaning cannot be provided externally (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009), is underrepresented. The present study identified this imbalance and thus adopts the humanist perspective. By adopting this perspective in the research, meaningful work is understood as property of the human rather than a dimension of leadership and managerial interests. For this reason, this study provided an empirical investigation focusing on the individual's perception about the responsibility for meaningful work rather than serving an institutional interest in productivity and work outcomes. Furthermore, this perspective set an intrinsic context for the understanding of the concept of meaningful work and thus the perception of responsibility.

The above described shape of the literature base also resulted from studies predominantly investigating sources, contributors, and potential outcomes of meaningful work. For this reason, the focus set in most studies is based on the association of obligations for meaningful work with the organization. Thus, the question about the responsibility for meaningful work was eluded and the research considering this question is little. A study by Michaelson (2011) represents the most relevant contribution about responsibility for meaningful work. Apparently, this study is limited to a theoretical discussion arriving at

literature based propositions for the responsibility for meaningful work. For the sake of completeness it should be noted that Michaelson (2009a) refers to a concept of meaningful work that is attributed to meaningful work theories. Thus, so far most contributions in literature were either narrowed to theoretical discussions of responsibility, or to theoretical assumptions of obligations based on managerial perspectives. Therefore, this study contributed an empirical investigation regarding the question of responsibility for meaningful work including the perspective of the individual (humanist perspective). This study investigated the individual's perception of responsibility and what this responsibility constitutes for each participant. For this reason, this study revealed constructive areas of responsibility and thus provided a realistic assumption about the responsibility for meaningful work. In the following the most prominent findings, as theoretical contributors, will be presented below.

The way responsibility is constituted and understood in reference to meaningful work must be understood as an inclusive concept simultaneously incorporating subjective and objective dimensions of meaningful work. And since the perception of the individual of responsibility for meaningful work is focused on perceived influence potentials, this also includes a rationale not dominantly forming on a moral perspective.

Since the focus of this study is considered to be theoretical, the concrete contribution to society and practice turns out comparatively narrow. Nevertheless, some derivations can be made that add value to these two areas.

The practical contribution derived from this research focuses on the individual having an impact and influence on practical circumstances. This means that the practical contributions rather focus on the advantages uniquely emerging due to the humanist perspective, than primarily focusing on managerial outcomes. Thus, the practical contributions are only possible in this sense due to the focus of this study on the individual inclined to a humanist perspective. Accordingly, the employee and his individual interests were recognized and emphasized in these practical contributions.

The first practical contribution refers to the individual change process emerging from the individuals' perspective. This study reveals that individuals' as employees perceive a responsibility to proactively involve in the design and shaping of processes in order to improve the perceived meaningfulness of their job. Accordingly, the individual has an impact on making the change rather than primarily the organization.

Furthermore, this research provides insights for several members of an organization building upon the focus on the individual, incorporating a humanist perspective. For this reason, results of this study allow for a deeper insight of superiors into this specific perspective. For instance, the change agent can achieve a more detailed view of the multi-dimensional

perspective of a change initiative and becomes sensitized to the individuals share in it. The results of this study provide insights into these perspectives as the substance is analyzed and further because it creates an understanding of its connections and relations. This will enable the change agent to approach and control change in a more targeted and deliberate manner in the future. Specifically, this would mean that if the change agent is aware of the association of areas of responsibility and how they are constituted, change processes that address those aspects can thus be designed and implemented purposeful and include the correct persons responsible.

Similar also applies to the integration of the results into for example leadership styles of managers. The understanding of the perceived shared responsibility for meaningful work and its associated aspects can be incorporated into the daily practice and actions to improve for instance teamwork and productivity in the long run.

The practical area of application of the results can also be applied in several departments. Thus, by recognizing the needs and interests of employees regarding the perceived areas of responsibility for meaningful work, for example measurements on recruiting can be adapted. This also goes hand in hand with internal and external corporate communication as well as the development of a corporate social responsibility strategy or organization culture to align to this.

Consequently, it becomes apparent that measures, whether bound to individuals in organizations or viewed holistically for the whole organization, should be multi-sided, and thus need to be proactively addressed by various sides. Therefore, all these sides must be activated and motivated to participate in order to build measures and strategies purposefully.

The societal contribution of this study deals with the impact of the results on society. Since society is about collective decision making; about how things are supposed to be done and thus about the establishment of rules and standards, the results of this research suggest the following: The way individuals ascribe and associate responsibility for meaningful work seems to rely on rules and standards due to perceived influence potentials rather than commonly shared ethical or moral consciousness. This is surprising taking in consideration that so far it is argued that meaningful work is considered to be a "moral issue concerning the management of others and ourselves" (Michaelson et al. 2014, p. 77) and thus highlights a certain moral consciousness as essential.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Michelson (2011) argued for the need to explore how meaningful work can be considered a responsibility of individuals and institutions. The present study adopted this recommendation and provided empirical contributions to this topic (see section 4 and 6.3). Nevertheless, this study serves as a starting point within a literature base that is in an initial stage and thus

much more research is expected to emerge. For this reason, it is still considered as worthwhile and needed for studies in the future to pursue efforts to gain a deeper understanding of the responsibility for meaningful work.

In retrospect of the methodological approach, the theoretical overview and results of the present study, some further recommendations can be formulated.

Due to the initial stage of the literature more research focusing on meaningful work from the humanist perspective is needed. Additionally, this should include the consideration of the relevance of the question for the responsibility of meaningful work as part of an inclusive concept of meaningful work. For this reason more research is needed investigating the perception of meaningful work in direct relation to the perceived responsibility for it. In this way each aspect expressed regarding the perception of meaningful work can be investigated with regard to its ascribed responsibility. Also this is assumed to contribute to an increased coherent understanding of the concept of meaningful work, which is currently considered as incongruent (Weeks & Schaffert, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings of this study include detailed descriptions of the aspects associated by individuals with meaningful work, serving as necessity to understand responsibility in reference to meaningful work. Nevertheless, the aspects building meaningful work are not further discussed in depth beyond the emergence of the overall theory of this study. But, it has to be recognized that the aspects associated with meaningful work by the individual show commonalities with the assumptions of Rosso et al. (2010) who discuss two dimensions of meaningful work including four pathways for it (see 2.4). Accordingly, the aspects of "freedom in working" (see p. 40) seem to fall into the pathway of "individuation" (Rosso et al. 2010, p. 114). And the "output related" aspects (see p. 39) such as "purpose and impact" (see p. 39) and "greater good" (see p. 39f) show commonalities with the pathway of "contribution" (Rosso et al. 2010, p. 114). The need of "doing things that are personally perceived as meaningful" (see p. 38f) resonates with the pathway of "self-connection" (Rosso et al. 2010, p. 114). Also findings show commonalities with the four needs for meaning in life defined by Baumeister and Wilson (1996). The aspects of "purpose and impact" (see p. 39) and "freedom in working" (see p. 40) resonate with their assumption that one needs a purpose and efficacy such as autonomy and control, contributing to meaning in life. Furthermore, the relation found in the responses regarding the aspects for meaningful work and thus a meaningful life also resonates with the overall assumption of Baumeister and Wilson (1996), since they discuss the contribution to a meaningful life.

In consideration of this it appears that even though this present study suggests a different interaction of these aspects as so far assumed, still same aspects are preferentially associated with meaningful work. For further research this would mean that already existing literature has to be revised with regard to the inclusive conception of meaningful work and

the responsibility for it, formulated in the present study, to build a coherent theoretical framework.

Since this study is considered as of a theoretical orientation due to a primary angle on theoretical implications rather than practical, such practical orientation is considered to be a worthwhile path to pursue. By that it is meant that it would be interesting to adopt a humanist stance regarding conception of meaningful work and focus on individuals within one specific organization in form of a case study. Such study should focus on individual level stories explaining perceptions of responsibilities within the workplace with regard to meaningful work. In this way a practical orientation is pursued by not focusing foremost on work motivation theories driven by a managerial perspective.

The topic of the multigenerational workforce is currently receiving increasing interest and thus is accompanied by the investigation of the understanding of meaningful work from the perspective of multiple generational cohorts. By those studies it is already assumed that the aspects ascribed to meaningful work differ among the generational cohorts (e. g. Weeks & Schaffert, 2017; Twenge, 2010; Wey Smola & Sutton, 2002). Thus, it can be assumed that this might be the case with the ascription of such aspects to areas of responsibility too. Accordingly studies into this topic are considered as interesting contributions to the theories on meaningful work, leading to a congruent understanding.

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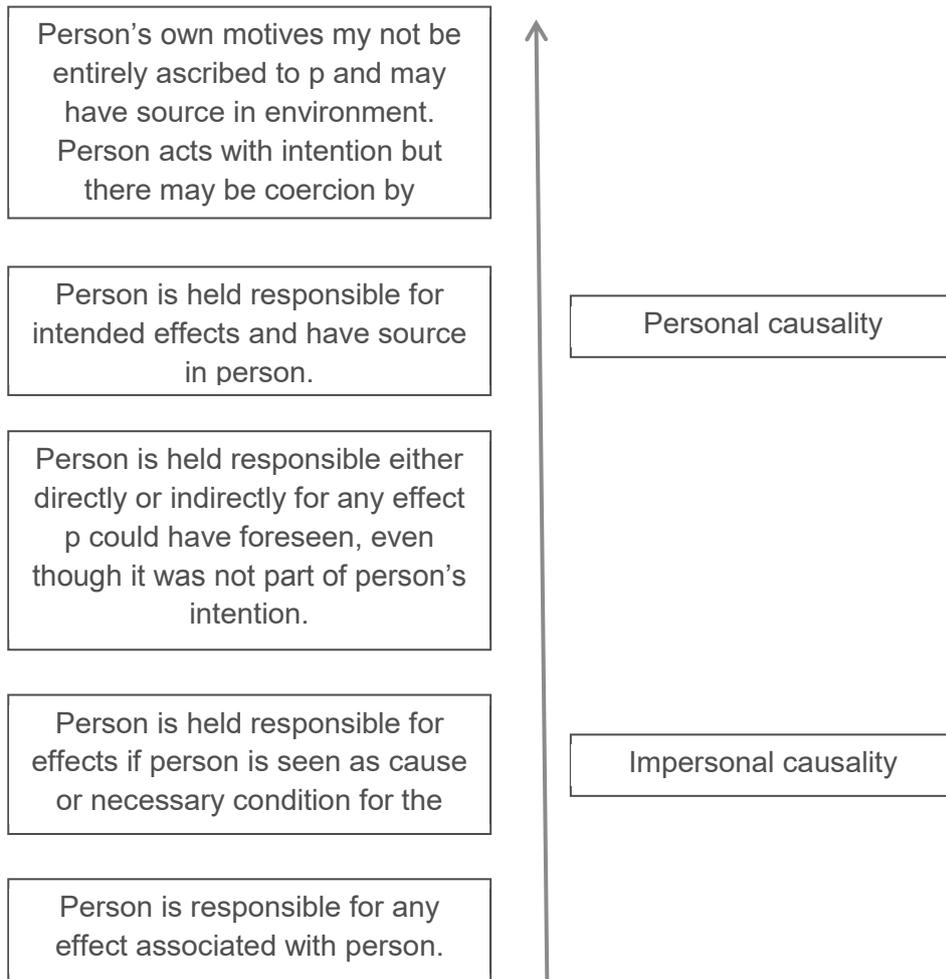
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8 Appendices

Appendix I – Five levels of responsibility according to Heider (1958)

Person's own motives my not be entirely ascribed to p and may have source in environment. Person acts with intention but there may be coercion by

Person is held responsible for intended effects and have source in person.

Personal causality

Person is held responsible either directly or indirectly for any effect p could have foreseen, even though it was not part of person's intention.

Person is held responsible for effects if person is seen as cause or necessary condition for the

Impersonal causality

Person is responsible for any effect associated with person.

Own depiction according to Heider (1958, p. 113f)

Appendix II – Four types of responsibility according to Hart (1968)

Role responsibility	Refers to demands and obligations made on a person by the role or position that person holds. Responsibility is tied to a specific role and duties prescribed by the role.
Capacity responsibility	Refers to a person's capacity to respond. A person has to understand consequences of own action and thus need to be able to reason and control of own actions.
Causal responsibility	Relates to the causal relation between person and event.
Legal and moral responsibility	Refers to a liability to punishment or negative consequences due to the fulfilment of e.g guilty mind, normal capacity, connection to offense being committed.

Own depiction according to Hart (1968, p. 44f)

Appendix III – Interview guideline: English

Final version:

<u>Interview Guideline</u>

<u>Preparation:</u>

- Resumption of contact as already established (formal or informal address).
- Assurance of a comfortable situation for interviewer and participant (Availability of drinks, comfortable seating, etc.)
- Thanking interviewee for participation
- Assurance of existence and completeness of interview consent form.
- Asking if anything further is needed.
- Asking if questions or uncertainties exist.
- Indication that asking questions is allowed at any time.
- Start of interview and activating of recording device.

<u>Introduction</u>

Age groups

Under 20
20 - 40
40 - 60
60 - 65
Older than 65

- What's your occupation, how do you earn your money?
- How long have you been working in this occupation?
- Why do you work in this job?
- Do you like your job?
- Could you please describe your current job?

<u>Part 1: Perception meaningful work</u>

- Do you perceive your job, your work as meaningful?
- What exactly do you perceive as meaningful in your job?
- How would you personally describe meaningful work?
- How would you personally describe meaningful work for yourself?

- What kind of characteristics does a job need to feel meaningful to you?

- In your opinion, what work contributes most to your overall well-being?

- How important is it to you, that your work is meaningful?

- Could you please describe your ideal job?

Part 2: Perception responsibility for meaningful work

- What do you think, how could the meaningfulness of your job be increased? How could this be achieved?

- Who needs to do or change something so that you perceive your job as more meaningful?

- Do you believe you have an influence on how meaningful your job is?

- Who determines that your work is meaningful?

- Could you share your thoughts on responsibility for meaningful work? What comes to your mind?

- From your perspective/ in your opinion, who is responsible that your job is a meaningful job?

- What do you think who is responsible for meaningful work?

- Is there any measure or action concerning meaningful work in your company?

End

- Indicating end of my questions.

- Is there anything you would like to add? Maybe something I have not asked? A question, something you would like to contribute?

- Ending of interview and deactivating of recording device.

- Indication that I will send, if agreed on, the transcripts for a member check.

- Offering to send conclusion of findings if participant is interested in such.

1st Version:

Interview Guideline

Preparation:

- Resumption of contact as already established (formal or informal address).

- Assurance of a comfortable situation for interviewer and participant (Availability of drinks, comfortable seating, etc.)

- Thanking interviewee for participation

- Assurance of existence and completeness of interview consent form.
- Asking if anything further is needed.
- Asking if questions or uncertainties exist.
- Indication that asking questions is allowed at any time.
- Start of interview and activating of recording device.

<u>Introduction</u>

Age groups

Under 20
20 - 40
40 - 60
60 - 65
Older than 65

- What's your occupation, how do you earn your money?
- How long have you been working in this occupation?

<u>Part 1: Perception meaningful work</u>

- Do you perceive your job, your work as meaningful?
- What exactly do you perceive as meaningful in your job?
- How would you personally describe meaningful work?
- How would you personally describe meaningful work for yourself?
- What kind of characteristics does a job need to feel meaningful to you?
- In your opinion, what work contributes most to your overall well-being?
- How important is it to you, that your work is meaningful?
- Could you please describe your ideal job?

<u>Part 2: Perception responsibility for meaningful work</u>

- What do you think, how could the meaningfulness of your job be increased? How could this be achieved?
- Who needs to do or change something so that you perceive your job as more meaningful?
- Do you believe you have an influence on how meaningful your job is?
- Who determines that your work is meaningful?
- Could you share your thoughts on responsibility for meaningful work? What comes to your mind?

- From your perspective/ in your opinion, who is responsible that your job is a meaningful job?
- What do you think who is responsible for meaningful work?
- Is there any measure or action concerning meaningful work in your company?

<u>End</u>

- Indicating end of my questions.
- Ending of interview and deactivating of recording device.
- Indication that I will send, if agreed on, the transcripts for a member check.
- Offering to send conclusion of findings if participant is interested in such.

Appendix IV – Interview guideline: German

Final version:

<u>Interviewleitfaden</u>

<u>Vorbereitung:</u>

- Wiederaufnahme des Kontaktes an zuvor vorbereiteter Stelle. (Formelle oder Informelle Ansprache)
- Sicherstellen der komfortablen Situation für Interviewer und Teilnehmer (Vorhandensein von Getränk, bequemes Sitzen etc.)
- Bedanken für die Teilnahme.
- Sicherstellung des Vorhandenseins und Vollständigkeit der Einverständniserklärung.
- Nachfrage ob noch etwas benötigt wird.
- Nachfrage ob bis hierhin Fragen oder Unsicherheiten bestehen.
- Hinweis darauf dass nach wie vor jederzeit Fragen gestellt werden können.
- Beginn des Interviews und Einschalten des Aufnahmegeräts.

<u>Einleitung</u>

Altersgruppen

Unter 20
20 - 40
40 - 60
60 - 65
Älter als 65

- Welchen Beruf haben Sie, womit verdienen Sie Ihr Geld?
- Wie lange arbeiten Sie bereits in diesem Beruf?
- Warum arbeiten Sie in diesem Beruf?
- Mögen Sie Ihre Arbeit?
- Können Sie mir bitte Ihre aktuelle Arbeit beschreiben?

<u>Teil 1: Wahrnehmung „meaningful work"</u>

- Empfinden Sie Ihren Job, Ihre Arbeit als sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Was genau empfinden Sie als sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Wie würden Sie, für sich persönlich, sinnvolle Arbeit beschreiben?

- Was muss ein Job für Sie haben, welche Eigenschaften muss er aufweisen, damit Sie ihn als sinnvoll ansehen?
- Welche Arbeit trägt Ihrer Meinung nach am meisten zu Ihrem allgemeinen Wohlbefinden bei?
- Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvoll ist?
- Bitte beschreiben Sie mir Ihre ideale Arbeit.

Teil 2: Wahrnehmung Verantwortung „meaningful work"

- Wie glauben Sie könnte die Sinnhaftigkeit Ihrer Arbeit gesteigert werden? Wie könnte das erreicht werden?
- Wer müsste in Ihrem Unternehmen was machen oder ändern damit Sie Ihre Arbeit als sinnvoller empfinden?
- Glauben Sie, Sie haben einen Einfluss darauf wie sinnvoll Ihre Arbeit ist?
- Wer bestimmt, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvolle Arbeit ist?
- Könnten Sie mir Ihre Gedanken mitteilen über Verantwortung für sinnvolle Arbeit? Was geht Ihnen durch den Kopf?
- Wer ist aus Ihrer Sicht verantwortlich dafür, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvolle Arbeit ist?
- Was glauben Sie, wer ist verantwortlich für sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Gibt es in Ihrem Unternehmen irgendwelche Maßnahmen zum Thema sinnvolle Arbeit?

Ende

- Hinweis auf das Ende meiner Fragen.
- Gibt es etwas was Sie noch anfügen möchten? Vielleicht etwas was ich nicht gefragt habe? Eine Frage, etwas dass Sie noch beitragen möchten?
- Beenden des Interviews und ausschalten des Aufnahmegeräts.
- Hinweis über die Zusendung des Abschriebs für inhaltliche Kontrolle, wenn zugestimmt.
- Anbieten der Zusendung einer Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse, falls Interesse besteht.

1st Version:

Interviewleitfaden

Vorbereitung:

- Wiederaufnahme des Kontaktes an zuvor vorbereiteter Stelle. (Formelle oder Informelle Ansprache)

- Sicherstellen der komfortablen Situation für Interviewer und Teilnehmer (Vorhandensein von Getränk, bequemes Sitzen etc.)
- Bedanken für die Teilnahme.
- Sicherstellung des Vorhandenseins und Vollständigkeit der Einverständniserklärung.
- Nachfrage ob noch etwas benötigt wird.
- Nachfrage ob bis hierhin Fragen oder Unsicherheiten bestehen.
- Hinweis darauf dass nach wie vor jederzeit Fragen gestellt werden können.
- Beginn des Interviews und Einschalten des Aufnahmegeräts.

Einleitung

Altersgruppen

Unter 20
20 - 40
40 - 60
60 - 65
Älter als 65

- Welchen Beruf haben Sie, womit verdienen Sie Ihr Geld?
- Wie lange arbeiten Sie bereits in diesem Beruf?

Teil 1: Wahrnehmung „meaningful work"

- Empfinden Sie Ihren Job, Ihre Arbeit als sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Was genau empfinden Sie als sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Wie würden Sie, für sich persönlich, sinnvolle Arbeit beschreiben?
- Was muss ein Job für Sie haben, welche Eigenschaften muss er aufweisen, damit Sie ihn als sinnvoll ansehen?
- Welche Arbeit trägt Ihrer Meinung nach am meisten zu Ihrem allgemeinen Wohlbefinden bei?
- Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvoll ist?
- Bitte beschreiben Sie mir Ihre ideale Arbeit.

Teil 2: Wahrnehmung Verantwortung „meaningful work"

- Wie glauben Sie könnte die Sinnhaftigkeit Ihrer Arbeit gesteigert werden? Wie könnte das erreicht werden?
- Wer müsste in Ihrem Unternehmen was machen oder ändern damit Sie Ihre Arbeit als sinnvoller empfinden?

- Glauben Sie, Sie haben einen Einfluss darauf wie sinnvoll Ihre Arbeit ist?
- Wer bestimmt, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvolle Arbeit ist?
- Könnten Sie mir Ihre Gedanken mitteilen über Verantwortung für sinnvolle Arbeit? Was geht Ihnen durch den Kopf?
- Wer ist aus Ihrer Sicht verantwortlich dafür, dass Ihre Arbeit sinnvolle Arbeit ist?
- Was glauben Sie, wer ist verantwortlich für sinnvolle Arbeit?
- Gibt es in Ihrem Unternehmen irgendwelche Maßnahmen zum Thema sinnvolle Arbeit?

<u>Ende</u>

- Hinweis auf das Ende meiner Fragen.
- Beenden des Interviews und ausschalten des Aufnahmegeräts.
- Hinweis über die Zusendung des Abschriebs für inhaltliche Kontrolle, wenn zugestimmt.
- Anbieten der Zusendung einer Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse, falls Interesse besteht.

Appendix V – Statistics Statistisches Bundesamt (StBA)

Population by employment and gender

Tabelle 0.16
Bevölkerung nach Erwerbstätigkeit und Geschlecht

Deutschland	Jahr [1) 2)]	Bevölkerung Insgesamt	Bevölkerung Weiblich	Erwerbspersonen Insgesamt	Erwerbstätige Insgesamt	Erwerbstätige Weiblich	Erwerbstätige Ausländer / -innen Insgesamt	Erwerbstätige Ausländer / -innen Weiblich	Erwerbslose Insgesamt	Erwerbslose Weiblich
		Tsd.		Tsd.	Tsd.		Tsd.		Tsd.	
Länder insgesamt	1991	79.829	41.281	40.088	37.445	15.570	2.611	857	2.642	1.392
	1992	80.438	41.485	40.126	36.940	15.317	2.873	951	3.185	1.764
	1993	81.100	41.717	40.179	36.380	15.084	2.989	983	3.799	2.007
	1994	81.368	41.836	40.236	36.076	15.088	2.982	1.010	4.160	2.110
	1995	81.570	41.900	40.083	36.048	15.109	2.998	1.019	4.035	2.045
	1996	81.832	41.989	39.985	35.982	15.276	2.934	1.029	4.003	1.877
	1997	82.029	42.058	40.280	35.805	15.256	2.868	1.003	4.475	2.095
	1998	82.014	42.040	40.262	35.860	15.351	2.837	1.017	4.402	2.048
	1999	82.024	42.018	40.508	36.402	15.744	2.920	1.059	4.106	1.886
	2000	82.160	42.080	40.326	36.604	15.924	3.012	1.104	3.722	1.726
	2001	82.277	42.116	40.550	36.816	16.187	3.074	1.156	3.734	1.680
	2002	82.455	42.173	40.607	36.536	16.200	3.049	1.165	4.071	1.782
	2003	82.502	42.172	40.792	36.172	16.176	2.990	1.174	4.619	1.990
	2004	82.491	42.161	40.606	35.659	15.978	2.932	1.153	4.947	2.102
	2005	82.465	42.127	41.150	36.566	16.432	3.047	1.196	4.583	2.009
	2006	82.369	42.062	41.607	37.344	16.867	3.115	1.241	4.263	1.915
	2007	82.257	41.986	41.771	38.163	17.272	3.243	1.304	3.608	1.664
	2008	82.135	41.904	41.875	38.734	17.546	3.337	1.347	3.141	1.451
	2009	81.904	41.769	41.895	38.662	17.690	3.355	1.393	3.233	1.393
	2010	81.715	41.657	41.887	38.938	17.891	3.371	1.404	2.948	1.250
	2011	80.249	41.080	41.317	38.916	18.022	3.107	1.317	2.401	1.064
	2012	80.413	41.109	41.430	39.206	18.139	3.304	1.395	2.224	987
	2013	80.611	41.157	41.799	39.618	18.425	3.492	1.458	2.181	950
	2014	80.896	41.245	42.032	39.942	18.598	3.707	1.540	2.090	901
	2015	81.404	41.432	42.228	40.279	18.788	3.974	1.628	1.949	824
	2016	82.425	41.742	43.113	41.339	19.232	4.435	1.782	1.775	746
	2017	81.740	41.219	43.261	41.641	19.369	4.698	1.883	1.620	664

Labour force participation rate by age group

Tabelle 0.25b

Erwerbsquoten nach Altersgruppen [1]

Deutschland	Jahr [2]	Im Alter von … bis unter … Jahren									
		15 - 20	20 - 25	25 - 30	30 - 40	40 - 50	50 - 55	55 - 60	60 - 65	65 und älter	Insgesamt
		Anteile (%)									
Länder insgesamt	1997	31,5	72,8	81,8	86,0	87,2	80,6	66,7	20,7	2,8	58,2
	1998	31,4	73,2	81,5	86,5	87,3	80,7	67,7	21,0	2,7	58,1
	1999	32,5	73,8	82,4	87,3	87,9	81,7	68,7	21,9	2,8	58,3
	2000	32,6	73,2	82,3	87,5	88,2	82,2	68,5	22,2	2,7	57,9
	2001	32,1	73,5	82,3	87,7	88,8	82,4	69,4	23,8	2,8	58,1
	2002	31,1	72,0	81,6	88,0	89,2	83,2	70,3	25,9	2,9	57,9
	2003	30,6	71,9	81,5	88,4	89,4	84,0	71,6	27,2	2,9	58,0
	2004	29,4	70,1	80,6	87,8	89,4	84,4	72,8	29,5	2,9	57,5
	2005	30,2	70,1	79,6	86,3	89,1	84,6	73,2	31,6	3,3	58,0
	2006	30,9	70,7	81,1	87,4	89,5	84,9	73,7	33,2	3,4	58,5
	2007	32,4	71,2	81,3	87,6	89,5	85,3	74,6	36,1	3,6	58,7
	2008	32,5	71,7	81,5	87,0	89,5	85,3	75,3	37,8	3,9	58,8
	2009	31,5	71,0	82,2	87,1	89,4	85,4	76,1	41,5	4,0	58,9
	2010	30,5	70,2	82,3	86,9	89,6	85,7	77,2	44,2	3,9	59,0
	2011	30,5	70,9	83,0	87,3	89,7	86,2	78,6	47,1	4,5	59,5
	2012	28,4	69,3	82,8	87,4	89,7	86,5	79,1	49,6	4,8	59,5
	2013	28,9	69,5	82,9	87,2	89,8	86,7	80,0	53,1	5,3	59,7
	2014	28,3	69,0	82,6	87,4	89,5	86,9	80,6	55,6	5,6	59,8
	2015	27,6	68,3	82,7	87,4	89,4	87,2	80,8	56,0	5,9	59,6
	2016	28,7	67,9	82,3	86,6	89,7	87,5	81,9	58,3	6,4	60,3
	2017	29,3	68,8	82,3	86,9	89,6	88,1	82,6	60,8	7,0	61,2

Quelle: Statistisches Bundesamt (Fachserie 1 Reihe 4.1.1, Fachserie 1 Reihe 4.1)

Anmerkungen:
[1] Erwerbspersonen in Prozent der gleichaltrigen Bevölkerung.
[2] Ab 2005 Jahresdurchschnitt. Aufgrund einer geänderten Methodik sind die Jahre ab 2005 nur bedingt mit den Vorjahren vergleichbar.
[3] Bis 2004 einschließlich Berlin-West, ab 2005 ohne Berlin.
[4] Bis 2004 einschließlich Berlin-Ost, ab 2005 einschließlich Berlin.

Letzte Aktualisierung: 01/2019

Appendix VI – Overview participants

Number Interview	Gender		Age group		Occupation / role	Notes
	Female	Male	20 - 40	40 - 60		
0	X			X	Accountant	Pre-test
1		X		X	Tax consultant	Pre-test
2		X		X	Procurement manager	
3	X		X		Communication and public relations manager	
4		X		X	Financial advisor	
5	X			X	Salary accounting clerk	
6		X		X	Service employee, human resource coordination	
7		X		X	Sales manager	
8	X		X		Associate consultant	
9		X		X	Merchant	
10	X		X		Conceptual marketing designer	
11		X	X		Strategic supply chain manager	
12	X		X		Junior consultant human resources	
13	X		X		Analyst	
14	X			X	Assistant of management	
15		X	X		Software developer	
Sum	7	7	7	7		
Total	14 participants					

Appendix VII – Interview consent form

English version:

Interview consent form

Please read the following information carefully. Feel free to ask questions at any time if something should be unclear**.**

Title of research: Responsibility for meaningful work

Supervision of study: This study is conducted as part of a master thesis supervised by the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Name of researcher: Adrienne Camille Meiss

Purpose of the study: Investigation of the personal and individual perception of meaningful work and the responsibility for it.

Thank you very much in advance for taking the time. The interview will be taking a maximum of 60 minutes.

This consent form is necessary to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and the conditions of your participation. Therefore please read the following information with upmost care.

 Please state your understanding and notice by checking the boxes in front of the corresponding information. Please sign this document subsequently to grant your approval.

☐   I understand that I am voluntarily participating in this research project.

☐   I am aware that I can ask questions at any time and they will be answered during the process and in the future.

☐   I understand that I am able to withdraw my participation at any time without stating any reasons.

☐   I agree that the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced

☐   I am aware that the transcript of the interview will be analysed by the researcher Adrienne Camille Meiss.

☐   I agree that the transcript will be send to me to give me the opportunity to correct any factual errors. And that I will state my email address for solely that purpose.

☐   Participants email address: _____

☐   I am aware that this consent form will be kept separately to my responds so that no connection could be made to my identity.

□   I am aware that the access to the interview transcript will be limited to me, the researcher and the examiners of the study (name and contact information stated below)

□   I am aware that any summarized interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publications or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that I cannot be identified.

□   I understand that the actual recording will be kept in secure storage as backup to the transcripts.

□   I do not expect any benefit or payment for my participation.

□   I have carefully read all information above and agree to the terms with my below stated signature.

_____   _____

Participants' signature   Date

_____   _____

Researchers' signature   Date

<u>Contact information</u>

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact the researcher or the corresponding supervisor of the project.

Researcher: Adrienne Meiss
Address: Im Andermannsberg 38, 88212 Ravensburg, Germany
Mail: adrienne.meiss@gmail.com
Phone: +49 152 25975569

1st supervisor: Liesbeth Gulpers
Mail: l.gulpers@fm.ru.nl

2nd supervisor: Waldemar Kremser
Mail: W.Kremser@fm.ru.nl

<u>German version:</u>

Einverständniserklärung Interview

Bitte lessen Sie die folgenden Informationen mit Sorgfalt. Gerne können Sie jederzeit Fragen stellen, wenn Ihnen etwas unklar ist.

Kurzinformation:

Titel der Studie:	Verantwortung für sinnvolle Arbeit – Responsibility for meaningful work.
Betreuung der Studie:	Diese Studie wird im Rahmen einer Masterthesis unter Aufsicht der Radboud University in Nijmegen, Niederlande durchgeführt.
Name des Untersuchers:	Adrienne Camille Meiß
Absicht der Studie:	Untersuchung der persönlichen und individuellen Wahrnehmung von sinnvoller Arbeit (meaningful work) und der Verantwortung dafür.

Vielen Dank im Voraus dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen. Das Interview wird maximal. 60 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen.

Diese Einverständniserklärung ist nötig um sicherzustellen, dass Sie die Absicht der Studie und die Bedingungen Ihrer Teilnahme verstehen. Bitte lesen Sie aus diesem Grund die folgenden Informationen mit höchster Sorgfalt.

Bitte bestätigen Sie Ihr Einverständnis und zur Kenntnisnahme durch Abhaken der Boxen <u>vor</u> den entsprechenden Informationen. Bitte unterschreiben Sie dieses Dokument schließlich um Ihr Einverständnis zu erteilen.

□ Ich verstehe, dass ich freiwillig an dieser Studie teilnehme.

□ Ich bin mir bewusst, dass ich jederzeit Fragen stellen kann und diese auch während des Prozesses und danach beantwortet werden.

□ Ich bin mir bewusst, dass ich meine Teilnahme jederzeit ohne Nennung von Gründen zurückziehen kann.

□ Ich stimme zu, dass das Interview aufgezeichnet wird und ein Abschrieb angefertigt wird.

□ Ich bin mir bewusst, dass der Abschrieb durch die Interviewerin Adrienne Meiß analysiert wird.

□ Ich stimme zu, dass der Abschrieb mir zugesandt wird um mir die Möglichkeit zu geben mögliche Fehler zu korrigieren. Und dass ich meine Email Adresse ausschließlich für diesen Grund angebe.

□ Email Adresse des Teilnehmers: _____

□ Mir ist bewusst, dass diese Einverständniserklärung separat zu meinen Antworten im Interview aufbewahrt wird, sodass kein Bezug zu meiner Identität hergestellt werden kann.

□ Ich bin mir bewusst, dass der Zugang zu den Interviewabschrieben und Aufnahmen beschränkt ist auf mich, die Interviewerin und zwei Prüfer der Studie (Namen und Kontaktinformationen unten angegeben).

□ Ich bin mir bewusst, dass mögliche zusammengefasste Interviewinhalte oder direkte Zitate aus dem Interview, welche durch akademische Publikationen oder andere akademische Kanäle zugänglich gemacht werden, anonymisiert werden und ich somit nicht identifiziert werden kann.

□ Ich verstehe, dass die eigentlichen Aufnahmen des Interviews in sicherer Verwahrung behalten werden um als Sicherungskopie für die Abschriebe zu dienen.

□ Ich erwarte keine Vorteile oder monetäre Entschädigungen für meine Teilnahme.

□ Ich habe alle Informationen auf diesem Dokument mit höchster Sorgfalt gelesen und stimme den Bedingungen mit meiner unten geleisteten Unterschrift zu.

_____   _____

Unterschrift Teilnehmer   Datum

_____   _____

Unterschrift Interviewerin   Datum

<u>Kontaktinformationen</u>

Wenn Sie Fragen jedweder Art haben, steht es Ihnen frei die Interviewerin oder die Betreuer der Studie zu kontaktieren.

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Appendix VIII – Interview consent forms signed by participants