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Making Meaningful Career Choices

A Theoretical and Q-methodological Inquiry

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

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Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management
Department of Education



NTNU – Trondheim
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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the subjectivity of making meaningful career choices among university graduates with three different backgrounds; counselling education, economic education and multicultural. The dissertation was organized into four different parts; 1) introduction 2) theory, 3) methodology and empirical inquiry, and 4) discussion.

In the theory part the concepts career meaning construction, human agency and career meaning were investigated and discussed philosophically and theoretically as possible ways of structuring the empirical inquiry in terms of investigating university graduates experience of making meaningful career choices. Career meaning construction was defined as objective, subjective and relational meaning construction. In the theory part, human agency was defined as important for achieving a meaningful career, where the emphasis was on the concepts intentionality and intrinsic motivation as significant elements for constructing career meaning into career choices. Career meaning was defined by three different career concepts; career as a job, career as an outcome of psychological success, and career as a call. In the methodological and empirical part, Q-methodology was explained and discussed philosophically and practically by combining it with the empirical results, which were subsequently presented.

Three factors emerged in the Q-methodological data interpretation process. These factors were called; existential meaning, relational meaning and career success meaning. The existential meaning factor emphasised agency and freedom together with other persons, career as more than a job, and personal success as significant elements in constructing meaning into one's career choices. The relational meaning factor emphasised security, pay and survival, relational and cultural meaning construction, relational career view, and external success as significant elements. Also the relational meaning factor emphasised that individual career choices are not relevant for constructing meaning into one's career choices. The career success meaning factor emphasised independency, career success and career as more than a job as significant elements.

In discussing the three factors, the emphasis was on positive and negative aspects of the factors' experience of constructing career meaning in relation to persons' agency. In the existential meaning factor the paradox of being an agent and being free and at the same time wishing to act out one's career together with others was the focus for discussion. In the relational meaning factor, the process of constructing a meaningful career that is motivated by

external influences contra constructing a meaningful career that is influenced by the person him/herself (individual meaning construction) was focal. In the career success meaning factor, the emphasis was on discussing the need for others in climbing up the career ladder, instead of just trusting oneself. Career counselling implications were also discussed in terms of the three factors, and reflections of the whole dissertation were included.

Foreword

Now that the journey of writing this dissertation is at an end, it is time to express gratitude for having had such an opportunity to both develop myself as a researcher and to explore in-depth the theme that interests me most as an academic.

I would like to thank the Department of Education and the Department of Adult Learning and Counselling for financing this project, and for the personal encouragement that I experienced. Secondly I would like to thank my writing assistant Vera Rabben Teigen for accompanying me in the writing process and formatting the dissertation. Thirdly, I would like to thank Roger Andre Federici for being a good friend, and for the social activities that helped me create some distance from my work when I needed it, enabling me to realise that there is also a social world outside my academic work.

My greatest gratitude goes to two persons Ragnvald Kvalsund and Eleanor Allgood. I would like to thank my supervisor professor Ragnvald Kvalsund, for believing in my research project, for hard feedback, for challenging and fun discussions, and for not letting me take any short cuts in writing this dissertation. You helped me see the landscape of the research field. Thank You!

Eleanor Allgood has been a good friend by supporting me, and correcting my English language throughout the whole dissertation. Thank You!

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Part I – Meaningful career choices

1. Introduction

The theme for this dissertation is the concept of meaning in relation to university graduates' career choices and perceptions about their meaningful career. The background for my choice of theme is based on my personal confusion as a student in the Master's program in counselling education, the confusion I was experiencing after my work with my Master's thesis, and my professional confusion in terms of the research in the post-modern career field about career choices and career development.

1.1 Personal background for choice of dissertation theme

During the Master's program in Counselling Education at NTNU¹ (2003-2005), I was presented with existential and humanistic theories about meaning, life choices and living a holistic life in general counselling courses, but in my career course I experienced that our Master's degree class was only presented with approaches about how I, as a career counsellor, should guide people to make the correct choice for themselves based on their education and interests. I remember I said to myself; why is it that in general counselling we learn mostly how to counsel persons based on meaning and living an authentic and holistic life, but in career counselling we learn counselling techniques and a theoretical worldview based on a modernistic tradition, where vocational tests and rational choice are emphasised. I thought that the career course was old fashioned and not congruent with general counselling courses I also took part in, and I remember I said to myself, career counselling is and should be more than tests and helping people getting a job or an education that fits people's interests. This led me to a curiosity about the career research field, and directed me towards writing my Master's thesis on the theme: career counsellors' subjective experience in the meeting with their clients. I discovered that there was a lot of literature and research in postmodern thinking in terms of career counselling, but hardly any in the Norwegian context². Most literature I discovered in the field was based on American and European contexts; Norway was missing. I remember I was so surprised that research in such an important field was almost totally lacking in my own country. From this day I knew that I would work with research in terms of

¹ Norwegian University of Science and Technology

² Allgood and Kvalsund published an article in 2001 about how persons subjectively experience their needs for career counselling. This is the only international published paper I could find in Norway about the theme. There exist public policy documents that comment on the Norwegian context for example the OECD report from 2001, but scientific journal articles on the career counselling field was almost missing in the Norwegian context.

career, career choice, career development and career counselling. Therefore I chose to do my Master's thesis on career counsellors' subjective experience.

In my Master's thesis I wanted to collect in data about how career counsellors experience their clients in terms of how their clients view their career choices, how the clients relations affects their career choices and how clients view the career concept. In my work with my Master's thesis I experienced that I was thinking of the above mentioned themes in a rather black and white way, without managing to grasp the complexity of career choice. "Do career counsellors experience their clients as rational or emotional in making career choices?" is an example of how I was thinking. I was looking for a clear answer in terms of the aforementioned themes. I could not find a clear answer; there were too many loose ends, and therefore I became confused. What is it in my data material that I don't understand I asked myself, and suddenly in discussions with people around me I started to reflect about why I was asking the career counsellors; why don't I ask people who are actually making the choices; what meaning they have in mind in terms of the theme career and career choice? What is significant for them? What does significance imply for people's career? Suddenly the concept meaning came up in my consciousness. From that experience I started to read and reflect about the concept of meaning, and how meaning affects persons' career choices, career development and their career. How does peoples' experience of meaning in terms of their career choices influence their process of making a career choice, and their view of their career? This was a question I asked myself. I was not aware of this question in the work with my Master's thesis, and therefore I decided that it was something I wanted to investigate in my PhD project. Questions such as what possible meanings can be implicated in people's career and what happens in the career meaning construction process³ made me curious and motivated me to go forward with this specific project.

1.2 Theoretical background and aim for dissertation

The topic "*meaning, career choices and career development*" has become an interest in the career counselling research field in the 20th century (Chen, 2001). Socio dynamic career counselling that is represented by Peavy (1997; 2005) and the narrative approach represented by Cochran (1997) are examples of career counselling theories and practice perspectives that emphasise focusing on meaning in career counselling that started to become popular in 20th

³ This career meaning construction process is defined as what drives persons towards their career choices.

century⁴. In reviewing annual review articles in the field of career research, published in the *Journal of Career Development Quarterly* from 1994 until 2010 I found that the subjective theoretical postmodern perspective⁵ with emphasis on meaning had become more and more important for researchers in the career counselling field, especially from 2001⁶ until today (Chope, 2008; Dagley & Salter, 2004; Flores, et al., 2003; Guindon & Richmond, 2005; Harrington & Harrigan, 2006; Luzzo & MacGregor, 2001; Patton & McIlveen, 2009; Tien, 2007; Whiston & Brecheisen, 2002).

Before that time period the career counselling research field had an exhaustive focus on individuals, diverse populations, gender, culture, family, organisations⁷ and so forth, but in reviewing the theoretical approaches that were in focus for researching the career field in relation to career choices and career development: three major theoretical approaches were the most popular: Person-environment fit represented by Holland's⁸ (1997) theory of vocational personality, Super's theory on career and lifespan (1994) and social cognitive career theory⁹. Together with these three major theoretical perspectives a lot of attention has been on individual differences, test inventories, vocational assessments and interventions, and decision-making in relation to career choices and career development. Such approaches as Holland's perspective were criticised for being too rational, deterministic, not focusing on human development, and for defining career as only as the person's working life, without integrating other personal dimensions (Gibson & Mitchell, 2006; Hansen, 1997). On the basis of this criticism, new perspectives on career, where career choices and development were investigated in relation to persons' lives, and not only on persons' working life, were introduced (Miller-Tiedeman, 1992; 2008). The critical career researchers turned to general psychology, sociology, and anthropology, where postmodern approaches such as constructivism and constructionism had been accepted for a long period of time (Amundson, 2003b; Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Since 2004 there has been an acceptance for criticising the modernistic approach to career as being too narrow, and deterministic (Guindon & Richmond,

⁴ This assertion is based on annual review articles in the career research field published by the *Journal of Career Development Quarterly*.

⁵ The first time a theoretical postmodern perspective had its own headline in the annual review articles on career research was in 2003.

⁶ Chen mentioned meaning explicitly in a career research article in 1998 where the focus was on identity, meaning and agency in career. This is the earliest example that I found.

⁷ It is hard to give a summary of what has been the focus in the career research field because of its length and breadth.

⁸ Holland's perspective has been the most popular research theory in terms of career choice and career development.

⁹ This assertion is based on annual review articles in the career research field published by the *Journal of Career Development Quarterly*.

2005; Hartung, 2010). The main emphasis in this post-modern paradigm in career research was that having a career or choosing a career is not an objective process; it is something that people construct subjectively in accordance with their experience and development (Savickas, 2008). This emphasis on persons' construction of career was acknowledged in Tiedemann's (1961) career theory, but it is not discussed in-depth as in humanistic existential philosophy. Tiedemann is looked upon as the first person to apply constructivist epistemology in terms of people's career construction. This directed the career field toward a new perspective where constructivist, social construction and narrative theories were important (Patton & McIlveen, 2009).

Within the constructivist, social constructionist and narrative perspectives, the term meaning and the role meaning construction has for persons' career and career choices are looked upon as important. More explicitly, people's own construction of their career and choices was looked upon as more significant than the career and career choices being decided objectively out from pre-determined factors such as test inventories, viewing career as solely a job and so forth (Cochran, 1997). Research questions such as, how people subjectively experience their own career in terms of emotions, how they construct and define career and how they experience making career choices, became a major interest among postmodern career researchers (Kidd, 2004). This "new way of thinking" did not necessarily negate what the modernistic approach emphasised, but the postmodern perspective believed that one needed to include subjective experience and people's context in terms of career choices and development together with objective terms such as personality and so forth (Cochran, 1997). The major theme out of this focus on people's subjective experience of their career was how people experienced making career choices, where the concepts such as meaning, complexity, uncertainty, chaos, being reflective and holistic perspectives emerged as significant factors (Hansen, 2001). In other words, for being able to make "good" career choices: meanings, being reflective and holistic perspectives are important concepts. The new hypothesis about how to make career choices in the postmodern world was: People should reflect on and become aware on how and why they chose the direction they have chosen by reflecting on what meaning does my career imply and what meaning do I desire to integrate into my career choices. Being reflective about career choices and career has become more important also because the society is continuously in development, and rapid changes in society effects peoples' career and career choices (Gelatt, 1989). An implication of these societal changes is that persons should learn how to adapt to new conditions in their career, because societal

change implies changing condition in persons' career (Savickas, 2008). The aim that persons had for their career in the beginning, in acquiring education or just starting to engage in working life, might not be possible anymore because conditions have changed, and out from that people need to adapt to the new realities. Adapting to new conditions without losing themselves, implies that persons direct their focus onto their subjective self, and reflect on what is important for them, and on that basis they need to make career choices for themselves in terms of new conditions that influence their career. In directing the focus onto persons' subjective selves in making career choices, an existential and humanistic approach to career counselling has been argued for, where the concepts of meaning and meaning exploration are emphasised. Chen's article (2001) about integrating humanistic and existential concepts into career counselling theory, Peavy's (2005) perspective on socio dynamic career counselling, and Cohen's (2003) article on existential theory in career counselling are examples of this argument.

In humanistic and existential philosophy, concepts such as meaning, holism, and choice are important for human development and existence (May, 1969), therefore I directed my focus to this philosophy that was also an inspiration for postmodern career researchers. I discovered that how people achieve meaning in life generally is a well-discussed matter in humanistic and existential philosophy and many perspectives can be transformed into the career context, such as choice, freedom to choose, construction and meaning. When I went back to career literature I found texts that confirmed that meaning was important (Cochran, 1997). In the construction of people's career choices the meaning concept is looked upon as very important in terms of the role meaning has and the interpretation of meaning in human development (Amundson, 2003b; Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Chen, 2001; Cochran, 1990; 1991). However, career literature in terms of career choice and career development does not to my knowledge discuss in-depth what type of meaning is significant for people, apart from a calling perspective (Wrzesniewski, 1997). In other words, it seems to me that the career literature acknowledges that meaning construction is important in terms of people career and development, and the result of the meaning construction is vital in terms of their career choices; nevertheless the career literature does not in my knowledge discuss and analyse the concepts in-depth to get a proper understanding of the concepts; they just emphasise that meaning in career and career choices are important for persons' career development in 21st century.

In my literature reviews I found some articles and books on humanistic and existential perspectives on career and meaning, but they were mostly in the terms of spirituality or a deeper meaning dimension such as a calling (Bloch, 2005; Gockel, 2004; Hansen, 2001; Leider, 1997; Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006). Even though this is an important dimension of career choice and meaning, it doesn't mean that having a calling is the only meaningful thing in persons' career (Wrzesniewski, 2002). In other words doing something meaningful can be so much more than just a calling. In my view some people can authentically believe that climbing up a career ladder can be meaningful for them, or for example, earning a lot of money.

On the above-mentioned basis, it seems that explicit and nuanced research on career choices that are related to the concepts meaning, persons' view of career and career choice, grasping the complexity of meaning, meaning construction, perceptions of career view and career choice, is lacking in Norway and internationally. Therefore I discovered that there was a need for more research in the field of career and meaning and that this project would be relevant not only in Norway but internationally as well.

1.3 Three objectives for this dissertation and research participants

In this dissertation, I am going to use existential and humanistic philosophy to investigate meaning and meaning construction, together with career theory¹⁰. The objective is to try to investigate meaning, meaning construction, career choice and career in a holistic way, which is aligned with the need for holistic research in the career research field. I will include modernistic and postmodern approaches to career approaches, career choice, career development, together with existential humanistic philosophy.

In choosing informants for the empirical part of this dissertation, the question, "Who can say anything about meaning?" arises. In my process of choosing informants, I have chosen to select persons who have experience with making some career choices, and who have reflected on the terms meaning and career. I have chosen to use new graduates from counselling and economy programs at the university level in Norway and persons with multicultural background that has newly acquired university degrees from Norway¹¹. The reason for choosing informants that have university degree background is that I expect that these groups will have reflected about their career choices and have important knowledge and experience

¹⁰ I have chosen not to include policy documents in terms of the Norwegian context: how career counseling functions in Norway. It is not an aim for this project to go through this type of document.

¹¹ The empirical inquiry in this dissertation is approved by Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)

that can be revealed. Further the reason for including three different groups is that I expect them to have different experiences in choosing meaningful career choices.

This PhD project is organised into three objectives.

- 1) Investigate how university graduates experience their meaning in their career choices.
- 2) Do a concept analysis of the terms meaning, meaning construction in relation to persons' career views and career choice.
- 3) Investigate which factors can be significant in university graduates' career choices, in terms of career meaning construction and career meaning.

Research into these objectives will hopefully contribute to new knowledge and challenges in making meaningful career choices, and help career counsellors in their counselling practice. The three objectives are organised in terms of research questions.

1.4 Research questions

The main objective for this dissertation is to develop research based knowledge about persons' experience in terms of meaning, meaning construction and career view perceptions in relation to career choices. The main research question for this research project is therefore:

“How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?”

To be able to answer this main research question, I have divided it into two sub research questions that are related to the theory and the empirical parts of this dissertation. In the main research question there are three wide concepts that need to be analysed in order to answer the question. I aim to analyse and discuss the concepts of meaning and meaning construction theoretically in relation to persons' career choices and perceptions about the career concept in the theory part of this dissertation. Therefore the first sub research question that is related to the theory is:

“What understandings can lie in the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning?”

The second sub research question is related to the empirical part of this dissertation. Once I have acquired a deep enough knowledge about what possible understandings can lie in the above mentioned main concepts, I can investigate the participants' experience in terms of what type of meaning they experience in making career choices. Career choices in this dissertation are concentrated in the context of career meaning and career meaning

construction. Therefore career choice is seen as the result of constructing career meaning, and by constructing career meaning, one makes career choices based on the construction process. This will guide me in answering the main research question. Therefore I will not do an analysis of the concept career choice, but rather do an analysis of career meaning and career meaning construction. The term career choice is mentioned further in this dissertation, but will not be discussed. The second sub research question that is related to my empirical work is:

“What subjective factors can be significant in university graduates’ career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices?”

1.5 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is build up in four main parts, with corresponding chapters.

Part 1 includes the introduction, in which the theme, aim and research questions are presented.

Part 2 includes the theoretical framework and an investigation into the main theoretical concepts that are: meaning, meaning construction, agency, career, and career meaning. The aim for this part is to do a concept analysis of the aforementioned concepts to get a deep understanding of what meaning and meaning construction can imply in terms of human development and in relation to persons’ career. This aim is in alignment with the first research question that is going to be answered in this theory part: *“What understandings can lie in the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning?”*

The theoretical part is built up in 6 chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction to the meaning and meaning construction themes, the second chapter explains and discusses Victor Frankl’s theory on meaning in human life, the third chapter discusses where meaning is constructed, the fourth chapter discusses levels of meaning construction in career, the fifth chapter discusses theory on human agency in career, and the sixth chapter discusses theory on persons’ meaning in career concepts.

Part 3 includes an in-depth presentation of the empirical work. The aim for this part is to present the methodology with its implications together with the specific empirical results of this project.

The methodological part is built up in two chapters. The first chapter is a presentation of the chosen methodology, namely, Q-methodology. In the beginning of the chapter a brief discussion is given about why I chose Q-methodology for this project, and how it can be

categorized in terms of research methodologies. Further on the specific steps a researcher takes in using Q-methodology¹² is explained and presented. Together with the science of philosophy that lies behind the methodology, and the specific steps in the method, an analysis of the empirical work of this project is presented. In the second chapter of this part, the specific empirical results are presented as an answer to the second research question in this project: *What factors can be significant in university graduates' career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices?*

Part 4 discusses the presented results in terms university graduates' experienced meaningful career choices together with theory presented in the theory chapters and introduce new theory¹³, challenges and paradoxes that the factors may meet in terms of their meaningful career choices, and implications for the career counselling field. An attempt is made to bind all the parts on this dissertation together and to answer the main research question: "*How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?*" Limitations and reflections of this research and suggestions for future research are also presented.

¹² The reason for giving an in-depth presentation of Q-methodology is because this method is rarely used in career research.

¹³ I chose to bring in new theory in the discussion of the empirical results, for abductive reasons.

Part II – Theory

2. Analysis of the concept meaning and meaning construction in persons' life and career

“To study meaning is to find one self-drawn into its dialectic of content and process, of noun and verb, of meaning and meaning making (Carlsen, 1988, p. 18)”.

2.1 Background for choice of theory

Recently in career research, the concepts of ‘meaning’ and ‘meaning construction’ in terms of ‘career’, ‘career choice’ and ‘career development’ have received a great deal of attention (Chope, 2008; Dagley & Salter, 2004; Flores, et al., 2003; Guindon & Richmond, 2005; Harrington & Harrigan, 2006; Luzzo & MacGregor, 2001; Patton & McIlveen, 2009; Tien, 2007; Whiston & Brecheisen, 2002). I aim to discuss these concepts both empirically, theoretically and philosophically. In my interpretation of different theories about the importance of meaning in life generally and in career, it seems that the different theories have not often looked upon meaning and meaning construction as two different concepts, but integrated both of them into one concept, using the term meaning or meaning construction or meaning making to describe both concepts. Also, when some theoreticians discuss this theme they use either the term meaning, but actually point to the process of constructing meaning or use the terms meaning making or meaning construction but points to the concept of meaning. In my opinion, one needs to look out for how one achieves meaning and what meaning is present, to get hold of the complexities involved in meaningful career choices. More explicitly, how a person achieves meaning in his or her career, and what type of meaning is significant in a person’s career influences person’s career choices. How a person is constructing meaning into his or her career choices will probably guide what type of career meaning the person achieves in his or her career. In other words it is important to distinguish how one achieves career meaning (construction process) and what type of career meaning (content) is significant in persons’ career.

On this background my main research question for my doctoral dissertation is: *“How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?”* The aim for this theory chapter is to answer and discuss the sub-research question: *“What understandings can lie in the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning?”* This question will be elaborated upon in this theory chapter. I am aware that there exist many ways of understanding theoretically the relationship between meaning, meaning construction and career meaning,

but the following theory presentations and discussions focus on a limited number that I felt were relevant to this research and my interests.

Also, most of the theory presentations and discussion is the basis for my empirical work. More specifically, this means that this theory part gives me as a researcher the framework for constructing the experiential design that gives me the basis for collecting empirical data on the mentioned theme. How I will use the theory, and what parts of the theory I will use in my data collection I will come back to at the end of this theory part.

I will present and discuss relevant theories in terms of the concepts of 'meaning', 'meaning construction', 'career' and 'career choice'. At first glance these constructs can imply a lot of things. Questions such as what does the word 'meaning' imply, what does 'meaning construction' refer to, how does the concept of 'meaning' and 'meaning construction' relate to the construct of 'career' and 'career choice' struck me as I was trying to find relevant theories about my research theme. In this theory part of my dissertation, I will present relevant theories and discuss them in terms of the aforementioned questions. Definitions of the concepts meaning, meaning constructions and career meaning will be defined throughout this chapter.

I will discuss how persons construct career meaning in their career, and why they prefer some meanings over others in connection to their career decisions. The definition of what career might be will also be discussed in relation to persons' career meaning and construction. The emphasis will be on different modes of meaning in life generally and in the career context, specifically, that affect persons' career choices¹⁴. In addition, I will discuss human agency and concepts of career.

In this theory chapter meaning construction receives more attention than, the term meaning, career and career choice. The reason for this is that I have chosen to concentrate on how persons construct meaning and experience meaning construction in terms of their career and choices because the meaning construction phase is the clue to what career meaning they construct, and thereby make career choices. This theory chapter will function as a framework for the empirical part of my dissertation, and also as an analysis for in-depth understanding of different conceptions of 'meaning' and 'meaning construction' in relation to 'career' and 'career choice'. This analysis will help me to understand my empirical part of the process in a more in-depth and nuanced way.

¹⁴ As mentioned before I will not go into depth on the term career choice, but I use the term throughout this dissertation to signify a result of persons' meaning construction

2.2 The word meaning as a theoretical construct

There have been numerous attempts to define ‘meaning’ in connection to life in general and to question meaning in life (Baumeister, 1991; Holmberg, 1994; Klemke, 2000). Meaning cannot easily be defined. The critical part of trying to define meaning is that when one tries to define it, meaning is already in use (Carlsen, 1988). I have no intention to give an objective definition of the word. This is because the word is used so much in different kind of aspects in society and in connection to persons and life; from natural science, philosophy and social science. One finds meaning everywhere if one intends to look for it; it is all about persons’ willingness to subjectively find meaning. According to Baumeister differentiating different meanings can be misleading. He saw the metaphorical or analogical connections between the different kinds of meanings:

The meaning of life is the same kind of meaning as meaning of a sentence in several important respects: having the parts fit together into a coherent pattern, being capable of being understood by others, fitting into a broader context, and invoking implicit assumptions shared by other members of the culture (...) a meaningless life and a meaningless sentence may share common features of disconnected chaos, internal contradiction, or failure to fit context (1991, p. 16).

This perspective can be interpreted as that meaning in life can imply many things, and therefore meaning can be difficult and maybe impossible to define generally in life. Often the criticism of the meaning concept points to the difficulty in defining meaning in life in general, however if one tries to analyse meaning in relation to something particular in life, then one does not try to cover the whole spectrum. This argument supports Frankl’s (1978) idea about meaning and meaning discovery. Frankl states that it is impossible to define ‘meaning of life’ in a general way. According to Frankl life is not something abstract, but it is concrete and very real. So to question meaning and trying to define meaning according to what is meaningful one needs to place it in a context within the persons’ life. In this circumstance the context is persons’ career and career choices.

The first thing one has to do to get a better understanding, in both depth and breadth, is to try to search for definitions of the word. The Oxford dictionary (2006) briefly defines meaning as intention or a purpose. So the question is what gives one intention or purpose (Carlsen, 1988)? In other words, there must be a source to the meaning in terms of persons’ career. Meaning comes from somewhere; meaning doesn’t emerge by itself. It is here the meaning construction phase comes in. Even though the definition states that meaning is a purpose or an intention, it doesn’t give us any more concrete directions in terms of persons’ career. Baumeister (1991, p. 15) defines meaning as: “(...) *shared mental representations of possible relationships among*

things, events and relationships". Hence, one can see in this definition that meaning connects things and that meaning emerges from somewhere, but this definition still does not give any direction for analysing the meaning concept. One way to give more direction is to look at the actual concept 'meaning'. Carlsen (1988) sees the concept 'meaning' as both a noun and a verb; meaning and mean-ing¹⁵. The noun points toward the content of the meaning construct (what type of meaning is there for me) and the verb is directed towards the process of persons' achieving meaning. Both the verb and noun are interconnected to each other. More explicitly: *"The noun contains the elements of constructs, word systems, cognitive schema, matrices of belief, orienting mechanisms, patters of signifcance - In other words the descriptors of which creates meaning of life"* (p. 23) [and in life]¹⁶. Meaning as a verb (the process) contains

(...) process, movement, growth, personal intending, the evolution of personal synergies- the "from to" growth development which takes us both from what we don't know to what we know and in various combinations of subject-object transitions and of subsidiary to focal knowing (p.23).

Meaning is then both meaning (noun) and mean-ing (verb), intention and in-tending, being and be-ing (Carlsen, 1988).

Out of this one can see that meaning in career is about both content and process agency; a complex phenomenon that has a complex structure that surrounds the career context around the persons, and generally meaning is a subjective dimension which is dependent on the person's interpretation. To use meaning represents interpretation, which means that to get hold of what meaning lies in career events implies interpretation of it. *"Interpretation is a matter of processing things and events with meaning* (Baumeister, 1991, p. 24)". To know what the meaning of and in career means in particular, depends on interpreting that context. One can say that interpretation can be done at two levels: recognising and conferring. Both these levels are involved in interpreting persons' career. Some persons like to think that there is one meaning in career, and all they need to do is recognise that specific meaning and act and choose on that specific meaning. Persons might expect to find a simple answer to the question, what is the meaning of my career. If the answer to this question was easy to grasp, then the persons would just "know" it. In contrast to this, the meaning of career can also be

¹⁵ Carlsen (1988) uses the hyphen to indicate explicitly the activity and the process; in other words, to show that meaning, intending and being are activities as well as things (nouns).

¹⁶ It is important to distinguish between meaning *of* life and in life. Meaning of life is an objective and structural description, and meaning in life is a more subjective description. Both are in relation to each other.

created by as an active process of interpretation, in which individuals choose and construct certain meanings, directing and reconstructing their direction in their career to suit those chosen meanings. This is what Baumeister calls conferring meaning on things. An important part of the interpretation process is to evaluate and an active construction of career is guided by values and an evaluation of what is a good or a bad life (Baumeister, 1991; Snyder & Lopez, 2005).

Interpreting something means that there is not necessarily one possible meaning, and one possible interpretation. Heidegger (1962) emphasised that every circumstance can have several potential meanings and interpretations, and that the human activity of thinking is about moving through the possibilities of meanings and interpretations. In other words this means that persons' career can have several meanings, and one has to choose some meanings over other meanings, which again means that some possibilities are chosen over other possibilities. In this way some possibilities of constructing meaning must be excluded.

Out from this brief analysis of what might be included in the concept of 'meaning' and 'meaning construction' one can state that these concepts are complex in terms of career. I, as a researcher, cannot define explicitly the content of meaning or the process of meaning construction before the empirical phase of the study. Persons' meaning has to be communicated to others, so that the meaning becomes known. Catching this communication is only possible, by entering into persons' subjectivity in terms of the research topic. This does not mean that I cannot try to operationalise the two concepts in a broad sense. The aim of this theory part is to show how meaning and meaning construction can be operationalised in the career context. By doing so, I will hopefully catch the nuances in the subjective career meaning experience, and as an outcome I will try to define explicitly how persons may construct meaning in terms of their career choices. The following part of the theory is concentrated on the verb 'mean-ing' as a process - meaning construction process and the noun 'meaning'- as the content of it. By focusing on both the verb and the noun, the concept of meaning will be treated holistically, and not dualistically.

2.3 The concept of 'meaning' as a holistic construct

The complexity of the concept 'meaning' has been omitted from both the practice field and the social science research field (Carlsen, 1988; Cochran, 1990; 1997; Peavy, 2005). One could suspect the researchers of eliminating the word 'meaning' from the vocabulary. Carlsen (1988) emphasised the tension between two ways of viewing persons and their development, - the atomistic and the holistic. This way of naming the views could direct one to two different

cultures, which disagree on scientific and humanistic values; that is, objectivism and subjectivism as sources for basic knowledge in the study of behaviour. These different ways of thinking may explain how the concept of 'meaning' has been used in the career research field. The postmodern approaches to career choice and development have used the word meaning and the value of it explicitly in their philosophy, theory and in research (Cochran, 1997; Peavy, 2005) while the opposite approach, positivism, or classical approach has not used the word or the value of it (Holland, 1997; Parson, 1909)¹⁷. This does not indicate that meaning did not exist in the positivistic or classical approach; rather meaning was perhaps used in another way in which the match between the objective personality and the objective environment appropriates meaning to the person. It is also difficult to describe meaning in the classical approach because of its belief in objectivism in terms of meaning construction which is a subjective dimension. Carlsen (1988) and Cochran (1997) argued and emphasised that one should accept the tension between positivistic objective approach and the postmodern subjective approach. 'Meaning' can best be approached as 'both and' not 'either or'; it is the whole and the parts. Just as I am both an individual who has many subsystems and I am a part of groups subsumed by other groups. This is how we can say that meaning flows from one system to another (Carlsen, 1988). To explain this further, the meaning that exists within the group is objective, and when the meaning floats from the group or context to the person the meaning becomes subjective, because the person has interpreted the objective meaning in terms of his or her subjective self. More explicitly, persons are a part of groups with other persons, which might be family, friends, work place, society and diverse culture groups such as interest groups, unions, and religious groups and so on. In other words, the meaning can flow for example from the individual to the mentioned groups and back again as a holistic system, where objective and subjective meaning flows together.

The problem as I see it is that 'meaning' in terms of career choice and development has not been clearly defined or at least there have been few attempts if any to analyse the concept in connection to career, career choice and career development. How can one really understand the concept and understand the importance of meaning in connection to career, career choice and career development without trying to define and analyse it? The impression is that 'meaning' and how one achieves meaning is important, but in my knowledge and search for

¹⁷ Frank Parson's book choosing a vocation has been impossible to obtain. This book is constantly referred to in theory and research about career counselling.

literature in the field, few have attempted to analyse it in terms of career, career choice and career development.

3. Introduction to the process of searching for meaning

The concepts of ‘meaning’ and ‘meaning construction’ are seen as important in human development (May, 1989; Klemke, 2000). This section will be concentrated on the process of searching for meaning. The reason for that is as mentioned above, that in my readings most theoreticians and philosophers do not discuss the content of meaning (what the meaning is), but the process of searching for meaning by using the term ‘meaning’. Frankl (1988) emphasised that what the meaning is, is not important, but how persons achieve the meaning that is important.

In the following section meaning will be discussed in a more general manner regarding persons’ life, even if the context in this research project is career. The aim for this section of theory is to take a standpoint on whether ‘meaning construction’ or ‘finding meaning’ is the correct term to use, not to take a standpoint on persons’ meaning in career. Persons’ meaning in career will be a theme later on in this theory chapter.

In my search for literature about the process of searching for meaning in terms of human development in life generally, I discovered different words explaining the aforementioned theme such as meaning-making, meaning construction, finding meaning, shaping meaning and so on. In the beginning of my literature search and reading I took for granted that the different authors were discussing the same thing just using different words. In further in-depth reading I was surprised that there were actually different and nuanced contents of the theme. This discovery led me to the questions: What does finding meaning actually mean? What does constructing meaning actually mean? Do persons find or construct meaning? How does society influence this process? Further on, in this theory chapter I will discuss these questions in terms to of persons’ life. I will argue for use of the term ‘meaning construction’ in connection to how persons find meaning in their lives and career.

3.1 Finding meaning or constructing meaning

I mentioned in the introduction that there are different nuances in terms of how persons discover their meaning. Through reading literature I have found that the main disagreement is whether meaning is found by the person out in society, or if meaning is constructed by the person in relation to the society (Bulka, 1978a). Both of the definitions can be said to belong to the existential humanistic approach of human development. Victor Frankl (1978) represents

the first definition: meaning is found while the second definition is represented by Rollo May (1983; 1991) among others. In the above mentioned definitions there are many similarities and differences when it comes to the concept of finding or constructing meaning. I will use May, Maslow, Rogers and Sartre to discuss Frankl's perspective. The reason for choosing these authors as "discussion partners" is because they communicated their view of Frankl's theory through a debate in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology in 1966 and 1978, and because Frankl criticised May, Maslow, Rogers and Sartre in his writings.

3.2 Victor Frankl's perspective on finding meaning

The most famous counselling theory about the importance of meaning in human development and choices is represented by Victor Frankl's ideas (1978;2004). I have chosen to give place to his theory in the beginning of this theory chapter, for two reasons. Firstly, he emphasised explicitly the importance of finding meaning and maintaining meaning in persons' life. Secondly, his theory has more recently been explicitly connected to career development, career choices and career counselling (Amundson, 2003a; Chen, 2001; Peavy, 2006).

His theory developed from his own experience in Nazi concentrations camps during the Second World War. This experience was developed later to a counselling theory which was named 'Logotherapy'. The concept 'Logotherapy' comes from the Latin word 'logos', which means meaning. The theory is directed towards the meaning about, and in, persons' existence and their search for finding such meaning (Frankl, 2004). In the concentration camp Frankl (1988) observed persons losing their meaning in life. They also lost their purpose and became damaged physically and mentally that often led to death. This observation led to the hypothesis; finding purpose and meaning in life is the greatest value of humanity. This primary quality in persons is called the 'will to meaning' (Frankl, 2004). Frankl's theory is referred to in an enormous amount of literature on persons and meaning in life generally and in more specific contexts such as career. Below I will discuss and explain Frankl's philosophy on meaning in more depth.

3.2.1 Frankl's philosophy: Will to meaning

Frankl (1978) emphasised that persons are always reaching out for meaning, in other words what he calls 'will to meaning'. To quote Abraham Maslow (1976): "*Meaning is man's primary concern*". Frankl (1978) claims that if we are to bring out human potential at its best we must believe in its existence and its presence. In other words; to think that persons are not capable of finding meaning for themselves in their reality is to underestimate their capabilities.

According to Frankl (1978) there are three possibilities for finding meaning in life (1) *love*, (2) *work*, (3) *suffering and death*. To explain these three possibilities further Frankl uses the distinctions between Homo sapiens and Homo patiens.

Usually, man is seen as the homo sapiens, the clever man who has know-how, who knows how to be a success, how to be a successful businessman, or a successful playboy, that is, how to be successful in making money or in making love. The homo sapiens moves between the positive extreme of success and its negative counterpart, failure (1978, p. 41).

Further he says:

It is different with what I call the homo patiens, the suffering man, the man who knows how to suffer, how to mold even his sufferings into a human achievement. The homo patiens moves on an axis perpendicular to the success/failure axis of the homo sapiens. He moves on an axis which extends between the poles of fulfilment and despair. By fulfilment we understand fulfilment of oneself through the fulfilment of meaning, and by despair, despair over the apparent meaninglessness of one's life (1978, p. 42).

According to Frankl one has to recognise that there are two different dimensions involved in how to understand that on one hand, in spite of success, some persons are caught in despair, while on the other hand some, in spite of failure, have achieved a sense of fulfilment and even happiness because they have found meaning even in suffering

In other words meanings are unique and they are ever-changing, but they are never missing (Frankl, 1978). So in that way life is never lacking a meaning. According to Frankl persons are used to discovering meaning in creating a work, doing a deed, experiencing something, or encountering someone. However, persons must not forget that they also find meaning in life even when they are confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. In that way one is witness to the unique human potential at its best, which is to transform tragedy into personal triumph and to turn it into human achievement; persons are challenged into changing themselves. Frankl acknowledges that the conditions may vary in the degree to which how easy or how difficult it is for persons to find meaning in their lives or to fulfil meaning in a given situation. In that way meaning is available to everyone and life maintains its meaning under any conditions. Frankl adopted this point from Nietzsche; if persons are up for it, they can cope with any experience if they have the capability to find meaning in their existence (Fabry, Bulka, & Sahakian, 1995).

To say this more explicitly; even though persons can experience something tragic, they have the capacity to discover meaning. This capacity points to the person's ability to find meaning for their selves, even in a hopeless situation. This way of viewing persons' capacity is something May (1969) also agrees upon, when he states that persons have the ability to search in their selves and to find meaning in their reality. What May (1978) disagrees with Frankl

about is how this capacity is related to meaning. According to Frankl the capacity is related externally to the society, in terms of finding meaning out in the objective world, while May relates persons' capacity to their selves, the subjective self. In this argumentation it seems that May has more trust in persons searching for meaning than Frankl has when he highlights the subjective self as the capacity to search for meaning.

It seems to me that Frankl (1978) ranks the meaning that persons find higher than persons themselves; meaning is something that lies out there in persons' context of living, and it is up to them with their capacities to find it. This interpretation is something that Frankl (1966) confirms when he says that to change oneself often means rising above oneself and growing beyond oneself. This is what he calls the secret of life's unconditional meaningfulness which gives the possibility of finding meaning in life, even in suffering and death. The philosopher Max Scheler pointed out that everything that surrounds persons are objects, and for persons to find meaning in those specific objects one has to rise above one self (Frings, 1996). This thought Frankl adopted from Scheler when he states that meaning is higher than the person. More explicitly, in my interpretation, Frankl does say that meaning is something independent that has a higher position, than persons themselves in their context. May (1978) would not agree with Scheler and Frankl's perspective on meaning, as he states that meaning is something subjective that lies within the person and not something higher outside of the person. Further May states that it is only up to the person to construct meaning for themselves in their society or context. The questions I ask are then: How can Frankl say that persons have to rise above themselves to find meaning? Shouldn't persons look in their selves and construct meaning in terms of what they experience and not from what lies out in society? Who is responsible for finding the meaning? Who decides what type of meaning is best for the person?

Frankl (1988) states that the definition of meaning is dependent upon what exists, so in that way he defines meaning as what is meant by a person who asks the question, or by a situation which implies a question and expects an answer. To put it in another way, the person is free to answer the question he has asked about his life, but this must not be confused with coincidence and it must be interpreted in terms of responsibility. In other words, the question about meaning in life must be reflected upon, and not be something that just happened as a coincidence, without taking responsibility. The person is responsible for giving the right answer to a question, for finding the true meaning of a situation, and meaning is something to be found rather than to be given, discovered rather than invented. This distinction between if

meaning is found or invented is expressed and discussed by Frankl and Sartre. The similarity between Sartre (2003) and Frankl (1988) is that they emphasise that the search for meaning lies within the persons' responsibility to find meaning, and every situation has a meaning; one right meaning for each person. The difference between Frankl and Sartre is whether meaning is invented or discovered by the person in a situation. Frankl emphasises that the meaning is not invented by the person, but it is found by persons' search for meaning in relation to the world outside. Sartre highlights that meaning is invented by the person in every situation. Frankl criticised Sartre for misinterpreting existentialism by stating that; persons do not invent meaning.

The above mentioned thoughts by Frankl and questions I ask are closely aligned with what existentialism believes in; persons' capacity, optimism and affirmation of life acknowledging the reality of values and of meaningful existence. According to Frankl, life is worth living in terms of the meanings and values of the individual. Further Frankl states that whether or not any circumstances have an influence on a person, and whatever direction this influence may take, it all depends on the individual free choice. Persons are also responsible for discovering meanings in the reality they live and exist in, and not simply for "inventing" meanings in an objectively meaningless existence, as Sartre recommends. More explicitly, Sartre emphasised that persons should invent meaning for themselves in their reality and not to find meaning in their reality they live in (Fabry, Bulka, & Sahakian, 1995).

Together with freedom and responsibility in terms of finding meaning, the concept of values is important in Frankl's theory. He emphasised that meaningful experiences often are true for a specific individual; some are shared universally by all people and are called values. In other words persons are responsible and have the freedom for finding meaning in the objective value based world.

So far I have introduced the main features in Frankl's philosophy on meaning. These features are: 1. Persons find meaning in society, 2. Persons will to meaning, 3. Meaning is higher than persons' selves, 4. Persons can find meaning under any circumstance, 5. Freedom and responsibility, 6. Values. I will go into more depth about Frankl's core concept of finding meaning: trans-subjectivity and discuss it out from 1. Beyond subjectivity and dualism, 2. Will to meaning: self-fulfilment or self-actualisation, 3. Meaning and value, and 4. Freedom and responsibility.

3.2.2 Trans-subjectivity: the core of finding meaning or pure subjectivity: the core of constructing meaning

Frankl uses the concept of person's trans-subjectivity to explain the core of finding meaning in their life. In terms of the person's trans-subjectivity or their ability to find meaning, the concept of existence is important in Logotherapy. Frankl (1988) emphasises that persons' existence is not only intentional but also transcendent. He explains this further by saying that persons are directed to something other than themselves; which is what makes them human. This means that this otherness is what human behaviour is pointing towards, or what Frankl calls the otherness of the intentional act. According to Frankl this perspective on existence constitutes the trans-subjective person (Pytell, 2006). This attention towards the concept of the trans-subjective person led to a major criticism towards the American humanistic psychology¹⁸ movement represented mainly by Rollo May.

Frankl's negative attitude towards the existential psychology movement can be quite hard to understand. In my interpretation of the criticism in terms of Frankl's theory on finding meaning; the criticism was directed towards the well-known distinction between subjectivity and objectivity in terms of persons' existence and meaning. I will further on go more into depth, into Frankl's criticism and try and define what he means by 'trans-subjectiveness' in terms of persons' existence.

3.2.3 Beyond subjectivity and duality

Frankl was very critical towards the existentialist approach, even though he defined himself into the existential approach. Because of the influence of existentialism the emphasis on persons' existence has been placed upon their subjectivity (Frankl, 1988). According to Frankl this is a misinterpretation of existentialism. Together with his criticism Frankl presented an alternative theory called 'dimensional ontology' or 'Logotherapy' which is about persons' existence in terms of their capability to find meaning in life.

Frankl's goal for his theory was to overcome existential subjectivism by emphasising the importance of the wholeness of the person. In other words he criticised the existentialists firstly for the subjectivist approach and secondly for overlooking the dualist mind-body problematic in human psyche. More explicitly, Frankl tried to deal with the dualist problematic by underlining the importance of viewing the person in holistic terms. By this I would say that Frankl agreed with the mainstream existentialist view in that the person must be seen as a whole person, and disagreeing with them in not taking the mind-body dualism

¹⁸ In my opinion, Frankl does not distinguish between humanistic psychology and existential psychology. I will treat them as having the same perspective, by using the term existentialism.

seriously. In an attempt to deal with this dualist problematic he tried to give an alternative view of the person's psyche:

(...) I am speaking of dimensions and not, as has formally and generally been done, of layers of being....This means that we no longer speak of physical, psychical, and spiritual layers, because as long as we do so it appears that the layers could be separated from one and another. On the other hand, if we try to understand the body, psyche, and the mind as different dimensions of one and the same being, its wholeness is not in the least destroyed. Such a dimensional interpretation refrains from seeing the whole phenomenon as though it were composed of many elements (Frankl, 1967, p. 135).

This dimensional view of the person's psyche is what represents the trans-subjective person that May criticised.

According to May (1969) existentialism can nullify the subject-object dualism that Frankl stressed. May was convinced that Frankl's dichotomy was false, because objective meanings did not exist outside the subject, the person, from whom all meaning starts and is projected on to something. Also he claimed that Frankl's trans-subjective approach was authoritarian in its way of treating meaning higher than the person. May's interpretation of Logotherapy was that if meaning is trans-subjective with the aim of finding meaning outside in the objective world and not something within persons from the beginning, it seemed authoritarian. In my opinion May was right that Frankl's theory seemed authoritarian, because he emphasised that self-transcendent meaning was something higher than the person who was finding it. Further Frankl emphasised that the self-transcendent meaning becomes the ideal to search for.

According to Frankl (1988) the tension between self-transcendent meaning and persons is the same tension as between '*I am*' and '*I ought*', between reality and ideal, between being and meaning. More explicitly, this implies that '*I am*' is the person (subjectivity) and '*I ought*' is *self-transcendence*. For persons to search for self-transcendent meaning they have to shift the focus to '*I ought*', or the ideal. If this tension is to be accounted for, *meaning* has to be prevented from being seen as the same as *being or subjectivity*. This distinction between being and meaning was the complete opposite of what May looked upon as meaning. May emphasised that meaning was being, because meaning mirrored the subjective being (May, 1969). This means that what is meaningful to the person, explains who the person is (I am). More explicitly, I construct meaning for myself; therefore what is meaningful for me determines who I am.

Further, Frankl (1988) emphasises that it is the meaning of meaning that sets the pace of being, and being human means facing the meaning of fulfilment¹⁹, and the value of realising meaning in life. This means that persons live in the polarity of the tension established between reality and ideals to realise. Frankl meant by this that the knowledge that comes through the tension between reality (values) and ideals is what is realised. In other words Frankl meant that reality is value based, and therefore persons' existence is value based. Human existence is not authentic unless it is lived by ideals and values; which are self-transcendent. The danger according to Frankl is that persons' natural concern with meaning and values is threatened by subjectivism and relativism. The latter concepts have the capability of threatening idealism and enthusiasm because subjectivism and relativism do not concern the trans-subjective meaning, or what Frankl (1988) calls real meaning, which implies otherness. In other words, Frankl outlined that the so-called subjectivists did not include the otherness in terms of finding meaning. One could ask the question: doesn't subjective meaning imply otherness? May (1978) meant that Frankl misinterpreted the existentialists (subjectivists). May argued that being subjective means taking the context into account: every person stand in relation to each other, and it is in this relationship that persons construct meaning.

In his disagreement with May in terms of how meaning is reached Frankl (1988) tried to nuance his perspective. He had no objection over replacing the term objective with the term trans-subjective. He states that this does not make a difference, nor does it make a difference speaking of things or meanings, they are both trans-subjective. This trans-subjectivity is aligned with the construct of self-transcendence. Persons are transcending themselves towards meaning that is something other than them and is more than mere expressions of their selves which means that meanings are discovered but not invented. This meaning discovery is what Frankl calls the capacity of the self-transcendent person, which means that persons have the capability to discover meaning by looking to the external world. This implies that the meaning discovery is not then a closed system in just containing the single person, but it includes something more than the individual. This implies that being human means to be open to the world with other persons to encounter who have meanings to fulfil. According to Frankl, this process involves a fulfilment of meaning rather than a fulfilment of the self.

In this way Frankl distinguishes between self-actualisation and fulfilment. He points out that self-actualisation contradicts the self-transcending quality of human existence. More

¹⁹ Frankl defines the meaning of fulfilment as the goal for human beings. This means that persons should strive to fulfil their lives with meaning, and when they are fulfilled with meaning they have a fulfilled life.

explicitly, Frankl meant that self-actualisation is a subjective process of human existence, which is false, and persons self-transcending quality is a more true to the actuality of human existence. Also Frankl looks upon the self-actualisation process as an effect of meaning fulfilment; by fulfilling meaning out in the world, persons fulfil themselves. This focus on the external world is the otherness which human behaviour is pointing towards; therefore persons are self-transcendent and not only subjective. Self-transcendence is the essence of existence. Frankl argues for this view by emphasising that human existence is not authentic unless it is lived in terms of self-transcendence. This means that being human is about being engaged in a situation and confronted with the world where objectivity and reality is in no way detracted from the subjectivity of that being that acts in the world (Frankl, 1966). Kvalsund (2003) asks the question whether the objective world acts on the subjective self as a negotiation, or do the subjective and the objective relationships happen at the same time. More explicitly; a person's relationship to his or her self and the world, is not either or, but a relationship where meaning flows from the person to the objective surroundings where other persons exist, and back again to the person as a relationship. According to Frankl (1966) the subjective acts on the objective, so in that way the objective world is related higher than the subjective self in terms of finding meaning. Kvalsund (2003) and Frankl's perspective are very similar, where both agrees upon the relationship between the subjective being and objective surroundings as a basis for finding meaning, and for self-transcendence. Kvalsund and Frankl emphasised that the subjective being needs to negotiate with oneself and transcend in relation to the objective world, for being able to understand the otherness, and thereby understand one self to find meaning for oneself. To understand the otherness implies understanding what exists out in the objective world. What distinguishes Frankl and Kvalsund is the understanding of what the objective world is. Kvalsund understands the objective world as others persons, that exists in the persons community, but Frankl understands the objective world in a more structural manner, where he doesn't talk specifically about other persons, but rather everything that exists outside in the objective valued world.

I mentioned above barely the discussion about self-fulfilment and self-actualisation in terms of self-transcendence. In terms of the concept of self-actualisation or self-fulfilment in relation of meaning it would be relevant to say something about the controversy between Frankl and Maslow. The controversy contained the same elements as the one between Frankl and May; between objective and subjective meaning (Pytell, 2006). Frankl (1966) claimed that Maslow (1962) had a too relativistic approach that did not include self-transcendence.

However, he did agree with Maslow in terms of the importance of will to meaning. He explained this by saying that persons' will to meaning is the same thing as persons' need for self-actualisation. In contrast to May, Maslow tried to take Frankl's criticism into his theory, and see what the concept of 'self-transcendence' contributed to:

Those people in our society selected out as self-actualization practically always have a mission in life, a task which they love and have identified with and which becomes a defining characteristic of the self.....this descriptive fact can be called self-actualization, authenticity, fulfilment, the achievement of meaning, self-transcendence, finding one self, the unitive life, or other names (Maslow, 1966, p. 110).

Further Maslow emphasised that he and Frankl agreed on a lot, the main difference was that they used different words. However, Maslow also highlighted that it is only when persons have accomplished the basic needs such as food and materialistic things that they can be self-transcendent, and realise higher values, such as a calling. Maslow believes in self-transcendence, but it must be constructed out from the person just like May highlighted, and after the basic needs and values have been accomplished. More explicitly, the subjective person needs to accomplish satisfying some basic needs before the dualistic subject – object can be exceeded by realising higher values.

So how do persons approach this dualistic subject-object view of meaning? Has it something to do with interpretation? Frankl (1988) agrees with May (1978) that meanings are a matter of interpretation when it comes to the final analysis, that the interpretation always implies a decision, and, that situations allow for a variety of interpretations among which one has to make a choice. This view of meaning is closely aligned with May, where the emphasis is on meaning as self-expression that is subjectively constructed. However, the only thing that is subjective according to Frankl is the perspective through which persons approach reality and this subjectivity does not diminish the objectivity of reality. To exemplify this distinction Frankl used the kaleidoscope and telescope as metaphors. According to Frankl human cognition is not of kaleidoscopic nature. If one looks into a kaleidoscope one only sees what is inside of the kaleidoscope itself, and if one looks through a telescope one sees something which is outside of the telescope itself. More explicitly, if a person looks at the world or a thing in the world without the telescope, the person also sees more than the perspective one thought one should see. What is seen through the perspective is an objective world, however subjective the perspective may be. Below I will discuss Frankl's perspective on the value based objective world.

3.2.4 Meaning and value

I have already mentioned the self-transcendent capacity in persons for finding meaning as an important aspect of the will to meaning. The self-transcendent meaning in Frankl's Logotherapy is connected to something else than the subjective person, instead it is connected to what Frankl calls the otherness. This otherness is directed to the value system that exists outside the subjective person in society. One could ask the question in what way is society outside the person? What Frankl meant was that the otherness in society did not exist within the person but surrounds them in their environment. This is something May did not agree upon. In a dialogue with Rogers (1989), May asked the question: "*who makes up the culture except persons like you and me? (1989, p. 241)*". In other words May emphasised that the culture or the world that surrounds persons contains persons and therefore it is not objective; persons are subjective. More explicitly; there is no such thing as an objective world outside persons; the environment is within subjective persons all the time, because they are always in relation to somebody; persons do not stand by themselves in a vacuum. Therefore subjective is also relational. On the other hand, Frankl emphasised that the culture was value based, and something outside the person.

A relevant question to ask is: what is the connection between values and finding meaning in Frankl's theory? And why is that important. I will try to discuss this link down below.

Frankl (1988) argues against the mechanical definition of meaning and values as reaction formations and defence mechanisms. He states that, "*I would not be willing to live for the sake of my reaction formations, even less to die for the sake of my defence mechanisms*" (p. 54). He asks the question of whether meanings and values can be as relative and subjective, as May believes them to be. Frankl speaks of this in the context of uniqueness rather than relativity of meanings. Uniqueness is a quality of life as a whole since life is a sequence of unique situations and not only of a situation. Persons are unique in terms of both essence and existence.

No one can be replaced – by virtue of the uniqueness of each man's essence. And each man's life is unique in that no one can repeat it – by virtue of uniqueness of his existence. Sooner or later his life will be over for ever, together with all the unique opportunities to fulfil the meanings (Frankl, 1988, p. 54-55).

Questions such as: If I don't do it, who will do it? And If I don't do it right now, when should I do it? But if I do it for my own sake only, what am I?, refer to the uniqueness of persons' own self, which gives persons an opportunity to fulfil a meaning and realise the self-transcendent quality of human existence. When it comes to human existence, it needs to

transcend itself and reach out for something other than itself, because unless persons find meaning and purpose in life, they would stagnate and feel unhappy. The question: who decides what is unique or not becomes relevant to ask? Is it not up to the individual, and not something or somebody else? Is it really possible that something else than the person can decide what meanings are unique (Rogers, 1980).

Viktor Frankl (1988) states that there is no such thing as a universal meaning of life, but only the unique meanings of the individual situations, but we must not forget that among these situations there are also situations which have something in common and there are also meanings which are shared by persons across society and even more throughout history. These meanings refer to the human condition rather than the unique situation and these meanings are understood as values. More explicitly, Frankl distinguishes between personal unique values and values of the society. Personal unique values are the unique meanings for the person. Therefore according to Frankl one can define values as those universal meanings which are crystallised in the typical situation a society or even humanity has to face. Such values can be for example in a career context: earning a lot of money, because the objective world or society has crystallised that value as an important one for the person. This can also be looked upon as a relief for persons because the career choice is based on the objective values, rather than unique meanings.

Further Frankl (1988) emphasises that persons have to pay for this relief because in contrast to unique meanings, which are uniquely experienced, two values can be in opposition to each other. For example earning a lot of money in their career or valuing other things than money in their career. These value collisions are mirrored in the human psyche, in the construct of value conflicts that play a part in the notions of meaning and finding meaning.

Frankl explains this value conflict by saying that the unique meanings are dots, while values are circles (see figure 1 down below).

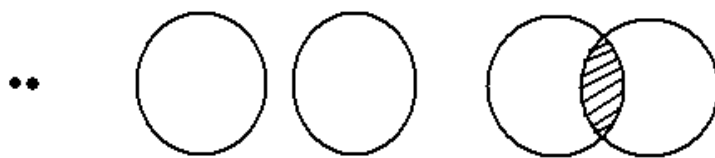


Figure 1: Value conflict (Frankl, 1988, p. 56)

This figure (figure 1) shows that values may overlap with one another and that this cannot happen to unique meanings (Frankl, 1988). The two dots visualise unique meanings and the first two circles depict values that can arise in persons' existence and the two other circles show overlapping values. But one must ask whether two values can stand in conflict with one another, in other words, if the equivalence of the two dimensional circles is correct. Frankl asks the question: would it not be more correct to compare values with three-dimensional spheres. This is shown in figure 2 below.

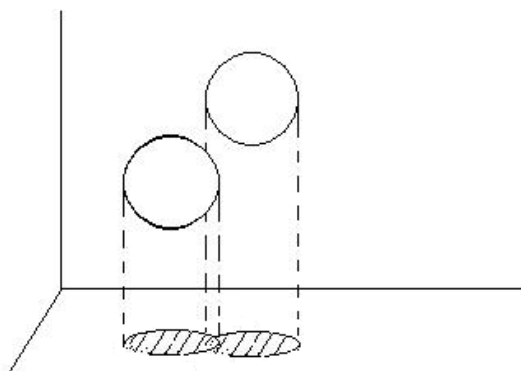


Figure 2: Three dimensional spheres (Frankl, 1988, p. 57)

Figure 2 shows two two-dimensional circles overlapping one another, but the spheres themselves do not touch one another. The idea that two values stand in conflict with one another is a consequence of the whole dimensionality being ignored (Frankl, 1988). This dimensionality is a hierarchical order of values which means preferring one value to another, which is the final result of the valuing process. So the experience of one value includes the experience that it ranks higher than the other, which means that there is no place for value conflict. More explicitly, if a person discovers two types of values in the objective world which are earning a lot of money in their career, or contributing to the society with a specific talent which does not pay well moneywise, the person have to find which one is more meaningful to follow, not in terms that the values are standing in conflict, but what is more meaningful to the person.

In this manner Frankl (1988) says that it is up to the person to decide whether the values are unique meanings for them and does not belong to somebody else. This experience of a hierarchical order of values does not free persons from decision making. Persons are free to accept or reject the value they are offered in a context. The values still have to go through the test of persons' conscience unless the person refuses to obey his conscience and suppresses it. In other words persons have the freedom to decide which values are found meaningful to

them, and in that way values become unique meanings to them. Further on I will discuss the term freedom in terms of Frankl's theory.

3.2.5 Freedom: Humans as responsible free beings for finding meaning

As mentioned above, in Frankl's (1988) perspective on meaning the importance of will to meaning is emphasised. In addition, if there is a will to meaning in persons' life, he argues that there also has to exist a freedom to undertake the task of fulfilling that meaning.

Logotherapy is an optimistic approach to life in which there are no tragic and negative aspects which cannot be transformed into positive accomplishments; a person's life depends on how the person views it. Persons are capable of shaping and reshaping themselves and it is a privilege of persons to find a meaningful life rather than not having a meaningful life and it is their responsibility to overcome the meaningless in their experience so that they achieve a meaningful experience in life (Frankl, 1988). Persons' awareness about their freedom and responsibility is a necessity in terms of achieving meaning in their life. So the question I ask in terms of freedom and responsibility is: In what way are Frankl's terms of freedom and responsibility connected to each other? Frankl explains this link between responsibility and freedom in the following way: persons should not just ask about the meaning of life, which they have the freedom to do, but also try to answer it when they take responsibility for their lives (Hadrup, 1979). The answer is not supposed to be expressed in words only, but also in action. One could wonder if words can also be actions, since words can influence and create feelings and reactions and so forth. I don't think Frankl would disagree about that, but that the answer to the question about meaning should be given in daily life, which is where persons' responsibility takes place (Frankl, 1988). In other words, human beings have the freedom to ask the question about meaning in life, but it is only through their responsibility by answering the question in their environment that makes them discover real meaning.

The further question I would ask is: how does this view of freedom and responsibility in terms of giving answers in action distinguish from the existentialist view of meaning and persons' freedom that May represented? May and Frankl agree philosophically that the existentialist worldview is based on freedom, and that freedom must be interpreted in terms of responsibility. They also agree upon that freedom functions as a potential to be actualised, rather than something which just is. In this way the concept of freedom can be seen as a dynamic concept because if freedom is actualised and not just is means that the concept of freedom must point towards something and not away from something. This means generally that for persons to acknowledge their freedom in their life to achieve meaning, they must take

responsibility to acknowledge their freedom towards the external reality they as persons are a part of. In other words, persons' freedom is pointed towards their external reality, and not away from their environment. One could ask the question don't persons have to free themselves from something to free themselves toward something? More specifically, to free themselves from something to free themselves toward something could simply mean that persons acknowledge and take responsibility for their freedom, to make a new meaningful choice in life in relation to their surroundings that is more meaningful than the former choice that they felt obliged to stand by, so that their life becomes more fulfilled with meaning. In this persons free themselves from the former choice and take responsibility to free themselves towards something that is more meaningful for them. These similarities between May and Frankl's existentialist view does not mean that their views are identical (Bulka, 1978a).

In contrast to Frankl, May (Schneider & May, 1995) views freedom as a kind of confrontation with the self in a here and now perspective. To explain this further May linked freedom and responsibility to the subjective person who decides for him or herself what meaning is important. Persons have responsibility to construct what meaning that is important for them. So May stresses that by confronting the self, persons have the freedom and responsibility to construct meaning. Frankl links freedom to the future and the present (Bulka, 1978a). This means that Frankl's freedom transcends the here and now experience to be a positive and optimistic attitude encouraging the focus on meaning and values waiting to be actualised out in the world. In this way, Logotherapy is a future oriented approach with focus on values and freedom, and not digging into the past and the self.

So it would not be wrong to say that Frankl views values and freedom of choice as a necessity for persons to find meaning, and May views freedom in terms of persons' self in the here and now as a necessity to construct meaning. As a summary one could say that Frankl's view of freedom and responsibility is limited to the meanings and values that exist outside one's self; meanings are not relative because they are given out in the objective world, but what the person decides as meaningful must be unique to the person. On the other side, May's view on responsibility and freedom is related to persons' self and the here and now situation and the meaning for persons could be anything in relation to their culture. Since freedom and responsibility are only determined by the person and not by the surroundings, freedom and responsibility are subjective constructions. So I ask: Is it more appropriate to use the term finding or constructing meaning? I will try and answer that question.

3.2.6 Summary: Finding meaning or constructing meaning?

The main purpose of Frankl's (1988) theory is to show the importance of meaning in persons' life, how it is possible to achieve such meaning, and what other significant features in persons' life interact with the concept of meaning. Frankl emphasises that meaning in a person's life is important for surviving and for having a purposive life. To achieve this, persons need to leave their subjectivity and direct their attention outwards; in a trans-subjective process towards their reality, the objective valued world. This implies that persons are responsible for their own search for meaning, and are free to find the meaning in their lives. In other words, Frankl emphasises that persons find meaning in relation to the objective valued reality, and not by constructing it in terms of their self.

May (Schneider & May, 1995) challenge this view, emphasising a more relational view, where persons construct meaning in terms of their self in relation to their culture. In other words, May had a subjective view of how persons search for meaning in relation to their living context. More explicitly, persons subjectively construct their meaning in relation to their context and do not find it in the objective valued world. Both Frankl and May agreed upon the concepts of responsibility and freedom; that persons have the freedom and the responsibility to search for meaning, although they have different views of the process and direction to obtain it.

One could ask what the difference between Frankl and May is if both emphasise the person's surroundings in terms of meaning. My interpretation is that May underlines that the surrounding consists of and is constituted by persons, and we should trust persons to construct meaning in relation to their environment. Frankl underlines objective valued world, and that the trust is more in the environment rather than in the person. In a way, May is more relational than Frankl, because Frankl emphasises that persons must rise above themselves and go into the objective world to find meaning, and not in relation to the objective world. This means that Frankl ranks the objective world higher than the person's subjectivity. More explicitly, Frankl does not look upon the objective world and the person as a relationship, but as to separate parts and May looks upon the relationship between the subjective person and their surroundings as equal for achieving meaning.

Further in this theory part of my dissertation I would like to use a mix of Frankl's perspective on finding meaning and May's perspective of constructing meaning. I believe that persons both construct and find meaning in their reality. The most positive with Frankl's theory is that he acknowledged the importance of the world outside the self. The perspective that I disagree

with is that persons have to rise above themselves to be able to find meaning in their environment. In other words I believe that persons construct meaning out from their selves in relation to reality, and not out from the objective world in relation to their self. In constructing meaning as May states it, persons construct possible meanings in relation to their self and their surroundings, and as a result find meaning, as Frankl states it. One can say that meaning construction is the beginning of the process and finding meaning is the end of the process. Therefore I will use the concept of meaning construction, because that is what starts the whole process of discovering meaning, and it shows that this process requires that persons are active in constructing career meaning out from themselves and in relation to the world they live in.

From now on in the theory part of my dissertation, I will use Frankl's (1988) theory in an implicit and not explicit way. As mentioned the aim for giving place to Frankl's perspectives and May's perspectives was to take a standpoint whether finding meaning or constructing meaning is the correct term to use further on in this dissertation. Most of Frankl's theory and May's (1989) perspective will be used implicitly in the meaning construction part of my theory. By this I mean, that their focus on meaning as a necessity for human development and choice as well as the environment that surrounds the person as important for the meaning that they find, will be implicit in terms of subjective, objective and relational meaning construction.

Even though so far I have had most focus on the process of achieving meaning, I will also focus on the content of it. According to Frankl (Hadrup, 1979) the 'who' that finds something and where it is found is more important than 'what' is found. In this way Frankl emphasises more the process than the content. I believe that persons need a balance of the process and the content. First, I will focus on meaning construction then I will focus on the actual meaning, namely the career meaning.

The next part of my theory will contain what types of different meaning constructions are there in persons' reality. Even though I have stated that it is the person that is constructing meaning for themselves, and not anybody else, there is a source to such knowledge. In presenting the different kinds of meaning constructions, I will firstly, connect meaning construction to human life in generally, and then transfer these perspectives into the context of career. I will further discuss the different sources of knowledge for career meaning construction in persons' career and reality, namely, objective, subjective and relational career meaning construction.

4. Meaning: where is it constructed?

4.1 Reality and meaning: questioning persons' reality

In exploring the concept of where meaning is constructed it is natural to bring in the concept of 'life' and 'reality'. Persons' reality occurs where meaning rises and is constructed (Baumeister, 1991; Burr, 2003; Frankl, 1978; Gergen, 1991). According to Baumeister (1991) among others reality and meaning can be defined in two perspectives²⁰, which correlate to natural science and social science. The first perspective can be explained in a physical matter like trees, mountains, water, houses and so on. They are concrete objects, which are objective, physical and real. The physical world is built up by natural science, in terms of atoms, molecules and it follows certain natural laws.

The second category of reality is subjective meaning construction, which has most relevance in this context. Since this perspective of reality is subjective it is relevant to ask the question: What is subjectivity? Roughly defined a person's subjectivity is their internal frame of reference (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). This implies that self-reference is what is personal to the individual, which means what a person feels, thinks, imagines and dreams of (Oxford english dictionary, 2006). So in this context subjective meaning is connected to a person's internal frame of reference and consciousness (Politikens filosofi leksikon, 2006). Then a central question is what kind of subjective meaning is real? How can one evaluate what is real and not real? Subjective meaning is not the same as physical meaning or reality as explained above.

In this connection it is relevant to briefly come into the concept of life. There is no doubt that the concept of life is physical and is a result of natural, biological processes. Life is made up of atoms, molecules, cells etc., and it follows natural laws (Baumeister, 1991). Baumeister claims that life is perfectly capable of developing without meaning. Without meaning natural motivations are the only factors that influence the person's behaviour. A meaningless life is lived from day to day; maintaining survival, searching for food, nourishment and pleasure and avoiding discomfort, without the person's subjectivity explicitly involved in fulfilling these natural needs. Meaningful lives have the same pattern and motivations. Meaning "goes over" these natural motivations, but it must start from them. This means that the natural motivations are a basis for the meaning construction where persons have an intention to try to find more than for example food nourishment. Existential theorists such as Frankl (1988) and

²⁰ It is important to note that in Baumeister (1991) the distinctions between meaning, life and reality are integrated into one concept, but I will be distinguishing between them for the purpose of this dissertation.

Kierkegaard (1978) would disagree with this perspective and argue that persons construct or find meaning into their life as they develop and experience. For some persons maintaining survival is meaningful for them; others can be avoiding discomfort. They might not have a deeper purpose in life, but they do construct meaning into their life. So in Frankl's perspective persons can't live or they don't exist without meaning.

The distinction between the subjective and universal/objective meaning in reality is according to Holmberg (1994) too simple, and does not give enough direction to what meaning construction in life is actually about. Below I will explain in more depth Holmberg's perspective on meaning.

4.2 Modes of meaning in life: Ontological, objective and subjective meaning

Often when meaning is discussed and explained it is in the context of life as I mentioned above. In terms of different modes of meaning, Holmberg uses the term meaning as a blend of the verb and the noun. In my interpretation of his understanding of the term meaning he does not differentiate between the content of meaning and meaning construction. I have chosen to use his theory in terms of different modes of meaning construction, and not the content part, which will be taken up in terms of the career meaning. When I am presenting Holmberg's perspectives on modes of meaning in life, I will mostly use the terms meaning, and not meaning construction. How Holmberg's perspectives can be transferred into career meaning construction, I will discuss later.

Holmberg (1994) argues for differentiated modes of meaning that one can have in mind regarding a meaningful life. Traditionally as mentioned in debating the question about meaning the concept has been divided into two interconnected parts: universal meaning and subjective meaning. The universal meaning concern such questions as, why does something exist, does it have a purpose, why specific things exist and not others, for example. The subjective meaning concerns such questions as why do I exist, what is my purpose, do I have one, for example. Holmberg argues that this kind of dividing is not directed enough; it only points from the general to the individual. This is why some researchers emphasise that the meaning question is not of any value as a research enterprise. On behalf of the criticism Holmberg made according to the traditional way of concretising meaning, he constructed an alternative way of understanding the process of constructing meaning according to life; by dividing the meaning construction concept into different discourses: ontological, objective and subjective meaning.

4.3 Three steps of meaning mode

Figure 3 visualises how the three ‘modes of meaning’ can be related to three different ‘connotations of life’. The staircase firstly points towards individual life as subjectively meaning based. Secondly, human life is objectively meaning based. Thirdly, cosmic life is ontologically meaning based. Reflecting about me as an individual that is constructing subjective meaning is the first step in the stairs. Further, the second step in the staircase is more distant to me, which means that I am reflecting and constructing meaning out from my culture for example and not in my individual context. The third step in the staircase is more distant to me; where I construct meaning based cosmic life and on ontological knowledge.

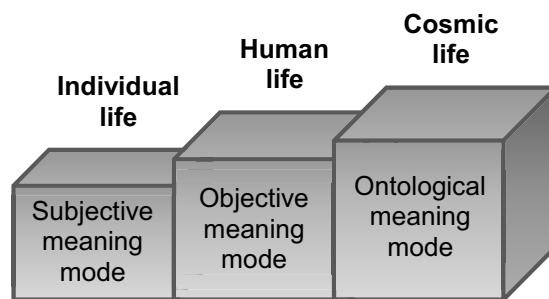


Figure 3: Relationship between life and meaning

In general one can wonder if Holmberg’s classification of different meaning modes is an attempt to classify the ontology of meaning, and one can wonder why he has only named meaning in terms of cosmos life as ontological. Generally, Ontology is defined as:

”science of ‘what is’, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes and relations in every area of reality...Ontology seeks to provide a definitive and exhaustive classification of entities in all spheres of being. The classification should be definitive in the sense that it can serve as an answer to such questions as: What classes of entities are needed for a complete description and explanation of all the goings-on in the universe? Or: what classes of entities are needed to give an account of what makes true all truths? It should be an exhaustive in the sense that all types of entities should be included in the classification, including also types of relations by which entities are tied together to form larger wholes” (Smith, 2003, p. 155).

Holmberg seeks to classify what kind of meaning modes might there exist in persons reality, and how these meaning modes affect persons meaning construction phases. In other words, he seeks to categorise classes of entities that are needed to describe and explain the concept of meaning in the universe. These classes of meaning entities are: subjective, objective and ontological. In terms of the definition of ontology and the purpose of classifying an ontology mentioned in the quote above, one could define Holmberg’s discourse of meaning mode as an ontology of meaning.

But can each meaning mode also be categorized as an ontological perspective. In terms of what Smith (2003) defines as ontology in the quote mentioned above, it is possible in my opinion to look at subjective, objective and ontological meaning as three different ontologies. In Smith's definition of ontology, the central concepts are reality, being and classification of entities in reality. To define what ontology can be classified as or not be classified as, one should in my opinion look at the questions: what is reality, what is meant by being and classification of entities. If the meaning construction reality is subjective, and being is subjective then that view of reality truth points to a description and explanation for what goes on in the universe of meaning construction, and therefore can be categorized as a single ontology. The same would then apply for objective and ontological meaning. In other words, in terms of Holmberg classification, it is possible in my opinion to classify each of the meaning modes, into three different ontological discourses.

So why has he only defined one of the meaning modes as ontological. As mentioned he sees different life connotations in terms of the different meaning modes: individual life, human life and cosmic life. Holmberg (1994) relates cosmic life to ontological meaning. In my interpretation cosmic life in Holmberg's terms, are defined in terms of metaphysics, more specifically metaphysical cosmology. In metaphysic, cosmic life is considered as the universe. Further cosmic life deals with questions about the universe, which are not addressed in science. For example questions such as does existence of consciousness have a purpose, does the universe have a cause or a purpose? Therefore I would suggest that the reason for why Holmberg defines one of the meaning modes as ontological is because that meaning mode is clearly related to metaphysics, and in metaphysics cosmic life is a central dimension.

Ontological meaning is a kind of meaning that is given in reality (Holmberg, 1994). It exists and is valid independent of persons' collective activities, concerns, convictions, experiences, wishes and desires. This kind of explanation or definition of meaning is metaphysically cosmic. In other words ontological meaning is defined strictly objective, and could have been named metaphysical meaning (Holmberg, 1994).

To relate meaning to cosmic life we have to suppose that meaning is ontologically given. According to Holmberg (1994) this is the only way that one can understand cosmic life as meaningful, at least in a theoretical meaning matter. Does the cosmos impose on us?, is a question one could ask, and if the question is yes one could say that it is an experience of meaning. This kind of meaning exists as a phenomenological matter on the subjective level. Holmberg emphasises that if the cosmos exists independent of everything else and has its own

experiences through the existence of persons; it would be difficult to say whether it is the meaning of cosmic life experience itself or whether it is a persons' life experience. In other words, as far as we know, cosmos itself is meaningful through the experience and existence of persons. This means that if cosmic life is meaningful, then it is an ontologically given meaning that stands in relation to the meaning ascribed to the human and individual life. The different modes of meaning are both independent and interdependent upon each other; and this means that when the cosmic life is meaningful it is also meaningful in the individual and human life and vice versa. Even though they are standing quite close, it is possible to distinguish between those different modes of meaning, and that is why they can also be looked upon as independent meaning constructs. The meaning one tries to actualise in one's personal life must not counter the meaning one ascribes to life in general, claims Holmberg, and coherence must be strived for.

Objective meaning is a type of meaning that is proposed and supposed or approved of by a specific group in a specific society. This type of group can be developed in a certain culture, social group or by an ideology or religion. In a general form, this type of meaning is in some sense objective; the group meaning acknowledges a specific meaning related to involved persons as a whole. If one sees human life as meaningful, and that meaning is thought of in general, for example, if all persons have the same final cause, then that meaning is objective (Holmberg, 1994). This means that if persons choose this objective meaning perspective for the whole of humanity, this meaning must be regulative for the subjective meaning that the individual may find. If the meaning is regulated by a cultural group or by sociological deviations, then the specific group will regulate the individual's meaning. If the individual is to have meaning in his or her subjective life, one does not need anything else than a meaning from the subjective level. This meaning can be constructed through chosen goals and purposes.

Subjective meaning is a type of meaning that is held by the individual in terms of what they specifically experience as meaning, independent of socio-cultural conditions and general conventions. Holmberg (1994) further states that subjective meaning can be both theoretical and phenomenological. The distinction between theoretical and phenomenological meaning is often seen as coherent with the distinction between objective and subjective meaning. According to Holmberg (1994) this comparison is not nuanced enough. He argues that theoretical meaning can be both objective and subjective. He states:

Theoretical meaning can be thought of as something imposed or projected in life. In fact theoretical meaning has to be thought of in this way. It is never out there. Theoretical meaning, thus, is always a construction, something that is produced in the conceptualization of the mind (1994, p. 35)

Subjective meaning does not have to be seen exclusively in a phenomenological way, it can also be described in understandable, coherent directions that any individual gives to their life, without taking into consideration their experiences and feelings. Phenomenological meaning is a subcategory of subjective meaning.

The relations between the different modes of meaning and connotations of life can be confusing, and one never gets one simple answer. In trying to make it more understandable one can say that the distinction between the theoretical and phenomenological concerns the question about what kind of concept the meaning of life may be. The distinction ontological-objective-subjective concerns the question how to justify or construct actual meaning (Holmberg, 1994) and applies to theoretical meaning and phenomenological meaning. If one wants to help somebody who has trouble with the question about meaning in life, the help can be unsatisfactory if it is formulated in terms of theoretical meaning. For example a theoretical answer to the question of meaning in life: the universe has a purpose, is according to Holmberg (1994) an ontological answer to the question, but would probably not convince a person about the meaningfulness of life, if the person doesn't subjectively experience that the universe has a purpose. However, if a person does experience that the universe has a purpose, at if that is subjectively experienced as meaningful for the person in their individual life, then this type of meaning can be phenomenological. In other words, questioning what is meaningful in life is also a question about experience of one's own life, the phenomenological dimension of meaning.

5. Levels of meaning construction in career

5.1 Would it be possible to use Holmberg's distinction in the context of career?

The question is: is it possible to use the analysis that Holmberg (1994) describes in accordance to life generally, and in the context of career, career choices and career development? At first glance one might say yes, because career is a part of life and life is a part of the career, but if one goes further into the three distinctions of meaning in life generally that Holmberg uses, one would say both yes and no to the answer.

I will describe and discuss Holmberg's distinctions in according to career meaning below before I go more into depth on career meaning construction. Career meaning is defined as the

meaning that is significant for one's career choices and development. More explicitly, it refers to the meaning that drives persons to their career choices.

Holmberg's (1994) three distinctions of meaning: ontological, objective and subjective cannot be used in the same context of career as it can be used in the context of life in general. As Holmberg explains²¹ the ontological meaning is in accordance to cosmic life; which implies that type of meaning only emerges independently of the persons' activity and experiences in the world. In this manner one could ask how is it possible for ontological meaning to emerge without any persons that experience it. Or how has it been possible to categorise it as ontological without persons experiencing such type of meaning? Who has decided that it is ontological? Somehow these questions do contribute to a doubt about ontological meaning, if ontological meaning exists at all. This is not the case, but it is categorized by persons, and therefor in Holmberg's perspective not ontological. I believe in universal ontological constructs in terms of career and meaning, but not in a black and white perspective as Holmberg puts it.

Persons' careers cannot be taken into an ontological meaning context because the concept of career cannot be an independent construction of persons. In the construction of a career in society, persons are the main source of the construction phase in defining meaning in their career, without persons there would not be a meaning in their career. One can discuss whether the construct of career or its framework is in a way ontological without the content, but at the same time a career without content could not exist. But for some persons the concept of calling is ontologically universal because that is the only true thing for them in their reality to experience.

When it comes to what Holmberg (1994) defines as objective meaning, one can discuss it more in depth without dismantling and rejecting the perspective straight away. Holmberg defines objective meaning in connection to specific groups in specific societies, for example specific cultural groups accepting a specific meaning regarding persons as a whole. Person's construction of meaning in their career can be seen, for example, in cultural groups, and this can also be seen through the history of career choices. One has seen examples of this in the old fishermen societies in Norway; that a man chose a fishing career because his father and grandfather were fishermen, and that was accepted as a true and correct choice to make that gave him meaning, whether or not he knew of any other possibilities. Such kinds of objective

²¹ I have explained Holmberg's distinction of modes of meaning earlier in this theoretical chapter.

meaning can be relevant to discuss in the career context, but this type of meaning can also be categorised as relational meaning construction; that persons are dependent on their culture for their choices. Said in other words persons are dependent on others to choose and to construct their own meaning in their career and not from their own self. I will use Holmberg's definition of objective meaning in the concept of relational meaning construction in career. This relational approach will I come back to in the discussion about relational career meaning construction. In classical career approaches, objective as a term is seen in connection to measurement of persons' personalities and vocational interests. Through their measurement persons construct meaning, in their choosing process. This objective meaning construction through measurement will be significant for them in choosing the right pathway. I will use this term of objective meaning construction, but in another way than Holmberg uses the term. As mentioned Holmberg uses the term objective meaning in terms of different cultural groups and sociologic deviations, but I will be using the term 'objective' in relation to persons' personality traits and what type of meaning construction that could apply to such an approach.

When it comes to Holmberg's (1994) use of the term subjective meaning, which is defined as dependent on the individual his or her self, it is the subjective meaning which is held by persons that they define as meaningful for them, independently of their culture. This type of subjective meaning construction is highly relevant within the context of career. In a career context it is persons who are constructing meaning out of their choices and experiences, no matter what culture and society they live in. They know intuitively what is meaningful for them, and from that experience of what is meaningful, they choose. In this career context it is their phenomenology, their freedom, and their narratives that are significant and important for knowing their meaning. So in discussing this, persons' subjective and independently constructed career narratives will be important.

So as a brief conclusion before these different kinds of modes of meaning are discussed in relation to career, it is possible to use Holmberg's (1994) distinction of meaning to some extent, but not as he describes meaning. In the next paragraphs I will go more into depth about objective, relational and subjective meaning construction in the context of career. I will discuss the construct of career meaning construction by integrating Holmberg's distinction between phenomenological and theoretical meaning; which are in my view more sensible terms than treating the word 'meaning construction' as one single construct without looking at the nuances.

5.2 Objective career meaning-construction

5.2.1 Personality

In discussing and describing the objective approach to career meaning construction, one can't avoid considering the construction of persons' personality which has clear roots in the positivistic objective approach in science, more specifically social science. Both personality research and the positivistic approaches to science had and still have a goal of predicting objective acts and truths about society and persons (Zunker, 2008). Both ontologically and epistemologically, theories about personality and objective approaches in science have a lot in common. Further on, I will discuss the personality construct within objective meaning construction in light of theoretical and phenomenological meaning.

In social science an objective approach to persons' career choices is often discussed in terms of personality. In theories about personality the questions about what decides persons' meaning construction, what initiates it, and what maintains it, are central (Nygård, 2007). Personality is defined as *"The set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments"* (Larson & Buss, 2005, s. 4). In this connection the trait-factor model is central (Holland, 1997).

The core of this model is that there are different personality dimensions or traits that decide the way that persons construct meaning, and how they feel, think or act upon those different dimensions. The dimensional perspective means that persons take on different positions in terms of these traits (Larson & Buss, 2005). That is why one talks about individual differences, for example, in interest level, anxiety level and so on (Nygård, 2007). In such ways persons' meaning construction is explained by underlying traits that construct their personality. The behaviour is understood as a mathematical function caused by how persons construct their meaning, so that they act in such ways that they desire (Lerner, 2002)²². According to Nygård (2007), this approach is characterised as personologism, or a fixed self-construct (Dweck, 1996; 1999). In the most extreme form of personologism each person is expected to have a characteristic level when it comes to traits, and that determines the way persons construct and act on meaning. Persons, for example, have a characteristic trait in honesty. Honesty is seen as relatively constant from situation to situation and relatively independent of outer circumstances. Personality in such a form is closely understood as

²² Lerner does not use the term meaning construction, but I have transposed his text into the meaning construction focus

parallel to physical characteristics like height, eye colour, and is a relatively constant phenomenon regardless of the variation of outer circumstances (Nygård, 2007). This way of explaining personality dimensions in terms of meaning is a theoretical meaning approach. Holmberg (1994) stated that theoretical meaning is related to what is imposed, projected, or constructed into human life. Therefore, the constructed personality dispositions are seen as stable, and the basis for meaning construction is theoretical meaning approach.

Persons create impressions of each other as stable individuals who act in predictable ways and perhaps are often inclined to overlook the name tags that do not fit them e.g. honest, social, and practical (Nygård, 2007). A combination of traits explains how persons construct meaning, why they have constructed such meaning and how they act on it. In research where behaviour has been investigated under varied situational conditions, however, only a small part of the variation of behaviour leads back to such identified personality traits (Larson & Buss, 2005). Today, only a small number of researchers will profess to champion this trait approach in such an extreme way where circumstances do not contribute any meaning. However, such an extreme form of consistency is not normally connected to the above mentioned trait approach (Nygård, 2007). The main thought in this trait approach is that stable individual differences in behaviour are relative to situations. This implies that traits in a group of persons with a given behaviour variable, are expected to be the same from situation to situation (Holland, 1997). For example, a student who is social at school is also expected to be social among friends. Within this approach the meaning of the environment or circumstances is not denied completely, but is understood as matchable to the personality traits (Holland, 1997). Even though some situations are more socially evoking than others, circumstances are not assumed to disturb the traits between persons when it comes to showing sociability.

Personality traits are expected to be approximately the same from situation to situation with the exception of measuring errors that cause a shift (Larson & Buss, 2005). Correlation measurements reflect such degrees of equality in personality traits while they do not say anything about the level of personality traits. For example how social the person is in different situations and to what degree. If there were good enough measuring elements one could expect to find high correlations between measurements of the behaviour variable in different situations (Nygård, 2007). This would again imply that we could predict who will be the most and least social in another situation. This type of prediction among others has created a basis for the growth of a whole industry developing tests, surveys and personality inventories. These prediction tools are being used also in counselling services such as career counselling.

5.2.2 What is an objective career meaning construction approach?

The objective approach in career meaning construction is seen as a process of matching personality and work environment through measuring traits and vocational interests. Those specific measured traits and vocational interests are used to guide persons in constructing meaning and choosing the correct career path. This kind of basic thought, the measured interests and traits, was seen as the most helpful, and is the oldest assumption in career psychology and research. It is called the trait-factor approach and was first presented by Frank Parson (Zunker, 2008). Parson is looked upon as the founder of the vocational guidance movement, and the founder of the trait-factor approach. The basic thought in the book *'Choosing a vocation'* (Parson, 1909) was a clear objective approach to making vocational choices. This objective trait-factor approach to career is both a theoretical and phenomenological meaning approach. It is a theoretical meaning approach because the measured vocational interest traits are predetermined in the career test before the actual person takes it. In other words, it is not the person taking the career test who constructs the measured vocational interest traits, they are already defined. In one way, the test results that give meaning to the person are based upon the person's measured and predicted personality traits. However, this objective career meaning construction approach is also a phenomenological meaning approach, because the persons taking a vocational interest test construct meaning on the basis of meeting the test questions. I will come back to this later.

The trait-factor approach represents a belief that a straight-forward matching of an individual's abilities and interests with work opportunities is possible, and when that is accomplished the work choice problem is solved (Parson, 1909). In this approach the assumption is that career planning and career counselling are linear processes of preparing people and fitting them into one right job that will last them throughout life (Amundson, Harris-Bowlesby, & Niles, 2009). Those who represented this approach also believed that society was static, the individual was stable over time, and the career choice was made for a life-time. Career choices in this approach were and are viewed as rational without integrating feelings into the choice, and are regarded as one-time events. As a summary one can say that this matching approach is a theoretical meaning construction approach because it is a linear process, where the matching is based on objective vocational interest trait constructs and work possibilities that are predefined.

When this system was developed the aim was not to integrate the use of feelings when persons took a test. However, today one knows that persons rank order what they prefer to do

based on earlier experiences and on what they wish to experience, which is the main purpose in taking a career interest test. Therefore, persons do experience an encounter with their feelings. In such way, this approach can be defined as phenomenological meaning, because persons do connect with their former experiences, and their here and now experience when they rank order the test items for constructing meaning for their future. Parson and Holland are the most known theoreticians in this approach; both assumed that the matching theory is the central for guiding the choosing process (Zunker, 2008).

As mentioned above, Parson (1909) viewed choosing a career as an occupational one-time event. Viewing the choosing process as a one-time event was probably a realistic reflection of society at that time, so it can be understood as independent of any particularity in Parson's view. His core concept was matching. In his opinion occupational choices occur when individuals 1) have achieved an understanding of their traits: abilities, aptitudes, interests, etc. 2) have knowledge of jobs, 3) and have made a rational and objective judgment about the relationships among these groups of facts. In this view the person's awareness of the relationship between the three stages is based on rationality. Parson thought that it was possible to measure individual talents and the attributes required for jobs, which then could be matched to a "good" fit. According to Parson, when persons are in jobs, which suit their abilities, they perform best and productivity is highest (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). His trait-factor theory that marked the beginning of vocational guidance, offered a logical and rational framework for occupational choice, continues to have powerful impact in career counselling today (Hansen, 1997).

In 1959, Holland presented his theory about career decision making, in which career choice represents an extension of personality and it was an effort to implement broad personality styles in the context of persons' work life (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The primary goal of this theory is to explain vocational behaviour and suggest practical ideas to help people select jobs, change jobs, and experience job satisfaction (Holland, 1997). Holland's ideas fall into the same matching tradition established by Parson. The new aspect Holland presents is the idea that persons project their views of themselves and the world of work onto job titles (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). This was the basis for his construction of the Vocational Preference Inventory (Holland, 1997). Holland's personality theory falls into the category of Self-report Data (S-Data), where the meaning that persons reveal is based on a test about themselves in which they self-report the information (Larson & Buss, 2005). Here again, one can see the theoretical and phenomenological meaning construction. The objective

perspective is the predetermined test, and the phenomenological is the self-reported data which comes through when persons take the actual test, where they decide which categories describe themselves best, and out from that, they construct phenomenological meaning from the theoretical meaning career test.

The problem with this perspective is that persons will not always give accurate information about themselves, because they might fill out the questionnaire or the test to present themselves in a positive light or in a way that they think is wise to communicate about themselves. The outcome of this problem can be that persons might report a personality trait that fits their surroundings and not themselves. This challenge also applies to social science research where the emphasis is on persons' experiences of and wishes in terms of a specific phenomenon.

Holland²³ (1997) developed an occupational classification system that categorises people's personality into six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. According to Holland, most persons can be categorised in one of these six personality types. The personality types are the ideal type or model, which can be measured against the real person. Each personality type contains a collection of attitudes and skills for dealing with environmental problems and tasks. The more closely an individual matches a type, the more likely he or she is to exhibit the personal traits and behaviours related to that type. Work environments can also be organised in the same way. In light of this, vocational choice can be defined as individuals searching for work environments that are congruent with their personality type. The resulting match includes factors such as vocational choice, vocational stability and achievement, educational choice and achievement, personal competence, social behaviour and susceptibility to influence (Holland, 1997). It is important to note that according to Holland the composition of a person's personality is stable over time. Holland illustrated the relationship in and between types or environments in a hexagon model (RIASEC model), shown in figure 4 below.

²³ The reason for presenting Holland's system is to show how one trait-factor system functions and is constructed in a career perspective. I will not discuss his system details in terms of meaning. I discuss objective meaning construction in general in relation to trait-factor approaches. The reason for that is that most of the trait-factor approaches have the same measuring system, and have the same principles as a basis, even though the content of career tests can be distinguished from each other.

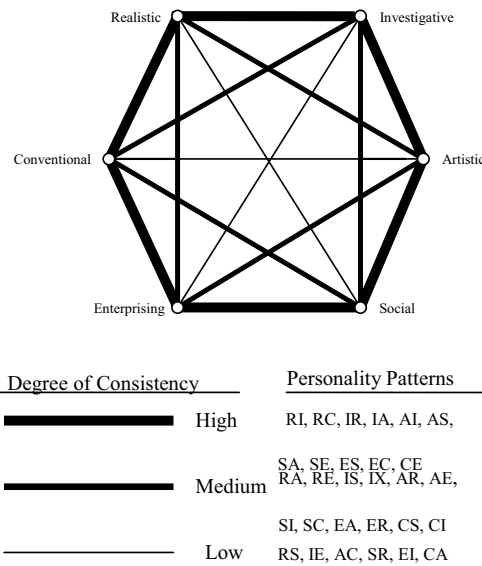


Figure 4: Holland's Hexagon model (Amundson, Harris-Bowlesby, & Niles, 2009, p. 16).

Each of these model types, for example, realistic, describes one personality type and a work environment. Holland (1997) assumed that the relations among the types are closer or more alike when there is a shorter distance between them. It is easier to predict a good personality and work match for a person who correlates high on one or two types than a person who has a flat profile. In addition to the relation between the types, the hexagon model also shows something about the following secondary concepts - degree of congruence between person and environment, consistency, differentiation, and identity.

Holland (1997) explains degree congruency with the above-mentioned assumptions that different types need different environments. Social types thrive in social environments because the environment has the opportunities for and rewards a social type need. This is a congruent match between type and environment. Incongruence arises when a type works in an environment that gives opportunities and rewards that are distant from the person's preferences and ability. High congruence between personality and work environment leads to a more stable career, better possibilities for occupational progress and greater personal satisfaction.

When it comes to consistency Holland (1997) says that some pairs of personality types or work environments are more closely related than others. Consistency is the degree of relation between personality types or work environments. For instance, according to his theory, an

individual who resembles the social type and next the artistic type is more predictable than a social – realistic person.

Persons who have a flat structure in their personality pattern according to the six personality types are undifferentiated or poorly defined. In contrast persons who have high degree of artistic and social types, for example, and a low degree of other personality types or environments are well defined (Holland, 1997). The degree to which a personality or a work environment is well defined means its degree of differentiation.

The concept of identity gives a notion of the clarity and stability of a person's or the environment's identity (Holland, 1997). A person's identity is defined as the possession of a clear and stable picture of interests, goals and talents. The environment's identity is present when it is clear, has integrated goals and tasks, and has rewards that are stable over time. The identity concept of the person and the environment are put together into a personality pattern. This personality pattern, which contains concepts such as consistency, differentiation, degree of congruency and identity is used to create hypotheses about a person's career road, aspiration level, achievement level, stability, educational level and ability to environmental affection.

To estimate a personality pattern, it is possible to use several methods. The two methods that Holland (1997) is most known for are the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI) and the Self Directed Search (SDS). Both these inventories are based on the RIASEC model. The idea that vocational interest is an expression of personality led to what Holland called the Vocational Preference Inventory composed of occupational titles. The development and validation of VPI made it clear that vocational preferences are signs of personality traits. The SDS developed from the theory of VPI. In contrast to the VPI, the SDS uses a broad range of content; activities, competencies, occupations, and self-ratings, to measure the individual's likeness to the types. From either the VPI or the SDS one gets a three letter code, which indicates which type one resembles. The three letter code is the first letter in the three types one resembles; for example RIC- Realistic, Investigative and Conventional. When persons take either the VPI or the SDS they find out what types they most resemble, then they can search in the Occupational Finder to find out which occupations match their types. For example, if a person finds out that he or she resembles a realistic (R), investigative (I) and conventional (C) type, then he or she can look up the code RIC in the Occupational Finder and find matching occupations.

Trait-factor thinking in this form has been exposed to criticism. The traits of a group of persons in a given behaviour area can strongly vary from one situation to another. For example the philosopher who is a football coach in his leisure time. His working career as a philosopher would demand a different set of behaviours than those he would use when he coaches the local football team in his leisure time. In spite of the criticism, optimism is still alive within this trait-factor approach (Nygård, 2007). The question: Where is the person in personality research? is central in discussing this topic. The criticism towards the trait-factor approach is that it is based too strongly on the objective measurement perspective of personality and not on persons' subjective phenomenological meaning construction.

However, research has shown that persons are stable in some form over time and situation to some extent (Miller, Springer, & Cowger, 2004). Miller, Springer and Cowger's research (2004) showed that Holland's theory did correlate with persons' decision making styles in terms of the different personality traits. However, since they pointed out that career counsellors should be careful of putting every client into the same decision making model in order to fit Holland's system, I interpret them as acknowledging individual differences and therefore, opening up for a phenomenological approach as well. In terms of the question above, it seems that persons (individual differences) are also visible in personality research, with some considerations. This implies that both theoretical meaning construction and phenomenological subjective meaning construction are visible and reliable in the trait-factor approach. The objective theoretical meaning construction approach is reliable in the way that persons' personality and traits are stable over time, and that the results of the trait-factor career test are reliable over time. The phenomenological meaning approach is reliable in that persons, who are taking the career test and match their personalities to work environments, construct their subjective meaning from the objective test results that are stable over time and fit their individual decision making style.

I will now discuss more explicitly the critical and positive considerations one must be aware of in terms of Holland's and other more general personality theories. Personality concepts do capture something essential within the person, such as continuity and inner coherence in the career meaning construction phase. This does not necessarily imply that if one has knowledge about a few personality traits, one can predict future career behaviour, and predict what type of career meaning persons construct. However, it gives the person knowledge about what types of personality dispositions are important for persons to use in their career choice process. This means that persons construct meaning out from their reflections over the test

items in that context, where both rationality and feelings are integrated into their meaning construction. This type of meaning construction is phenomenological.

It may happen in such a personality perspective, that persons don't believe in the freedom to choose how one constructs meaning in one's career. Instead the view is that persons believe in the possibility of predicting future meaning and this represents personality psychology which emphasises persons' dispositions or personality traits (Nygård, 2007). This perspective is truly theoretical objective meaning construction. It almost functions like a computer program with stereotypical ways of constructing meaning, which are vital for one's career choices and career development. One can get the impression in this personality approach that the question of why one chooses and constructs meaning as one does is a consequence of one's traits that constitute one's personality and identity. This view is one-way causality thinking about persons' personality traits that predict their meaning. Is this a satisfying explanation of persons meaning construction? Would persons continue to construct meaning as they have done earlier because they have always done it one specific way? In this argument, one forgets that it is actually the person who is taking the career test, and is choosing to answer in a specific way. This fact of the person taking the test cannot be ignored and therefore this approach cannot be only theoretical objective, but also must be subjective phenomenological.

In addition, if one integrates the fact of the persons' experience, learning and development into the trait-factor approach, one broadens the concepts of career personalities in terms of how one constructs career meaning. In such a way, the subjective phenomenological meaning approach is combined with the theoretical objective meaning approach. Also it implies that one can accept that persons do develop their personalities in terms of their learning and development in life and that can result in different meaning constructions throughout life. This argument is aligned with Zohar and Marshall's (2000) perspective on development and personality traits. According to Zohar and Marshall it is possible in principle for persons to develop all sides of Holland's vocational personality system. This implies that persons are capable of developing the conventional, social, investigative, artistic, realistic and enterprising personality traits at the same level, and not only two or three of them, as Holland emphasises. How this is done, in practical life is another question. If persons are told that developing all sides of the vocational personality traits is possible, and that they truly believe in that, it is still theoretical meaning construction, if the persons have not tried out the different qualities in the different vocational traits in practical life. If persons test out the different qualities in the

vocational interest traits, then this perspective become phenomenological because it is explicitly connected to experience and reflection.

5.2.3 Summary

As mentioned above, one could say that this objective approach to meaning construction can be seen in relation to Holmberg's (1994) construct of theoretical meaning and phenomenological meaning. On one hand, persons do not experientially construct meaning subjectively, but receive meaning from an already constructed personality typological construct that is universal. On another hand, the moment persons rank order the test items in terms of their preferences, the phenomenological meaning becomes evident. Persons integrate their experience in the here and now in relation to the test items, and on that basis construct subjective phenomenological meaning. This perspective received a major criticism for not including the subjective person in categorising what type of meaning suits best in terms of one's personality traits. The criticism emphasised (Hansen, 1997) that subjectivity, as the phenomenological meaning and the interpretation of one's conscious experience into subjective meaning (Holmberg, 1994), must be a vital factor for persons in choosing a career path that is right for them. In my interpretation, the trait-factor approach is criticised for constructing something universal that is supposed to fit every individual in the world, and at the same time forgetting that it is actually persons who take the test, rank order the test items in terms of their experience, and on that basis construct subjective phenomenological meaning. Another criticism is the question about who has constructed the career tests, and how the items have been constructed. In constructing career tests that are supposed to be valid and reliable, there are probably many persons who have tested the inventory and used their subjective experience, so in that way the test is based on persons' subjective phenomenological meaning that is made into theoretical meaning that is objective. In other words, this objective perspective is both theoretical and phenomenological meaning construction.

5.3 Subjective career meaning-construction

The subjective meaning construction approach to career is connected to the individual and his or her free choice to choose what is best for him or her in his or her career, based on life experience and patterns. In other words, how persons construct career meaning out of their life experiences and patterns is essential for their free career choices. This approach is in some sense seen as the opposite to the objective career meaning approach, where the

emphasis is an objective fixed self-construct. The philosophy behind this subjective approach is based on phenomenology.

In the subjective meaning construction phase, the objective and the relational construction phase is part of the subjectivity, but it lies in the background and not in the foreground. The subjective 'I' is in the front, the relational and objective is in the background. Through individual's narratives where life experiences and patterns are crucial to whom he or she is and how he or she got to be whom he or she is today. The how and whom perspective leads the road to choosing and constructing one's own career meaning and way into a meaningful career construct.

Often in research and in different kinds of theory about subjective career meaning construction, this approach is named the postmodern perspective in career choice and development. In career counselling literature, social constructionist and constructivist concepts are included as a part of the postmodern approach (Chen, 2001). The postmodern approach is defined from a set of perspectives, for example by social constructionist and social constructivist thought. Below I will clarify the social constructivist approach to career meaning, before I will go further into the construct of narratives and the philosophy behind persons' subjective construction of career meaning.

5.3.1 "Social constructivist" approach to meaning and meaning construction in career

Social constructivism and social constructionism have achieved substantial attention within social science both used separately and undifferentiated as "constructivism", where both perspectives are talked upon as the same. In career theory, research and practice "constructivism" has had a great impact the last years. Savickas (1993; 1997) recognised that the "constructivist" perspectives²⁴ were a new perspective in the field of career, where the trait factor approach was dominant, and the new perspective could supplement the dominant method. Towards the year 2000 the "constructivist" perspective was considered as a response to the changing society, where work roles and roles in life had changed dramatically the last 40 years. Because of the societal development, core concepts in career theory were re-examined and transformed in many ways. This change led to two camps; objectivism and "constructivism". Both Cochran (1997) and Savickas (2000) saw them as complementary and collaborative, but the mainstream thinking in the career field saw them as two different paradigms (Brott, 2001; 2004). "Constructivism" has also grown generally in psychology

²⁴ Many constructivist perspectives were identified such as constructive development perspective, meaning making perspective and hermeneutical inquiry.

because it is aligned with the cognitive paradigm within psychology. The discovery of “constructivism” in the career field is not primarily because of cognitive and postmodern thinking, but because career practitioners were seeking approaches that were more aligned with the everyday life; the reality of their clients, than those in traditional career research and theory (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). They turned to counselling literature where constructivism and constructionism had been a ground for many years (Mahoney, 2003). Today one can say that “constructivism” is well established in this field.

5.3.2 Social Constructivist approach to the concept of ‘meaning construction’ in career

The constructivist approach is a well-known area in the disciplines of psychology, education and philosophy (Woolfolk, 2007). Central figures are Bruner, Piaget, Vygotsky and Von Glaserfeld (Young & Collin, 2004), and Kelly (1955). It is a wide concept where many misunderstandings about the philosophy behind it have been developed, especially in the career field of research, theory and practice. The main emphasis in constructivism is that each person constructs his or her experience through cognitive processes. In the science of philosophy context, it differs from the positivistic approach as it is argued that the world cannot be known directly, but can only be known by the individual construction through cognitive structures. But the constructivists agreed with the positivist perspective about a dualist ontology and epistemology (Young & Collin, 2004). So what does actually this dualist ontology and epistemology mean?

A dualist view can be connected to binary thinking. The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1999, p. 244) explains the concept of Dualism:

Dualism, [is] the view that reality consists of two disparate parts. The crux of dualism is an apparently unbridgeable gap between two incommensurable orders of being that must be reconciled if our assumption that there is a comprehensible universe is to be justified ... Descartes’ dualism is taken to be the source of the mind body problem.

This definition and explanation points directly to the concept of ontology, by stating that there exists two separate independent views in reality. Ontology is often defined as the study of existence or reality. In other words a dualist view of reality and existence implies dualist ontology. Since social constructivism in terms of meaning in career believes that thought is the focus of meaning construction, and is independent of the social relationships in persons’ reality, it contributes to a dualistic ontology. In other words the reality according to social constructivists consists of two independent systems; thought (cognitive processes) and social relationships, where thought is the main focus of meaning construction in terms of career.

The nature of knowledge (epistemology) in this dualist ontology also becomes dualist. So in that way it represents an epistemological perspective which is concerned with dualism: the knower and what is known. This implies that social constructivists are interested in how one knows and by implication how one develops meaning in one's career. This process is internal to the person- integrating meaning into pre-existing schemes or changing the schemes to fit the environment (Young & Collin, 2004).

In the constructivist perspective there are different positions. Three perspectives are mentioned frequently in the literature about the topic. The radical constructivists' interpretation of constructivism highlights that it is persons' minds that construct reality. Martin and Sugarman (1999) argued that the failure of constructivism is the focus on the individual cognitive construction without reference to social interaction, context and discourses which makes reflection and meaning construction in career possible. Constructivists like Kelly (1955) acknowledged that persons' meaning construction takes place in a systematic relationship with the environment surrounding them. Bruner (1990) recognises that the influence in persons' construction comes from and is preceded by social relationships. This can look like a social constructionist approach, and challenges the dualist assumption; split between the persons mind and body.

In the subjective meaning-construction mode I will take a radical constructivist perspective, where persons' narratives are essential to their construction of career meaning. As mentioned above the narrative perspective is the essence in the subjective career meaning which stems from phenomenological philosophy. I will first explain phenomenological philosophy and subjectivity, and then go into Holmberg's (1994) perspective on narratives and subjective meaning construction.

5.3.3 Phenomenology and subjective meaning construction

Phenomenology is often understood as a disciplinary field in philosophy, and is defined as the study of structures of experience or consciousness (Hopkins, 2005). More explicitly, phenomenology is the study of 'phenomena', which reflect appearances of things, things as they arise in persons' experience, or the way they experience things and the meaning things have in their experience (Moran, 2005). Looking at persons' career meaning construction from this perspective implies viewing them from within their subjective first-person point of view (Varela & Shear, 2002). Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean Paul Sartre are all important contributors to the phenomenological movement in science and philosophy (Diprose & Reynolds, 2008; Owen, 2006; Webber, 2009). One can

say that they contributed towards that phenomenology became known as a “proper” foundation in philosophy.

Basically, phenomenology studies the structure of different types of experience such as perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, social activity, embodied action and bodily awareness. Husserl (1936/2001) called these structural experiences as the directedness of experience to phenomena in one’s world; the consciousness of experience. According to Husserl, persons’ experience is directed towards a phenomenon through for example thoughts, ideas, images they have of the phenomenon. This process is, according to Husserl, the subjective meaning construction phase that gives content to one’s distinctive experience (Hopkins, 2005). In this way the subjective meaning phase is about what persons have in their conscious mind, being aware of that, when they construct their career meaning.

In phenomenology, the basic structure of consciousness is described as involving a range of experiences. In this case the focus will be on self-awareness in relation to career, awareness over one’s own experience, purposefulness, social interaction with things in society and everyday life in one’s reality. Further it is important to note that there exist various grounds for conditions of possibility for subjectively constructing meaning in relation to career; such as cultural context, language and contextual aspects of meaningful activities that facilitate their subjective construction of vital career meaning or meanings. In this way meaning is led out from conscious experience into conditions that help persons have meaningful experiences (Owen, 2006).

5.3.3.1 The study of consciousness

As previously mentioned, phenomenology investigates structures of conscious experience, from the first-person point of view, the so-called ‘I’; with relevant conditions of experience. The central structure of persons’ experience is its intentionality or meaning that is directional through its content or towards a certain object in the world. So in this way, the phenomenological perspective contributes to the study of persons’ consciousness (Hopkins, 2005; Moran, 2005).

Persons have various ranges of experience from thought, feeling, bodily content and action. Experience does not only include passive experience, but also active experience (Webber, 2009). The focus here is on the active experience involved in persons’ career meaning construction.

Conscious experiences in the career meaning construction phase have a unique feature: persons experience them, live through them or perform them. Other things in the world one

may observe and engage with, but one does not always experience them in the sense of living through them and performing them. This phase can be seen as an experiential first- person feature, which is being experienced, and this is the essential part of the structure of conscious experience. For example, I think of something, I desire to choose something, I want to choose something. In other words, the person is always aware of something when he or she is constructing career meaning.

The question, what makes an career experience conscious, becomes relevant. The general answer, which is often given, is that the career experience gives certain awareness within the person while they live through it and performs it. This inner awareness has been a topic of considerable debate through the centuries, which can be traced back to Locke's and Descartes perspective on self-consciousness and co-knowledge (Politikens filosofi leksikon, 2006). Awareness of career experience is a defining trait of conscious experience, which is the trait that gives the first- person, lived character²⁵. A character is a normative notion, which can be defined as a comprehensive set of dispositions or qualities of a person (Audi, 1999). It is that experience of the lived character that allows the first-person perspective to come through in the chosen object for study (Hopkins, 2005)

The diversity in phenomenological approaches is described in the Encyclopaedia of Phenomenology (1997), which features seven different types. These are: transcendental constitutive phenomenology, naturalistic constitutive phenomenology, existential phenomenology, genetic phenomenology, hermeneutical phenomenology and realistic phenomenology. In this case, it is the existential perspective that is in focus. It is also important to be aware that phenomenology is a research method inquiring into experience, and a philosophy about persons' being in the world. The focus here is the philosophy behind phenomenology; more explicitly, how persons subjectively and consciously experience their career meaning construction in relation to free choice. The concept of the free choice is vital in this perspective of subjective meaning construction. In order to be able to construct subjective meaning in relation to their career, it is vital that persons experience freedom to construct the meaning they choose to construct (Sartre, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, the context surrounding the person is a condition for constructing career subjective meaning that is freely chosen by the person. I will therefore discuss persons' narrative.

²⁵ Character can be defined as the combination of traits and qualities distinguishing the individual nature of a person or thing.

5.3.4 The narrative nature of life

Chen (2002) gives an overview of important perspectives on the narrative approach in terms of human life and research in social science, and why it is important to have a narrative approach to life. Below I will give a short description over Chen's overview of the narrative perspective.

Persons' existence and consciousness is both physical and psychosocial, which is best described as a narrative representation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers in the social science field has described how to use narratives to understand a phenomenon, for example, the role of narrative influence in life span developmental knowledge (Freeman, 1984), narrative interpretation in critical psychology and pedagogy (Sullivan, 1984), narrative functioning in the helping process (Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1996), narrative inquiry in the macro domain of social sciences (Polkinghorne, 1988) and Cochran's (1997) approach to career narratives. As one can see the narrative perspective in human life both from a macro and micro perspective has been elaborated in social science and career counselling theory.

5.3.4.1 The narrative construction in terms of past, present and future meaning

Persons in society live in narration every moment of their experience, even though they might not reflect and pay conscious attention to their narrative in their reality. At first glance the sentence *persons' life is a narrative*, could be hard to understand, but if we look upon human life as a development it is easier to understand and illustrate narrative according to career meaning construction and human life in general (Chen, 1997; Cochran, 1997). The narrative life is the truth of people's life, so is career because career is always a part of persons' life (Chen, 2002). So what does career in life mean? Career can be defined in so many different ways, it is dependent on how persons experience and view the concept. How persons experience their own career can range from viewing it and experiencing it as work, education, voluntary work, contributing with their special talent to somebody in society and so on. This can in some ways be seen as a relativistic postmodern perspective. Shortly one could say that career is a continuous activity that follows the person through their life. Super (1980; 1990) described this perspective in his theory about persons' career development in life. More explicitly this means that persons' are *doing* a career rather than *receiving* a career. The career activity and development can be categorised in time perspective, in accordance to persons' narrative.

There is no doubt that life is temporal; it is experienced in time and in that way time is related to meaning. In discussing narratives, subjectivity, career and meaning Holmberg's (1994)

distinction of past, present and future meaning can be useful. History is an example of a form of narration that is based upon past-time meaning and sequences. Informational facts, experiences, observations and so on are shaped into episodes or happenings that describe what has happened (Chen, 1997). Past-time meaning is related to questions like: why did this happen to me? What does it mean? A further explanation could be; persons try to fit the puzzle together towards a satisfying whole; that makes sense to them. In that way persons are constructing subjective meaning into their life as a whole, in trying to understand their past significant events, and trying to understand what they have experienced in life, and understand why they have come to where they are today.

In a career perspective, one is trying to consciously and subjectively construct a meaningful story or a narrative with basis in past time experience. This story can include school experiences, working experience and decision making strategies and so on. According to Brott (2004) and Gibson (2004), persons are *deconstructing* their past experiences to understand their present career narrative. In a phenomenological perspective, persons are getting to know a stream of consciousness (James, 1890) where their thoughts and feelings are woven into a meaningful whole (Cochran, 1997). When persons are deconstructing past experiences and transforming it into a meaningful career story, they are constructing theoretical meaning (Holmberg, 1994), because they are deconstructing career experiences that have already happened, and imposing meaning onto them, without being present in the situation here and now.

Persons' thoughts about the future narrative in terms of their career path initiates future meaning construction, but is not limited to planning activities, project design and implementation. The future orients career meaning-construction that symbolises narratives of desires, ideals, anticipation, speculation or doubts. Future meaning is related to questions like: what should I do in the future? What is the purpose for my future? Such questions are relevant for persons who are in doubt which way to go, and striving to find direction in their path of life. Visioning the future meaning becomes possible when persons are able to see things that will happen. These things or situations give future meaning stories that one is composing ahead of them actually occurring. In composing future career narratives persons are *reconstructing* their desires, ideals, anticipation, speculation or doubts so their future narrative becomes realistic to achieve or implement their meaningful story, which is based on their past-time narrative and to the future narrative (Cochran, 1997). Like past-time meaning future meaning is concerned with theoretical meaning, because persons have not experienced the

future, persons are imposing meaning onto the future without being present in the here and now experience. One could also say that the force of imposing career meaning onto the future can be looked upon as the force of imagination; persons imagine what the career meaning in the future might be, without being present in the here and now.

Persons present living experience tells them stories in here and now moments which give them present meaning (Holmberg, 1994). Present career meaning is related to questions that persons asks when they are considering a career choice, communicating with others, in performance of a career related task, resolving a problem or a challenge (Chen, 2002), or in a state where nothing matters meaning that they can't find anything that is meaningful for them (Holmberg, 1994). In the person's present living, questions arise when the experience is missing quality. The questions are not about the future or the past; they are about the quality of life here and now that is missing. What is missing is a certain experience. In this sense persons focus on phenomenological meaning. Persons are not subjectively constructing past or future meaning they are *constructing* their present career meaning with the basis in past career meaning construction. Without becoming conscious about significant events in the past that are integrated into their holistic narrative/story, persons are not able to subjectively construct career meaning about their present experience and existence. Persons exist here and now based on experiences and development in the past. It functions the same way in a career context; in persons career one has to reflect about the past to become conscious and construct a self about the present (Cochran, 1997).

To get a more clear notion of meaning according to Holmberg one has to distinguish among past, present or future meaning or a blend of them all. As mentioned, Holmberg (1994) argues that meaning in a theoretical and in subjective sense is related to different modes of meaning in terms of persons' life (ontological-cosmic life, objective-human life, subjective-individual life). In the same way the different time perspectives of meaning are related to each other since they represent different senses of meaning. Who I am today is developed from the past, and who I am in the future is developed from the present. In this developmental perspective Holmberg (1994) argues that past-time meaning and future meaning is secondary to present meaning. When present subjective career meaning is constructed, past-time meaning is not problematic. Persons reflect about past-time career meaning when they are frustrated or not happy about their career in the here and now phase. Persons ask about future career meaning when they are searching for a project or a life change that will make their life meaningful now, in others words: that will give present meaning in a subjective career

construction mode. Reflecting about the past, present and future career meaning is a narrative exercise. We are, today, a result of our past, which is the background for projecting our future. Because of time and causality the narrative structure of past is important (Holmberg, 1994). It is the career narrative structure that can make us become aware of what we have been experiencing in life, and that is the background for what capacity lies within our experiential knowledge to achieve a satisfying career, what might happened and so on.

In addition to time perspective for understanding the notion about meaning one has to also see it in the context of a career narrative framework (Cochran, 1997; Holmberg, 1994). The concept of the narrative has two functions which are important to be aware of (Holmberg, 1994): (1) The narrative of a person's life as an object, where the meaning in the person's life becomes known. In this circumstance one is becoming aware of one own specific career life story. (2) The narrative as the general structural characteristic of persons' career experience which makes it possible to attribute meaning to their career. There has been some discussion questioning the necessity of ascribing meaning to a narrative in order to become aware of meaning in life. Cochran (1997) and Holmberg (1994) state that meaning in life and career needs a story to frame persons' own life stories into coherent stories.

5.3.5 Subjective career meaning-construction with focus on the individual I: a combination of theoretical and phenomenological meaning

The narrative concept reflects the unique human subjectivity, which integrates cognition, emotion and behaviour into a wholeness of life. Individuals recall, organise and make sense of significant life events and happenings, since they are fully capable of thinking, feeling and acting in their reality (Cochran, 1997). No matter if the individual is aware or not aware of this action phase of organising and reorganising, this type of arranging and rearranging meaning information goes on in their subjective processing (Chen, 1997; 2001). Mitchell and Krumboltz's perspective (1996) on learning through individuals' self-observation confirms the importance of persons' subjectivity. The core argument in Mitchell and Krumboltz's research is that individual perception and learning will never happen without the subjective interpretation of internal and external conditions surrounding the experience, but it is always the subjective person who is in front of the experience and not the contextual events in themselves. I will come back to this theme in the relational meaning construction and human agency parts of this dissertation.

Whatever the learning process might be in the construction of career story, subjective meaning construction and interpretation are vital points of meaning and meaning construction

in career stories/narratives. According to Chen (2002) persons' subjectivity opens up a venue for dynamic organisation and reorganisation of their narrative with flexible interpretation, reflexive dialogue and the possibility for change, imagination and creativity.

According to Holmberg (1994) one should discuss life as a unified whole, if there is to be any sense in the expression 'meaning in life', which Cochran (1997) also highlights when he discusses persons' career as an integrated lifecycle. 'Meaning in life' as an expression seems to require that life and every experience in life is meaningful, and this focus can be transformed into the thought: every experience persons have in their life-career, is meaningful. In this context it is important to take up the question about monism and unifactionism (Holmberg, 1994). The concept of monism and unifactionism can be explained in this way: if life has any meaning it has to have a single final aim that is universal. Said in other words, if career is meaningful, it is career and its entirety that is meaningful. Through the career narrative one can ask the question if one story can be regarded as a unified whole, and what kind of features might this unified career have (Holmberg, 1994). Giddens (1991, p. 189) discussed the question in terms of fragmentation and unification of persons self in society:

On the level of the individual right up to that of planetary systems as a whole, tendencies towards dispersal vie with those promoting integration. So far as the self is concerned, the problem of unification protecting and reconstructing the narrative of self-identity in the face of the massive intentional and extensional changes which modernity sets into being.

The goal of a career narrative as a unified whole, according to Giddens, is hard for individuals in terms of the massive changes that occur in their reality, even though creating a unified career story is an ideal for everybody. One could ask the question: Is it only ideal?

Persons construct different career narratives for themselves where there is no universal final aim (Cochran, 1997). However they might construct a final aim for themselves in terms of their career, but the content of the aim is not universal; that is, it is subjectively constructed and unique. Said in other words, the concept of a final aim for persons' career can be ontologically universal as a capacity, but the content is not. In addition, the content of their final aim is reached by subjectively constructing career meaning through the different parts in the individual's specific significant career events and through integrating the parts into a whole. This emphasis can be looked upon as a teleological argument for existence (Holmberg, 1994), with focus on purposefulness of persons' career.

Holmberg (1994) highlights that in a narrative context there is no need for a final aim. The narrative finds meaning in terms of the relation between the parts, in the relation among

entities, actions and events that make cosmic life go on. This can be seen as mentioned earlier as theoretical meaning. Theoretical meaning is explained with focus on intelligibility²⁶. There is no demand for a final aim or finality in intelligibility. Holmberg gives a structural picture on the narratives' role in the world and within persons' life. One can easily get an impression that persons have no impact on their own career narrative and that it just exists "out there" in the world. The question: If persons look for the relation and influence between significant career events, are they not actively constructing subjective career meaning to develop towards something that might be a final aim that can be altered as they are developing?, is interesting to ask. Adler, in his individual psychology, emphasised that the final aim was an idea of the subjective future, by stating that the final aim or goal exists in the present, but not in the present consciousness. The final career aim functions like a guiding idea, which is constructed by the subjective individual. Also Adler (1956) stressed that the person is usually unaware of his final goals. This implies that the finality has hidden nature, but the person is actively trying to subjectively construct it, and alter it in terms of how the person develops in life in relation to narrative events (Lundin, 1989). In other words, the final career aim is hidden, but the person is constructing career meaning into it, and this meaningful final aim develops and changes in relation to narrative events that effect person's career choices.

Often a narrative is presented as a story from birth until the end, which is accordingly to Holmberg (1994) true in some sense. One has to first look at persons from where they are here and now, which is the end of their story, because they have not experienced the future yet. Said in other words one has to look at persons' phenomenological career meaning; their career actions and events, feelings and circumstances that are related to it. When persons have looked at their here and now, and subjectively constructed career meaning about their present career, and integrated past time events that are significant to them, they have started to integrate their story/narrative into a whole, doing it from the end to the start of their life. Holmberg (1994, p. 42) highlights this: "*The way that human thought, action and interaction makes a continuing web where the intelligibility of one part of the story is dependent on another*". Out from this, one can state that persons' subjective career meaning-construction is dependent on their theoretical phenomenological meaning, and on their past, present and future meaning. To explain this further one could say that the career narrative as a subjective

²⁶ Intelligibility is important to have in mind when one is discussing the narrative; it is the essence of the narrative perspective. It relates primarily to theoretical meaning. A narrative that is not intelligible is not a narrative. It could be moments of experiences, feelings, but not a narrative. The narrative is what connects these moments together (Holmberg, 1994).

theoretical meaning construction concept provides a structure to understand persons' phenomenological meaning construction process. The career narrative as a structure is subjectively described in naturalistic and causal terms, and the phenomenological is subjectively described in experiential and developmental terms. Holmberg (1994) agrees with this assumption and especially when persons are retelling their career narratives or reconstructing them. It is no secret that when persons develop they change not only molecules with other molecules, but also psychologically. The persons' career experiences, beliefs, expectations, wishes and desires change, in relation to their past, present, and future meanings. One has new career experiences and then one might find new ways of relating different meaning parts or significant career events and career experiences to each other. Another way of seeing it according to Holmberg is that earlier events that might have been frustrating might not be so frustrating after all as they did lead to something at the end. The career narrative provides a deeper awareness of meaning construction into persons' subjective self-construct.

Such a thought is specified in figure 5 below. The figure visualises the person's narrative construction, where the phenomenological career meaning and theoretical career meaning relates to each other in the career narrative to the person. The inner circle is where the phenomenological career meaning construction develops in terms of present meaning. That circle can be seen as the person developing in relation to the external forces in their career experience. The arrow between the phenomenological career meaning circle and theoretical career meaning circle shows the relationship between them. If the former career meaning is altered, then the latter is also altered, and vice versa. The theoretical career meaning circle visualises that it is something "outside" the person, but at the same time it is important in the construction of the career narrative. It lies outside the person because it is related to past and future career meaning, which is not constructed in the here and now. Theoretical career meaning can for example be past events, past career choices, future wishes and so on. As the person develops the here and now phenomenological meaning and theoretical career meaning develops too, none of them are stable. It functions like a system where the circles alter themselves in terms of the person's career meaning. In that way the structure of persons' narrative in a theoretical meaning sense can only mark out extreme possibilities and significant events (Holmberg, 1994), and the individuals construct their career experience as meaning into them (Cochran, 1997). To explain this more explicitly: theoretical career meaning can only distinguish concrete events such as a past or a future career choice, and

phenomenological career meaning can only construct meaning onto the concrete career events in the present.

The difference can also be looked upon as the relationship between hypothetical and empirical meaning. Theoretical career meaning can be categorised hypothetical because one cannot know if this type of career meaning is true or not to the individual, one can only be open for testing the hypothesis that implies to discover if the theoretical career meaning is true to the individual or not. For example: I think that my future meaningful career should give me the possibility to earn a lot of money, therefore I choose a career that gives me such a possibility. The phenomenological career meaning can be categorised as something empirically in terms of the experience of *I am now*. In some ways one could say that in the phenomenological perspective; persons are experiencing the hypothesis that was constructed in the theoretical perspective.

The umbrella down below reflects that persons' narrative is an overall structure of their career meaning process, where the outcome is: what is the person's meaningful story.

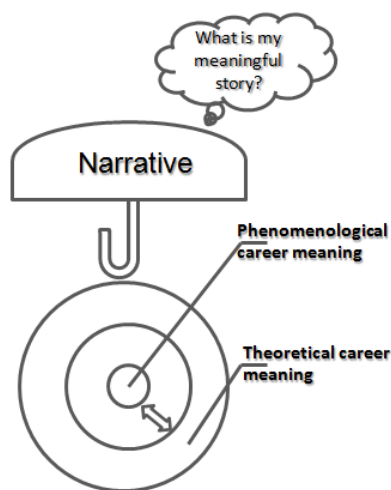


Figure 5: The logic of persons' meaning construction and their narrative

It is important to highlight that this interdependency relation between theoretical and phenomenological subjective career meaning construction is also dependent on culture beliefs the persons are surrounded by (Gergen, 1991). Even though the culture and the surroundings play a central role in the persons' meaning construction in terms of their career, it is all dependent on the person as a subject, and the subjectivity of the subject. How I choose to see

my career narrative is influenced of how I construct meaning into the significant events, and that process is influenced by how I consciously choose to experience those specific events.

Below, I will go further into subjective career meaning-construction, by focusing on persons' freedom in constructing their meaning onto events that give the content of persons' career narrative.

5.3.6 Freedom to choose your own subjective self-construct

Freedom to choose your own self-construct or freedom to construct your subjective meaning is an existential thought, which has its basis in phenomenological existential philosophy. As mentioned earlier Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre are philosophers that represents that philosophy tradition (Diprose & Reynolds, 2008; Owen, 2006; Webber, 2009). Further in this chapter I will discuss Jean Paul Sartre's (2003) perspective on persons' freedom to construct their meaning in their reality, with basis in persons' subjective career narrative. I will have most focus on his early writings, rather than the latest, because he had more focus on persons' freedom in his early days (Fox, 2003). I could have chosen to use Frankl's (2004) perspective on freedom, but since subjective meaning construction is about the person's pure subjectivity, it would not be appropriate to us Frankl since he emphasised that there does not exist subjectivity in the process of achieving meaning.

5.3.6.1 The 'Sartrean' view of the person

Sartre's view of the person is an example of the humanistic existential tradition in French philosophy, where his writings in the field developed in relation to historical and social happenings in the world (Fox, 2003). His early writings '*Being and Nothingness*' (2003)²⁷ and '*Transcendence of the Ego*' (1960)²⁸ was attacked from the so called structuralists, where they interpreted Sartre's view in Cartesian terms divided into material, social, historical and linguistic features (Fox, 2003).

Sartre's concept of persons' absolute freedom in '*Being and Nothingness*' was criticised most, and the structuralists accused him of reducing the influences of circumstances and situations in relation to persons' freedom (Fox, 2003). Sartre himself insisted in his early writings that all circumstances and situations are equally beatable; it all depends on the individual. According to Sartre the individual has the power and freedom to "beat" every circumstance

²⁷ The book: *Being and Nothingness* was first published in 1943 in French, but I have read the translated publication from 2003 which was first published in 1957. In the following section of this chapter I will refer to the 2003 publication

²⁸ The book: *Transcendence of the Ego* was first published in 1936 in French, but I have read the translated publication from 1960.

and situation as they want. More explicit, they can choose the career meaning in terms of how they act; it is not the circumstances or situations that decide for them.

This perspective is something Heidegger (1962) would disagree with, but Sartre again criticised him for being lost in the instrumentality of the world and overlooking persons' power. All persons have a responsibility for being who they are through their career choices of action. Further he stresses that it is not possible not to choose, because not to choose is also a choice (Sartre, 2003). Said in other words, when persons decide that they don't want to construct meaning out of a specific career situation, they have decided that and chosen not to give meaning to it, and they have already constructed career meaning: that the situation has no meaning- the individuals have chosen that.

As mentioned above Sartre explores the concept of choice in terms of persons' existential freedom. With this perspective in mind, he rejects the deterministic view and instead emphasises that persons are free and responsible for taking their own career choices, which will result in meaningful meaning for them. Sartre explains this in a polarity dimension, where the person as free is a being-for-itself or the person as being driven by what happens in their surroundings. The last dimension in this polarity Sartre called persons who have bad faith. To integrate this polarity dimension with Holmberg's (1994) distinction between phenomenological and theoretical meaning, Sartre (2003) would have rejected the theoretical meaning dimension in his early writings, by stressing that it is always only the individual who can construct subjective career meaning, and that theoretical meaning does not exist, because career meaning is always something phenomenological.

Sartre also distinguishes *positive choice*, *negative choice* and *radical choice*. For example if a person chose the family instead of focusing on his or her one wish for life: to be a researcher, would Sartre have called a negative choice because the individual chooses his or herself as an object, who is a victim of his or her surroundings and not choosing authentically. This is what Sartre (2003) called bad faith. In terms of the given example it might be too radical for the person or the family to choose his or her aim of becoming a researcher, even though the family is important. According to Sartre (2003) persons often choose the convenient, and, rejecting other meaningful possibilities by putting themselves through pleasing truth for the circumstances that surrounds the individual. By persons choosing the convenient, they are reflective in terms of the others, but not for themselves. More explicit, persons manage to take the position of the significant others as Mead (1981) would have said, but they do not feel free to shape themselves in terms of the others, they take the others without including their selves.

The opposite of the negative choice is the positive perspective. This choice includes taking responsibility for oneself, and choosing authentically (McMahon, 1971). In regarding persons' subjectivity in their meaning construction in relation to career choices Sartre (2003) would have stressed that one should choose and construct meaning in the direction of who one is, and not who society wants one to be. When it comes to radical choice Sartre underlined that every choice in a person's life is radical, because there are no grounds for choosing one action over another. Persons' choice is not based on justifications and reasons because they only have their own subjectivity to compare to. Said in other words, persons' career meaning and career choices, according to Sartre are unconditional and an expression of their freedom.

He explained this further by acknowledging that there are many situations in persons' life that influence them. However, persons are free to construct their meaning out of all situations and circumstances; no situation or circumstance is freer than others, and act it out in the world. To transform this thought into a subjective career meaning construction context would be that persons are free to interpret and construct career meaning into situations that helps individuals to construct their career narrative. Sartre would have said that persons' career is their responsibility to construct, and it is a part of their freedom. "*Whatever situation I am born or thrust into, this simply defines the particular landscape in which I am free to determine the meaning of my life*" (Sartre, 2003, s. 254). Further Sartre highlights that it is only the fundamental power of persons' projects that causes the organisation of things in the situation (Fox, 2003). This means that the individual chooses what he or she wants to include in his or her meaningful career narrative. Even the deepest crisis (for example, losing one's job because of health reasons) in the person's career can he or she choose not to include in his or her narrative and in this way the person choose what career meaning he or she want to construct in terms of his or her career.

The general term Sartre uses to describe the weight of our social and material configuration is what he calls facticity. This involves our being thrown into a world that pre-exists us and into a web of situations that are not all of our choosing. As he makes clear in BN²⁹, however, facticity encroaches upon us only to the extent that we integrate it into our personal project – I am always able to 'disengage myself from the world where I had been engaged' (BN,39). The language that I speak, the historical situation of my race and culture, my gender, my childhood experiences are viewed in this light as no more than transient surface aspects of me which I can choose to exclude from my personal project that I can withdraw from (Fox, 2003 p. 12-13).

Even though Sartre does not explicitly talk about persons' narrative, one can transform his words into the context of the narrative, especially when he discusses the concept of the 'I' in terms of every person has to create the 'I' in them. The way to create one's self is to describe

²⁹ Fox uses the initials BN that are the initials of Jean Paul Sartre's book Being and Nothingness.

past acts under a specific description, or a future 'I' or ideal self. In that way Sartre, talks about the narrative, where he integrates past acts and future acts as the basis for constructing meaning. According to Sartre it is consciousness that confronts the past and the future when facing a self. In that way the 'I' can refer to the past which Sartre calls the character and to the future which he calls the ideal self. This temporal construct or relation to being is floating and not permanent. This implies that the character is floating between the past, present and future. In this way Sartre refers to persons' narrative implicitly, and he supports that persons develop, and that their meaning construction is temporal because persons develop (Fox, 2003).

In Sartre's book (1993)³⁰ *Existentialism and humanism* it is emphasised that individuals are defined through their actions, and not from inwardness. Persons' consciousness is defined here as an activity that is pure. It is here that Sartre moves away from the Cartesian view, and focuses on persons' meanings construction that is something that is done outwards in terms of the concrete world, which is more a dialectical approach to persons' reality and meaning construction. For Sartre persons' reality contains body, consciousness, materiality and transcendence. "*Consciousness, Sartre insists, 'exists its body' (BN, 329) and is 'wholly body' (BN, 305) since the body is its 'center of reference' (BN, 326) in the material world of experience, action and engagement*" (Fox, 2003, s. 17).

As a summary of Sartre's view of persons; how they construct subjective meaning through their own freedom in terms of their career choices; one could say that his phenomenological perspective contributes to the awareness of persons' freedom to construct what career meaning they want to construct, and it is all dependent on their career narrative, which is dependent on their chosen career action (moving body) in the world. The theoretical meaning comes up to persons' present consciousness in stressing that the concept of freedom is universal, but the content of the concept of freedom is phenomenological, because the subject matter is not ontological or epistemologically universal; persons' experience the freedom in the here and now, and the freedom is based on past experiences which are deconstructed in their career narrative. Even though persons might not feel free, they are free within their context. It is the content of persons' freedom that will differentiate from one person to another in terms of how they experience themselves in relation to their present career context.

Even though one can get an impression in Sartre's writings that he rejects everything outside the person, and that persons' freedom is absolute, he developed later a more contextual view

³⁰ The book, *Existentialism and humanism*, was originally published in French with the title *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* in 1946. I have read the Norwegian translation second edition that was published in 1993.

of persons and their subjectivity. During the post-war years Sartre began to develop and modify his earlier theory about persons' freedom (Fox, 2003). He wanted to integrate the social and historical contexts in terms of his freedom foundation, that was no longer an absolute concept but situated and contextual. In other words, Sartre acknowledged that persons' freedom is dependent on the social and historical context that surrounds persons. This implies that persons' freedom to construct career meaning in relation to their career narrative, is dependent on the social and historical context that surrounds the person.

5.3.7 Summary

As a summary one can say that pure subjectivity is utopian in relation to subjective career meaning construction, and subjective meaning construction is only possible in relation to the context, and is a combination of theoretical and phenomenological meaning. By emphasising the importance of the context, I will go further into the relational meaning construction phase. In having subjectivity in foreground, persons have to search for what is meaningful, and to find what is meaningful they have to give life a shape and structure to find what is significant. If a person is asking his or her self what is significant in his or her career, the person is asking what he or she wants from his or hers career. These questions are necessary to highlight so that persons narrative is a meaningful narrative not just at a conceptual level, but that it is satisfying for the person to be the main character, and free to construct the meaning they want (Cochran, 1997; Holmberg, 1994; Sartre, 2003). With this assumption it is important to go further into depth about persons in reality; the relational context where the individual is the main character, but where the relation to others are in foreground. The relationship between the subjective and the objective could be similar to Frankl's (1988) perspective on the trans-subjective being. It is not the same, because this subjective meaning construction approach that I have been discussing above emphasises the subjective in terms of what is in the foreground. This is something that Frankl criticised, where he meant that persons should go beyond one self, which is not something that this approach to meaning construction emphasises. Frankl's perspective of the trans-subjective being looks more a like the relational perspective on meaning construction.

5.4 The relational career meaning construction

I started this chapter about meaning construction with the distinction between theoretical and phenomenological meaning (Holmberg, 1994), where I stated that objective and subjective meaning construction is a blend of theoretical and phenomenological. In the relational meaning construction phase I will focus on the space and knowledge that is discovered

between theoretical and phenomenological meaning in terms of the career narrative. One can wonder what the difference is between subjective and relational meaning construction when both consider theoretical and phenomenological meaning as vital for constructing true meaning for persons career narrative. Explicitly, the difference is the space between the former and latter type of meaning and the outcome of the construction phase. As mentioned the subjective meaning construction phase has the focus on the main character in the narrative and freedom, but in the relational construction phase the nerve centre is the context that surrounds persons, and as an outcome how relations have an impact on their career meaning construction, and on that basis make career choices. The concept 'space between' can be defined as the conscious knowledge that the individual becomes aware of in the meeting with what surrounds him or her. In this thought it is possible to see the concept 'space between' in terms of James (1890) discrimination between transitive and substantive thought. In the relational construction phase the career meaning always is there, or said in other words the career meaning always floats in the space between the person and the context. James (1890) called this floating mode transitive, because it has not become conscious to the individual. When the relational career meaning construction becomes conscious to the individual the meaning becomes substantive. To say it in other words the relational career meaning construction has become conscious to the individual, and then the individual make career choices based on the substantive meaning.

According to Carlsen (1988) there are three primary sources for meaning in life; personal relationship, career, and an experience of personal growth. This implies that there is a meaning construction phase, where the person is an agent in constructing career meaning in relation to other persons (Cochran, 1997). I do agree that the meaning and the meaning construction can be grounded in personal relationships, career and experience of personal growth; however I believe that the division is a bit conservative. I think there is an interconnection between the three main sources of meaning in life. It is relations with others that can lead to personal growth within one's career (Josselson, 1992; Schultheiss, 2003). The essence of this is that it is through other persons that one constructs and discovers career meaning in one's career narrative, and makes career choices. One can ask the question: Is it always the relational aspect that leads to growth and a greater consciousness about career meaning? This question is hard to answer, but one thing that is clear is that the space between persons is always there, and the knowledge is therefore always there.

On the ground of this I will take a social constructionist approach to how one constructs meaning and where it comes from in connection to career (Kidd, 2004; Young & Collin, 2004). Below I will explain this combined perspective more in depth.

5.4.1 Social constructionism

Social constructionism is similar to the social constructivist approach in the way that it is the person that constructs career meaning, but in contrast to the constructivist approach it includes the social interaction focus more than an individual focus. The differences between the positivist and the social constructionist approach are deeper than between the social constructivist approach and the social constructionist approach. The ontological position to social constructionism is understood as anti-realist and anti-essentialist. An anti-realist and anti-essentialist do not believe in that reality can exist without persons that experience it. Social constructionism as an epistemology believes that the career meaning persons construct is historically and culturally based; language constitutes reality, rather than it reflects reality (Young & Collin, 2004). In that way language is the main source for meaning. In this way, social constructionism is concerned with how the world gives meaning, and how these meanings are reproduced, negotiated and transformed through social context (Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004).

The social constructionist perspective emphasises that reality is the interactive relationships between persons, which is the core for construction of knowledge and meaning (Rosen & Kuehlwein, 1996). This is in opposition to the notion that persons construct career meaning and knowledge independently, without taking the context, culture and background history into consideration. Gergen (1991) argued that meaning is located in the interaction within the context of relationships, and is constructed and reconstructed over time within the social matrix. In other words it is the career meaning construction process in interaction with context and relationships, which is the reality of persons in the world. Persons' reality is constructed in relation to the social context. Burr (2003) outlines four assumptions about social constructionism and reality. Firstly, a critical determination about taken-for-granted knowledge is outlined. What this means is the social constructionists' challenge the thought of career reality as objective, linear, and, with the right instruments, knowable. Social constructionism challenges traditional understandings as natural and true. Secondly, social constructionism is concerned about historical and cultural contexts. In this perspective this means that the world is historically and culturally situated, changing and developing in time and space. The third point emphasises that social processes sustain knowledge. This means

that the construction of knowledge is an interactive process. In a daily life, persons construct and reconstruct their versions of their career reality through their social practices. What persons think is true, is not some external reality, but what is currently accepted as one. This perspective of career reality construction is a negotiating process where some interpretations are privileged and others are eclipsed. The fourth point is that knowledge and social action go together. In this sense one could say that some versions of career reality lead to particular forms of action, and away from others. With this it follows that social career action will work in the interest of more powerful groups and against those in weaker positions (Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004).

5.4.1.1 Ambiguity of the Social Constructionist approach and Social Constructivist approach

Young and Collin (2004) emphasise the ambiguity between the social constructivist and constructionist approaches. Often these approaches are discussed and explained in the same terms. Said in other words constructivism and constructionism are equally the same thing. Kidd (2004), Richardson (2004), and Young and Collin (2004) argue that it is important to distinguish these concepts so that one doesn't misunderstand them, which can lead to ambiguity in identifying the contributions these perspectives give the career field in accordance with meaning and meaning construction in career choices. The main difference between social constructivism and social constructionism is that career meaning is constructed cognitively in the former and through social processes in the latter. Apart from this it is difficult to distinguish between them. The discussion is mostly on their similar epistemologies and ontologies. Amundson (2003b) and Peavy (2006) use constructivism in a general way ignoring ontological and epistemological issues, other defines new sub-perspectives, for example, that constructivism is a part of constructionism, others again use the terms interchangeably with the same meaning (Burr, 2003). One can ask: What do these perspectives actually mean? What is the actual difference? Is it possible to distinguish them? These questions are relevant to ask in trying to understand these perspectives.

I think it is difficult to distinguish the social constructivist approach from the social constructionist approach. In my view they are interconnected to each other, but the former has more focus on the subjective experience, and the latter has more focus on the contextual knowledge impact on the individual. To explain this shortly with reference to what is mentioned above; Persons are culturally based individuals, where the career meaning is constructed, but persons, as agents, have to interpret the career meaning which comes from the social context. In that manner, I believe the person theory where the emphasis is on

persons that are inherently relational is a more precise perspective to take because it includes both the social constructivist and the social constructionist approaches, but with more focus on the latter; the space between persons, where theoretical and phenomenological meaning is included. More explicitly, all important knowledge or career meaning that persons receive from different relations in their environment can be looked upon as imposed and projected meaning, and therefore this type of career meaning is theoretical because the persons have not constructed meaning themselves (Holmberg, 1994). However, if persons interpret their career meaning in concert with the type of relations that they experience and the type of knowledge and information that is given in the relations, the career meaning becomes phenomenological because then the persons have used their feelings, cognitions and bodily experiences from former career experiences and here and now career experiences to construct career meaning that is valid for them. In this way the relational career meaning construction approach is both phenomenological and theoretical.

5.4.2 The person theory

In a social constructionist approach (Richardson, 2004) persons are inherently relational and the space between persons is the source for career meaning and the basis for constructing career meaning. This space for constructing, presumes that the person is an agent constructing his or her world, which is also seen in the social constructivist perspective (Cochran, 1997; Macmurray, 1957/1999). These perspectives can also be seen in the person theory of the Scottish philosopher Macmurray (1991) and the Norwegian counselling theorist Kvalsund (1998). Macmurray (1991) claimed that there is no 'I' without 'you'. With this he meant that the individual is only a person when she or he stands in relation to other individuals, and that the isolated individual 'I' is something less than a person. 'You' is not meant as a single specific person, but it can be an individual, family, community and so forth (the other). The theory of 'I-You' is central for what Macmurray called persons-in-relation. To be a person is to be in a relationship with other persons and it is through understanding the quality and characteristics of these relations that one can make meaning of one's life (Kvalsund, 1998). From the 'I-You' perspective one can say that persons construct career meaning through being in agency in relation to other persons; in this case, in connection to career.

This relational theory can be understood through the paradigms of dependency, independency, and interdependency (Kvalsund, 1998; Macmurray, 1991). Macmurray's theory (1991) about persons-in-relation and Kvalsund's theory of the person (1998) are really developmental theories. They declare that persons cannot become independent before they have experienced

dependency, and persons cannot become interdependent before they have experienced both dependency and independency. This developmental theory or philosophy is not a so-called categorical developmental stage theory that would imply that when persons have experienced dependency and started to experience independency they never experience dependency again. It is a holistic, dynamic, and interactive system (Kvalsund, 1998; Macmurray, 1991).

Within the dependency paradigm the 'I' is dependent on 'you'. The 'you' is the centre of constructing career meaning. Persons, who are trying to find meaning in making a career choice, would be dependent on what others think and feel. The 'you' is in foreground and the 'I' is in the background. Dependent persons cannot differentiate their own subjective career meaning from the other persons. An expression could be: *It is important for me to do what others think and feel so that I can make the right career decisions because they know what the right meaning is for me.*

Within the independency paradigm the 'I' knows its own position in the relation to 'you'. The 'I' knows its needs and how to organise its desires into action to fulfil a meaningful purpose for them. When a person moves from the dependency paradigm into the independency paradigm the awareness is focused on him or herself and not the context surrounding him or her. One can say that the person is in isolation (Kvalsund, 1998). The 'I' is the centre of this paradigm. Persons, who are trying to construct career meaning for themselves in their career, think they know themselves and what they want to do. The 'You' is in the background, but the 'I' is in the foreground. An expression of an independent person could be: *I know myself best, and what I want, and that is why I don't need anybody else in order to construct my career meaning.*

The interdependency concept is not particularly well developed in the western culture, in which the independency paradigm is seen as the primary goal for persons in the society (Kvalsund, 1998). The interdependency paradigm contains the whole development scheme of persons in relation (Macmurray, 1991) and the theory of the person (Kvalsund, 1998). Within this paradigm both the dependency and independency are enclosed. They are, according to Kvalsund, subordinate to the primary stage of interdependency, and are seen as a dynamic movement between the whole and its parts. The framework of interdependency is that persons are moving away from clean self-centred motives and moving towards inclusion of the 'You' and participation in the community. This means that persons acknowledge each individual's deep interconnections with one another. It is through relations that persons come to know who they are in connection to families, communities and society. The basic principle in this is that

personal subjective meaning lies in the meeting between the self and the other (I-You) (Allgood, 1994/1995; Kvalsund, 1998; Macmurray, 1991). The goal in this paradigm is mutuality between persons. Being in a relationship with others, and especially being in a mutual relationship can be used as a basis for career meaning construction in connection to career choices. When persons increase their subjective knowledge and meaning, they become able to make choices as agents interacting with the world on the basis of new extended career meaning in connection to them. An expression of a person constructing career meaning in career choices would probably think like this: *Career choices are based on relations, because it is through relations that I get more knowledge about myself for constructing meaning for my career.*

I will not go more in depth in this perspective; however, as a summary one could say that the quality of the construct persons-in-relation is dependent on how persons construct career meaning, and it is important to have this in mind when one goes further into depth in meaning and meaning construction in connection to career.

5.4.3 Summary

In this section I have tried to express the differences between the three spheres of persons' meaning construction processes. These three spheres can be seen as independent of each other or as a developing cycle. Throughout the history of the career counselling field one could say that the field has developed from a personality approach that has been treated as an objective meaning construction approach in which the construction of meaning and the construct of it are universal. Further the career field has developed to become a constructivist approach in which the objective perspective has been abandoned, and the emphasis has been placed on a phenomenological approach as vital for persons feeling free to construct their own career meaning. As I have discussed, both theoretical and phenomenological meanings are disclosed in the constructivist paradigm, but with focus on the phenomenological perspective in relation to persons' career narrative. In the end a more social constructionist approach has been expressed as vital, the person theory, because the contextual is more influential on persons who have the responsibility to construct their career meaning out from the knowledge that surrounds them. This perspective on career meaning construction contains both the phenomenological and theoretical career meanings. The reason for including the person-in-relation and person theory was to show a nuanced theory in terms of social constructionism. In my empirical investigation I will not use the person theory explicitly, but I use the notion

about the importance of including the knowledge from relations as background for collecting data about persons' career meaning in terms of relational meaning³¹.

Career meaning and career meaning constructions play a vital role in how persons' experience themselves in relation to their career agency. I have barely mentioned the agency construct in this section. In the next chapter, I will discuss the human agency perspective in relation to career meaning and career meaning construction in terms of persons' career experiences.

6. Human agency, meaning and meaning construction

6.1 Introduction

Earlier in this chapter I emphasised that career meaning and career meaning construction is dependent on three levels of meaning; objective, subjective and relational, which again are dependent on theoretical and phenomenological career meaning. Within these dependency constructs the importance of how persons view or experience their agency becomes vital. This dependency construct can be looked upon as a hierarchy, where persons have to construct career meaning in terms of how they experience their agency and how they view the construct of career (career meaning). Said in other words career meaning construction, human agency and how persons view the career construct (career meaning) interplay with each other, and affect each other, and functions as guide for making career choices. Further I will discuss the agency part of this hierarchy.

As previously mentioned all persons have meaning in their lives (Baumeister, 1991; Carlsen, 1988). The concept of meaning comes through when persons are active for example when he or she speaks, thinks, or when he or she decides on a career choice (Baumeister, 1991). Said in other words career meaning, career meaning construction and how persons' experience themselves as agents in society depend on each other. Existentialism claimed that persons' lives do not automatically have a specific universal meaning, but all persons have the ability to construct meaning for themselves and act on the constructed meaning in their reality (Hadrup, 1979).

Meaning that is constructed by the person has been developed from somewhere "out there", in relation to one's self. Accordingly to Baumeister (1991) persons choose among meanings

³¹ I discovered that the relational dimension was relevant to use as a discussion partner in terms of discussing the factor's that emerged in the empirical investigation. I had no knowledge of that when I wrote this theory chapter, so The person theory will be discussed more in depth in the discussion part of this dissertation.

offered by the culture or the society. In this sense, one could ask the question if persons were dependent on the society and the cultural context to construct meaning and act on it. This perspective is vital in the human agency paradigm in social science.

6.2 Human agency in social science

In theory and research about the concept of human agency in social science, the essence is that persons need to look at themselves as actors who are creating their own lives, and not act like patients that do not take any responsibility for creating their own lives, but just go with the flow in society (Cochran, 1997). This perspective on human agency is an existential perspective where it was emphasised that persons should be conscious of choosing among; what the society and the culture offers; and they should be aware of making decisions and acquiring meaning, as opposed to accepting meanings uncritically from the society and culture. This is in alignment with Baumeister's (1991) distinction on the use of meaning. Persons' use of meaning can be broadly categorized into two parts. The first one is to understand patterns in the environment, and when that understanding is achieved to act on behalf of what the environment tells one to do. The second is to control oneself, including regulating one's internal states. Meaning enables one to understand patterns in oneself in relation to the world and then predict what can happen. In this perspective persons actively construct and use their experienced meaning to make decisions, to guide their actions, and to regulate their emotional states. In that way, meanings in life can be considered as outcomes of negotiations between the individual and the social system, or meanings in life can be created by persons but they are products of the society and the culture. The construct of freedom becomes central in this manner. If persons feel that meaning is a negotiation between themselves and their environment, one could expect that they experience their agency as being free to do so; they feel free to act upon what is meaningful for them. On the other hand if persons feel that they are product of the society, one could expect that they don't feel free to act upon what is meaningful for them. This can also be seen in terms of Mead's (1981) perspective on "I" and "Me". Mead emphasises that a person's self ("I") develops in relation to the generalised other ("Me"). The "Me" is a cognitive object, which is only known in retrospect, which means reflection. This means that often persons act in unself-conscious ways, which are not reflective. But when persons take the generalised other perspective they are watching and shaping the self in relation to the system of behaviours that constitutes the other (Mead, 1931). This implies that persons reflect themselves in terms of the environment

or reality in which they exist, and they feel free to do so. But this freedom is not easy for every person.

According to Nygård (2007) persons strive all the time for understanding themselves as actors in society; some are more successful than others. Based on that statement, the central question relevant to ask is: why do persons experience themselves so differently when they live and experience their reality in the same society and even in the same backyard? Nygård's explanation is that there exists different understanding of the notion of agency, and that different theories have to take a lot of blame for putting the concept of agency in a black and white framework; in which the emphasis is on persons as either an agent or a patient, without showing the very complex realistic picture.

Those different understandings about being an active agent or a patient constitute accordingly the subjective constructivist approach and then objective deterministic approach to persons' agency. The question one can ask is: are persons determined out from external objective reinforcements that shape them or by internal subjective forces that make them capable of constructing their own meaning so that persons make meaningful career choices in life? Or is there an interaction between the internal and external that steers the knowledge about persons' agency?

In the career counselling area, at the end of 20th century human agency with the emphasis on the subjective person as the main actor in constructing meaning for their career choices, became an important research field. Based on the development in the career field that has changed from an objective to a subjective approach in which the focus is aligned with the positive psychology tradition, and where the focus is on growth and subjectivity within persons (Seligman, 2003/2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2005), I will focus on the subjective approach to human agency, with emphasis on persons' career in a broad definition. According to Chen (2006), Young & Valach (2004), Richardson (2004) the core concepts in career human agency are able to promote positive management and healthy growth in persons which is the core feature in the social constructivist and social constructionist perspective in career counselling in the 21st century.

Career human agency is a wide and confusing concept, where many parts fit together, making it very complex and impossible to cover across the whole spectre. I will first, describe career human agency, secondly I will discuss and describe important concepts of human agency, with emphasis on Albert Bandura's (2001), Deci and Ryan's (2000a; 2000b), Lent's (2004),

and Young and Valach's (2004) perspectives on human agency in social science and in the career counselling field.

6.3 Career human agency

The concept about human agency in the career field has its background in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (Chen, 2002; 2006). Bandura (1989) divides the development of the human agency approach in three different ways: mechanical agency, autonomous agency and interactive agency. The first approach to human agency is often connected to behaviourism, where persons' develop in terms of internal instrumentality where external influences operate mechanistically on action. In this mechanical approach internal events are products of external ones and free from any causal efficacy. In this matter the view of persons' self-system is as storage and a channel for the environmental forces. The second view of agency is named autonomous agency where persons act as entirely independent agents of their own actions. Personality theories are often connected to such a view. The third approach to human agency is the interactive agency where persons are neither autonomous agents nor mechanical conveyors; rather they make casual contributions to their own actions with the system of triadic reciprocal causation.

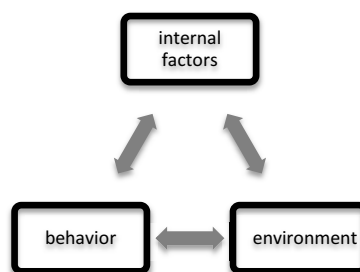


Figure 6: Triadic reciprocal causation (based on Bandura 1986)

This triadic system (figure 6) can be visualised as a triangle, where the top end represents internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological factors. The end to the left represents persons' behaviour and the end to the right represents the environment where persons live. This means that persons' actions, which are based on their personal factors, behaviours and environmental events operate as interactive determinants. The interactive view of human agency is often described as the constructivist or constructionist approach to human agency. Within the human agency paradigm I will focus on Albert Bandura's social cognitive interactive agency theory (SCT).

In the interactive agency approach (SCT), the concept on self-efficacy is vital. Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as persons' "(...) *judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance*" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). In the career research field several approaches have emerged in terms of Albert Bandura's perspective on self-efficacy (Chen, 2002; 2006).

The first explicit contribution to this field within the career context was Betz (2000) and her colleagues (Betz & Hackett, 1987), where the emphasis was on person's self-efficacy, and what role and function this had on career development and counselling. Betz (2000) and her colleagues emphasised that persons' agency is an important factor in accounting for their capacity and potential in their career development. In line with Bandura, their conclusions confirmed the hypothesis: the higher level of a person's career self-efficacy is; the more competent and prepared persons are in terms of career tasks and as an outcome; work out possible career problems.

Lent (2004) and Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002) introduced social cognitive career theory (SCCT), to try to get a better understanding of the notion about human agency and career. The development of career interests, the formation of educational and vocational choices, the nature and results of performance in career spheres are looked upon as occurring in three conceptually interlocking process models. In each model the basic theoretical elements such as human agency, personal goals, outcome expectations and specifically self-efficacy are included and operate together with other aspects of persons, that is, their context and learning experiences, to facilitate career development. In this way SCCT is an interactive model (Lent, 2004). SCCT developmental framework tries to build on and expand Bandura's social cognitive theory to understand the career development process in persons' reality. Self-efficacy allows persons to exercise personal agency in their own career development and the framework also highlights environmental factors such as gender, culture, barriers and supports that help shaping their career path. This framework aims to explain and understand the career interest, choice and performance processes. Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002) wanted to develop a more reality oriented approach to human agency and emphasised that human agency is a complex and dynamic psychological interplay that is both purposeful and intentional. Persons' agency influences their career performance, but it also affects other interconnected factors such as the already mentioned interest development, attitude and values and the choice process.

SCCT's approach is closely aligned with Bandura's view of human agency, where he underlines that human agency is the essence of humanity (Bandura, 2001). According to Bandura, human agency contains the central mechanism of personal agency where persons' beliefs about their capabilities of exercising control over events, which affect their meaningful lives. Further, Bandura emphasised that human agency includes some core features that are: intentionality, forethought, motivational self-regulation, affect, and self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness that include persons' functioning, meaning and purpose of their lives. These core features guide persons in their development and adaptation. This definition of human agency lies close to the notion of self-efficacy beliefs/personal agency (Chen, 2006). However, human agency is more than that; it must also include a broader integration of self-efficacy where factors such as persons' intentional actions, the dynamic interplay between the intrapersonal, relational, environment and contextual features come into play (Chen, 2006). These are aspects that Bandura also takes into account in his later writing about the theme. This dynamic interplay was something that Super (1957; 1990; 1994) was engaged in. In short Super's approach to persons' career and career development was that persons are constantly in a developmental maturing process in which they achieve more self-insight; through mastering experiences, physical and psychological growth, and through their relation to society. Super meant that the maturity of persons doesn't happen in a vacuum, but in relation to different factors that surrounds them. In addition, persons are in relation to different phases in life, and in different relations persons take different roles.

Human agency in the social cognitive view has until now been addressed as an individual and personal agency exercise, but according to Bandura, like Super (1980; 1990; 1994), this is not the only way that persons influence events in their lives and develop from them. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) distinguishes between three different modes of human agency: personal, proxy, and collective. Personal agency has already been discussed; proxy and collective agency will further be discussed below, in which persons' relation to others and the environment persons act in is central.

In many areas of functioning persons do not have direct control over social conditions and institutional practices that influence their lives. In such occurrences persons seek wellbeing, security and valued outcomes through proxy agency. This type of agency is a socially mediated mode of agency where persons try to get a hold of those who have access to resources or expertise, or those who have influence and power to act on their request to secure the outcomes they desire. Bandura (2001) claims that successful functioning involves a blend

of reliance on proxy agency in some spheres of functioning, so that persons have free time and effort to manage and directly control other aspects of their lives. It is important to be aware that proxy agency relies heavily on socially perceived efficacy, engaging the meditative efforts of others. In other circumstances persons can also turn to proxy control in areas where they can have direct influence when they have not developed personal control. In such situations persons believe others can do it better, or they do not want to burden themselves with the aspects that direct control entails. In such a matter personal control is neither an inherent drive nor universally desired, as others commonly claim in this field. Bandura expresses it in this way: *“The exercise of effective control requires mastery of knowledge and skills attainable only through long hours of arduous work. Moreover, maintaining proficiency under the ever-changing conditions of life, demands continued investment of time, effort, and resources in self-renewal”* (Bandura, 1989, p. 13). The exercise of personal control also includes responsibilities, stressors and risks in addition to the hard work of self-development. Proxy agency can be used in ways that facilitate self-development or the cultivation of personal competences, but part of the price of proxy agency rests on the competence, power and favours of others. Persons do not live in isolation; the knowledge that persons seek is achievable through socially interdependent effort, but they have to work with others to secure what they believe they cannot accomplish on their own. This is where the concept of collective agency becomes visible (Bandura, 2001).

Persons share beliefs in their collective power to produce designed results, which is highlighted in the collective agency (Bandura, 2001). The collective power is not only the product of shared intentions, knowledge and skills of its members, but also the interactive coordinated and synergetic dynamics of their transactions. Bandura claims that since collective performance of the social system involves transactional dynamics; which implies that the perceived collective efficacy is an emergent group level property, not only as the sum of efficacy beliefs of individual members of the group. It is important to note that persons act jointly on a shared belief, not on an independent individual belief, that does the cognizing, aspiring, motivating and regulating. In other words, personal, proxy and collective agency interact together in a system that is the basis for how persons experience their own agency.

To relate this interaction approach where personal, proxy and collective agencies are in relation to each other in a career development context; one should have an awareness of the relation between these types of agencies with having the intentional agency in mind that leads to a type of action that will drive the persons in a more optimal career direction, where growth

and positive management is vital (Bandura, 2001). The latest explanation from Bandura on human agency has offered an integral perspective where micro and macro aspects of persons' reality are integrated into a holistic image (Chen, 2006). This holistic image makes a major contribution to the career field in the social constructionist area; where meaning construction, human agency, intentionality, uncertainty, cultural diversity, transition and adjustment, and transformation have become vital to focus on.

Now I will focus on two of the core features in human agency, which are human intentionality and human action (Young & Valach, 2006).

6.4 Human intentionality and human action

As mentioned earlier, human intentionality and human action are two vital factors of human agency, or one can say the two necessities arguing for human agency in the career field. Cochran (1997) defined human agency in the career context as a combination of human intention and human action for making things happen. Cochran explains it in this way:

Action is an exercise of human agency, a person's power to act. In acting, for instance, a person judges, applies knowledge and skill, plans, monitors, decides whether to exert more effort or to quit...the more general target of career counselling is not agency, but a sense of agency, a person's sensed capacity to bring about desirable outcomes or carry out a task (p. 28-29).

For persons to act in this agency spirit, their actions must be intentional. One could ask the question whether any action can be defined as action without an intention to do so. In this circumstance, the difference between behaviour and action is relevant. Persons' behaviour often happens without persons thinking what they actually are doing, but action to start an action one must have an intention to do so, to achieve desired outcomes of the action.

Human agency researchers emphasise how an action starts. DeCharm's (1976) perspective on personal causation is an example of how persons' action begins. A person experiences being an agent if the goal or purpose of an action is grounded in a meaningful motive, this motive explains and gives meaning towards accomplishing a goal, which increases his or her involvement and the sense of self-determination. Other human agency researchers emphasise how an action ends. Bandura's early writings about self-efficacy (1989) and Seligman's (1998) perspective on learned optimism emphasised that persons can exercise control of events to successfully complete a task or achieve a desirable consequence. In the later years theorists and researchers in this field and specifically in the career research field have expanded their original emphasis to include more complex syntheses while maintaining the

original emphasis (Cochran, 1997). Such examples will be given below, in concert with human intentionality and human action.

6.4.1 Human intentionality and intentions

The main key to human agency is to recognize the role of human intentionality in the creation and performance of career action (Chen, 2006). According to Chen subjectivity forms the basis for human intentionality. This subjectivity is defined in the context that persons are cognitive, emotional and bodily beings. These attributes that are involved in persons' functioning, manifest in their subjectivity, which is the essence of the constructivist world view in the career field (Chen, 2006; Peavy, 2005; 2006; Savickas, 1993). Said in other words subjectivity manifests the basic foundation for human intention, and being aware of such intention is the vital content of human agency. So this means that human agency is connected with and drives intentionality, which again creates and transforms persons' acts in their life, which includes career aspects of life (Chen, 2002; 2006). In this sense, agency and intentionality are tied up to action and teleology. So what is human intentionality?

The construct of intentionality has a significant potential for career theory and practice, however, many career researchers and those in other social science areas hardly address this construct. Often the word intentionality is understood as being similar to the word 'aboutness'. Martin and Sugarman (1999) define intentionality as persons' experience of always being about something, and that experience of always being about something comes from their physical presence in the world. This means that their physical presence is seen in relation to persons' development of consciousness. This type of definition is a clear example of what is problematic with intentionality (Young & Valach, 2004), in that one does not explicitly say if it is connected to desire or, for example, to teleology³².

To come a bit closer to intentionality it seems appropriate to start with its definition. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2006) intentionality is the distinguishing property of mental phenomena being necessarily directed upon an object, whether real or imaginary. Franz Brentano (1995)³³ reintroduced the concept of intentionality in contemporary philosophy and defined intentionality as one characteristic of mental phenomena, by which they could be distinguished from physical phenomena, using phrases

³² Teleology comes from the Latin word *telos*, which means end or purpose. Teleology is the philosophical study of purpose. The essence in teleological philosophy is that human beings construct meaning for or directed toward a final result, that there is an inherent purpose or final cause for all that exists.

³³ This book was published after Franz Brentano's death in 1917. This is a republished edition of his book, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint*

such as “reference to content”, “direction towards an object” and “the immanent objectivity”. This definition helps concretise the concept of intentionality, but it still needs some more clarification. If one then goes to the Latin word ‘intendere’ which means to direct toward an aim or goal, and adds that it is constructed through persons’ engagement in the world, then this intentionality arises from their engagement in the past and the present. In this way one sees clearly the teleological approach to intentionality when one integrates it with intention. Since it has been underlined many times in this theory part that persons’ agency is about purposefulness (directive to a goal) and intentionality, it seems clarifying to connect these with intention and intentionality and to go further into the action approach in the human agency concept.

Career literature has not addressed intentionality explicitly until recently. Richardson (2004) contributes in depth to intentionality and career. Richardson is in alignment with Searle’s (1983) definition of intentionality and Husserl’s (1936/2001) definition. “*Intentionality is a property of many mental states and events, by which they are directed at or about or of objects and states of affairs in the world*”(Searle, 1983, p. 1). In addition Searle views intentionality as a subset of consciousness or subjective experience that has to do with persons’ states of directedness towards the world. These states of directedness towards the world are intentions, beliefs, hopes, fears and desires. An intentional state can be defined as a determination to act in a certain way that one has in mind to do or bring about. In this way intentions are associated with all types of directed actions and goals. Even though intentions look to the future, they are grounded in the present.

As mentioned the connection between intentionality and action is critical to the construction of career which is the back and forth movement between intended action and answering the ontological question: What is this action about? (Young & Valach, 2004) For example one could ask the question what kind of career do I want to construct for myself. By reflecting about this type of question, one is reflecting about one’s career action and one’s intentions in one’s career. Young and Valach argue for a strong reformulation of intentionality which is tied to action. Intentionality prefigures action and arises from it. According to Young and Valach the long term and complex action sequences in career are reflective and connected to the socio-cultural normative language context where actions and career occur. In other words, person’s action sequences, person’s career intentionality and career are affected by the socio-cultural context and stand in relation to the surroundings. Further they clarify this formulation by saying that persons make sense intentionally of the past, present and future. Persons ask

what intention is pointing towards and this implies that intention has a strong sense of direction to goals as it refers to the future.

Cultural psychology emphasises that it is the culture and not the biology that shapes human life and the human mind that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying states in an interpretive system (Richardson, 2004). Such intentions that Bruner (1990) talks about are associated with the construction of meaning which are understood in relation to the interpretive and symbolic system that are provided by culture. One can then say that it is the culture that provides the language, symbols and objects out of which meaning is made, and that intentions are central in connecting the person to the cultural environment. New intentions represent new connections to the cultural environment and give rise to the construction of new meanings. The experience of new intentions is also imbedded in time; it is conceptualised as a part of a stream of consciousness that is on-going in connection to an unfolding future in the present, and to the complex texture of daily life. The persons' experience of new intentions is dependent on the context that is involved. Sometimes intentions will emerge with few new ideas and can be very repetitive, and at other times new intentions can be ignored or not taken seriously even though they are experienced. The issue here is that the emergence of new intentions needs to be generated, which means that something has to bring them to mind. Richardson (2004) emphasises that once new intentions are present in the subjective experience they need to be identified and taken seriously. Richardson conceptualises intentions and actions as non-dualistic as they refer to states of consciousness or subjective experience compromising directedness towards the world and compromising what a person might actually do in the world. In my opinion, one could also understand intentions and actions as dualistic, because intentions are not always acted upon. For example I have intentions, but did not realise them. Dualism often represents a split between the mind and the body, which can be transferred to the relationship between intentions and action if the intention is categorized as something cognitive and action is related to the body. But in this circumstance; intentions and action are non-dualistic since intentionality represents an essence of human psychology as it is defined as a combination of cognitive, affective and behavioural facets that are involved in goal formation. The inclusive whole of all its parts is the action per se, if it is defined by the characteristic conditions of being in action, that is intention. The process of acts therefore is not dualistic, because it integrates the whole, i.e. both intention (thought) and motives (feeling); mind and body, and in addition the world where the action is executed.

6.4.2 Human action theory in relation to intentionality

Action theory has received increased attention over the last decade; a whole range of researchers has contributed to the creation of its conceptual groundwork. Young, Valach and Collin's (1996) and Young and Valach's (2004) contribution to the action theory explanation of career is of special interest. The emphasis in this theory is that action is goal directed purposeful and intentional behaviour. Persons' actions are featured as being socially and cognitively driven and controlled. This type of action is organised as a system, and within this system it has parallel, sequential, and hierarchical dimensions. This is a complex and multidimensional process that integrates action systems, perspectives on action and levels of action organisation. As mentioned above these aspects intertwine with one another and the common character they share is that they always interact with, reflect, and explain the life career context in which they exist.

Agency could be an aimless process in life, because if the purposeful and intentional action is not included in the persons' agency design; they will have no direction to guide them (Cochran, 1997). Persons with intentions make things happen; they have a goal and a direction to go (Cochran, 1990; 1991; 1997; Cochran & Laub, 1994). Action theory takes a holistic stand toward the understanding of major constructs in the action process. Within this action theory (Young & Valach, 2004) there exists three interconnected features that are manifested in: behaviour, internal processes and social meaning. Further it is emphasised that these three aspects interact and construct a comprehensive meaning context for action to take place. In this sense intentionality and intentions together are a catalyst and a controlling construct accompanying these interrelated action features. This perspective of intentionality does not only focus on causality and goals, but asserts that intentions are better to be understood and applied as a part of the whole process. This means that the intentions function like a red thread through the whole action process. Further, Young and Valach (2004) emphasise that it is the complexity and openness of this action process that will create and recreate human intention.

Another vital theory about goal orientation and intentionality is rooted in social cognitive theory (SCT) where the focus is more on self-directed and self-regulated learning and the process implementation. The action perspective of Young and Valach differs from social cognitive theory in many ways. First human agency in SCT emphasises a need for well-defined and well organised self-regulatory system before the action can happen. If a person does not have an accurate self-efficacy expectation an action can end in an unfruitful

outcome. Human agency does emphasise human intentionality but it is exclusively outcome oriented, which means that it focuses on generating effective behaviour. SCT also focuses on intentional causality, which means that it is a more linear process of action. In other words the multidimensional action theory that is processed by Young and Valach is more process oriented than the more task oriented SCT-perspective.

Chen (2002) is concerned with how the action theory (Young & Valach, 2004) distinguishes from the SCT perspective of Bandura (2001; 1989) and the SCCT (Social cognitive career theory) perspective of Lent (2004) and Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002). The following question is relevant, Can those two perspectives be seen in connection two each other? It has already been stated that the concepts of action and intentionality are the core concepts of career human agency. Bandura (2001), together with Lent (2004), contributes to the action system that Young and Valach (2004) emphasise and that is organised in three levels; goal setting, strategies, which include cognitive steering, and operations that include subconscious self-regulation. They do this by their emphasis on persons' self-efficacy beliefs, and a triadic reciprocal causation process as a ground for their outcome expectations, which has a vital influence on persons' career agency process. It is the knowledge about the process of how the persons' agency has developed and been constructed that Bandura's (2001) and Lent's (2004) perspective on human agency becomes a bit narrow. But by integrating their perspective on human agency together with the action theory presented by Young and Valach (2004), it becomes an important feature of the whole career human agency process, which then includes human agency beliefs and action. Young and Valach focus on that action is more than just a perspective on regulating behaviour (mechanical agency), but also a necessary prerequisite for a constructionist understanding. Emotional processes that include emotional construction and processing invigorate this system. It is also important to be aware that actions can be seen from different perspectives, such as manifest behaviour, internal processes, and social meaning, in this way the approach starts to become fruitful and holistic. Young and Valach suggest using the narrative approach to accomplish the process, where the emphasis is on time; past, present and future (Cochran, 1997). The narrative approach seems like a sensible suggestion for reaching out to persons that need help to construct a future career with focus on intentional agency, and not just focus on the outcome.

Career human agencies where intentionality and action are important aspects are complex concepts that include many sub features. For persons to be able to act in the way they want, to make meaningful career choices they need to construct intentional career goals. In other

words I connect intentionality and human action in relation to career goals and persons awareness of their career action for being able to make meaningful career choices.

But, in this perspective on action and human intentionality is there not a need for intrinsic motivation to construct intentional goals that develop their knowledge about human agency, which will guide persons to construct a meaningful career?

6.5 Intrinsic motivation

As mentioned previously, the action theory perspective in career human agency does not say anything about intrinsic motivation explicitly, even though Bandura (2001) and Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002) mention it briefly. But if the agency in persons drives them toward a goal or an outcome in their growth oriented career that is purposeful and intentional, then intrinsic motivation is a necessity. One would expect that if a person that drives towards a meaningful growth oriented career that is purposeful and intentional, he or she is intrinsically motivated to act to reach that specific goal of a meaningful career. Intrinsically motivated activities are defined as those that persons find interesting and would do in the absence of operationally separable consequences. This definition correlates with De Charms (1976) declaration, that persons have a primary motivational disposition to feel like causal agents with respect to their own actions, and intrinsically motivational behaviours are a function of basic psychological needs. Deci and Ryan (2000b) emphasised that intrinsically motivated behaviours and actions are based in persons' needs to feel competent, autonomous and related. Autonomy and competence are found to be the most powerful influences on intrinsic motivation, but relatedness is also found to play a role, in the maintenance of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000a; 2000b). In this manner, one could say that this approach is a social constructionist approach, where the view is on persons' intrinsic motivational agency in relation to the environment and conditions that surrounds them. Below I will describe Deci and Ryan's (2000a; 2000b) perspective on intrinsic motivation and their self-determination theory in connection to persons' agency which has to be goal oriented, intentional and purposeful, which guides the meaning construction phase, so that the result of action will be satisfactory and lead to growth in the person and again will give them a fruitful meaningful career.

6.5.1 Assumptions of self-determination theory (SDT)

Deci and Ryan (2000a) emphasise that healthy persons are active, playful creating beings, who are ready to learn and explore and do not need incentive to do so. In this intrinsically motivational tendency, the crucial element lies in cognitive, social and physical development,

because it occurs when persons are acting on inherent interests and pleasure and as a result persons grow in knowledge about themselves, society and their skills. It is also important to be aware that intrinsic motivation exists within individuals and also in relations between individuals and activities. Persons are intrinsically motivated for some activities and not for others, and not everyone is intrinsically motivated for any particular task. One can suspect that this perspective of intrinsic motivation is task oriented, but it combines both the task and the process of becoming intrinsically motivated.

This concept of intrinsic motivation in SDT can be seen in a 'Kuhnian' (1962) perspective as a reaction to the dominant behavioural operant theory paradigm as represented by Skinner. Because operant theory emphasises that behaviours are motivated by rewards, intrinsically motivated activities are said to be activities where the reward is incorporated in the activity. In other words, being intrinsically motivated will imply that one will be acting intrinsically motivated to achieve a meaningful career that is based on meaningful carer choices. The reward of acting intrinsically motivated is incorporated in the action for achieving a meaningful career. Deci and Ryan (2000a) argued against Skinner's declaration that learned behaviours are functional reinforcements; they do not require operationally separable consequences, because when persons are doing an interesting activity, it is in itself intrinsically rewarding and meaningful. Deci and Ryan's research (2000b) demonstrated that extrinsic rewards can damage the intrinsic motivation which is interpreted as shifting persons from a more external to an internal locus of causality. Then again choice and opportunity of direction increases intrinsic motivation and enhances autonomy.

Within this intrinsic motivation perspective activities and actions are seen to be what satisfies psychological needs. Deci and Ryan (2000a; 2000b) view persons' basic needs as inborn rather than learned, and the process of fulfilling these needs, give motivational content to life. They emphasise that drive based theories are typically regulated by psychological processes such as learning interpersonal relations and mastery of persons physical and social environments, and therefore are interconnected with autonomy, relatedness and competence. In SDT persons are viewed as having a natural inborn tendency to act on their internal and external environments, engage in activities that interest them and move towards a personal and interpersonal connections, which again facilitates their meaning construction, and action, which is based on intentional goals.

There exists also three other sub theories in self-determination theory apart from the needs perspective designed by Deci and Ryan. These sub theories are: cognitive evaluation theory,

organismic integration theory and causality orientation theory. I will not go into depth in those theories; the focus here is on intrinsic motivation, needs and self-determination as a ground for acting intentionally in persons' meaningful construction of their career.

6.5.2 Basic needs theoretical assumptions

The starting point for SDT is the postulate that humans are active, growth-oriented organisms who are naturally inclined toward integration of their psychic elements into a unified sense of self and integration of themselves into larger social structures. In other words, SDT suggests, that it is a part of the adaptive design of the human organism to engage interesting activities, to exercise capacities, to pursue connectedness in social groups, and to integrate intrapsychic and interpersonal experiences into a relative unity (Deci & Ryan, 2000b, p. 229).

The organismic-dialectical perspective in the above quote emphasises that these natural activities and the integrative tendencies that organize them require encompassing support for experiencing competence, relatedness and autonomy. Self-determination theory (SDT) emphasises that these types of needs for satisfaction rise from engaging in interesting activities. In contrast to other types of motivation theory SDT is specifically framed in terms of social and environmental factors that facilitate versus counteract intrinsic motivation. This means that intrinsic motivation is catalysed when individuals are in situations that contribute to its expression.

SDT define needs as:

(...) innate, organismic necessities rather than acquired motives, and (...) redefine needs at the psychological rather than physiological level. Thus, in SDT, needs specify innate psychological nutriment that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000b, p. 229).

As mentioned above, Deci and Ryan (2000b) emphasise that if persons are going to fully experience self-determination and growth in constructing career meaning and acting on the constructed career meaning, three basic needs have to be fulfilled; need for competence, need for autonomy and need for relatedness. Persons will develop and function in a healthy way based on which degree these needs are satisfied or thwarted (Deci & Ryan, 2000b). Innate psychological needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy has to do with the deep structure of human psyche because they refer to inborn and life span tendencies toward attaining effectiveness, connectedness and coherence.

It is important to be aware that there may be individual differences in the strength of persons' needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy. These individual differences could be that some are more aware of fulfilling their needs in terms of competence, than relatedness for example. Deci and Ryan emphasise that these differences are not the most productive place to have one's attention. The notion of basic needs entails that some desires are linked to or

catalysed by persons' psychological design or others are not, because some are constantly aware of their need for competence, autonomy and relatedness for living a well-functioning life, others are not aware or don't want to be aware of it, and therefore the basic needs are not catalysed by their psychological design. This can be a result of past failed needs and as a defence these needs can form the ground for a future need failing.

6.5.3 Need for Competence

Deci and Ryan (2000b) view competence as one of the fundamental psychological needs that can invigorate human activity and must be fulfilled for long term psychological health. Need for competence refers to the need to experience oneself as capable and competent in controlling the environment and being able to reliably predict outcomes. This assumption is consistent with social learning theory models of human agency and more specific career human agency (Bandura, 2001; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (2000b) the experience of competence in a career task is connected to self-regulation. Research within motivation literature and career literature has supported this hypothesis (Lent, 2004; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). According to Blustein (2006) the experience of competence promotes intrinsic motivation. For example persons that are capable of learning relevant tasks in their career have a better chance to experience success and mastery feelings. These experiences have been associated with many positive outcomes, such as greater effort in career tasks and facing career obstacles better (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). According to Blustein's (2006) research; there is a clear and precise connection between persons' level of competence and sense of enthusiasm about their career. Whether this sense of enthusiasm is connected to the specific type of career or the way persons act does not come through clearly. I would imagine that it is an interaction. In relation to Deci and Ryan's (2000b) perspective, Blustein's research (2006) shows that competence does play a major role in the development of self-regulating mechanisms in general human agency, career agency and career self-efficacy beliefs. On this basis one would expect that persons who experience a need for competence, and experience that their competence results in mastery feelings will experience meaning in their career, and on that basis experience that they will construct meaning into their career choices that are based on the need for experience mastery feelings, and act on that type of meaning.

I believe that Blustein's (2006) research tells us something important, even though, one could ask the question if persons that master their tasks in their career always will be happy and satisfied. I am tempted to answer no, because it is difficult to just look at the need for

competence alone, but together with the need for autonomy and relatedness, one will get a more nuanced answer to the question I asked about competence in terms of always an experience of being satisfied and happy.

6.5.4 Need for Autonomy

According to SDT, perceptions of competence will not enhance optimal functioning, unless the sense of autonomy is there. The need for autonomy refers to the need to actively participate in determining one's own behaviour. It includes the need to experience one's actions as result of independent choice without external interference, which means the organismic desire to self-organize experience and behaviour and to have activity that is correlated with ones integrated sense of self. This is often discussed in terms of internal locus of control, independence, or individualism. For Deci and Ryan (2000b), autonomy relates to the experience of integration and freedom and is a central part of healthy human functioning. For example if persons are acting out their meaningful career decision in relation to what they really want, they are satisfying their need for autonomy.

Persons' perceived autonomy has been operationalised through motivational processes and self-regulatory styles. Deci and Ryan (2000a) have emphasised that there are different types of motivation, reflecting different types of autonomy. Intrinsic motivation reflects the highest level of autonomy, which refers to acting out an activity for its sake and to experience pleasure and satisfaction from the engagement. Extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity because of external means. According to Deci and Ryan different types of extrinsic motivation exist; from low to high degrees of autonomy. The different types of extrinsic motivation are external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation.

External regulation is the most externally oriented approach of extrinsic motivation. If persons rely specifically on an external locus of causality, the external regulation will be the direct opposite to intrinsic motivational agency. Persons that are motivated by external regulation would behave in such a way because of external awards. If they don't act in such a way persons might lose their resources to survive, for example losing their job.

Introjected regulation as external regulation is based on an external locus of causality that has been internalised for psychological reasons. Introjection is explained in Gestalt psychology as something the person has taken over from the environment as if it was one's own property and which function as something one ought to be or to do:

(...) complex, integrated ways of behaving or being, adopted wholesale by the developing organism from significant others without assimilation or integration with the self (...) They can be detected by the repeated concurrence of a certain voice, quality, type of verbal content, and gesture-posture style, and by similarity with which others respond to this unified complex behavior (Enright, 1970, p. 112).

This differs from the external regulation phase because some actions have been integrated into the self to prevent negative feeling within the self, and not necessarily for external rewards. The career task is only partly integrated into persons' self-regulation system in situations where they are motivated to avoid negative feelings. Often one hears about persons feeling relieved and free after losing their job, but the pressure from the environment to work and have a certain type of career, or relying, for example, on family members for survival might drive them to develop a feeling of shame and despair about not having a career, even though they have hobbies or social activities that are important to them. In other words, persons keep their job, because of external pressure, and for themselves. More explicitly, the person's career is meaningful for others, but not for the person who is acting in it. Another example could be that a person might feel, on the basis of external pressure, that they ought (introjected) to feel their job as meaningful, even though the person does not feel in that way. The result of this perspective is that the person keeps the job because others define that job as meaningful for the person.

Identified regulation is characterised by an increasingly more internalised locus of causality. In this phase persons engage in given career activities because of the result of the activity. Persons that are engaged in their career that allows them to support their family and to receive certain benefits such as insurance might begin to identify with their goals in such a way that they will become more self-regulated. Blustein's (2006) research showed that certain persons identified with the security aspects of their career, which made them believe that they were safer in the world. This did not mean that they enjoyed all their career tasks but it shows that there were some inherent structures for their life via their career. Another example could be persons choosing to go to college because the diploma they achieve will let them into the job market. However, it is important to note that persons in such a category still do not view their career as intrinsically interesting or meaningful. But this phase creates valuable knowledge about the degree of motivated agency for choosing a future career, and that gives knowledge about the degree of intentional career agency.

Integrated regulation is the fourth and last phase in the autonomy process. This phase characterizes the internal locus of causality. This integrated regulation describes agency that is fully integrated into persons' self-regulated systems. These behaviours are transformed

because the person has integrated values and outcomes into their motivational processes. However, the career task is not intrinsically motivating, even though they are autonomously initiated. Persons that are in the integrated regulation phase have the capability to describe some satisfying aspects of their career, and they are able to reflect on their meaning of career (Blustein, 2006). Blustein emphasised that many features of persons' career are fulfilled, such as commitment and dedication to others. The locus of control is within the persons, but it is clear that they engage in their work for a living, and act on that perspective. The question why is this so clear if persons at this stage has an integrated regulation? is relevant to ask. Wouldn't persons that have an integrated motivation to act in a career, a wider perspective on career than just doing it for a living? Deci and Ryan (2000a; 2000b) explains this somehow paradoxically by emphasising that the integrated regulation started out from an external motivation, and not something from within, therefore persons still believe in a career that is work for a living. I still ask the question, because I think that Deci and Ryan don't explain this paradox. They explain it in a more general way.

At this point persons are acting out from their own interest and in the activity itself. Even though the activity may not have been originally aroused from intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation results in an experience where external rewards are not the primary force in the activity, rather it is the activity that becomes internally motivating, and as an outcome result of that process persons act more in favour of the ideal career human agency which is more intentional and intrinsic (Blustein, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2000a; 2000b). Also these phases show nuances in the concept of autonomy in career, and underline the importance of feeling autonomous in the holistic conceptualisation of human agency, and more specifically career human agency.

I would say that I don't quite agree with Deci and Ryan (2000b), when they emphasise that integrated regulation cannot be transformed into intrinsic autonomous action. For example a person who does not think that the new job in a new career would be satisfying, can decide to take the job for the meantime to earn money for survival and then might discover that the job and the new career was perfect for him or her and where he or she acknowledges the value of relationships with colleagues at the work place, experiences dedication in the career tasks and reflects about it. Couldn't this example show that it is possible to develop from external motivating agency to intrinsically motivating agency where persons can self-regulate themselves, and reflect on a high level about their career? I would propose that persons that have a high level of autonomy experience a high level of psychological functioning, where

those who have low perceptions of autonomy experience negative outcomes in terms of their psychological functioning. The degree of being able to satisfy needs for autonomy and competence will also have an impact on persons' needs for relatedness in constructing their meaningful and intentional career agency.

6.5.5 Need for Relatedness

Need for relatedness refers to need to care for, be related to others and feel a certain degree of belonging. It includes the need to experience authentic relatedness from others and to experience satisfaction in participation and involvement with the social world (Deci & Ryan, 2000b), and it can be developed when persons feel related to others, who are meaningful for them within their specific context (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). In light of the huge empirical research that exists in the career research field (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004; Richardson, 2004), the experience of relatedness and interconnectedness has played and is playing a vital role in persons' process of acting in the human agency spirit and experiencing positive outcomes of their career related goals. Deci and Ryan (2000b), emphasise that persons have an inherent need for connection to others and the availability of this connection facilitates the conditions of perceived competence and perceived autonomy. The sense of interconnection provides individuals with emotional support that is a necessity within a broad career context. Persons that are in specific career contexts where their relatedness need is fulfilled and affirmed have a better chance of experiencing more self-regulation and growth. For example, in a situation where persons view their career as boring, but have enjoyable colleagues and have leaders that are supportive and caring, one could suspect that these conditions would lead to development of the external regulation moving towards internal regulation that provides the motivation. Persons that have such support may have an easier time doing specific career tasks that not are inherently rewarding. One can often hear that the main and joyful task every day is to meet friends at work. The need for a relatedness perspective for Deci and Ryan (2000a; 2000b) shows that a sense of isolation and lack of interpersonal connections, that according to Blustein (2006) characterizes the career reality of persons, contribute to difficulty in developing a level of internalized self-regulation that would add greater meaning to persons' career, and would let the persons experience a more intentional career human agency.

These three needs are a result of an on-going dialectic between persons' needs and their social context that either has fulfilled or not fulfilled their needs and they describe the way persons orient themselves towards the social environment and therefore affect its potential for giving

them further need satisfaction. Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) looks at how contextual factors affect intrinsic motivation. The theory maintains that basic psychological needs for autonomy and competency are major factors in intrinsic motivation and the degree to which contextual factors (rewards, punishments, deadlines etc.) affect intrinsic motivation depends on whether these contextual factors support or thwart attainment of the basic psychological needs that will influence career human agency.

In other words, self-determination theory emphasises complexity. According to Deci and Ryan (2000a; 2000b) if persons lack a sufficient level of competency beliefs (need for competence), one has to look into what lies behind the insufficiency. If persons experience a lack of perceived autonomy one has to go into a different level of regulations in accordance with extrinsic regulation until the autonomy is integrated. If persons don't experience a sufficient level of relatedness, they will not grow in their development. Then again one has to go into their insufficient experience, and analyse it. All the three basic needs interplay with each other and the environment and that affects the construction of what are meaningful intentional goals for persons' development in their career agency.

6.6 Summary

The integration of the above mentioned theories shows two important things; firstly, the importance of integrating theories from general social science with career theories, so that one opens up the knowledge channel and has a wider perspective. This integration concept is very aligned to Samuel Osipow (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996) emphasis (Chen, 2003). Secondly, it shows the importance of human agency and the importance of emphasising action and intentionality in relation to intrinsic motivation and self-determination theories.

One could say that Deci and Ryan's (2000b) approach to intrinsic motivation and self-regulation has made a major contribution to understanding persons' construction of a meaningful and an intentional career agency. In my point of view, the quote from Deci and Ryan communicates the essence in career human agency: "*Needs specify the conditions under which people can most fully realize their human potentials* (Deci & Ryan, 2000b, p. 260) “.

To sum up the self-determination theory in few words, one can say that this theory contributes to the notion about career human agency in three ways. First, SDT gives a complex and holistic picture of the intrinsic motivation concept in relation to constructing meaningful and intentional goals in persons' career agency, with no black and white colour frames. Generally, the literature gives an impression that if one is an agent in one's career one is intrinsically motivated to construct a meaningful career. It is not so simple. The main message of Deci and

Ryan is that it is a complex process, where many parts must fit together before one can say that one has constructed one's own meaningful career out from my intrinsically intentional action. Secondly, the concept of persons' basic needs contributes to a better understanding of how persons achieve or construct their career goals and actions. Are the goals intentional or do their goals lack intentionality? How does this influence career human agency? Thirdly, SDT manages to integrate Bandura's (2001) and Lent's (2004) picture of human agency, and gives the action theory a context and structure to facilitate growth in the development of striving to achieve the fully intrinsic, intentional goal construction and actions that guides persons in achieving holistic meaningful career.

Even though career human agency with the related constructs, contribute to widen the perspective on career, there exist some critical perspectives about the mentioned theories. The basic construct of human agency such as personal, proxy and collective agency and the basic constructs of self-determination theory and intrinsic motivation such as the inborn needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are somehow represented as universal constructs. This can imply that these mentioned concepts exist above the persons, and are more powerful than the individual who are striving to fulfil the concepts within themselves. Who is to decide what is important for the person? The mentioned universal constructs of career human agency (which includes intentionality and intrinsic motivation) gives the impression of that the constructs decide for the individual and not opposite. In my opinion, the persons must decide what is important for them. For example does it mean that persons who don't want to become intrinsic motivated in their career, does not have a correct view of themselves and their career? Does it mean that persons who experience that being a patient is fine for them, does not have the correct view of themselves in terms of their career choices and future? Does it mean that persons who are not intentional have a skewed view of themselves and in the construction of meaningful goals in their career? My point is that it is the persons that must feel free to reflect upon what is important and not the universal constructs that is presented by the mentioned theories. I am not saying that the universal constructs, are not important, but one must give the persons some power and let them decide for themselves how they want to experience the career human agency (with related perspectives) paradigm, and not force what is important onto them. However, one could ask the question whether persons has to relate to some conditions where the persons are acting out their career. For example if it is meaningful for me to receive the pay check without doing any work; is that to give and allow such a choice and power.

So far in this theoretical part of my dissertation, I have expressed that persons' meaning construction is dependent on their objective, subjective and relational modes. These three modes stand in relation to two philosophical constructs; phenomenological and theoretical meaning. The meaning construction phase is also dependent on persons' agency; how they experience their intentional actions and their motivations to construct meaningful goals in their career. The construction phase and the experienced agency stand also in relation to the construct of career. How persons' experience and view their career affects their meaning construction phase and their agency in society. In the next section of this theoretical frame in terms of the construct of meaningful career, I will discuss persons' view of their career.

7. Looking at the content of the career meaning construct: Three meanings of career

7.1 Introduction

In the beginning of this theory chapter I highlighted that the construct of meaning is the *noun*, and the meaning construction phase is the *verb* (Carlsen, 1988). This does not mean that these two constructs stand independently apart from each other; they stand in relation to each other, where the noun and the verb are dependent on each other. I have already discussed the meaning construction phase in terms of objective, subjective and relational meaning construction modes and the human agency perspective. Further in this theory part I will discuss the content of the career meaning construct, explicitly; the noun. As mentioned above, the noun perspective contains descriptors of the career meaning construct; what can career meaning possible contain? The verb is all about the development and action of the meaning; the meaning construction phase and its agency.

7.1.1 Complexity of defining the career construct

The content of the career meaning construct is complex, which makes it difficult to define. What is meaningful for persons in terms of their career can be different from person to person. The central point here is that persons today have several careers that function in interconnection with each other. One type of career is work, other type is family and another could be leisure (Hansen, 1997; Super, 1957; 1994; 1980; 1990). Central questions that persons can ask themselves are: What kind of career should I choose? What do I want to do? What should I do? Which direction should I go in? What is sensible to do? What is realistic to do? What do others think and feel about my choice and direction? Why should I want to go in that certain direction? How can I fulfil my needs and wishes? Answering these questions depends on how persons define their career, and how one defines career is dependent on how

one constructs meaning into the concept, and how one views one's own agency. Further on I will give a short resume regarding the kinds of definitions of the word career that might be in the discourse among persons.

Many different kinds of definitions exist of the concept of career; both narrow and broad definitions. The word career stems from the Latin word *carraria*, which means a carriage road. Transforming this Latin meaning into persons' career context will then imply that career has to do with persons' course or path through life, or a distinct portion of life. There can be a difference between what stories persons tell themselves about their career and the "actual" course they go through in their career. Career as a narrative (subjective career) can be seen in this perspective when persons interpret the meaning of what they have done and the things that have happened to them (Cochran, 1997). As one can see the subjective career is a postmodern and broad definition of career, which is attached to the postmodern philosophy and direction. This definition includes all experiences persons have in life, and not just only work. The classic objective career is often seen as a narrow definition, where a map is drawn over the persons' social territory that they have been through, for example, education they have taken, jobs they have held, or a specific skill they have acquired. One can say that historically the Latin definition was a subjective approach, but developed to become an objective approach, and today there is an emphasis on and return to the subjective definition. Said in other words the concept of career was first of all connected to persons' life-lines, and then to an objective reductionist approach where work and the need for work were central, because persons had to work so they did not starve. Aligned with the development of the society this perspective has changed. Persons' work is a part of their life and is connected to the other parts of being alive. So researchers and practices in career counselling started to develop perspectives where work was understood only as a part of persons' life and they included, for example, family, leisure and so on in developing a broader concept of career (Super, 1957). One of the latest definitions of the concept of career comes from Hansen (1997) where persons' career is defined as the sum of every experience in one's life. I believe that none of the definitions are nuanced enough because the definitions are mixed; including both the noun and the verb, into a bowl of soup, without distinguishing them.

To get a more precise definition one has to become more concrete and go in depth into the concept of career. Questions such as: Who is entitled to have a career? Is it a property of those that only have been able to achieve higher positions in their working life, or is the construct career applicable to anybody? These questions have been raised again and again, and there

have been many different answers from different perspectives by mixing meaning and meaning construction together, but there is a great value in revisiting these conceptions for further investigation and discussion out from the content of career meaning (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). When one goes more into depth in the narrow definition of the word career, both the meaning construction phase with its agency and the content of the meaning construct are included. One might get the impression that if one views career as only a job, one views and experiences the meaning construction phase as something reductionist and straight forward. However, is it not possible to view career as just a job, and at the same time experience the meaning construction as subjective where one is in control, and not necessarily something that is objective? This type of holistic notion shows the nuances and the complexity in terms of the concepts career, meaning and meaning construction. I highlight the importance of distinguishing meaning construction and the content to get a more nuanced and structured picture that is more aligned with persons' possible reality. In my point of view one should go through the different career views, what they specifically contain, by looking at the history of those specific perspectives.

Historically the concept of career has been closely connected to the concept of work. According to the research and literature, the concept of work can be broadly divided into three parts. Wrzesniewski (1997) research documented the importance of these distinctions. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton (1995), from whom Wrzesniewski (1997) has been greatly inspired, emphasised three distinct relations persons can have to their work - jobs, career and callings. In her research the participants were asked to read three work descriptions and decide which one best fit their approach to work. Work as a job was referred to as something that is primarily done to make money, work as a career was referred to as something considered as fulfilling, but involved a constant extrinsic motivational developmental process of trying to get promoted, and work as a calling was referred to as something different than a calling coming from a higher power. It was more concrete; namely, service to society.

In this dissertation I will use Wrzesniewski (2002) distinctions in her concept of work, but I will transform her understanding of work onto the concept of career in which I will name the three understandings: career as a job, career as an outcome of success and career as a calling. These three categories are not meant to be treated rigidly, without overlap, because some persons combine elements from each of the categories. Rather, one could look at them as prototypes for understanding the content of career meaning in relation to persons' meaning

construction phase and it agency. One example of this relationship could be that the intrinsic need perspective by Deci and Ryan (2000b) is a necessity for persons developing meaning and discovering that their career is a calling. Nuances such as this could be discovered in the empirical process of this dissertation.

According to Wrzesniewski (2002) the distinction between job, success and calling has not been explicitly addressed in the psychology of career before her research. Halls' (2002) sense of calling subscale, and some research on work-involvement and identification (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994) all relate to issues raised by this triadic classification; career as a job, success and calling, but none of them account for the three distinct relations to career that are the focus of her research.

Even though I criticised that researchers have been mixing both the noun a verb, in defining what the concept of career can be, I will in discussing the three prototypes of career bring in meaning construction process elements and human agency element, to explain the main aspects of the content of the three different career types. This is to get a deep enough understanding of the three prototypes.

7.2 Career as a job

Persons who view career as a job do not rely on it as the most meaningful theme in their lives.

William Faulkner's quote explains this perspective:

It's a shame that the only thing a man can do for eight hours a day is work. He can't eat for eight hours; he can't drink for eight hours; he can't make love for eight hours. The only thing a man can do for eight hours is work" (William Faulkner).

Their career is an instrumental activity that is done for the sake of something else (Baumeister, 1991). This view can be traced back to the Greeks where work was considered to be an activity for slaves and women only. So in those days career was defined as work and not as a prerequisite for a good life. In an effort to try to distinguish between humanity and animals the Greek saw work as a tool for survival; work that animal's performed. In that way work was regulated to the persons of the lowest class in Plato's hierarchy. The greatest work in those times was the work of contemplation and leisure, which was assigned to men. During the middle ages the Christian Church maintained this distinction where work was defined as secular (Hence, 1999)³⁴.

³⁴ The value of work can be seen in different ways. I have given the Greek's view of work. The bible has the famous paradise myth. Where persons are thrown out of paradise to sweat for the bread, meaning that work and paradise are not compatible, that means that persons has to sweat for their food, and not just take it for granted.

Persons in this approach only work for the income and for the outcomes the income makes possible (Terkel, 1972), which can include fundamental materialistic things such as food, house, a car, independence, family activities and so on. The view of career as a job is probably the most common approach among the lower classes, such as blue-collar workers. Less well-educated persons seek and find less satisfaction in their career than more well-educated persons (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). Such working-class jobs may not offer much mastering to the person because of the failure to offer satisfaction and the consolations of other meanings of work are missing. As a result, self-efficacy based hobbies may be common among persons in such a career view, for example persons who have an interest and master sports activities, such as swimming, and therefore volunteer to be a swimming coach at the local swimming club. This interest; that persons have experienced to be joyful, might not be possible to transfer into a full-time job. Therefore they have transformed the swimming interest into a hobby which gives them meaning in life.

Even though their job is not interesting in itself, concepts such as self-worth and self-efficacy play a vital role. Self-worth may develop from the fact of holding a job. Low income jobs are determined as successful when persons are able to find such a job and manage to hold onto the job. This can be seen as a combination between self-efficacy and self-worth. All that matters is having a job and doing it well enough to keep it (Baumeister, 1991).

In this career view, it also appears that there is little need for a major value base to justify the career; the job is important to provide food and housing, and those needs are good enough to motivate one to work. The need to work is mainly rooted in materialistic motivations such as earning enough money to survive, the workers are not specifically motivated by what type of work they are doing, but by the financial result it gives.

Persons who view their career only as a job are often discussed in terms of plateaued workers (Plateaued careers) (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). Persons in this view have no prospect of continued vertical growth in their workplace, and they usually do not get promoted because of the structure of many workplaces, and not because they are not competent. This can lead to productive plateaued workers that are satisfied or to unproductive plateaued workers that are dissatisfied. These types of workers develop less commitment to their workplace, a greater inclination to leave the workplace and a decreased concern with specific career issues. Some workers are plateaued for reasons of self-satisfaction, with a current status and a sense of security. This type of satisfaction can lead to a problem of no further development in their

career for example; stagnation, mid-career boredom and dead-end prospects (Baumeister, 1991).

7.2.1 Linear career development

During the 20th century when major career theories including Super's (1952) and Holland's (1997) views on career development were created, the assumption was that the induction to, adjustment to and implementation of a career were linear. Persons entered a particular career and evolved through different positions of responsibilities until they declined and retired. This type of career still exists in our society. This pattern assumes stable, fixed career paths where persons cope in the same job until they retire. The long-term goal in such a view is that persons have a basis for earning their living which will not stop before they retire and a short term goal has the same meaning as the long term goal. Such a view can be seen in connection to Maslow's (1962) pyramid of needs. The linear perspective on career can be associated with the first stage of Maslow's perspective on physiological needs where physical safety and material security are essential.

Tolbert (1980) acknowledged that most persons define career as just a job which is an activity that is difficult, unpleasant and done only out of necessity, which produces something of economic value that can produce service to others as well as a material product. This view of career is very close to the great industrial expansion in the mid-20th century, in Europe and in the United States (Peterson & González, 2005). Early vocational theories were bound up to this industrial expansion where universal applications to career were developed to explain, predict and control how persons choose their jobs and their on-going career and where the assumption was that the choosing was a onetime event. So in that way career theories did not have an emphasis on persons' inner drive to growth and development, but had a more social, geographical and cultural explanation as to why they stayed in a job that they mostly hated. One might think that this view does not exist today, that this old career model does not any longer apply, but research has shown that this view does appear quite commonly (Wrzesniewski, 2002).

Having in mind that this approach still exists today, vocational practitioners can be confronted with clients who only want a job to make a living so they can survive in society and take part in leisure activities. Each practitioner should be aware of this possible conflict where the client has no desire to develop in his or her career. The field of career today has in some sense been too much involved with the post-modern perspective where the construction of career is a subjective field and where the low level of work motivation, security and stability have not

been acknowledged. The reason for taking this practitioner approach into account is because researchers and practitioners have been neglecting persons that believe and experience their career as only a job. The focus today in many of the career counselling research programs are a more constructivist approach where more value based career choices are acknowledged as the right thing to do. A value-based career can be a person that believes in having success in their career.

7.3 Viewing career as an outcome of success

From the theological concept in the 17th and the 18th centuries the meaning of work developed to a view of hard work and opportunity. The belief was that hard work remained constant in spite of the development from agriculture-based societies to industrial ones. In addition to the belief in hard work, job security and opportunity were important constructs in persons' working values. Persons' career is looked upon as achieving success in terms of these constructs. One could say that the career concept, developed into a self-fulfilling approach where the aim is not survival but recognition, job security, progress and opportunity (Hence, 1999).

Such career aspirations came often in conflict related to family needs. "In today's age of self-fulfilment workers seem to be looking for meaning in work within themselves rather than in their employment. They almost see the face in the mirror as a 'sacred object' whose personal values are paramount" (Bernstein, 1997, p. 297). This requires that career is more than just a job, and it includes some personal subjective perspectives. In that way career as an outcome of success provides more motivational activity within the career, which is not just done to get food on the table, it provides something more for the person. So the development has transformed from meaning of work to meaning in work.

According to Gunz and Heslin (2005) most persons view success as a favourable outcome that most people want to experience, as opposed to lack of success, which is avoided. How persons view their success in relation to a good outcome can be different from person to person. It could be interesting to study which factors lead to career success, but in this circumstance it is more relevant to investigate how and in what way persons subjectively experience the notion about career as an outcome of success, where experiencing success is vital to them, for having a meaningful career.

A search in the career literature about the concept of success yields a huge amount of literature and research reports in the field (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). This is not a surprise, if one thinks of how the word 'success' influences our daily life. One often asks the questions: Am I

successful? What can I do to achieve success? What can I do to not fail? What price do I have to pay? In this way success within the career context is important and meaningful for many persons in some way or another, and must be taken into consideration when one is discussing the topic in concert with career meaning and career meaning construction, as well as career choices. The concept of success in career literature has been divided in objective and subjective career success (Heslin, 2005). Hughes (1958) defined objective career success by observable and measurable criteria such as pay, promotion or status. Subjective career success he defined as an individual reaction to unfolding career experiences that can be feeling, cognitive and bodily based. Traditionally conceptions of career success are linked to the notion of linear hierarchical career progression in a competitive environment. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996) career studies regarding career success that were published between 1980 and 1994, were measured by objective measures such as salary rank or promotion.

On the other hand, a number of studies have found that career success in terms of external and objective terms such as pay and position are not congruent with what many persons feel about their own career success (Heslin, 2005). In this sense there is a need to have both objective and subjective attention to the concept of career success, where the interplay between work, family, life and significant others are acknowledged.

7.3.1 Objective and subjective success

Salary growth and promotions are the most used indicators of objective success (Lee, Lirio, Karakas, Mac Dermid, Buck, & Kossek, 2006). However, it also involves occupation, family situation, mobility, task attributes, income, and job level. Researchers who emphasise career success from this perspective view it in structural terms and emphasise persons' disposition to organise around status differences (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Traditional objective criteria such as pay and promotions are not the only objective outcomes that persons seek for their careers. Many persons also emphasise subjective outcomes such as work-life balance, purpose, transcendence, and contribution (Hansen, 1997). These constructs reveal an emphasis on subjective career success criteria that goes beyond objective outcomes, such as prestige, power, money and advancement. Objective outcomes can also be subjective if persons report that they subjectively experience that power, money, status and so on are important for them, but receiving promotions does not necessarily make persons feel proud or successful, so in that way subjective success is not necessarily a function of objective

attainments and this highlights the importance of learning more about the nature of subjective career success (Heslin, 2005).

7.3.2 Objective success

Persons who have self-interest in achieving career success and who construct it as the only, single, meaning for their career have made major sacrifices to do so. Such sacrifices can be leisure time, social time and family obligations. Often persons develop a competitive drive for success. Persons who see their ideal career in such terms often find it difficult to imagine any other perspectives of success. Such a linear career is a contract between the self and one's work in objective terms such as positions and achievements with the power to influence other people. This approach is not a passionate attachment to the career itself, it does not focus on the products and service that are created by the career and it does not resemble the job approach where career is regarded as means to other ends (Baumeister, 1991). According to these persons their drive is to be recognized as effective, talented and valuable, and it is vital to them that this prestige and status must be obtained to mark their successful career. This view of career has often been expressed as a selfish and greedy view that has become more and more accepted today, where there is little need for other sources of meaning (Baumeister, 1991; Hall & Chandler, 2005).

Since the persons have developed a view of their career where work is the only source of meaning, their self-value has been developed in the same direction. They have developed their efficacy-beliefs to the extent of the mastery of skills and abilities necessary for discharging the duties of the profession and obtaining recognition in their career. Self-worth is a central focus in this connection. Status and achievement provide more precise definitions of self-worth in this approach than those that are available in other approaches to careers. As mentioned climbing up the career ladder may give feelings of efficacy, and efficacy may be involved in the mastery of skills and abilities necessary for obtaining recognition. Self-worth and efficacy are very closely linked in the climbing up the ladder career approach. It is important to know that the efficacy and skills that are most relevant to the career mentality are not necessarily the most relevant to performing ones career duties. It is a skill to impress rather than the skill at some task that is crucial (Baumeister, 1991).

In this way advancing and defining their individual self is in the construct of recognition and that the purpose is satisfied through their goals which can be seen as long term and short term. Long term goals and short terms goals are ambitions such as reaching certain levels of status, power, prestige or achievement. Specification of these goals may be defined by the structure

of the institution where the person acts out their career. These objective self- measurements for success are external measurements for fulfilling their purpose, which is “climbing up the career ladder”. Such a value system within persons expresses and cultivates itself in response to career. In such a way self-fulfilment through career is set as an obligation and transformed into the notion of success that has been integrated into the subjective self. In other words career has a potential to result in social status, which can enhance prestige and power (Baumeister, 1991).

This view of career is an independent perspective where autonomy is the ideal goal and where the view of oneself is: I function best alone. It is aligned with the western view of persons (Baumeister, 1991). This career approach emphasises feedback about the persons self that comes in response to acting out their career. For persons in this approach, career contributes significantly to creating, defining, expressing, proving and glorifying the self. The self interest in this view has been transformed by modern values from greed and conceitedness into semi-sacred obligation and a fulfilling duty. In such a manner the career arises as a source of meaning in life. Once the self is accepted as a value base, the development of self through career channels becomes justified as a highly desirable activity.

As a summary, one can say that this view of career is probably the most known view in our western society and in that way reflects an important source of meaning in life. The assumption is: the career will bring the person in the position of eminence, which will give respect, admiration and acclaim from others, as well as allowing the person itself to feel self-respect and self-esteem. This view supplies a hierarchy of goals, opportunity for developing a sense of self-efficacy, and criteria for establishing self-worth.

7.3.3 Subjective success

The subjective dimension emphasises that it is important to determine that persons' who are considered to have hierarchical and financial success also are satisfied with their career. A subjective perspective on the objective criteria opens up the field. Subjective career success is often looked upon as career satisfaction (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). Persons that are not satisfied with their jobs would probably not consider themselves as successful, so in that way job satisfaction is a very important aspect of career success. The notion of subjective career success includes anticipated career related attainments across a broader frame than one's immediate job satisfaction as well as a wider range of outcomes such as identity, purpose and work-life balance (Heslin, 2005). Even though Heslin (2005) emphasises that job satisfaction in relation to career success are objective constructs and not necessarily related I will define

job satisfaction as a part of subjective career success and objective career success. This is because the aim is not to define subjective career success as job satisfaction, but to investigate if persons experience their definition of career success as job satisfaction.

7.3.3.1 Job satisfaction

In the perspectives of job satisfaction there exist numerous examples showing that this is vital for persons' career development. The concept of job satisfaction measures both overall satisfaction and facet satisfaction. The latter assesses satisfaction with particular facets or elements of work, for example pay, co-workers, supervision, working conditions or types of work. According to Dawis and Lofquist (1984) it is possible for a person to be dissatisfied with specific facets of their work, but still experience an overall sense of satisfaction. When it comes to overall work satisfaction and facet satisfaction there are distinctions of job content and job context. Typically research approaches to job satisfaction have treated these as separate having different implications for job satisfaction.

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) proposed a classical two-factor theory of job satisfaction, which expressed that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two distinct sets of processes. Persons who evaluated their job in terms of the work context, such as compensation, supervision, co-workers, working conditions, company policies and practices, were often dissatisfied, whereas those who viewed their jobs through the work content, such as achievement, recognition, advancement, and responsibility, seemed to be satisfied. In this theory the factors associated with the job content were classified as satisfiers, whereas the factors related to job contexts were categorised as dissatisfiers. This theory clarified the importance of the facet of satisfaction and the separation of external variables into opposite poles such as satisfiers and dissatisfiers.

Pritchard's equity theory (1969) added other factors to Herzberg's et.al. (1959) perspective. Equity theory does not only add to the conception of factors affecting job satisfaction that are related to outcomes, but it also shifts the focus from what the environment provides or does to the individual, to the individual's cognition about such events. According to theory of work adjustment, satisfaction is defined as a feeling resulting from persons' evaluation of the situation. This concept of satisfaction includes both positive and negative feelings of satisfaction.

Lofquist and Dawis' (1969) theory of work adjustment is a classical approach to job satisfaction. In this model the fit among individual needs, skills and abilities, and technical, organisational requirements are a basis for satisfaction and if such satisfaction is attained, it

will result in high performance. Also in this model, work is more than an accomplishment of some set of tasks; it is also a place of human interaction and psychological reinforcement, which will be more significant in creating job satisfaction than in performing tasks. Lofquist and Dawis emphasised that job satisfaction and work adjustment result from correspondence between the person and the environment. The major assumptions in this theory are; each person seeks to achieve and attain correspondence with their environment; work represents a major environment to which persons must relate. Within this theory there exist four basic psychological concepts, which are person-environment fit, satisfaction, ability as a predictor of potential job performance, and reinforcement value as reflected by the reinforcers' importance or power in reinforcing the workers behaviour. In this way the correspondence can be described in terms of a reciprocal process: the person fulfilling requirements of the work environment and the opposite; that the work environment can fulfil the requirements of the individual. This correspondence process between the person and the work environment is called work adjustment. *"This stability of correspondence between the individual and the work environment is manifested as tenure in the job* (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004, p. 88)". Another very important assumption in this work adjustment theory is the concepts of 'satisfactoriness' and 'satisfaction' in terms of persons work. The level of job satisfactoriness indicates the correspondence between persons and the work environment. Satisfactoriness is an external indicator of correspondence related to external sources other than the person's own self-appraisal. On the other hand, satisfaction is an internal indicator of correspondence, which represents the persons' self-appraisal, if the work environment fulfils his or her requirements for satisfaction. Being either too much in the category of satisfaction or satisfactoriness will lead to a difficulty in the correspondence between person and the work environment; either one has too much focus on one self or too much focus on the work environment.

Dawis and Lubinski (1995) suggested that job satisfaction is a cognition with affective components that results from certain perceptions and results in certain future behaviours. This cognition is linked to other cognitions such as self-esteem, job involvement, work alienation, organisational commitment, morale, and life satisfaction. According to Dawis and Lubinski one must examine the relationship between these cognitions. Further they meant that it would be best to think of job satisfaction as an outcome of job behaviour. As an outcome or consequence of job behaviour, job satisfaction can be seen as a reinforcer that has consequences for future job performance and other work behaviour. Future satisfactory job

performance can be maintained by present job satisfaction, and future absence or turn over behaviour can develop through present job dissatisfaction acting as a negative reinforcer. This view that Dawis and Lubinski emphasises is not inconsistent with the recent proposition of Davenport (2005). Davenport emphasised that the relationship between job satisfaction and work performance is a function of rewards and can be described as strong performance brings rewards which in turn increase satisfaction. So in this sense performing to the mechanism of rewards produces satisfaction.

Fundamental to this issue is the matter of a person-job fit and its implications for individual commitment to work. Such a person-environment fit is based in two core assumptions; human behaviour and work role is a function of the person and the environment, and the person and the environment need to be compatible. In such a manner the discussion about job satisfaction is linked to the question of career and personality. Personality approaches have been discussed and taken into account in accordance with career and counselling development during the 20th century. Such questions as: Are there specific personality dispositions that describe different perspectives on career success? Can different personality dispositions change from an objective success perspective to a subjective career success perspective?, is important to ask, but are not taken further in this dissertation.

So subjective and objective constructs of career success stand in relation to each other in the sense that they see persons as more than puppets responding to the firm tug of social strings. Instead persons are interpreting and reinterpreting their experience and career success continuously in relation to their self and to their career context, where job satisfaction can play a major role. Persons' experience in the objective reality creates understandings about what constitutes career success and then they act on those understandings, whether it is knowledge about job-satisfaction or other aspects of career success like pay, promotion or work balance for example. So in this way career success may be expected to involve both subjective and objective aspects. This duality offers a substantial platform for research on how persons subjectively experience objective constructs such as pay and promotion. According to Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom (2005); it is the person who interprets and acts upon career stimuli (objective career success) and it is their perception of how they view this that has the strongest influence on persons' self-concept, which will have an impact on their future career behaviour and satisfaction. The argument for having such a focus is that careers have changed dramatically in the past few decades and that using the objective constructs of career success does not reveal the reality of how persons experience success today. Since

organisations have a flatter structure than they used to, there is less chance today to climb the hierarchical career ladders. Therefore one should strive to define and redefine success in persons' own terms.

Hall and Chandler (2005) emphasised that persons are in charge of their own choices, how their subjectivity influences the subjective success, and that the connection between objective and subjective characterizes psychological success. The notion of psychological success as Hall and Chandler use it comes from Lewine's (1935) early work of the psychology of success and failure through his experiments on aspiration levels and goal-setting. In the career context psychological success develops in a cycle as a result of setting and attaining challenging goals. The sense of psychological success would likely be achieved when the person independently sets and makes an effort towards a challenging, meaningful goal and then goes on to succeed in reaching that goal. Hall (2002) emphasised that success would lead to an increase in persons' level of self-esteem, a more competent identity and an increased involvement. Wrzesniewski (2002) observed that persons who experience success as vital for their career marked their achievements not only financially but also by upward advancement within the occupational structure where they work. So persons who belong in this paradigm adopt standards of success that are guided by an organisation rather than setting standards for themselves for evaluating their career. Even though subjectivity is integrated in the objective constructs of this perspective it is still a linear approach where there is focus on progressive steps upwards to achieve positions of greater power.

Hall (2002) also suggested that persons have changed their focus from a linear career to a non-linear career where the focus is "path with a heart" and is evaluated against more self-referent criteria. The results of self-referent subjective criteria include a broader spectre of elements than are used to evaluate a career. Non-linear careers³⁵ tend to be driven by motives to experience outcomes, which include personal growth, creativity and interdependence. Such a non-linear career has been called boundaryless, cosmopolitan, expert, protean, transitory or self-realising. These involve a life-long commitment to developing a high level of skills in a particular field, periodic shifts between related occupational areas or regular changes between often seemingly unrelated careers. The commonality is that the commitment is held to discover one's personal values before shaping a career that satisfies these values. Comparing this approach to the traditionally based objective linear careers one sees that; those persons

³⁵ Non-linear careers is defined as a more self-referent approach to career, and not as a externally referent linear approach where objective factors such as promotion are significant.

who are engaged in it; are more inclined to set their own agenda and determine what success is for them. According to Hall (2002) a deeper form of satisfaction and psychological success occurs when persons experience their career as more than just achieving success as an outcome. This is career as a calling³⁶. The calling perspective to career will be discussed below.

7.4 Career as a call

7.4.1 Introduction to the concept of career as a calling

The Chicago School³⁷ defines this career approach: as the perspective where the person sees his or her life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his or her various actions and the things that happen to him or her (Barley, 1989). This perspective on career moves away from the structural career towards a subjective approach where the person's experience of the meanings they attribute to their career and the sense they make of their developmental existence is emphasised. The subjective view of the career construct indicates personal calling and vocation, and interpretation of the career experience rather than the career as a structure that is conceptualized by society and organisations (Lips-Wiersma, 2002).

Both sociological and psychological career theory has been criticized for its lack of integrative constructs and its lack of attention to subjective career perspective. As a result the research field is filled with knowledge about career function and structure and very little about what makes career personally meaningful³⁸ to persons and how career meaning affects career choice and experience. In other words career theory is criticized for its exclusive focus on hierarchical progression up career ladders, where jobs move either upwards or sideways, and for the assumption that external development leads to inner development (Hall, 2002). Another critique is the assumption that inner development and personal meaning is something private that does not belong in the career organization. Other critiques are that the constructs of career and the career environment are not stable and therefore climbing ladders is not possible (Hall & Chandler, 2005). These critiques show a common under-evaluation of subjective career theory and a lack of research into spiritual career meanings because very

³⁶ Even though it is possible to define the calling perspective a subjective success approach to career, I have not chosen to do so. The perspective on career as an outcome of subjective success has a clear outcome perspective, where the end goal is the person experiencing career success. The calling perspective is more a process oriented perspective, where a deeper meaning perspective is emphasised.

³⁷ The Chicago school's concept refers to the Chicago school of Sociology, which had a great interest in human beings, work and career from a sociological view point.

³⁸ Meaning and meaningful are referred to as deep and spiritual in this part of the theory.

little is known of the process and the effect of the attribution of spirituality to career. Therefore a spiritual calling perspective (Lips-Wiersma, 2002) is suggested.

The approach to career as a calling has been ignored in classic rational career decision-making and theory approaches (Parson, 1909). In the traditional career approaches career success has been seen as the final aim for persons and is primarily directed by market forces, external to the individual. One can say from this perspective that the ground for change is economically driven rather than by the necessity of a meaningful and internally driven career. Within this context the concept of boundaryless career becomes important, where the emphasis is; persons need to find personal spiritual meaning and purpose to achieve a sense of well-being in times of insecurity and change (Hall & Chandler, 2005).

7.4.2 Boundaryless and protean career

Traditional boundaries, such as geography, function, hierarchy, are being erased and a new set of boundaries that are more subjectively and psychologically defined are emerging. Mervis and Hall (1996, p. 246) describe this development:

Since this career will provide so few external guideposts and guarantees of success, there will be little choice but to look inside and probe personal values to fashion some kind of career development plan and identity in this new working world.

In this sense the distinction between the boundaryless and protean career is helpful for understanding the development of the career concept. Boundaryless career documents the career environment and the career competencies one should have in that environment, and the protean career emphasises adaptability and identity. In both of the perspectives the self becomes the career brand, the employable unit. However, the concept of protean career is also concerned with adapting ones identity in a way that leads to psychological success instead of just employability. This is defined as the experience of achieving goals that are personally meaningful to the individual and not those created by parents, organizations or society.

The new career environment provides the necessity and opportunity to access or enact spiritual career meanings. Theories on boundaryless career and protean career agree that there exists a structure of how to find meaning and purpose in these boundaryless times. This new career environment offers the opportunity to pursue more meaningful careers instead of lifetime employers offering opportunities for continued professional growth and development. Workers are not dependent on their employers to direct their career paths and they are more active in developing their own career that leads to a larger variety of options (Hall, 2002). In an environment in which it is acceptable to make important moves across occupational areas

and disciplines, persons can combine a range of self-expressive and altruistic career interests, and values over a lifetime and discover and explore a range of competencies that widens a sense of self-created by their career identity (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). This topic began to be discussed in the 1980's using the terms calling, meaning, purpose and spirituality. In the 1990's this was discussed again to include spirituality as a part of career and life planning (Hansen, 1997).

7.4.3 The concept of calling as a research topic

In reviewing the literature on calling in relation to career, the concept has often been discussed in connection to religion and spirituality. There are a number of examples where persons explain their direction in life as a calling where their relation to God is emphasised, but in this dissertation persons' calling is connected to their career, that does not necessarily include religious aspects. Career as a calling is defined as a path or a process that has as its central task to make meaning for our lives (Hansen, 1997), and implies that one searches for one's calling (Leider, 1997). When one is in touch with one's vocation or calling one serves a larger integrative project than those that are merely for ego or collective norms (Hollis, 2001). To find one's calling is about creating "a path with heart" (Castenada, 1968), and according to many authors and counsellors in the career field this has become and is very important (Hansen, 1997; Leider, 1997).

Dik and Duffy (2009) emphasised that the concept of calling in research about career lacks a unified empirically testable definition, and in this circumstance they suggested a new three part definition that could guide future research: " (1) *A transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self;* (2) *to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or a meaningfulness;* (3) *and that which holds other-oriented values and goals as a primary source of motivation* (2009, p. 4) ”.

Common themes in many definitions of calling is that it rises from inside one's self or from some source outside the person and is thought to apply to careers that an individual sees as meaningful, and that promotes the greater good in some way. Even though many of the definitions include a higher power or powers as the source of a calling the exact source of the external call is not considered in this circumstance. In alignment with the definition mentioned above, this dissertation will emphasise that persons may be called from a variety of sources and limiting the construct to specific religious aspects may not represent persons who feel called to a career from other sources. It is also important to keep in mind that persons can have the presence of a calling or be actively searching for one. These distinctive groups can

appear as very different from one another in their career development progress and can pose unique challenges in career counselling. I will further discuss the different aspects and definitions of achieving a calling that has been expressed throughout history.

7.4.4 Vocation; a changing notion

It is important to note that the concept of calling is closely connected to the concept of vocation. Today the word vocation is used in rational career theory (Holland, 1997) but it actually means what one is called to do with one's life energies (Hollis, 2003). The idea of vocation has been replaced by career planning, which according to Hollis is making our humanity less valuable. He says further that there is nothing wrong with work, but choosing an occupation for a lifetime based on a pay-check is destructive to the soul. Palmer (2000) would have agreed with Hollis (2003) and says that vocation does not come from wilfulness; it comes from listening and accepting one's true self with its limits and potentials. In most of the career literature the concepts of vocation and career are used synonymously, but the former concept has lost its earlier connotations being called to a religious purpose or service to humanity. I will further in this section discuss the historical movement of the vocation concepts, and highlight the most vital aspects of them. Also I will use the words vocational calling, calling and vocation as synonyms in discussing, analysing and explaining the complexity of it in relation to career, because of the close relationship between the concepts.

7.4.4.1 The concept of vocation in a historical perspective

The idea of having a special vocation developed in early Christianity when Apostle Paul used the Latin *vocatio* to indicate Gods calling, bidding or summons to practice such gifts as prophecy or preaching (Rehm, 1990). Persons that were called to a vocation were inspired by God to demonstrate talents that gave evidence of the spiritual source and contributed to the quality of the social spirit. It is important to have this understanding of vocation in mind to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of vocational calling in modern times. There are two important points in the earlier understanding of the concept of vocation. Firstly the spirit of calling was deeply linked to manifest forms of the invisible spirit. Since persons' personalities are noted for how they act and what they say, these manifest forms were proof of a spiritual calling. Persons who sensed the vocation in a spiritual sense achieved direct evidence of personal gifts through experience and manifest outcomes. This type of evidence was distinct and unique to the single person. Secondly, these gifts did not glorify the individual, but expressed a broader social purpose for the higher principle of building common good. In this view persons contribute their gift through service and they work to create quality in life (Rehm, 1990).

Holmberg (1994) emphasises that this type of vocation is what one can call external teleology. This type of teleological interpretation comes from something outside the individual. The *telos* (or the aim) that is to be reached is a kind of interpretation that is not within the life of the subject and one does expect to find this aim in a religious and theological context. However, it is also possible to find such perspectives in the ideologies that are a-religious or anti-religious where different aims are specified for the human life. Holmberg (1994) stressed that a given external *telos* is possible in relation to persons and their reality without being ontologically given. He further says that it is possible that the *telos* is internal in regard to the life of a person, but is considered ontologically given.

As mentioned theological perspectives in terms of external teleology can be formulated in terms of the belief that God has a plan for the person and that this plan is fulfilled when everybody is doing what he or she is sent to the world to do by God. In this limited perspective it is those who have dedicated their lives to God who can be said to have a meaningful life.

By the 20th century the field of psychology and economics had developed into being at least as important as religion as social influences. The persons' search for psychological fulfilment and material comforts were viewed to be as quite compatible. Dewey (1966) reflected about the concept of vocation in relation to American pragmatism and individualism "*A vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptively significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates*" (1966, p. 307).

Further Dewey expresses:

Every person should be occupied in something which makes the lives of others better worth living, and which accordingly make the ties which bind persons together more perceptible – which breaks down the barriers of distance between them. It denotes a state of affairs in which the interests of each in his work is uncoerced and intelligent; based on its congeniality to his own aptitudes (p. 316).

With these words Dewey emphasised that individuals expect some type of gain when pursuing life activities, which has meaning to the self as well as to others. In this sense vocation was no longer limited to religious terms, but the same spiritual sense of seeking higher meaning than the concrete here and now in the large organizing framework for directing one's life still filtered through. In other words Dewey used the concept of calling regarding special work in life, and common good and mutuality were intact in his thinking about personal vocations. This view was radical in the way that every person could try and

find a personal vocation in the spiritual, personal, and social sense and was not an exclusive capability for only a few persons.

The development from the external construction to the internal construction of persons' vocation can be called a development from external teleology to internal teleology (Holmberg, 1994). This internal perspective is regarded as a construct and an activity with certain aims and there are four conditions that have to be fulfilled for persons' lives to be considered meaningful. These conditions are: intrinsic value, having a purpose, being valuable and being hopeful. The *telos* has to have some intrinsic value in the person for life to become meaningful, and it also has to be related to the action, experiences and wishes of the person. The second condition entails that an activity must have an internal purpose.

7.4.4.2 Need for purpose in persons vocational calling

Leider (1997) emphasises that purpose is the deepest dimension in persons - the central core or essence. It is the quality persons choose to shape their lives around. The life purpose is the source of energy and direction in individuals' lives. In this perspective in order to understand the essence of purpose, persons must look to a deeper underlying belief. Most religious and spiritual traditions speak of an essence at the centre of our selves. Some call it 'God', 'higher power', 'the soul', or 'the spirit'. When persons are in contact with their purpose they have a sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they are going. According to this perspective people who live and work with purpose know how to express this essence through their calling. Searching for one's purpose is a continuous activity for listening and shaping one's life stories.

Further in this perspective, finding the purpose in one's life is dependent on one's intuition. By intuition I mean using one's heart (feelings) in searching for our purpose. The key to acting with purpose is to bring together the needs of the world with one's gifts in a vocational calling. Calling is the way for persons' actively contributing to the world. According to Leider persons will lose their way, and live without true joy in life and work, if they don't search for their purpose. Further he emphasises that, without making peace with one's purpose one will never discover fulfilment. Purpose is the quality persons want to centre their work and life on.

In this perspective, a sense of purpose comes from inside of us, and only the individual person knows if he or she has it. There is a purpose whenever persons use their gifts and talents to respond to something they believe in. To fulfil their purpose as persons, Leider says that persons have to turn their selves inside out- becoming aware of their essence and living it out. Further he says that, to follow the call, persons must understand that purpose is an inside

process for organizing our lives, providing meaning, following our heart and clarifying our calling.

According to Holmberg (1994) the purpose of a certain activity has to have intrinsic value to make the activity non-trivial. There can be several reasons for such a thing not to happen. For example, persons can construct goals that are impossible for conceptual or logical reasons. Another reason could be accidental and unforeseeable events. Those can be activities persons engage in with a purpose but because of some unfavourable events the activities become impossible to continue. One can imagine, for example, that a person who has a clear talent in basketball and also lives out this talent by using all his or her time and energy in this activity, and the aim to become good at it is reachable, but a car crash, for instance, destroys his or her possibility to go on with the activity. Further, Holmberg highlights that the purpose is only meaningful when it is possible to achieve, which is closely connected to the concept of *fate* or *destiny*³⁹ as Rollo May (1991) uses it.

Teleological explanations for the concept of fate or destiny support the thought; that every person has a purpose in life and they have the capacity to interpret and picture possible outcomes of their actions. In other words persons are guided by their actions, goals and outcomes (Baumeister, 1991; Lundin, 1989). Through the lens of persons' need for purpose, Baumeister (1991) emphasised three involvements. The first involvement is that the goal or goals are pictured and fantasised; secondly persons' behaviour options are analysed and evaluated in connection to see if they will help them achieve the desired goal toward the purpose. Thirdly persons make choices so that they can achieve the goal toward the purpose. Past, present activities and events that are meaningful for them connect to future events. What made meaning in the past, which has guided them through choices to the present time, derives meaning to make choices for the future. In this way persons are purposive (Baumeister, 1991; Cochran, 1997).

Baumeister (1991) divided purpose into two broad categories: goals and fulfilment. Goals in his definition are extrinsic purposes desired for the future. These are external to the individuals. Present activities are organized so they achieve their goals. The activities themselves are not looked upon as desirable, but persons pursue them anyway in sake of the goals. Fulfilment is categorized as an intrinsic purpose. This purpose is a desirable future state

³⁹ Fate or destiny in Rollo May's terms is defined as: human beings who are free, must also accept that sometimes limitations imposes on their destiny. This definition expresses the difference between what humans want to do and what they really can do. In other words human beings destiny has specific limits on their existence.

of being. I would argue that goals guide way to fulfilment; one can't divide them into two. They are interconnected and are dependent on each other. To define fulfilment is difficult, because it is something that might not be present in the present life of persons. It is a subjective matter of a perfect state of being or ideal connected to the future. The key point is that fulfilment is a source that gives life meaning for persons, and it is also connected to quality of life and happiness. It is an idea of a possible future state of being, often connected to goal achievement, and it helps persons to structure and interpret their present being in life.

Goals are the clue to human's state of being (Baumeister, 1991). In an ideal world, persons live according to a series of short-term goals that lead towards long term goals that have been chosen based on a life plan. In reality there is seldom such a rational reality. Some persons may have short-term goals that do not lead to long-term goals. To have major long term goals can help to structure one's life, but short-term goals are needed first. Having a set of short-term goals does not necessarily imply that one constructs long-term goals from them. Persons, who live that way will at some time in life, experience the loss of long-term goals. Said in another way; their goals will not add up to their high level purpose.

The loss of purpose is also accompanied by other losses as well (Baumeister, 1991). In most of the literature about loss of purpose Victor Frankl's (2004) experience in the concentration camp is described. Frankl observed that when persons lost their sense of purpose, they became damaged both physically and mentally which could lead to death. This is seen as evidence for the need for purpose in life; however it has been criticized from many sources. Many claimed that Frankl defined purpose as survival, but Baumeister (1991) argued that survival is not necessarily a purpose for every person. Purpose as survival was indeed valuable in the context of the Second World War, and it is for many persons in the world today for example, persons in war torn areas and the starving in Africa. In terms of this, it would be wrong to criticize all of Frankl's (2004) theory, but the criticism is valid in that purpose as survival in most of the western world today would not be correct. However, Frankl does highlight one thing that is very important: purpose is a need in life, whether it is survival or something else.

David Levinson (1978) ⁴⁰ discovered that in the early part of adulthood persons organize their life around career goals, which is often described as climbing up the career ladder. This kind of career view would be classified today as a traditional view of career. The goals were

⁴⁰ Levinson's research was about men, and women were not included. Therefore his research might have been a bit skewed. However, I think this research says something important about the career view.

internally driven because persons could imagine reaching the goals and feel fulfilled and living happily (Baumeister, 1991). At around 40 years old, persons experienced that they would never reach their goals that had guided them through life so far. Some did reach their goals, but they did not experience being fulfilled. Either way Levinson (1978) found out that persons experience a mid-life transition. The central theme in this transition was that they had to reconstruct their life, for the goals that had driven them in the past, did not give meaning to them in the present and certainly not in the future. This evidence shows the need for purpose in life, and that purposes can be reconstructed. Levinson also saw that persons had a tendency to reconstruct life through new goals, there was also a larger emphasis in family and intimacy, and some changed careers (Baumeister, 1991).

The evidence points us to the conclusion that persons need a purpose in their life. When purposes are altered, and the purpose does not give them meaning any more, persons suffer and soon find other purposes that guide their lives.

As a summary one could say that persons determine the search for their purpose in terms of their vocational calling. They have to actively search for their “core” potential, by turning their self-inside-out, and asking what is my potential in this world that would contribute to the society. This potential is the vocational calling that one should strive for. By setting the purpose, which may change, persons strive for fulfilment by setting short term and long term goals to achieve their purpose and experiencing their vocational calling. The hypothesis is that, persons would not experience the “loss of purpose” or a “midlife crisis” if they search for their purpose and their vocational calling. To be more explicit; the need for a purpose is a need for everybody (Frankl, 1978). Having a purpose would help them to fulfil themselves, and self-actualise their fully potentials in their career. To strive for self-actualisation one must have a purpose for their career. According to Maslow (1976) self-actualisation is a basic need for persons in life. So in that way self-actualisation and purpose stand in relation to each other, since it is a basic need for everybody in terms of life and their career.

By searching for and finding their core potential that is looked upon as a contribution to the society that surrounds them, they get in touch with their values. Questions such as: what is important to me, and what does my value say about my potential in the society, become vital to ask. Without asking such questions, or searching for their purpose in life, the hypothesis is that persons are not in touch with their inner self and their urge for self-realisation. Without being in touch with their inner self and their values, there is a chance of feeling a loss of purpose (no direction in life), or a midlife crisis.

7.4.4.3. Need for value in persons' vocational calling

In connection to vocation the construct of 'value' becomes vital to discuss. There have been many attempts at discussing the notion of values in relation to persons and the importance of values in achieving a vocational calling (Rehm, 1990). The word 'value' comes from the Latin *valere* which means 'strong', 'brave' or 'courageous', and as a noun 'value' means 'worth' in terms of usefulness such as a principle or a standard. As a verb, 'value' means to 'regard highly', to 'esteem' or to 'prize' (Baumeister, 1991).

As mentioned above, the nature of values is extremely complex. Discussions among philosophers have produced a variety of definitions of values (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966). Even though a simple definition is difficult to formulate, one common theme that is evident is: values are hypothetical constructs that guides the person in terms of what one ought to do or what one perceives is the right thing to do. In this way values must be objectively derived from the justification of choices made regarding goals or objects. Values are subjectively evident by responses, which involve elements of belief, interests, wants and desires. Also, from the mentioned principles, values concern themselves with ethics, behaviour, conduct and morality and they influence the role career plays in persons' lives. According to Raths et.al values rely on the person's cognitive abilities without externally imposed pressure. But this does not mean that there does not exist, any emotional processes in developing values even though it is described as a cognitive ability. Values in this affective sense are connected to the emotional level of persons by being first felt in the body, and by having this body reaction, which is emotional, one develops values by acting on some repeated patterns of cognitive choice over time that point to some feeling judgement: what is right for me. So in that way it is both cognitive and feeling oriented in terms of the subjective being. The distinction between objective value and subjective value becomes important (Holmberg, 1994), but I will focus on subjective value, which is described as a necessity for being able to achieve a vocational calling.

According to Holmberg (1994) meaning is interpreted in terms of subjective value which can be seen in two perspectives. Meaning can be defined as a feeling rather than the realisation of objective values, which can be defined as universally valued values. The subjective is the feeling. The second perspective is that the subjective values are subjective because they are feelings, and the end or the aim that promotes the feeling is subjectively chosen. No matter whether the notion of value is objective or subjective, the focus is on how persons subjectively experience the value in connection to meaning and the construction of a

vocational calling. One could easily criticise the notion of objective value, by asking the question: Is it possible, for anyone but persons themselves, to decide what is valuable or not valuable for persons? How many people must there be who find their meaningful *telos* for it to become valuable objectively?

Often value is seen as equivalent to the term of meaning. According to Holmberg (1994) one must look at the relation between value and meaning for understanding the difference. Holmberg claims that there exist four different types of relational perspectives about the notion of value and meaning. The first possibility has already been mentioned and is that value and meaning means the same thing. The second relation is that there exists no relation at all, in terms of necessary or sufficient conditions between value and meaning. This possibility is a very difficult distinction because it is the realisation of value that leads to meaning. The third possibility is that value is seen as a sufficient but not as a necessary condition for meaning. This could mean that value then entails meaning, which, according to Holmberg, is vulnerable to the same criticism as the first possibility of sameness that value is a sufficient condition for meaning. The fourth possibility is that value is seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for meaning. Meaning in this sense entails value. To divide these four possibilities into two groups one could say that either meaning entails value or value entails meaning. These conditions define human potential. It is when persons realise their values in their lives that they are capable of constructing a purpose and achieving a vocational calling, which clearly is related to subjective qualities.

There exists a lot of evidence that persons' values affect vocational decisions and are internalised early in the development (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). However values cannot be viewed in isolation. The values that a person holds are a product of upbringing, environment, cultural tradition, education, and so on. According to (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996, p. 138):

Values provide a sense of purpose. They serve as stars to steer by in guiding individuals to specific places within life spaces, places that can be the centre of meaning, locales for need satisfaction, and venues for the expression of interests. Values are more fundamental than interests because values indicate qualities or goals sought, various interests, denote activities or objects in which values are sought.

Brown (1996) emphasises that when values emerge they influence all aspects of functioning, including processing of data, and thus what may be clear to one person who holds a value may be unclear or irrational to a person who does not hold that value.

Baumeister (1991) claimed that lack of value is the inability to justify one's actions, and that regulating emotion is to act in a morally justified or valued fashion. In this way Baumeister uses justification and value as similar constructs and he emphasises that justification is a more technically precise term. Persons want to see their lives as having positive value, and in that way they want to justify their lives. Then value is a formal motivation where the belief that an action is wrong will prevent them from doing it. This self-interest must be justified. Persons' accounts of their own actions will emphasise the justification and values even though these are not the true motives. It is also important to be aware that there are both positive and negative values and that persons' lives involve both. Negative values are rules against certain acts, which can be named moral rules. All societies have moral rules about how to behave or how not to behave. There are also positive values and these make certain acts desirable and beyond avoiding various restrictions and prohibitions. This is often called goodness and is visible through sharing with others, helping people and worshipping.

Even though the construct of value has had attention in career counselling theory, it has not been seen in connection to persons' purpose explicitly. Instead it has been related to the career choice construct, which is a good thing, but I believe that in connection to vocational calling and purpose one should treat it as something "before" the career choice, and not as an outcome of the career choice.

As a summary one could say that value is an important construct that comes from within persons as something subjective and not as something objective that is restricted by external forces. By using one's values as something important; by getting hold of one's purpose and achieving a vocational calling; one is allowing oneself, by the use of the will, to try to come closer to one's true self. In this sense, the construct of the will becomes important.

7.4.4.4 The will

Psychosynthesis emphasises the experience and development of the will in human development and vocation (Metzner, 1998). Assagioli (1974, p. 6) defines the concept of will in this way:

Only the development of his inner powers can offset the dangers inherent in man's losing control of the tremendous natural forces at his disposal and becoming the victim of his own achievements... Fundamental among these inner powers, and the one to which priority should be given, is a tremendous, realised potency of man's own will. Its training and use constitute the foundation of all endeavours. There are two reasons for this: The first is the will's central position in man's personality and its intimate connection with the core of his being – his very self. The second lies in the will's function in deciding what is to be done, in applying all the necessary means for its realisation and in persisting in the task in the face of all obstacles and difficulties.

Psychosynthesis emphasises conditioning from our environment but at the same time Assagioli (the quote) asserts that persons can transcend this conditioning through the skilful use of the will. The will in this sense is identified closely with the self and the self can express itself through the act of will. William James (1890) discovered the important role of the will before Assagioli began to develop Psychosynthesis, where he emphasised that using the concept of will is beneficial to human life in believing in free will and the responsibility for one's choices. James further expressed that persons have an inner capacity to make real choices in relation to their actions and what they believe in, so in this manner the concept of will is closely connected to persons' beliefs, because they act in accordance with their beliefs. In such a way the will is the foundation for persons' reality. The concept of the will has also been discussed and emphasised by a handful of other psychologists such as Rollo May (1991), Abraham Maslow (1976), Otto Rank (1998), Carl Jung (1953) and Viktor Frankl (1988).

In *The act of will* (1974) Assagioli stresses that the concept of the will is a subject that has been largely neglected. A strong will is needed to change behaviour patterns, but the strength must be balanced by skill, which entails the greatest economy of effort rather than the strategy that is most direct and obvious. The most effective and satisfactory role of the will is not the source of direct power, but in the function that stimulates, regulates and directs all other functions and forces of persons' existence toward their predetermined goals. In this circumstance the aspect of good will is vital. Good will arises from the recognition that we are each part of a greater humanity and community. It prompts us to act in accordance with the larger perspective rather than only to our own welfare. The integration of the three aspects of the will; strength, skill and goodness is the loving will; expresses love through our willed acts. This loving will is personal, which is aligned with the will of the higher self.

In order to develop the will, Psychosynthesis emphasises self-awareness in making choices and changing, because the will is a natural human function. In evoking the choice, a sense of purpose is established and persons' intentions to move towards a purpose, needs to be mobilised. This identification is an important step in the conscious choice where the choice is made from a perspective close to the self rather than from a disoriented sub-personality⁴¹. Persons must choose to let go of limited identifications and move towards a larger perspective to reach their vocation. This will to choose, that is closely connected to the persons' self, is

⁴¹ Sub personalities can be defined as "functional self-presentations that navigate particular psychosocial situations" (Wilber, 2000, p. 101). Each sub personality has a set of judgments, thoughts and actions. One can for example have a large critic or nice daughter as a sub personality. The danger is if one of the sub personalities becomes too large and comes too much in focus, a person can get over identified with that sub personality and think that being a nice daughter, for example, is the only possible way to think. This can lead to limited functioning, and affect the choices one makes.

outlined by Assagioli in six stages in relation to the purpose behind the choice. The first stage is deliberation, where the persons can choose which course of action or direction that seems best. The second stage, which is affirming that choice, can be developed through visualisation methods. The third stage emphasises a plan for carrying out a choice where the use of skilful will and the good will are important in considering the impact of the plan for oneself, family and community. The fifth and sixth stages involve the implementation and the evaluation for changes in the plan or for new choices. It is important in Psychosynthesis to include cautiously all aspects of the will in the experience of choice. Persons need to feel strong and committed to the choice and flexible in using many alternative paths to move towards implementation taking into account the psychological, physical and social needs and potentials that are involved (Assagioli, 1974).

Persons who act consciously on their wills have to deal with the concept of resistance; which is a vital aspect of growth. Persons who consciously develop the will, faces the resistance of old patterns of habits and security, which have protected them from responsibility and freedom. Resistance often arises when something is about to happen. When persons are acting based on habit there is nothing to resist because things feel safe, but when persons move towards awareness about their habits, and as an outcome choose to change their way of acting in terms of their habits, fear and resistance of change, can arise. This resistance is a sign of change and persons' known worldview or identification is threatened. When persons are moving towards a new paradigm of their self-understanding and the reality that they live in, old beliefs are challenged. This challenge comes into the forefront of persons' awareness and conflicting thoughts, emotions and physical responses resist new truths. Persons can misinterpret this resistance to mean that they really should not change and that the old truth was right. Ignoring this resistance would sabotage their true choices, which would stop their vocational development, and them, from achieving their calling in life. But the resistance must be acknowledged as a value and included in persons' change process. Persons' old beliefs need to be integrated within the new paradigm because a paradigm shift means moving towards an expanded belief system and not merely a substitution of one for another, which, of course, is in concert with the notion of synthesis (Assagioli, 1974).

So to transform the importance of the will into terms of achieving a vocational calling one could say that the use of will challenges persons' beliefs systems about their potential regarding their purpose. The use of the will can guide persons in making the "right" choices in connection to their development of their value-based purpose. The outcome of the active

use of the will can answer the question: what personal gifts⁴² can persons contribute to the society. Said in other words the outcome becomes a value-based purpose that contains personal gifts for society.

7.4.4.5 Personal gifts

These personal gifts are a part of the interior of the self, of the spiritual person who tries to find the truth of his or her personal calling. Persons seek to understand and manifest these qualities consciously; persons want to know and demonstrate what they are good at but it is important to be aware that basic knowledge and skills must be learned in order to use a gift fully through. This perspective takes a lot of effort if one wants to actualise the ideal idea of what we wish to become; reality must then be shaped and reshaped from the subjective desire. Persons must be willing to reflect upon experience with such abstract awareness and ideals. Such effort develops and gives energy to inner relations, which includes satisfactions and gifts, every small and big insight contribute to searching for a vocational calling. This spiritual capacity enables persons to transcend the insights of their self and their environment and have the ability to hope and search for more. The more varied and rich the qualities that develop in our interactions with the world, the greater is the opportunity to achieve insights, manifest gifts, knowledge and skill (Rehm, 1990). In other words the personal gift is a relational construct that is achieved by the persons' interior and acted out from it. The reason for saying that this personal gift process is relational, is because, persons do not live in the world alone, but together with other persons. So to discover one's personal gift must be discovered in relation to other persons.

7.4.4.6 Relational qualities

Rehm (1990) emphasises that the relation between the inner and outer world must contain both flexible and coherent opportunities if the person is to be fully capable of developing a vocational calling. Through this action a person's vocation can only be verified in the context of individuality and commonalities in relation to others (Rousseau & Arthur, 1999). This vocational calling is developed over time and is learned and redefined in relations to others.

Holmberg (1994) also shares this relational perspective where he argues for the notion of meaning within persons, and that their actions must be related to the notion of pattern, worldview and context. He also underlines the importance of connectedness in relation to teleological theories, where taking the context into account is not obvious. Considering the fact; persons who are teleological acting out their vocational calling in a reality with other

⁴² A personal gift can for example be a talent that the person believes the society needs.

persons; must consider the relational dimension that influences it. By taking into account the way persons' life is formed as a whole and the foundation of meaning and meaning construction in relation to vocational calling, is not achieved through only one single act, but rather through a series of choices that connect this focus into a narrative perspective. One could explain the series of actions in terms of fundamental patterns or gestalt patterns. When a person has a fundamental pattern; feelings, attitudes and cognitive structures are integrated, and they originate in the subjective experience that is determined by that pattern. Holmberg also emphasises that if the perspective of fundamental patterns is to be of any importance one has to look at persons as active beings and not as spectators. This can also be seen in terms of persons' gestalt. To explain this further one could say that persons have a possibility to direct their lives into certain patterns; a gestalt. It is the contexts, wholeness, patterns, gestalts or relational perspectives that are fundamental conditions for the possibility to discuss vocational calling connected to meaning.

In terms of this argument a vocation is a combination of spiritual search for meaning and relation manifested by individual searches and the work of potency as evident by perceived change for the common good. This can also be categorized as an interdependent relationship between persons and the environment that surrounds them and the purpose of their vocational call. The personal call pursues a direction that is often secularized, and it might be viewed as coming from any source that guides the person to follow a direction; true to the self that enables them to find fulfilling ways to manifest their talent. This relational knowledge that is revealed in the person does not happen in one day. It is a life process of facing challenges, developing new understandings and learning how the self fits into and strengthens the world (Rehm, 1990). So in this way, the basic dimensions for constructing a meaningful vocation is spiritual wisdom that is looked upon as a mental capacity to detect relations between the self and the world, and an active process of work and manifestation of inner qualities which are called for or used by the external world. In this manner, vocation includes contemporary ideas of career, but it broadens the concept of career by integrating a meaning greater than only work and success alone – the meaning of persons' lives that is a part of their working activity.

To summarise the discussion the development of the concept of vocation from early Christianity to present time one can say that the positive value of persons' constructing a vocational calling is that the person has an inner desire to construct and manifest connections between the self and the rest of the world and this is the reason for integrating the different concepts of career. Because of the spiritual quality of the concept of vocation it connects each

person interdependently to others and to their purpose. This spiritual and relational emphasis has faded away from the original understanding of the concept of vocation, and has been transformed into a rational concept of career and of how to achieve success in persons' career. In my interpretation, one can say that the development has gone from an external calling from God to an inner construction of calling in relation to the environment with emphasis on purpose, values, the will, personal gifts, and then again has developed into an objective rational understanding of having a career.

7.4.5 The contemporary concept of vocation

As mentioned above the term vocation is today often related to professionalism, in terms such as vocational guidance and vocational counselling. The meaning of vocation is related to a general occupational picture. Cochran (1990) expresses concerns about the simplification of vocation and emphasises that vocation is a concept with a status of great value that is important to consider in the current career context. The term vocation has often been accused of being irrelevant in the current economic context because of the commitment to one occupational calling, and because of the amount of training and investment required for experiencing a vocational calling, which becomes rapidly out of date in a fast changing society. In this sense career and vocation may seem to be incompatible concepts. Arthur, Inkson and Pringle (1999) agreed with the incompatibility and emphasised the irrelevance of the term vocation because it no longer correlates with the current career context due to its strong connotation with stability and individual minded career choice.

Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006) expressed that if the concept of vocation is going to be considered seriously, its connotation has to be revised and the domain of discourse has to be identified. As mentioned earlier the original concept of vocation was religious. The emphasis on attributing a meaning or purpose to an external source might not be relevant today. Lips-Wiersma's (2002) research on holistic career development shows that a sense of vocation is relevant to persons. The concept of vocation in her research was not interpreted as something stable in occupational choice, but it was the interpretive schema that gave meaning to both change and stability to persons' lives. Broadening this concept (Hall, 2002; Lips-Wiersma, 2002) contributes to a wider range of contexts, than only religious beliefs in society for understanding vocational calling. For many persons purpose and sense of calling beyond one's own agency are meaningful concepts.

Frankl (2004) demonstrated how important the construct of a deeper meaning is in relation to the concept of vocation. Through his books on the concept of meaning, the concept of

vocation had a potential to provide a sense of purpose to one's life. According to Frankl the primary force motivating career choices is a search for a meaningful vocation. More specifically persons are motivated to choose a career that will provide a sense of purpose to life. Even though such beliefs and values come from a subjective phenomenological basis, one does not criticise persons who express a deep sense of purpose such as Gandhi, Mandela and the thousands of ordinary men and women who seek to live their lives by values deeply integrated in their selves. In the current boundaryless career context there are some advantages that can give persons creative flexibility towards finding and developing a career path with heart. However, boundaryless career theory emphasises the importance of more subjective career determinants, but it does not give any direction of how to find and attain a sense of deeper meaning and purpose, nor does it acknowledge that the traditional, rational definition of career choice can challenge persons' capability of finding a deeper meaning and purpose through their career. According to Lips-Wiersma and McMorland's (2006) it is possible to redefine the notions of vocation and career in connection to four elements of vocational discourse that can be accomplished in the meaning construction process.

7.4.5.1. Four elements of vocational discourse

Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006) argued that the boundaryless career theory, the importance of the subjective domain and the discourses of career with its emphasis on the individual and personal, lacks an important dimension of human experience. They have also proposed the reinstatement of vocation to broaden the current career theory. Further they state that a vocation can be experienced by the four elements of vocational discourse: 'animation', 'dedication', 'evaluation' and 'coherence'. Traditionally the purpose of career theory was to explain why persons pursue the courses of action that they do. Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) claimed that much energy has been used in traditional career theory to explain how persons made career choices on the grounds of interests, capabilities, opportunities or organisational fit. Beyond these approaches the vocational perspective on career development and career choice recognises that persons may also make choices based on subjective grounds that are greater than the self. At the core of vocational choice there is active and emotional response to calling, conviction or cause.

Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006) differentiate between 'choice' and 'animation' where the last term is viewed as the energizing effect of a guided principle. In this matter vocational self-knowledge contains knowing what one is called to do. Their use of the term calling refers to an inner sense of one's unique talents and abilities and yearnings of the soul. This

perspective responds to the developed and revised concept of vocation which then means to “notice the stirrings of the soul and the capacity to discern between satisfying and interesting work and work of life” (Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006, p. 157).

In recognising the animating force of calling, attention would be focused on what persons and groups engage themselves in service to others. Bogart (1994, p. 11) expresses: “*Vocation may be viewed as a unifying story that brings together the social, individual and the sacred or transpersonal dimensions of the life world.*” Lips-Wiersma (2002) states that making a contribution to other persons’ lives can provide the animation for effective self-agency and mobilisation of effort; facing the needs of others and commitment to a cause outside oneself can lead to a meaningful and purposeful employment of time and effort.

Living with a deep vocational sense of self is not effortless and persons’ deep purpose will meet the world in which there are often many obstacles to overcome. ‘Dedication’ is therefore seen as a necessity to fully live out one’s vocation. Stress and self-doubt in many professions, show that sustaining commitment to ones’ sense of purpose is not easy. Overcoming the obstacles requires the power of the will to stay in touch with the inner purpose, which developed the vocational calling in the first place. The relational aspect is also important here; it helps to sustain the vocational calling. Such a sustainment of dedication is hard in an independence focused society.

Constructivist career theory has recognised that the ‘evaluation’ of psychological success takes different measures from objective career assessments emphasising the value of family, personal well-being and sense of individual identity. According to Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006), evaluation in the vocational discourse provides additional dimensions to measure value. The famous statement “*Man constructs himself through his choices*” (May, 1953) expresses the importance of subjective value. When persons live out their vocation, the quality of such a construction is open to review. Cochran (1990) emphasises that the concept of vocation relates to the concept of mastery and agency resulting in feeling alive, at home and in coherence with oneself. In the evaluation process questions such as: am I doing all that I can do that I am capable of, become important to reflect about. This is a wholehearted evaluation process, which involves a serious consideration of ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’. The criteria for evaluating one’s vocation centres around the narrative of life lived and the contribution of one’s working life makes to society. In other words the deeper subjective meaning is created out from the search for congruency of value and action that is voluntarily chosen and personally judged.

This deep subjective meaning creation is aligned with Holmberg's (1994) emphasis on persons' reflexive self-reference. Self-reference takes place in acts where persons constitute their selves and these self-synthesising acts are transcending in the same sense as meaningful activities are transcending in values. This synthesised self cannot integrate just anything; there must be something that drives the person towards the vocational calling. This inner drive is all about how conscious persons are in achieving their *telos* and then restructuring the self, with its knowledge, beliefs, experiences, wishes, desires and emotions becomes necessary. In this sense the self-referring reflective acts can be described in terms of intentionality. Husserl (1936/2001) emphasised that persons constitute themselves continuously as existing⁴³. This constituting act takes place in intentionality where the intentionality directs persons through the self-reflective act so that they can evaluate and dedicate themselves to their inner calling.

The original focus on stability and vocation is rejected in boundaryless career theory because of the changing society, so when the career no longer holds a stable pattern another discourse is needed to make sense of persons' career experience. The importance of vocation as an organising existential principle of career is; that the concept of career has a sense of 'coherence' rather than stability of purpose. Cochran (1990) suggested something similar; that vocation is a pattern of meaning a person constructs in life. Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006, p. 160) expresses this importance:

Within the discourse of vocation, coherence may lend color, shape, and texture to one's individual reflection and sense making. Coherence is discerned through reflection – a dynamic, kaleidoscopic process of sensing and reassembling changing patterns of meaning, as iterations of animation, evaluation, and (re)dedication occur.

This coherence has to be rediscovered and remembered dynamically.

Lips-Wiersma and McMorland also emphasises the importance of coherence. However, coherence can be quite challenging. What does it mean? What does it actually mean to have a coherent vocational calling? There is no doubt that persons want to understand how everything fits together and make sense of the patterns and principles in their career (Baumeister, 1991), but does that imply that everything has to fit together and make sense? What if it doesn't? In this connection, according to Baumeister, it is useful to introduce the concept of chaos theory. In the chaos theory perspective nature is not random, but patterns come and go with a sense of randomly occurring. Patterns suggest connection and interrelation, and so meaning. Both patterns and influences can be found. Coherence can help

⁴³ Even though Husserl did not discuss the concept of calling explicit, his thoughts are can be transferred to the calling concept.

us understand the patterns, but it would not understand the whole world completely. Even if complete understanding of the world were possible and available, prediction of the future with perfect accuracy is impossible. In this circumstance persons may have difficulties accepting such limitations in their potential to predict the world. Persons develop by discerning patterns in the environment and taking advantage of them, but the coherence may be challenged by some events, that may not be patterned. This will challenge persons' general belief; that everything can be understood. One cannot predict the future, and one cannot predict the meaning of persons' vocational calling development, that is something that needs to be experienced and reflected on while one develops (Cochran, 1991). In the traditional career counselling perspective one emphasised that predicting the future of persons and the outcome of their meaning was possible (Holland, 1997; Parson, 1909). This traditional view can be defined as objective perspective to career meaning. The postmodern perspective in career counselling claims that one cannot predict the future and the meaning outcome; it comes from the subjective experience of persons. From the subjective experience one can see patterns and then construct meaning (Cochran & Laub, 1994). This type of analysis can be applied to this career meaning construct: the vocational calling. As mentioned earlier in the analysis of the concept of meaning, meaning is built up in small units. Persons make sense of their life every day; every event and action may be meaningful, and as one has more experience one thinks in longer units. To think that persons' entire life fits into a single, coherent pattern that fits into a life story can be challenging (Baumeister, 1991). Persons can suspect that there is an even higher level of meaning in their lives which fit (Baumeister, 1991; Frankl, 2004; Hansen, 1997). However, this view may be mistaken. Small local meaning does not necessarily add up to a grand meaning (Baumeister, 1991). That does not mean that it is wrong to have local meanings, rather it could also imply that persons have not been aware of the possibility that everything fits together. Said in other words, the myth of higher meaning implies that everything fits together in one way or another, but probably not everything fits together. Some events may be irrelevant and even contradictory to the main themes in one's vocational calling. So one could talk about how significant events, choices, and actions reflect the higher spiritual meaning. In other words, a coherent vocational calling implies that significant events, choices, and actions reflect one's inner self. This inner self can be defined as how persons experience their self. Rogers (1980) defined the inner self in terms of persons that are self-aware in terms of their inner self.

Such a person is more potentially aware, not only of the stimuli from outside, but of ideas and dreams, and of the ongoing flow of feelings, emotions, and physiological reactions that he or

she senses from within, the greater this awareness, the more surely the person will float in a direction consonant with the directional evolutionary flow...such a person is free to live a feeling subjectively, as well as be aware of it...this person is moving in the direction of wholeness, integration, a unified life. (Rogers, 1980, pp. 127-128)

This means that the coherent vocational calling expresses who the person really is, and not what others wish the person to be in terms of their career.

Within this context of coherence the concept of consistency becomes vital. When inconsistency emerges, persons try to resolve or minimize it (Baumeister, 1991). In this context on vocational calling, I will concentrate on psychological inconsistency. The so-called myth of coherent vocational higher meaning has been likened to consistency. This myth has often been linked to spirituality, because of the lack of prediction. To explain this further spirituality and a coherent vocational calling are linked together, because the two concepts has according to career researches (Holland, 1997) not been able to scientifically predict persons career. A coherent vocational calling is not possible to predict, because it develops through persons' career. Since career researchers often link spirituality and vocational call to a myth that is impossible to predict, persons do too in the same way. Career researchers search for an objective consistency and pattern in how persons act out their career, and persons expect there to be answers and that the world is consistent. Another point is that persons expect the patterns to be stable (Baumeister, 1991). In this there is a paradox; one wants stability but one also want to develop and with development the stability changes. One general pattern in the explicit use of meaning to construct ideas is to make sense of the world in relation to oneself. The idea, which comes from a meaning construction is often unchangeable but, the reality changes. It is here the challenge comes. There is very little about life, which is stable and unchangeable; life is a process. When it comes to vocational calling development, it is the same; it is a process (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Also in a worldview one could interpret that persons live in a modern world, but in reality they live in a postmodern world, with change as a natural part of human development and career development (Hansen, 1997). The continuity of life is the continuity of a process rather than being the same through life. Life and career, the two of them, involve change. Meaning is based on stability and consistency. When meanings do change, it disturbs the life development of persons and vice versa. Meaning and life changes are in interconnection with each other. The same perspective exists in vocational calling (Chen, 2001; Hansen, 1997).

The last feature in achieving coherent higher meaning is 'fulfilment'. In practice persons sometimes feel good and sometimes not so good, but when they construct concepts to

fantasize about fulfilment, they tend to focus on the good feeling all the time. In other words fulfilment seems to be permanently positive. Persons imagine that success in work will bring them to constant happiness, which is both a true and false reality. It seems that persons want to believe in permanent fulfilment, but in reality it seems to be temporary (Baumeister, 1991). One's imagination about how it is to be fulfilled will change, just as it is with higher meaning; it will change within the development of vocational calling. Ideas for fulfilment come from positive experiences, which again construct the ideal concept of being fulfilled, which is only a positive feeling or state of being. This might not be realistic in every part of one's life. Positive experiences are temporary and developmental, and most persons don't necessarily reflect upon them. By not adapting positive experiences into other parts of life, one might say that persons live fragmentally and not holistically. Those who do adapt the positive experiences with other parts of their life, such as their career, might be able to live fulfilled, which would be realistic. Persons use their intelligence to make sense of themselves in connection to their world bit by bit regarding their vocational calling. In their development they see broader and integrative patterns and the meanings that they construct are linked together as a whole.

7.4.6. Can anybody achieve a vocational calling?

As mentioned previously, the holistic calling perspective is an internal coherent process where purpose, value, will and personal gifts are central (Baumeister, 1991). This calling perspective can also be linked to the notion of self-actualization where the persons' own inner nature, their actualising tendency (Rogers, 1961), dictates the choice of a certain line of career. Persons that categorise themselves as self-actualisers:

See life as a continuum. They live primarily right now. They are focused on their life in the present. At the same time they see life as a pattern. They see how their life has been unfolding. They also see how it is evolving toward meaningful goals. They see how their present situation is moving toward the future and can create a more fulfilling future by their actions in the now (Cullen & Russel, 1990, p. 16).

According to Cullen and Russel (1990) self-actualisation has a strong connection with the will, purpose and values. Persons that believe in self-actualisation have a tendency to use the will, by choosing in terms of their own needs. Further persons in this context are not so concerned with what other fellow beings might think and feel; it is all about following their inner purpose. Also they are sure about who they are, what choices they are making in the world, and what the consequences might be for their choices. Another important perspective is that values are very important for persons that strive for fulfilling their potentials (self-

actualisation) in their reality by choosing based upon their values, and not what others believe in.

One could see from this brief explanation about the similarities between calling and self-actualisation that the two concepts are interconnected. One could ask the question if the strive for self-actualisation is a necessity for discovering a holistic calling. The process of fulfilling themselves and the self-actualisation process can start from choosing from experiencing a talent that is discovered in the strive for fulfilling themselves, and might reflect the start of a vocational calling.

In this way a calling might develop from the belief that one has a special talent one should fulfil, and that one should cultivate that talent. The romantics and Victorians developed this type of inner calling in relation to artistic work. Callings of this type are probably the closest one can get to truly intrinsic motivations that one finds in the world of career meanings. In this approach to career meaning a strong link to a major value base exists, that is perhaps the most important aspect of a calling. The career is endowed with a powerful sense of being right and good, and sacrifices are justified. A calling may also promise fulfilment. This typically implies that some unusual talent or unique quality of the person marked him or her out as especially suited for this line of career. To act on a calling is to cultivate and use one's qualities to the best advantage. The notion of calling becomes the person's destiny and that is a road to fulfilment. This is true regardless of whether the source of calling is external or internal. Religious and artistic vocations are prototypes of callings, but one can also find the concept of calling, for example, in being a housewife and a mother. Society has put a major value on these roles, especially motherhood, which has been regarded as something untouchable that one should not say anything negative about it. In other words it has been assumed that all women have a calling to be wives and mothers. Calling emphasises the two needs for meaning that are most problematic in modern life, which are value and fulfilment. One could think that a calling would be especially popular and common in the postmodern world, but it is not. An explanation that it is not so common may be that there are few actual careers that offer such opportunities. Callings may often be combined with climbing up the ladder attitudes, furnishing a special combination for satisfying the persons' needs for meaning in life. Persons may feel that their talents and motivations constitute a calling and so they have to act from there. Such a career can offer the climbing up the ladder glorification of self through achievement. It also provides the calling with a sense of a feeling about persons' potential. This combination of climbing the ladder and calling seems to characterise the

attraction in many forms of persons' reality. Special talents and interests for specific occupations such as medicine, law, scientific research, and so on are examples of such a combination; both climbing up the ladder and calling. Their career will be a major and comprehensive source of meaning for him or her. For this person the career may be sufficient for satisfying all needs for meaning.

7.4.7. Summary of the vocational calling concept

As one can see through this discussion about vocational calling, it is not easy to understand. I will try and sum up the most important features within this concept by using the figure below.

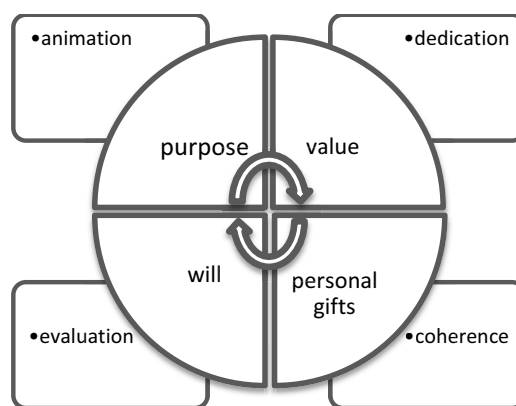


Figure 7: The vocational calling construct

In figure 7, I have tried to visualise the vocational calling concept. In the middle of the figure there are four pieces, which refer to the main constructs in achieving a vocational calling; purpose, value, will and personal gifts. When one of those pieces is altered, then all four is altered like a system. Persons that are animating, dedicating, evaluating and striving for coherence in their lives, alter them. These subjective internal processes stand in relation to the environment that surrounds the person. Also it is important that this is a spiritual act no matter what the vocational calling is about.

The spiritual quest for greater meanings and the understanding of life in terms of the self and others, will lead to questions such as: Who am I?, What is the destiny for my life? These questions are bound up to the active search for meaning in one's life as a whole with emphasis on spirituality, calling and coherence. Since the nature of spiritual activity is to seek a meaning beyond the demanding, rapidly changing and often confusing here and now existence, spiritual activity in relation to calling seeks to unify and coherently construct what one's life is called to do in the world. In such a way the spiritual activity becomes the primary

force for achieving a deeper, meaningful, vocational call. Hofstadter (1967, p. 174) emphasises this spiritual activity in relation to subjective impulse:

Spirit is subjectivity in search of the truth of its being. Subjectivity, is first, will impulse, blind thrust toward existence; secondly, it is will limited and controlled by itself through the understanding which it develops for the purpose of controlling itself. But something more is needed, namely the transition of subjectivity to spirit, which is made by virtue of the aim at truth of being. There is an element in will, the measuring element, which enables it to aim at truth of being.

This quote points to the person that is a part of the relational organism, where the person is the agent. By actively willing and reflecting on consequences of the will, one finds one's spiritual calling. To achieve spiritual wholeness, gifts and motivation must be inspired by the spirit of subjectivity, tested by will, and reflected upon in search for understanding. So in this sense a vocation is a guiding force to find the truth of the self's work in relation to one's personality and to others. This spiritual understanding in search of the truth about a particular kind of wisdom in vocational calling, which is the ability of the person to grasp the relations that bind unique life qualities and incidents into a totality of being. To say it in a different way, spiritual wisdom requires learning the truth about one's inner relations and one's relations to others, corresponding to personal gifts, motives and the good of the common world, which the concept of vocation binds together as a whole. One can understand this complex vocational calling construct as an achievement of higher meaning coherence, which contains: purpose, value, will and personal gifts. Persons accomplish this process by actively choosing to form these qualities that are congruent with their inner self, which requires that they are agents with inner motivation.

7.5 Summary of the career meaning construct

In the beginning of this section I highlighted that the content of the career meaning construct is categorised as the noun in the meaning context, and not as the verb in the career meaning construction process. I have included in some discussions the career meaning construction process and human agency aspects, where it is seemed appropriate. The reason for that is that I want to underline that the content of the career meaning construct is not constant; it develops like a process in relation to the career meaning constructions phase. Regarding the meaning constructions phase as a development, one should also view the content of the career meaning construct as developmental. Said in other words when the career meaning construction phase alters itself in alignment with persons' development, the content of the career meaning construct alters itself too.

In this section I have focused on the content of persons' career meaning, in that I have defined career as a job, career as an outcome of success, and career as a calling. In the career as a job perspective I focused on the linear approach, which is related to the industrial expansions in the mid-20th century, where persons kept their job for survival. Even though this view can be traced far back in history, this view is still alive in the 21st century. Within the perspective on career as an outcome of success I stressed the distinction between objective and subjective success. Objective success is defined as something external⁴⁴ to the individual, like status, promotion and salary. These objective success criteria can be viewed as important for persons' career meaning construct. The subjective success criteria are something that comes from within the person, and are featured by the concept of job satisfaction. Career as a calling perspective is defined as something spiritual, and not necessarily as something religious. In this perspective I pointed out that purpose, values, will and personal gifts are vital to persons for achieving their vocational calling, in relation to the vocational discourse; animation, dedication, evaluation and coherence. Also the three career meaning perspectives: career as a job, success and calling, are dependent on persons' experience of their agency and how they experience and view their meaning construction phase.

7.6 Where do we go now?

In this theory part I have tried to define and discuss the complexity regarding meaning, meaning construction and career⁴⁵. The three vital themes I have mentioned are meaning construction, human agency and the content of career meaning construct. In terms of the meaning construction phase, there exists three important ways of constructing meaning for persons; relational, subjective and objective. These three meaning construction phases guide how persons experience themselves as agents in their context. Without that, persons might not be able to construct the meaning that is best for them in terms of their career. Having the meaning construction phase and persons' agency in mind, the content of their career meaning is vital. The content of their career meaning is defined as career as a job, career as an outcome of success and career as a call. How persons⁴⁶ view their career depends on if they view it as

⁴⁴ One could ask the question: Is it not possible that external factors for objective success can be internalised into the individual. In my opinion it is possible that some humans internalise them to become subjective success factors, but they began as external sources of success. Therefore I have categorised them in an objective perspective.

⁴⁵ In the research before the 1970's that I have referred to, one might suspect that mainly men have contributed to the results. This could be because most women at that time probably did not work or have a career, and therefore researchers gathered the empirical data from men. Even though one might suspect some differences between men and women, the research results that I have based my theory on says something important about the development in the field of career. However, the results will not be based on gender differences in terms of conceptualising meaning in career.

⁴⁶ In discussing the complexity of persons career meaning, I have not focus on the differences between men and women. One might expect that masculine values such as climbing up the ladder are known male values, and for example, woman

only a job, an outcome of success, or a calling. Already now one can picture the complexity. So how is it possible to find more out about this complexity? In my point of view one has to look for nuances in this picture, and to do that one must go into persons' subjectivity. How do they experience their career and choices in terms of meaning? The research question for this dissertation is: *How do university graduates experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?*

Their experience is defined in the above-mentioned themes: meaning construction, human agency and career meaning content. In terms of the size of the theory chapter, it would be impossible to cover all the mentioned theories. Therefore I have chosen to focus on trait-factor approaches in terms of objective meaning construction, narrative theory and freedom in terms of subjective meaning construction, social constructionism in terms of relational meaning construction. Meaning construction is the name that I have given this theory in the experimental design presented in the method chapter. When it comes to human agency I have chosen to focus on human intentionality and intrinsic motivation theory. Human agency is the term that I used in the experimental design. In terms of career as a job, I have chosen to focus on the linear perspective, in career as an outcome of psychological success I have chosen to emphasise job satisfaction and theory on objective success, in career as a vocational calling I have chosen to focus on the model of vocational calling discourse. Concepts of career is the name that I used in the experimental design.

To try to investigate persons' subjectivity regarding their meaning construction, agency and career meaning would imply using a subjective research method. In this case I will apply Q-methodology to investigate persons' subjective experience about how they experience their meaning and meaning construction specifying the content of it in terms of their career. In the next chapter I will go further into the research methodology, before I will present my empirical work.

experience female values such as relational meaning construction. I have already underlined that I will not focus on the differences between men and women in their experience of career meaning and career meaning construction. If the empirical gathered data shown a clear difference I will take it into consideration in the data discussion.

Part III – Methodology and Research Results

8. Research methodology

8.1 Research methodologies in the career field

In this methodology chapter I consider Q-methodology as an alternative and a complement to qualitative inquiry⁴⁷ in the career research field. Q-methodology combines the in-depth subjectivity of qualitative approaches with factor analysis that is associated with quantitative methodology. I argue that Q-methodology appeals to the career field by enabling in-depth complex understandings of career choice processes, motivations, values and subjectivity. I will discuss the career research discipline and Q-methodology; explain in depth the basic formulations in Q-methodology with emphasis on the philosophy behind it and the factor analysis. I will also describe the stages of a Q-study by relating it to this PhD-project.

Knowledge development in the career field in terms of career development and career choice processes has been represented by two paradigms, which are called the modernistic and the postmodern approaches (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). These two approaches are heavily influenced by quantitative and qualitative inquiries, in that order. Within career research and theory today the field is seen as an interdisciplinary project where research and development of knowledge develops across scientific branches in which most of the disciplines in social sciences are involved (Young & Borgen, 1990). Even though the career research field is seen as interdisciplinary, quantitative research is still the most applied methodology in the field. The career variables, such as what is important to a person in making career choices, have often been measured in quantitative terms because that has been the most accepted tradition in mainstream opinion. However, both practitioners and some researchers have acknowledged that there is more to career variables than what can be settled solely by quantitative terms (Richardson, 2004). The most important thing is to find out how persons subjectively experience their complex careers and career choices (Kidd, 2004). By focusing on how persons subjectively experience their career choice processes, motivations and values in their career, I am critical to the sole focus on career variables in quantitative terms. It is the researcher and not the persons who experience making career choices that define career variables in quantitative terms. Also I am critical to the focus on career choice processes in solely qualitative terms because I believe this is not systematic enough in terms of doing

⁴⁷ Inquiry is defined as a general term in terms of research. In this connection: the process of data analysis and interpretation; process of obtaining knowledge (Webster dictionary).

research in the complex career field. I argue that Q-methodology offers a more systematic approach to subjective experiences than qualitative research offers, and it has a greater possibility of grasping the nuances in persons' experience than the qualitative paradigm has. Also I assert that it is important to proceed with holistic perspectives by combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives, when it comes to research methodology in the career field, since it has not been emphasised so much. I will come back to this perspective later on in this methodological chapter.

8.2 Operant subjectivity

In criticising the methodological perspective that has been in focus in the career research field, one should justify the methodological attack. Brown (1980) emphasises that one has to justify methodological attacks towards the traditional methodological paradigms, often based on Thomas Kuhn's (1962) explanation of scientific revolution and paradigm development. He states that:

“(...) it is necessary to illustrate new worthwhile directions or a promising approach to old issues. To pave the way for such a venture, a beginning might be made by suggesting that most previous work in the behavioral tradition has stressed the ‘external’ standpoint of the investigator, i.e., has begun with his vision of his world according to which all else has been measured. Theories have been entertained by the investigator, consequences have been hypothetically explicated by him, relevant categories have been conceived, measures have been constructed, respondents queried, and scores obtained and analyzed. The investigator in the past has been forced to exceed the boundaries of the original framework only when the data have insisted on it by misbehaving in some unanticipated way (Brown, 1980, p. 1).”

Taking the internal point of view within the person in terms of research implies taking a position on the edge of the behaviour, abandoning rating scales, and searching for and exploring the complexity in meaningful career choices. I, as a researcher, have noticed that there have been attempts to try to uncover this complexity by combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, but there does not seem to be many such studies (Patton & McIlveen, 2009). To explain this further without walking into the lion's den I will argue for a research methodology that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the career research field.

To reach subjective experience systematically, Q-methodology seems to be an appropriate approach to utilise because it integrates qualitative and quantitative perspectives into a holistic methodology, which seems not have been in focus in the career research field.

In deciding on Q-methodology, one needs to know what type of methodology it actually is. Is it a mixed methodology, a qualitative methodology with quantitative perspectives, a quantitative with qualitative perspectives or a unique methodology? I argue below for the

importance of understanding these questions in terms of understanding how to categorise Q-methodology. The approach with which I choose to understand Q-methodology will affect how I use the methodology and how I interpret the data material.

8.3 Is Q-methodology a mixed methodology or an integrated unique methodology?

In the paragraph above I pointed to the importance of knowing what type of research method Q-methodology is. In discussing this topic, one also needs to ask the question: What important differences are there between a research method and a research methodology? According to Kothari (2004) research methodology is an approach to scientifically studying a research question and properly lies within philosophy of science. Research methods are the techniques used to answer the specific research questions. One needs to know the consequences of and the scientific thought behind the different steps in terms of both the methodology and methods one chooses. In other words, the methodology points to the scientific thought and reasoning that exist behind the research, and the research method points to techniques the researcher chooses to use in relation to its methodology. One can see that there is a close interconnection between the two.

Returning to the question of what type of research methodology Q-methodology can be categorized as one needs to look into the methodology and its methods. To answer the question one needs to understand the science of philosophy that lies behind the methodology and the techniques (pragmatic use) that “belong” to the methodology.

The science of philosophy in terms of research methodology is defined generally as ‘a way of knowing’ (Heppner, Kivilighan, & Wampold, 1999). In my opinion this basically means different types or paradigms of knowledge that the researcher views as ‘true’ science. What is possible to obtain knowledge about and how such knowledge can be established are relevant questions in the philosophy of science. In researching a specific phenomenon one needs to reflect upon what the purpose of the research is and how it is possible to obtain trustworthy knowledge about the phenomena in terms of the purpose of the research. One could say that the science of philosophy is a set of assumptions and scientific reasoning in terms of the research one ought to do on a specific topic (Haslam & McGarty, 2003; McQueen & Knussen, 1999).

To gain knowledge on a specific topic one needs some systematic procedures and techniques in terms of data collection (knowledge collection) that help the researcher pragmatically. Pragmatic use of a research methodology is either seen in terms of the science of philosophy

that is connected to the specific methodology or seen as something that does not have to be directly related to it (Johnson, Onwuegbuezie, & Turner, 2007). In this methodology chapter a direct connection to the science of philosophy in terms of Q-methodology is seen as a necessity. Researchers within the mixed methodology paradigm claim that the research paradigms cannot only be seen separately but can also be combined with one another. I ask the question: Does not mixed methodology need a specific set of philosophical and method positions? I argue that one needs specific positions in terms of philosophy and pragmatic use for being capable of executing trustworthy research because if one has a constructivist philosophy one will interpret the research in a different way than if one has a post positivistic philosophy, where the aim of the research is something quite different. The difference could be that in a constructivist philosophy paradigm researchers interpret their research in terms of persons' experiential constructions of their being in a social context. This interpretation cannot be proven to be the truth. In a post positivistic philosophy paradigm certain truths exist, and research can discover these truths (Heppner, Kivilighan, & Wampold, 1999). In these different perspectives of "truths", the epistemology and the ontology are so different from each other that it is not be possible to integrate them into one paradigm (Feyerabend, 1992). The figure below depicts the relationships between research, methodology and its methods.

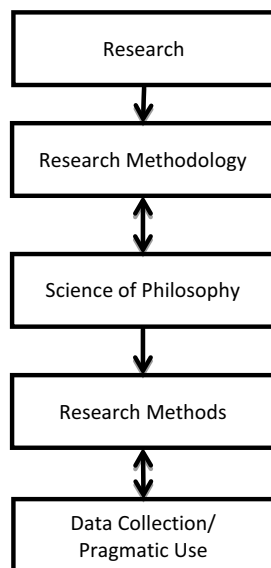


Figure 8: Important features that qualify a research methodology

One needs to understand the science of philosophy (methodology) and its techniques (pragmatic use) to answer the question whether a research methodology is a unique methodology with unique techniques (methods), a mixed methodology with mixed techniques, a qualitative methodology with quantitative techniques, a quantitative methodology with qualitative techniques, a quantitative methodology with quantitative techniques or a qualitative methodology with qualitative techniques. Below I have made a table (Table 1) of the differences between qualitative, quantitative, mixed methodology and Q-methodology. The table is more detailed than the figure above. The most important distinctions in this circumstance are: focus, science of philosophy, aim and data collection.

Table 1: Differences between the methodologies

Research Methodology Paradigms				
Distinctions	Qualitative methodology	Quantitative methodology	Mixed methodology	Q-methodology
Focus	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Both	Operant Subjectivity
Science of philosophy	Constructivism	Post positivist	Both	Constructionism
Aim	Induction	Deduction	Both	Abduction
Role of theory	Building theory	Testing theory	Both	Both
Data collection	Interview	Survey	Both	Sorting of items
Interpretation	Categorizing interviews	Factor analysis	Both	Both
Research Results	Description	Confirmatory	Both	Both

From this table one can see that mixed methodology is categorised as unique methodology, and at the same time includes all sub-features that originally belonged to the quantitative and qualitative methodology paradigms. According to Johnson and Onwuegbizie (2004) and

Johnson, Onwuegbizie and Turner (2007), mixed methods research has been recognised as a third research paradigm along with qualitative research and quantitative research.

In determining a research paradigm as a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches one meets the conflict about which type of knowledge is valid (Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002). In integrating two major methods into one's approach one accepts multiple truths. Mixed method research attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (Creswell, Fetters, & Ivankova, 2004). Researchers who choose to use mixed methods can start their research interviewing some participants on the research topic, build up a survey questionnaire based upon the interviews and then collect data from a large number of participants. They can also start with basing their questionnaire on theory on a specific research topic, and then interview a small number of participants to verify the questionnaire (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). I have difficulty in accepting mixed methodology as separate methodology since it shares both qualitative and quantitative science of philosophy thoughts. I would say that deciding whether a methodology can be categorised as a separate methodology or not depends on the aim of the research that the researcher is executing.

In the recent history of the social, behavioural or human sciences mixed methodology began with the researchers who believed in using qualitative and quantitative viewpoints in addressing their research questions (Johnson, Onwuegbuezie, & Turner, 2007). The core concept in terms of mixed methodology is triangulation. Campbell and Fiske's article (1959) introduced the idea of triangulation, which means that more than one method is applied in the validation process that tries to assure that the explained variance is the result of the underlying phenomenon and not of the method. This idea of multiple-operationalism is more of a validation technique than a full research methodology. The point here is not to criticise mixed methodology as I do agree that it is possible to mix methodologies. However, in order to get a good enough understanding of what the results mean one needs to fully execute both qualitative and quantitative methods in such a way that the research becomes trustworthy. One need to know what one is doing in terms of scientific reasoning and pragmatic use.

So far I have discussed the mixed methodology approach. The actual question in this circumstance is where does Q-methodology belong? Is it a mixed methodology, a unique methodology or a method in the qualitative or quantitative methodology paradigm? In terms

of table 1⁴⁸, mixed methodology and Q-methodology do have some similarities and dissimilarities. The similarities are that both approaches to methodology apply qualitative and quantitative methods to the research theme. In others words the similarity is the data collection, interpretation and the aim for the research results. The main dissimilarities concern the focus, science of philosophy, and aim. In terms of focus mixed methodology emphasises subjectivity and objectivity, but Q methodology emphasises something that is called operant subjectivity. Operant subjectivity has its focus on persons' internal frame of reference, which is analysed objectively by factor analysis in order to make it more systematic for interpretation. In mixed methods the focus is on subjectivity and objectivity, which is executed by the research technique that is chosen, for example, interviews followed up by a survey questionnaire or vice versa. In terms of science of philosophy, mixed methodology emphasises constructivism and a post-positivistic approach, but Q-methodology emphasises constructionism. In relation to the aim of the methodology mixed methodology emphasises deduction and induction, but Q-methodology emphasises abduction⁴⁹. As a conclusion one can say that since Q-methodology is different from mixed methodology in the areas which can determine the research methodology, such as focus, aim, and science of philosophy, it does not belong in the paradigm of mixed methodology, but rather points to a unique methodology. What about qualitative and quantitative methodologies; what are the similarities and dissimilarities?

Q-methodology shares some important facets with qualitative inquiry. The approach is self-referent in that *à priori* constructs are not forced on a respondent by the researcher as some predetermined meaning owned by the researcher alone. It facilitates knowledge of subjective opinions, beliefs and values (Brown, 1980) and only a small sample of respondents is required to explore the rich diversity of the topic. Also in deciding on the statements that the participants sort, it is possible to interview them before or after the sorting procedure. Where Q-methodology differs from qualitative methodology is in the means of data collection and analysis and also the science of philosophy, focus, and aim of the methodology. Since these dissimilarities are so important in terms of determining the methodology, Q-methodology cannot be categorised as a qualitative methodology.

⁴⁸ The table is not meant for a deep discussion about the differences, but to visualise the differences and commonalities among the methodology paradigms; and to show that Q-methodology can be treated as a unique methodology.

⁴⁹ I will explain these concepts when I discuss Q-methodology in depth further on in this chapter.

Q-methodology uses the mathematical approach of factor analysis to identify underlying patterns in the data (Stephenson, 1953). This is the most significant similarity with quantitative methodology. Both Q-methodology and quantitative methodology use factor analysis to understand the underlying patterns. The dissimilarities concern the focus, science of philosophy, aim, role of theory and data collection (see table 1, page 144). In addition, a major difference between Q-methodology and quantitative methodology is the perspective from where representation is focused or located. In Q-methodology the representation is emphasised on the stimuli side, and in quantitative methodology the representation is located on the response side. This means that in Q-methodology the emphasis is on persons' communication about a theme that is investigated (stimuli) rather than on the respondents' side, where generalisation back to the population is important. Since the dissimilarities are directed towards important features of research methodology characteristics, I argue that Q-methodology cannot belong to the same paradigm as quantitative methodology.

As a summary one could say practically that Q-methodology is a unique methodology using quantitative and qualitative perspectives/inquiries to structure the research process. The quantitative perspective in Q-methodology is used to organise the data as factors ready for interpretation, the qualitative perspective is used in preparing for the data collection and for the interpretation. One might think from this argument that Q-methodology is a qualitative methodology with a quantitative structure, but since it differs so much from the science of quantitative and qualitative philosophy bases, it cannot belong to either of them. In this argument I claim that Q-methodology is a unique methodology rather than a mixed methodology because it has one single philosophy behind it. In few words one could say that the philosophy aims to not test hypotheses, but to create hypotheses. In persons' subjectivity, researchers will discover something that they did not plan for or expect to discover. This discovery is based on persons' experience in relation to their social and cultural context, which is based on constructionist philosophy. Further on in this methodology chapter I will go more into depth about the Q-methodology research approach, by treating it as unique.

Even though I have categorised Q-methodology as a unique methodology with qualitative and quantitative perspectives, it does not mean that all areas can be researched in terms of Q-methodology. If one is doing research on multiple subjective views in terms of a phenomenon, Q-methodology seems to be the paradigm to choose. Below I will explain explicitly my choice of research methodology.

8.4 Background for the choice of methodology

In this research project I have chosen to use Q-methodology because this methodology was designed to investigate persons' subjectivity regarding particular themes or topics. Since the topic for my PhD project is: *university graduates' subjective career meaning construction and career meaning in relation to career choices*, Q-methodology seems to be appropriate. As mentioned, Q-methodology offers a systematic investigation of persons' subjectivity, where the emphasis is on their communicated point of view, which expresses their meaning pattern of experience on a particular phenomenon. In terms of this emphasis, Q-methodology would be useful and appropriate for investigating persons' meaning and meaning construction in career choices, and for capturing meaning patterns as particular views within persons' career choices that could form the basis for new hypotheses about choosing careers. It would also be useful in investigating particular views (generalised views⁵⁰) and tendencies of a certain group of persons about how a meaningful career is chosen.

The philosophy behind Q-methodology and the stages in Q-methodology research are discussed and explained in depth below.

8.5 Introduction to Q-methodology

The British physicist and psychologist, William Stephenson (1902-1989), introduced Q-methodology in 1935 (Stephenson, 1935). It is an acknowledged scientific methodology that has contributed to both qualitative and quantitative methods in social science. Originally it was applied in fields of communication and general psychology, but today it is a well-known methodology in fields of social and humanistic science, such as communication, political science, health science, general psychology, education, counselling, etc.

While Stephenson's colleagues such as Spearman and Burt were interested in finding a measure for generalised intelligence, he became interested in the single case and subjectivity. He was against elementalism and instead emphasised wholeness and person-oriented action that is measured and evaluated. Stephenson wrote a letter to the Journal "*Nature*" in 1935, where he argued for an emphasis on understanding persons through their subjective experience. In developing Q-methodology he turned the ordinary R factor analysis upside-down in which the correlation between items and tests is the foundation for the factors. In Q-methodology it is the correlation between persons that is the foundation for the factors (Brown, 1980).

⁵⁰ Each factor that is discovered in a Q-methodological study represents a generalised view in society.

As with other methodologies, such as qualitative methodology, Q-methodology has also been criticised and misunderstood, especially by the so-called “R-methodologists” that represent the dominant research methodology in psychology. In fact, Q-methodology was designed for the purpose of challenging the objective “Newtonian” logic of testing, that the field of psychology represented and still does. Q-methodology emphasised a critique of the cognitive view of persons as divided into psychological parts. Instead, Stephenson expressed that the persons should be seen holistically. Since Stephenson earned doctorates in both Physics and Psychology, he was able to base his challenge to the objective tradition in psychology on epistemological, ontological and mathematical presumptions that were close to quantum mechanics in physics and which may have led to a confusion and misunderstanding in the field of psychology (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Further in this chapter the emphasis will be on clarifying the difference between R-methodology and Q-methodology. A brief description of Q-methodology follows in which the basic principles are outlined and related to my project about meaning and career.

8.5.1 Brief description of Q-methodology

Q-methodology is a research methodology for the scientific study of human subjectivity. Subjectivity in this connection means a person’s communication of his or her point of view. The person’s point of view is anchored in self-reference, which is the person’s internal frame of reference. Further, Q-methodology helps the researcher in becoming aware of, understand, uncover and give meaning to subjective experience about a topic. This gives a basis for systematic research of subjectivity (Brown, 1980). Q-methodology includes a distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that are combined with statistical applications of correlational and factor analytic techniques. These give researchers a systematic and exact quantitative means for investigating subjectivity (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

To investigate subjectivity persons are presented with a sample of statements or visual objects about a topic. They are asked to rank the statements or visual objects from “highly disagree” to “highly agree” or to evaluate them from “like me” to “unlike me”. This process is referred to as Q-sorting. In other words the research participants rank the statements or visual objects by comparing them all together from their point of view, and this is how subjectivity comes into the picture. The ranking of the statements or visual objects is the basis for the factor analysis and the resulting factors indicate “segments of subjectivity” that exist in the concourse (Brown, 1993). This process will be explained in more detail after I have explained the difference between R-methodology and of Q-methodology.

8.5.2 Differences between R-methodology and Q-methodology

Between 1935 and 1938 Sir C. Burt and William Stephenson discussed the pros and cons of R-methodology and Q-methodology (Stephenson, 1953). The result of this discussion was a joint paper on alternate views about the correlation of persons. Burt (1940) later expanded this view in his paper: "*Factors of the mind*".

As mentioned in the introduction, Q-methodology is distinguished from typical factor analysis in the psychological tradition, which is represented by R-methodology; where the emphasis is testing of traits in persons. Stephenson received criticism and was misunderstood especially by R-methodologists. The criticism focused on the "wrong" separation of two fundamental aspects of Q-methodology; namely the Q-sorting procedure and the Q-pattern analysis (factor analytic procedures) (Brown, 1980). Stephenson (1953) designed the Q-sorting process in order to enable the application of the Q-pattern analysis. According to Watts and Stenner (2005) it was the combination of these two aspects that allowed Stephenson to make subjectivity his principle research focus. Much of the blame for this division of the two most central aspects of Q-methodology can be attributed to Carl Rogers⁵¹. Rogers introduced the "Q-technique" in counselling sessions, where he asked his clients to rank cards with statements about their personal characteristics into piles ranging from "not characteristic" to "very characteristic of me" (Kvalsund, 1998). This is not what Q-methodology is all about in its original form. Rogers gathered data in the form of Q-sorts, but did not factor analyse those Q-sorts. He used them as a pre-post test system, to look for significant differences before and after therapy to measure a decrease of the distance between the real and ideal self, and an increase in self-confidence. His pragmatic approach to using Q-method was on the side of R-methodology, which reflects where Rogers was situated as researcher at his time; that is in the central positivistic paradigm. The way that Rogers used the method alone can confuse researchers (Watts & Stenner, 2005). This pragmatic approach is, of course, fully possible, but was not in line with Stephenson's intentions with the methodology.

The figure below shows the most distinguishing elements in Q-methodology in relation to R-methodology.

⁵¹ Carl Rogers was a counsellor and a researcher in the counselling psychology field. He introduced the person centred counselling tradition to the psychology field.

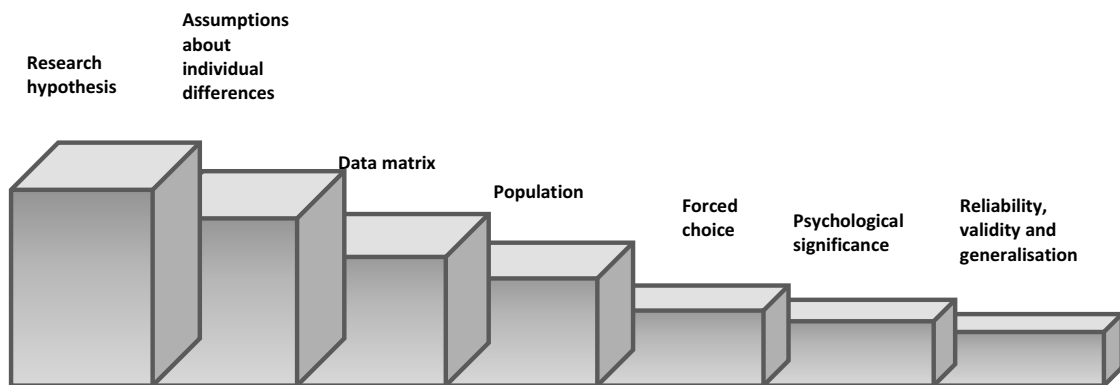


Figure 9: Distinguishing characteristic elements for Q-methodological research

The visualisation of the distinguishing elements as a staircase (Figure 9) is how I see the differences between R-methodology and Q-methodology. A researcher begins with the research hypothesis and the philosophy behind the methodology, which is the most distinguishing element in Q-methodology in relation to R-methodology. Once the researcher has come down the stairs he or she it ends up in evaluating the quality of the research, which differs in some ways in terms of the two different methodologies, but the basic elements are the same in considering the importance of the quality of the research that has been executed. The size of the stairs is not important, but I have constructed it in terms of what distinguishing elements come first in R-methodological and Q-methodological research. I describe and discuss the elements one by one below.

8.5.3 Hypothesis

The research hypothesis as it applies to R-methodology is not necessarily applied in the same way in Q-methodology. Often the hypothesis reflects the researchers' viewpoints or what they are expecting to prove or disprove in their specific research. Since Q-methodology is based on the person's and not on the researcher's subjective viewpoint, each response is regarded as valid. Persons' subjective viewpoint is a vital source of information in the research, because there is no external source for validating other than the person's own measurement of his or her subjectivity, which cannot possibly be invalid from a self-referent perspective (Kvalsund, 1998). In other words Q-methodology is not constructed for proving or disproving something specific in terms of the research theme, but to discover subjective patterns in terms of the research phenomenon, for example, career choices. As noted earlier, Q-methodology promotes discovery of hypotheses rather than testing hypotheses. This subjective hypothesis perspective has been criticised by the dominant hypothetic-deductive paradigm.

Stephenson (1953) was concerned with the dominance of the hypothetic-deductive methods within psychology and the neglect of persons' subjectivity, which he considered a proper discipline. In recent years similar concerns have been expressed by post-modern researchers and with an expanded group of qualitative and critical researchers. The similarity between Stephenson's approach and this new development is that they both emphasise curiosity and promoting discovery and understanding in preference to logic testing of hypotheses. In this way Q-methodology can be said to share characteristics with the qualitative tradition where discovery of hypotheses is emphasised. The R-methodological group of researchers criticised Stephenson for emphasising psychological significance instead of testing hypotheses, which resulted in Stephenson turning to Freud for theoretical sustenance. Stephenson emphasised the basic Freudian premise of pleasure or pain (displeasure) as theoretical support for psychological significance instead of focusing on the hypothetic-deductive method for testing hypothesis. He saw that the Freudian premise could support the Q-methodological sorting and factor analysis procedures that are based on the psychological significance perspective (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The Freudian premise in the Q-sorting procedure:

“(…) involves a heterogeneous set or sample of items (ordinarily a set of statements about a particular subject matter, although pictures, objects, and so on, might also be employed) being ranked or scaled (along a standardized ranking distribution or continuum) by a group of participants. They were to do this according to their own likes or dislikes and hence as a function of the personal values they assigned to each item (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 73) “

In terms of the quote, the participants sort the items in terms of pleasure (like me) and displeasure (not like me). The factor analytical procedure is also recognisable in the Freudian premise perspective, because the factor analytical procedure has the aim of gathering the participants' sortings into factors, where each factor shows a gestalt of pleasure and displeasure in the factor in terms of the research topic. In other words, the aim in Q-methodology is to discover pleasure and displeasure about a phenomenon, rather than testing hypotheses about a theme.

8.5.4. Assumptions about individual differences

In R-methodology there are postulates of individual differences that Stephenson (1953) could not accept. For example, when an intelligence test is applied to a sample of persons, each person gains a score. These scores compromise the individual differences and one cannot doubt that they represent a fact of some kind. When three persons A, B and C achieve scores X, Y and Z, and $X > Y > Z$, the transitory postulate is at issue. When X has a higher value than Y and Y has a higher value than Z therefore X is higher than Z. These postulates are all acceptable at a certain significance level. This type of significance exists in R-methodology

for example as some belief about abilities, potentialities and about test scores in terms of individual differences.

Stephenson emphasised that the correlation technique that is used in R-methodology can be applied to data that does not only contain individual differences. The most common critique of Q-methodology is that correlation coefficients cannot be calculated for only one person, which Stephenson spent his whole academic life trying to contradict. In R-methodology every person is tested and achieves a score of some degree for every factor at issue in terms of individual differences. This circumstance is not an issue in Q-methodology. One can look at the example career choice certainty. Participants who experience lack of meaning in the area of career choice certainty will achieve a neutral score in a Q-sort. Participants who experience meaning in the area of career certainty would achieve a high significance score (-6 to + 6) if they have strong feelings about lacking career choice or not lacking career choice certainty. This implies that in Q-methodology individual differences are not at issue, but rather individual similarities. These individual similarities are for example correlated into factors (those who experience career certainty are integrated onto the same factor), rather than every person being tested and correlated into all factors on the theme of career certainty.

8.5.5. The matrices of the data of R and Q

In R-methodology individual differences with their assumptions are basic to everything. In Q-methodology intra-individual significances are basic to everything, which means that they replace the role of individual differences completely. According to Stephenson (1953), Q-methodology critics such as Burt, Thomson, Cattell, Babington-Smith “(...) *have continued to suppose that only one matrix is ever at issue, involving individual differences either directly, indirectly, or fundamentally, which, looked at ‘down’ its columns is R, and ‘along’ its rows is Q* (p. 51)”. According to Stephenson, R and Q-methodology are two independent systems. According to Burt, as described in Brown (1980) there only exists one basic data matrix, which can correlate persons and which was typically filled out from objective intelligence tests. Stephenson (1953) expressed that there were two separate data matrices, one that contains objective measurements (R-methodology) and another that contains subjective data (Q-methodology) (Brown, 1980).

8.5.6 Population

Q-methodology was originally established by the simple adaption of the quantitative technique known as factor analysis. Stephenson (1953) emphasised that R-methodology referred to a selected population of n individuals, each who has been measured in m tests, and

that Q-methodology referred to a population of n different tests, such as statements about a phenomenon, each of which is measured or scaled by m individuals. In this sense, in R-methodology, something is being done to persons, for example, the measuring of their intelligence. In Q-methodology, on the other hand, persons actively do something; for example, they sort statements about their subjective experience in relation to career, career choices and meaning. This is the subjective mode of measurement that comes from the person's own viewpoint (Brown, 1980).

This distinction between Q-methodology and R-methodology initiates methodological departures from the psychological tradition (Stephenson, 1953). Firstly it is the n different tests or measurable material, not the group/sample of persons, which become the study sample. Secondly the variables are the various persons who take part in the research; not the tests or the hypothesis traits, and hence the persons become the variables of interest. Such Q-methodology research explores correlation between persons or whole aspects of persons. A consequence of this is that it is also the persons and not the testing of traits that load onto the factors (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Also regarding the population construct the number of items or persons distinguishes R-methodology and Q-methodology from each other. The person sample size in Q-studies is often relatively small and it is not unusual to have one case study in detail, the so-called intensive study (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In small scale studies persons measure their subjectivity with the same item sample, but from multiple instructional viewpoints in order to generate a sufficiently large correlational matrix for factor analysis (Brown, 1980). The focus is on in-depth analysis of a small number of cases rather than an analysis of a large number of cases, which is emphasised in R-methodology.

8.5.7 The forced choice method

The forced choice method is a characteristic feature of the Q-technique. The method implies that every statement needs to be placed in terms of the quasi normal distribution curve. This curve is symmetrical based on the psychological significance principle, which I further explain below (Stephenson, 1953). The research participants sort a sample of N statements into a quasi-normal frequency basis. In practice, the participants first give attention to all N items thereby achieving a general impression of them as a whole. Then, following the instructions, they place the items that are *highly significant* at the high score end, *neutrally significant* at the zero score, and *negatively significant* at minus score end.

8.5.8 Psychological significance

The sorting procedure involves a heterogeneous set of a sample of items (statements) being ranked or scaled by a group of participants. Participants sort a sample of items according to their own likes and dislikes, and as a function of the personal value they relate to each item. This is what Stephenson (1953) called psychological significance, which means that the statements of great psychological significance would be ranked or scored highly, while those of little relative significance would be lowly ranked. This sort of ranking procedure in Q-methodology has some methodological drawbacks in connection to claiming that it is a qualitative alternative; which, for example, can be that the tests, scales and questionnaires look too much like R-methodology which Q-methodology claims to be challenging (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

According to Watts and Stenner the role of participants in Q-methodology, the nature of the gathered data, and the way in which the data are interpreted, could not be more different from a context in which testing and measurement are prioritised. Further they emphasise that tests in R- methodology reflect a certain *à priori* imposition of meaning, and that that meaning must be built into the measurement instrument. Each separate item in an attitude scale (in R-methodology) is assigned and predefined and is considered to represent a measure of the psychological construct that the scale sets out to measure. To complete such a test is to be subjected to measurement and the results of the data are treated as independent absolute measurements of the person and will be interpreted only in relation to the operational definition of the psychological construct that the researcher has chosen to investigate. Also, in R-methodology, researchers rarely consider that there is a possibility for different kinds of meaning or that interpretational quality may have influenced the responses by the informants. In Q-methodology the persons who are participants are not tested nor is meaning imposed upon them *à priori*. Instead participants are asked to evaluate what is meaningful for them and what has value and significance from their perspective. Watts and Stenner (2005) describe it in this way:

A series of absolute measurements cannot result from this process. Instead, a single set of essentially relative evaluations (and hence a gestalt configuration of items) is produced. These gestalt configurations have been made by the participants and the basis of criteria, which are personal to them (i.e. that which they consider to be 'psychologically significant'), and it is these gestalt configurations which constitute the target of the Q-methodology. (p74)

This quote from Watts and Stenner shows that it would be pointless for a researcher using Q-methodology to strictly define the meaning of items (statements), which are presented to participants because any given statements can take on the psychological significance only in

the context of an overall structure. These overall structures in a Q-study, are not the measured test results which are inter-correlated and factor analysed, as they are in R-factor analysis (Stephenson, 1953). Q- factor analysis produces a set of factors (onto which participants load on the basis of the configurations that they produce), which are represented not by different subsets of the presented items that will be in our methodological factor analysis but by all the presented items configured in different, but characteristic ways. The meaning of these configurations must then be attributed *a posterior* through interpretation rather than through postulations *à priori* (Brown, 1980).

8.5.9 Reliability, validity and generalisation

When it comes to evaluating the quality of the specific research, Q-methodology and R-methodology are quite distinct. The quality construct is important in all types of qualitative and quantitative research. Concepts such as reliability, validity and generalisation are significant.

Reliability is important in questioning if the Q-sorts, the factors, factor loadings and factor scores are reliable. Reliability is a measure of the degree to which one can predict that the result would happen again if it were repeated (Kvalsund, 1998). According to Brown (1980) there is an acceptable chance to achieve the same result a second time. He further says: “*that experience has indicated that reliability coefficients of a person with himself normally range from 0.80 and upward* (p. 24)”. The more persons who define a factor the more the factor’s reliability increases (Kvalsund, 1998).

Validity is important in research so that one can be sure that what one intends to measure is actually what one measures. In Q-methodology one does not measure predetermined and externally defined operational constructs, but persons measure their own subjective point of view from within their own internal frame of reference. Because the measurement is internal, it is important that there is a certain consistency in which the Q-sorters maintain the intention of the operation. It is a measurement of their understanding of the sample items directed by the condition of instruction based upon their feelings and so forth. When this kind of validity is secured, other types of validity do not play a big role because there is no external criterion to judge internal frames of reference (Kvalsund, 1998). In addition, interviewing the participants can also contribute to the validity by getting the participants to confirm the researcher’s interpretation of the data material, and to secure that the participants have followed the instructions. This is the opposite of what R-methodology is trying to achieve by setting external criteria for measuring persons’ internal frame of reference.

In every research methodology including Q-methodology an important construct to be aware of is generalisation. In fact generalisation is not often discussed as a theme in Q-methodology because it doesn't claim to generalise the results from the sample to population of persons as R-methodology does. Watts and Stenner (2005) emphasise that Q-methodology does not claim to have identified subjective viewpoints that are stable within persons across time. This is true to a certain point, but even though a person develops and experiences more in life and their experience of meaningful career choices develop, the view will always exist in the concourse in society. This important emphasis is vital to the understanding of the role and place of Q-methodology. If researchers start to try and generalise to a larger population then they impose *à priori* assumptions onto the participants, which is not appropriate in this methodology. Researchers can only conclude that the participants in the study did express these viewpoints via the researchers' interpretation of the Q-sorting pattern, but one might expect the shared viewpoints from the participants to be consistent over time. Expecting that the shared viewpoints will be consistent over time is as mentioned, because the view will always exist in terms of the concourse that the researcher defined. In other words, one can only generalise back to the concourse that was constructed in the beginning of a research project, and on that ground generalise it as an existent point of view, that will always exist in society. This argument points back to the difference between R-methodology that generalises back to the population, and Q-methodology that generalises back to the concourse, that is stimuli oriented.

8.6 Main principles of Q-methodology

As mentioned above, there was little room for Stephenson's view on the investigation of human subjectivity in the 1930's (Stephenson, 1953). However, today there is evidence that the criticism is turning and a new generation of social science researchers is beginning to take an in-depth interest in Stephenson's ideas. Figure 10 shows an outline of the Q-methodological research process. Further I will explain and discuss the steps one by one and relate them to my PhD project.

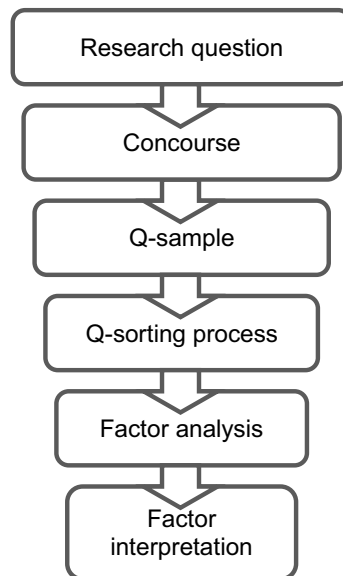


Figure 10: Outline of the Q-methodological research process

8.6.1 Research question

The research question directs you in terms of the goal the researcher has for his or her study. In general, the goal for Q-studies is to achieve knowledge about segments of persons' subjectivity in relation to a phenomenon. In my study the main research question is: *How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?* This research question contains the interest in segments of subjectivity in terms of meaning, meaning construction and career choices. In other words the goal is to discover knowledge about university graduates' subjective experience in terms of the above-mentioned theme.

8.6.2 Concourse theory of communication

One can say that the concourse is all kinds of expressions on a theme. Persons' every day experiences, feelings, thoughts and body experiences are measured in the meeting with the society around them through a thematic population of meaning sample, in other words the concourse." *In Q. the flow of communicability surrounding any topic is referred to as a concourse*" (Brown, 1993, p.3).

Stephenson (1978) emphasised that this communicability in Q-methodology was the "*modus operandi*" for the subjectivity science field. This concept has two dictionary definitions, which are: the condition of viewing things only through one's own mind and "*(...) consciousness of our own perceived states*" (p. 21). The first definition is accepted among Q-

methodologists while they reject the last. Stephenson defined consciousness as persons' possibilities to communicate and he further highlights that persons' possibilities take place in two different ways related to the objective and the subjective. The objective is defined as the external world and contains facts. The external world is explained "(...) *in relation to change we can bring about in it*" (p. 21). Stephenson explains this further by saying that sciences are bodies of statements of facts communicating to us what has to be done or has been done to bring about change in the external world.

The subjective form of communication occurs in persons' internal selves and includes thoughts, feeling, wishes, emotions, opinions, beliefs, dreams and so forth that can be summed up as the persons' "mind". Persons' experiences of this so-called "mind" or expressions in their behavioural field involve meaning and self-engagement. Stephenson explains this further in this quote:

The form of communicability is characteristically diffuse; its statements have 'excess meaning': (as in synthetic proposition); it is subject to expansive understanding and not to prediction; its explication is in terms of higher-level structures, configurations, and synthesis, not reduction to elementary units (p. 22).

The communicability in this subjective system is based on the theory of concourses. The theory of concourses is explained and discussed below, which is the basis for structuring persons' subjectivity in operant factor terms.

8.6.2.1 The theory of concourses

"The theory of concourses generalizes what have hitherto been postulated as universes or populations of 'statements' in Q-methodology, to a broader concept of concourses in relation to functional-interactive situations in subjective behaviour (Stephenson, 1978, p. 23)". The concourse forms the basis of the phenomenon that is investigated in Q-methodology. Stephenson (1953) used the word "parent-universe" or "population" to describe the concept of concourse. This term is the essence for extracting a sample in Q-methodology.

The word concourse comes from the Latin word *concursum*, which means "a running together". The flow of communicability refers to conversations, discussions, and thoughts from everyday life. The concourse is central in persons' lives in the way they live and communicate with each other. From the concourse they make new ideas, meanings, discoveries and creations. Researchers can gather expressions of the concourse from interviews and dialogue with persons, books, papers, TV, pictures and music. Through the Q-method technique researchers can discover the structure of the concourse through the pattern of thoughts and feelings involved in it. The goal in Q-methodology is to find out which

patterns or factors lie in the concourse (Brown , 1993). In this PhD project, the concourse is defined as the communication among persons regarding their meaning and meaning construction in terms of their career and career choices.

8.6.2.2 Consciring versus consciousness

In relation to the flow of communicability in terms of the concourse Stephenson (Smith, 2000) highlighted that this meaning sharing knowledge has been understood as consciousness but was originally consciring. The word consciring comes from the Latin word *conscire*, which means or indicates a *shared secret or a conspiracy* (Smith, 2000, p. 203). In the seventeenth century Descartes defined consciousness as a synonym for consciring, which implies a private knowledge that tells one something about the non-physical mind of his perspective of the mind-body dualism. In this way consciousness got transformed into the mind's secrets and was imported into English from French. Stephenson (1980) suggested using the term consciring in its original meaning as the shared knowledge that Q-methodology highlights. Further Stephenson claimed that subjectivity is rooted in consciring, which is the shared knowledge, known to everybody, in a specific culture. The sharing is explained as what has been called consciousness but it actually means *communicability*. In Q-methodology the aim is not to ask persons to transmit a stream of consciousness, but to ask about persons' subjectivity, and that is done by communication with oneself or with others.

8.6.2.3 Communication theory

According to Stephenson (1967; 1978) subjective communication is theoretically based in statistical quantities of statements about a situation. By stating the fact "it is cold outside" one can test that type of information by observing the frost outside, but it may involve many possibilities of thoughts and feelings that one hates the cold, that one likes the cold, that one misses the summer and so on. These possibilities can constitute the concourse of statements. Further, Stephenson (1978, p. 24) assumes "*that each 'statement' of a concourse is equally probable a-priori, and equipotential a-priori*". This implies that the statements from the concourse about the experience of being cold outside produces many possibilities of experiencing the cold weather, and not only one possibility. Therefore all statements of the concourse provide an access to the functional-interactional situation that is in focus (Stephenson, 1978). Operationally one cannot focus on all the possibilities within the concourse sphere, and one has to apply samples taken from the concourse, and these samples are statements from the concourse that are self-referent. On the assumption of persons' subjectivity the concourse will contain meanings and not facts.

Consequently the theory of communication that Stephenson developed (1967) contradicts the theory of information (Stephenson, 1978). The latter is only concerned with facts and ignores meanings, while the former is focused only on meanings and ignores facts. It is important that this complex subjective meaning perspective should not be taken as a reductionist assumption. It can be explained by stating that Q-methodology is concerned with structures, configurations and synthesis of statements within a concourse and with understandings. This means that Stephenson was neither concerned with testing in an objective manner of scientific reduction, nor with explanations or predictions. So in this way Q-methodology focuses on complex aspects of subjectivity even though the scientific study of subjective communication starts with the statistical concept of concourses.

To structure the scientific study of subjective communication about a phenomenon one can construct an experimental design that represents the communication in the concourse (Stephenson, 1953). This experimental design will be explained below.

8.6.3 The Q-sample and experimental design

8.6.3.1 Representative design

According to Brown (1970) the question of what is a representative design is one that often has been discussed in quantitative terms. When it comes to the concept 'representativeness' it is often discussed in terms of respondents and has not been extended far enough as a theme in the research design. According to Hammond (1998), Egon Brunswik is probably the best known theoretician when it comes to the concept of theoretical design. This design principle is grounded in sampling theory that gives the inductive perspective its operational ground. This implies that in Q-methodology, the design principle is constructed to achieve a representative sample on the stimuli side (statements), and not on the respondent side. This can be looked upon as the same as generalising back to the concourse, the universe of statements for a certain topic. This implies that Q-methodology one does not generalise back to the population, but back to the concourse, from which the sample of stimuli is collected. The question that can be raised is how does one achieve representativeness in terms of stimuli? In trying to achieve representativeness in terms of stimuli, there will always be an uncertainty moment, but representative designs as Brunswik applied them are tools for achieving representative stimuli.

Brunswik claimed that the psychology researchers' failure was that they had extended sampling theory to the object outside the stimulus-response situation (Hammond, 1998). He further claimed that the psychologists were operating under a double standard, which he

explains by saying that sampling theory was being ignored in terms of the objects or the stimulus or input of the specific experiment's environmental conditions. He asked the question of why the psychologists examined person sampling procedures so closely but generalised their results without any defence of the conditions outside the experiment. Experimental psychologists objected to Brunswik's arguments by stating that one should not bother with such a matter because it cannot be done, or at least not easily. They raised the question of how was it possible to sample situations. Another objection was that researchers do not have to bother with such a matter even though one could do it, one should not want to do it. To say this in other words, psychologists are not interested in generalising results from experiments to conditions outside the experiment (Hammond, 1998).

To relate this to the experimental design in Q-methodology, according to Stephenson (1953) one can use Brunswik's concept of ecological universe, which means that in Q-methodology the point is not to generalise the phenomenon that is investigated to every person in the populations of persons but to generalise in terms of the concourse. To do that one uses the Fisher balanced block design (Fisher, 1947). Fisher contributed to an alternative way of constructing a design that was not dependent on a large number of respondent sampling (Brown, 1980). This specific variant of an experimental design was integrated into the so-called Q-technique because it was functional for selecting theoretically based Q-samples which helped the researcher move away from the dependence upon sampling from a large number of statements. Also Q-sample are ecological stimuli fields, and so more suitable for generating valid views. Because using representative design functions as a tool for reproducing a picture of the concourse from which the sample of stimuli is collected.

The principles of the experimental design give the researcher permission to compose a set of stimuli, which is theoretically important (Brown, 1980). The structure of the Q-sample and the experimental design is useful for being explicit about one's theoretical position and is a way to secure a representative stimulus situation in relation to the main effects. In other words, a Q-sample is a collection of stimuli items (McKeown & Thomas, 1988) – a set of statements that is taken out from the concourse (Brown, 1993). It is this Q-sample that is presented to the participants who are going to rank order the sample of statements in a Q-sort (Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Structuring a Q-sample, therefore, consists of constructing an experimental design, by applying Fisher's methods of experimental design called a balanced block design (Stephenson, 1953). The size of the Q-sample is dependent upon how many statements are required to represent the theme (Kvalsund, 1998).

According to Kvalsund (1998) it is important to design a structure that is capable of representing the theory one wants to investigate. This structure can be applied to the Q-sample by using Fisher's balanced block design.

Fisher's design seems to be suited to most sampling procedures in Q-studies in terms of the design which is primarily for the sake of collecting a comprehensive stimuli representation, and must be seen as independent of the subsequent statistical analysis as a necessary condition (p. 302).

Also in structuring and representing the sample of theory that one wants to investigate from the concourse, law of parsimony is important. Kvalsund states that:

For theoretical purposes this logic of parsimony has to be inclusive of the logical properties of the theory's structure and function. To decrease the manifold and multitude possibilities of expressing the theory, one must be concerned, according to this law, with the main factors explaining and constituting it, and levels of facts which are needed for the sake of systematic comprehensibility. All of these properties are for the sake of not excluding any important features of the theory. Lack of such important stimuli would reduce the operational possibilities of the subjects rendering their understandings, and so omitting, although unconsciously, important subjective information on the topic under investigation (pp. 302-303).

Further, in structuring a research design with a sample from the concourse the estimation of error is important (Fisher, 1947). To control for error, randomisation is a necessity. In other words one must ensure that systematic influences are not operating in error estimates, hence decreasing the effect of randomisation and error control. According to Kvalsund (1998) the problem of the destruction of randomisation is always present in the research sample if it is not controlled for. The biggest problem in this case is that when one shall represent theories in the career field, the risk is that the sample, even though it is a representative of the population is skewed because the population text is skewed. To explain this further, it is possible to go into a theoretical population field and sample randomly, but if the text explains parts of the theory more in-depth than other parts there will be more statements or items in that area. Therefore, one might expect more statements about objective career construction in this research because this area is dominant and explicitly more known than subjective and relational aspects of career perspectives. This fact can result in an expansion of the former at the expense of the latter. If one is not aware of this skewedness, the sample and stimuli domains will suffer. In this connection the "Fisherian factorial design" plays a vital role in creating a balanced sample of the career field that is under investigation. Kvalsund states that "*Without the balance inherent in Fisher's block design a skewed sample could emerge from a random selection of the population text* (p. 303)". In this sense the Fisher balanced block design creates the possibility of creating a structured sample and it controls for skewedness.

The Fisher balanced block design (see table 2 below) consists of three columns: effects, levels and cells. Effects are the main categories and every independent effect is divided into levels to include different aspects of the effect (Kvalsund, 1998). All of the effects and levels are taken into account when one draws the Q-sample. This means that every level in each effect is represented equally (Stephenson, 1953). The number of cells is determined by how many levels the design contains. Each cell in the design is given a letter, and each statement is constructed on the basis of one cell from each level (Brown, 1993). To find the possible combinations of cells, one has to look at the levels (Kvalsund, 1998). Building up the statement sample will be described in more detail below.

Table 2: Fischer balance-block experimental design for this study

Effect	Levels			Cells
Meaning construction	Objective (a)	Subjective (b)	Relational (c)	3
Human Agency	Intentionality (d)		Intrinsic motivation (e)	2
Concepts of Career	Job (f)	Psychological success (g)	Call (h)	3

8.6.3.2 Building the experimental design

In my experimental design there are three effects. The effect, *meaning construction* is based on different theories and philosophical distinctions about how persons construct and achieve knowledge about themselves and their reality. The objective level is based on trait factor approaches (Holland, 1997), the subjective level is primary based on existential phenomenology, freedom and narratives (Cochran, 1997; Moran, 2005; Sartre, 1993)⁵², and the relational level reflects principles in the theory of the person which is understood as persons are inherently relational (Kvalsund, 1998; Macmurray, 1991). The *Human agency* effect reflects principles about intentionality (Searle, 1983) and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000a; 2000b). The third effect, *concepts of career*, is based on theories and assumptions about career. The job level is based on theories and assumptions that are related to work (Terkel, 1972), the psychological success level is based on theories and assumptions about viewing career as a goal for achieving success (Baumeister, 1991), and the third level, call, is based on different theories and assumptions about calling (Hansen 1997, Leider 1997).

⁵² The Sartre book in question was first published in French in 1946. The original title is: *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*.

In summary, the three main effects can be seen as developmental phases and as operating in every person's thoughts about career. In this way the design becomes a tool for identifying career phenomena in any particular human experience. It can also be an instrument for identifying statements from the chosen theories, which reflect the categories in the design and therefore, can be assigned to the appropriate cells.

8.6.3.3 Composing the Q-sample in the study of how persons view meaning in their career choices

In this research study the combination and multiplication of levels in the design is $2 \times 3 \times 3 = 18$, which results in the following cells: acf, acg, ach, adf, adg, adh, aef, aeg, aeh, bcf, bcg, bch, bdf, bdg, bdh, bef, beg, beh. These cells are the basis for constructing the statements. Each cell is represented by three statements, which add up to a total sample of 18 cells x 3 replications that in sum become 54 statements. This number of statements seems to be sufficient for balance, which means that all effects have equal and heterogeneous stimuli representation with as many different statements as possible reflecting the same structural logic (Kvalsund, 1998). When I was structuring the sample of statements I formulated half of them negatively and half of them positively. Before giving the statements out to the participants, the statements were assigned random numbers.

The aim of the Q-sample is to stimulate persons to react to the statements so that their responses come through the Q-sorting operation. As mentioned earlier the requirement for the sample is to represent the theories under investigation so that the sample covers the main logical facts within the theory. This requirement helps the researcher to qualify the theoretical field systemised for the sake of the analysis but not for testing the logical facts through the statistical analysis (Stephenson, 1953). The sample elements could have been chosen from every theory book on career; however I decided to collect statements from the theories that I discussed in part 2 of this dissertation. This means that the sample of statements that persons subjectively experience in terms of their career are collected from the concourse or the parent universe that is conceptualised by the different theoreticians in the career field that I chose to discuss in my theory part. It is important to keep in mind that when one goes into the theories to select statements for the cells one must remember that the procedure has been designed for balancing and for the sake of a broad enough stimuli representation of the theories.

Constructing the statements for the Q-sample is described as more an art than a science (Brown, 1980). Nevertheless the principle of within cell heterogeneity for logical reasons means that there should also be greater within cell homogeneity than between cells. Bearing

this in mind it seems that the Fisher balance block design is appropriate for selecting items for a sample that represents theories where different understandings will be investigated. In order to take care of both stimuli representation and within cell heterogeneity more than three statements for each cell were selected for this particular study. Up to 25 statements for each cell were constructed initially. The variation in the initial number of these statements in each cell was based on the fact that it was much easier to find statements of one kind rather than of other kinds, which resulted in larger samples for some cells than for others.

In taking care of stimuli representativeness heterogeneity (Brown, 1980; Kvalsund, 1998) and from the selection of statements I tried to ensure that each cell received a balanced sample of statements based upon the principle of the greatest possible within cell heterogeneity. The latter was accomplished without abandoning the principle of greater between than within cell homogeneity. There were no difficulties in selecting the statements from the cells even if it sometimes was hard to decide what level was dominant; for example intentionality or intrinsic motivation, objective, subjective, or relational, meaning construction, or career as a job, career as a job, career as success, or career as a call. Some of the statements had this uncertainty in what level was dominant, therefore there will always be a discussion related to the logical features regarding where the statement belongs. However, Q-methodology's purpose is to measure not the *a-priori* logical features of the designed sample but the psychological understanding of it. It is the stimuli representations that are important, not the precise and concise logical determinations that are required by R-methodology.

After I placed the sentences in their cells and randomly numbered them, the 54 statements were printed on cards ready for the Q-sorting participants. Each statement has a number, but the number is not a categorical signal. This is because one has to avoid any structural influence that could destroy the natural randomization of the comparative process in Q-sorting. How the statements are compared should always be a random matter that comes from different persons or from different conditions of instructions and not from the structural bias in the sample.

Brown (1980) explains the perspective in this way:

What is essential is a principle of randomisation, and in this respect, systematic comparisons rarely occur in well-composed Q-samples. One subject may see a similarity between a and b, for example, and so feel constrained to give them both the same score for the sake of being consistent; another subject may compare a with c, however without the involvement of b. In this sense, which statements enter into comparisons tend to be a random affair (Brown, 1980, p. 201).

The sentences that were constructed for this study are shown below.

Table 3: The set of statements in the Q-sample

1. I like the idea of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	2. The culture that I am surrounded by does not give me adequate information and knowledge about what is meaningful to choose in terms of my career	3. I am not reproduced of my culture, but I am aware that I am influenced by it, therefore choosing something meaningful to do, is my choice
4. When I choose the road for my career, I focus on what can prevent negative experiences	5. My belief about my capabilities is rarely influenced by my relations, environment and my life context	6. Having a job for the sake of a job is the first step in my needs hierarchy, when I have achieved that I have the freedom to choose whatever I want
7. Even though I am scared to take a job that doesn't fit my interests, I can imagine taking it in order to survive	8. I wish I could believe in mutual relationships but I can't listen to others when it comes to choosing a meaningful career. I don't want to be affected by others	9. Climbing up the ladder must be the goal for my career: and that is why I don't need help from others, I only need intentional and conscious goals
10. Having a meaningful career means that I must look at it as more than a job	11. My former experiences in life such as school and leisure activities have not consciously affected my career choice	12. I love climbing the career ladder
13. Through mutuality I am guided towards the right career for me	14. I know I will not measure my career success by careful reflections about what my workplace asserts as successful	15. To experience success means having a good match between my co-workers and my personality
16. I don't feel that I have a "path with heart" and I feel helpless and alone	17. I define career success as something more than climbing up the ladder; it means for me a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	18. Without a clear intention to direct my career purpose it remains just a strong intuitive feeling and vision, and not something real
19. My awareness about how my values have affected me in my career choices has been more helpful, than what my personality tells me	20. Awareness about my personality traits and knowledge about job possibilities gives me an internal feeling of control that helps me to find a career to which I can be dedicated	21. Climbing up the career ladder is not an egotistical act, I want to do something meaningful for others: therefore I choose a career that is not very congruent with what my heart says
22. Climbing up the ladder in an organization, and one day becoming the boss; is what gives me motivation and a belief of experiencing career success	23. I don't like work for works sake, there must be more in life to motivate me	24. My dedication, animation, and coherence in my intentional career is developed through others face to face or in spirit
25. Sometimes what we daydream about in a career does not suit us at all	26. I am afraid of climbing to high in my career; I might unintentionally fall off the ladder and hurt my self	27. I choose security in terms of pay and not insecurity in terms of a meaningful career
28. I don't plan to take any career test to find a job as the tests aren't reliable	29. My aim is to earn a lot of money in my career, and that is only possible through good colleagues	30. When I choose my life partner, it will be with my career development in mind

31. I am not getting the marks and higher education I need so my dreams of climbing up the corporate ladder are not realistic	32. I am not interested in the normal rewards of a successful career, family is more important	33. I'm an agent in my life, my freedom to choose what I want to do in my career has been vital
34. My career and interests have guided me in finding my calling	35. My intentions behind my job choices are always congruent with my actions	36. I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others
37. The goal for me in my career is not to give gifts back to society, because of what society has given me: first and foremost I believe in my talents	38. My need for competence , autonomy and relatedness is not important for developing dedication towards my career	39. My heart's path has many people on it
40. Intuitively I know my heart's path and I'll follow it with great dedication	41. I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake	42. I don't feel autonomous; the environment controls me in finding meaning in my career
43. I value success as something that is not about status, but something that is about my intentional acts and interests	44. Opinions from other human beings are disturbing my attempt of making intentional goals to get a job	45. My work identity is not determined by my view of the actual job, but through my view of my own competence
46. To me having a meaningful career means achieving job-satisfaction. For me being satisfied implies experiencing success on my own terms that also fits the organizations criteria for success and satisfaction	47. I am I and you are you. I can only listen to myself in terms of choosing a career: That gives me place to strive for doing something meaningful.	48. My inner voice seldom directs my destiny; later I must listen to others
49. I cannot control what the environment communicates about my competence	50. I act on what others believe in, which is success	51. My past and present as well as projections of the future have shaped me in my striving for choosing a meaningful career that is based on self-determination and what can I do to experience success
52. When I hear my call it comes as a clear voice within that I share with others	53. It's fun to work with others	54. My experience of my competence and autonomy is seldom driven by my personality; not telling me much about what the right thing to do is

8.6.3.4 Participants: person -sample (P-set)

Most attention in designing Q-methodology research is given to the Q-sample – the statements. However the person sample (p-sample or p-set) is also important. The person sample means the selection of participants (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The size of the person sample is dependent on what one is going to investigate. When one selects participants for a research study, one selects persons who are expected to have a viewpoint on the theme that is investigated (Brown, 1980). The selection of research participants can be decided by either theoretical or pragmatic considerations. Theoretical considerations mean

that the persons who are participating in the research are chosen because they have special relevance to the goals of the research project. Pragmatic considerations mean that the participants in the research project are chosen because they were available at the time for participating. The person-sample is divided into two types: extensive or intensive person samples. Drawing an extensive person sample is often affected by who is available to participate in the research. If it is an extensive person sample the purpose is to explore the attitude in the communication universe. The persons who are participating in an extensive study sort the Q-sample with the same condition of instruction. Drawing an intensive person-sample has often a purpose of in-depth examination of one person who sorts the Q- sample under many different conditions of instructions. However an intensive study is not limited to a single case study; several persons can be examined in detail (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The person sample in my research project is an extensive sample with theoretical and pragmatically considerations. The goal of this project is to explore university graduates' subjective experience concerning career meaning and career meaning construction in career choices. To achieve this goal I had to ask participants to take part in this research study who have experience in making some career choices and who self-report that they have constructed intentional goal and plans for their career. Therefore I chose persons with a background in counselling education from two different colleges and universities in Norway; 37 persons agreed to sort the Q-sample. It turned out in the factor analysis that there was really only 1 factor. I tried a two and three factor solution without any luck. The correlation between the factors was from 0.65 to over 0.80. At first glance I thought that this was a huge surprise since the field of meaning and meaning construction in career choices is enormous. After reflecting about this result and discussing it with my supervisor, I thought that it was not so surprising after all, because the group of university graduates who sorted can be seen as homogeneous in that they have gone through the same education and they are trained to reflect about themselves on the basis of the same theories. As a result of this discovery I decided to include persons from two other contexts who theoretically might reflect differently about their career choices and so add another perspective to the counselling group. I chose persons who have taken economy studies, and persons who have a multicultural background. The reason for choosing these groups was based on both theoretical and pragmatic grounds.

Together in the end I chose 49 participants from 3 different contexts. These are persons with university degrees in counselling education, in economy and persons who have a multicultural background (immigrants with a university degree from Norway).

8.6.3.5 The Q-sorting process and the condition of instructions

Q-sorting is the process in which the participants objectify their subjectivity (Kvalsund, 1998), and is the basis for the factor analysis. According to Brown (1993) the resulting factors indicate segments of subjectivity that exist in the concourse. The participants model their point of view by rank ordering the Q-sample of statements according to a condition of instruction and a scoring continuum pattern sheet (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

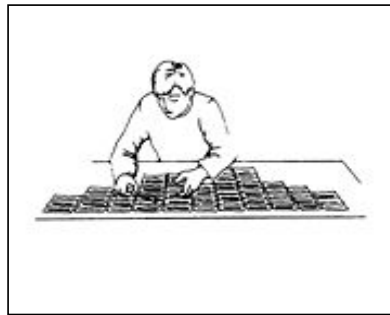


Figure 11: Q-sorting process (Stenner, 2006)

The figure shown above is a picture of a person Q- sorting with statement cards. There are also internet-based programs for doing the sorting electronically. No matter which way one collects the Q-sorts, there are some vital aspects of the sorting process that are important to explain and discuss. Below I will describe the most important aspects of the sorting process.

8.6.3.6 The forced-free distinction in Q-technique

Arguments favoring free- and over forced-distribution Q sorts have assumed that forcing leads to loss of important statistical information and interferes with interval properties, rendering Pearson's r inappropriate for analysis. Q sorts with identical item orderings but with varied distributions are shown to provide essentially the same correlations and factor structures when coefficients are computed using Spearman's r_s , Kendall's τ and Pearson's r , leading to the conclusion that the same results are obtained, despite distribution and whether interval or ordinal statistics are used (Brown, 1971, p.283).

One of the biggest criticisms against Q-methodology concerns the form that the sorting distribution takes. In a so-called forced sort condition (forced distribution procedure) that was suggested by Stephenson (1953) all participants have to sort the statements in the entire range and be true to the same distribution, which is usually quasi-normal distribution. To explain this further, a fixed number of items are required to be placed in a pattern, for example in my study, from +6 to -6. More explicitly, all 54 statements must be placed in the range from +6 to -6 (see figure 12 page 174).

In contrast, under so-called free sort conditions participants have the freedom to use as much of the range as they wish and they can follow their own impulses regarding the number of

items to be placed in each category, which results in differences in means and in standard deviation. In both the forced sort conditions, and free sort conditions, the Q-sorts are correlated, using Pearson's product-moment r , and factor analysed. (Brown, 1971)

According to Kvalsund (1998) the central critique is that participants might need more freedom in sorting the statements (items) in relation to their own subjectivity, which implies that they are not forced to sort the statements into a restricted number of piles in terms of the sorting pattern. For example, there might be a need for a participant who sorts the statements to place 5 statements in +6 instead of 2 statements. By not letting the participants choose for themselves how many statements they want to place in each interval (from +6 to -6), the critics claim that important information is lost.

Through his research, Brown (1971) demonstrated that most of the statistical information is contained in the item ordering and that in Q-methodological research factor types are more influenced by the ordering preferences⁵³ than by the distribution preferences. In other words, no matter what kind of distribution (forced or free sort condition) is applied, the statistical information would be the same because it is the pattern of statements that affect the factor loading and the factor pattern, and not the distribution preference. Also, Kvalsund (1998) emphasises that persons who are sorting the statements are capable of making decisions about which statements are most like them and most unlike them, and which statements should be placed in each interval according to the restricted amount of statements that should be placed in each pile.

Cottle and McKeown's (1980) conclusion was in the same direction as Brown's (1971): "*(...) the varying distributions of the Q-sort do not appear to affect factor structure, intercorrelations between Q-sorts are affected by changes in distribution shape*" (Cottle & McKeown, 1980, p. 62). Even though the intercorrelations are altered by free choice distribution, this is not looked upon as a concern, and that might be because no important statistical information is lost.

At the same time Cottle and McKeown (1980) emphasised that Q-methodology is an alternative to the traditional R-methodology, which means that it is more than a technique; it is a comprehensive approach to the study of behaviour. Therefore, the technical features should not overshadow the validity of the total methodology.

⁵³ Ordering preferences means which statement are like me or not like me

8.6.3.7 Condition of instructions

A condition of instruction is the guide for sorting the Q-sample. It tells the participants which perspective they are going to take when they sort. In some research studies, such as single case studies (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Stephenson, 1974) the same Q-sample is used with a variety of conditions of instruction. In this study there is one condition of instruction: *Sort the statements out from your subjective experience in making meaningful career choices.*

The condition of instruction, as mentioned above, is a tool for action. When a Q-sample of statements is given to the participants nothing meaningful can be done with the statements before the participants know what to do through some instructions, which can be looked upon as a frame of reference which directs their attention and actions (Kvalsund, 1998). To put it another way, without instructions the statements can be understood as propositions about persons' career without knowing what to do with them. The conditions of instruction help the participant know precisely what to do with the sample items within the constraints of the forced choice situation of sorting the actual sample of statements along a continuum from most agree to most disagree. Also the researcher needs these instructions for helping him or her to know what to do with the data and how to interpret them. It is through the conditions of instruction that the researcher also expects some behaviour to be communicated. However, the researcher is obliged not only to connect to the expected behaviour, but also in Q-methodology it is imperative to discover what actually happened, which means; what did the participants actually do with the sample of statements?

8.6.3.8 Laws and expectancy

Expectancy, as mentioned above, is important in Q-methodology research. In Q-methodology one wants the participants to use their intentional action. Kvalsund (1998) explains the importance in this way: "*Whether what actually happens is also what one intended is another matter which, however, never can eliminate the inherent human characteristic of purposeful agency. This is the reason why designing conditions of instruction is so important in Q-methodology*" (p. 315). This is based on the fact that persons' agency in life or in science needs some tools or designs to direct them. This is the function of the conditions of instruction. Kvalsund emphasises that in using known facts and theories and to integrate them into the conditional situation one can think that more than just anything can happen. Stephenson (1953) called these facts laws where certain communicated behaviour could be expected. He also warned against looking at these laws as absolute constructs; he wanted these laws, to look like rules or what he called frames of reference, where the communicated data could be transformed into meaningful data:

Q-sorting has the same pragmatism. Conditions of instructions for Q-sort are usually instructions based on known laws. Thus, there is a law of self-consistency (Taylor, 1953) that self-descriptions tend to be consistent over long periods of time; also James' law (some subjective condition are me, others only mine); Rogers' law (self and ideal tend to be congruent in adjusted situations), Freud's law (of identification-with someone), and so on, including Sullivan's (ut supra) (Stephenson, 1953a, 1974). When an individual performs a series of Q-sorts with respect to a behavioral segment, with a Q-sample from its concourse, each Q-sort can mediate one or another of these lawful conditions. No Q-sort, however, is predictable due to the uniqueness of behavioral segments, and their representation as psychological (subjective) events. Only after an experiment has been completed and the data subjected to a factor analysis is it possible to say which laws have been operated among many (Stephenson, 1982b, pp. 243-244)

According to Kvalsund (1998) the concreteness and particularity that are expressed in the quote above are not fully predictable in any operation; researchers must wait and see what will happen. However, some of the lawful behaviour will arise in relation to the intentional schema of the situation; even though it cannot fully predict the result. In this study one might expect that a participant would load on a factor, which is related to intrinsic motivation, subjective meaning construction and career as a call, but the result of the analysis can be that the participant loads on a different or orthogonal factor compared to this expectation. According to Stephenson (1953) it is only possible to interpret what the fact became either from some known theoretical clues or rules that one sees as an interpretative tool, or to search for other theories or rules that explains this actual happening. This process is called abductory logic, which will be explained towards the end of this methodological chapter.

8.6.3.8.1 Laws used in the conditions of instruction in this research project

The condition of instruction for this research project is: *Sort the statements out from your subjective experience in making meaningful career choices*, It was not constructed by any specific law such as Rogers' Law, James' Law or Freud's Law (Stephenson, 1982a). Therefore, I did not have any absolute constructs that I used as interpretation tools. The aim for constructing the condition of instruction was to reach the true experience of university graduates' meaningful career choices. I was most interested in capturing the participants' real experiences and discovering what they might be.

8.6.3.9 Scoring continuum pattern sheet

A scoring continuum distribution pattern sheet is given to the participants together with the sample of statements, instructions for sorting and the condition of instruction. This pattern sheet is a quasi-normal distribution. In my study it ranged from +6 until -6. This means that participants were instructed to rank the numbered statements from their subjective experience along a continuum from most agree (+6) at one end to most disagree (-6) at the other end. Figure 12 shows a scoring continuum pattern that a participant filled out in relation to his or her subjective experience regarding the statements.

	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10	13	17	1	25	2	3	52	38	27	5	15	6		
47	4	44	22	16	32	23	30	14	37	9	33	49		
	8	34	48	39	46	29	41	53	12	7	54			
		19	35	26	50	21	36	28	11	45				
				43	40	24	20	18						
					42	51	31							

Figure 12: A completed scoring continuum pattern

As mentioned above, in the Q-sorting process (the participants place the statement numbers in the scoring pattern sheet in relation to their experience of a phenomenon) the underlying dynamic is psychological significance. This means that statements at the extremes are most significant for the participants operating under the condition of instruction. The statements that are placed in the middle of the distribution are neutral. The further the statements move towards the middle of the distribution, the less meaning the statements have for the participants (Brown , 1980). Brown emphasises that this significance is important for both phenomenological and statistical reasons.

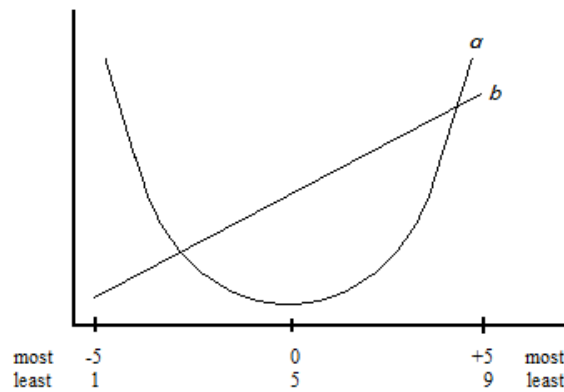


Figure 13: Psychological significance in Q-method, (Brown, 1980, p. 198)

Figure 13 visualises the importance of psychological significance. In the figure there is both a curve *a* and a line *b*. The line is related to R-methodology and the curve is related to Q-methodology. The curve is what is important in this circumstance. The curve shows how the psychological significance relates to the statements and the Q-sorting procedure. Experiences that are uncharacteristic of the persons are just as important as those that are characteristic.

Brown (1980) further highlights that persons are not neutral about experiences that carry negative contents, but on the other hand some experiences may mean very little to them so statements about those experiences will receive score about the zero area. Stephenson (1953) called this perspective 'choice equilibrium'. Even though the participants may be neutral (Brown, 1980) in terms of some experiences that are expressed in the statements it does not mean that there is no meaning in the statements. It rather says something about the neutral experience in relation to the distribution of what is characteristic and uncharacteristic which gives meaningful information. One must not forget that even though a statement may be categorised as having no meaningful information for some participants it still gives meaningful information in relation to the distribution scale for the same participants. No meaning has something to tell about psychological significance and that fact will be the ground for how to interpret zero factor scores meaningfully within the overall distribution of factor scores.

In this connection it is relevant to emphasise James' (1890) distinction between substantive and transitive meaning. In the psychological significance perspective, the participants first meet the statements in a frame of substantive meaning, where the statements are simply holding a content of meaning. In the moment, when the participants decide to Q-sort the statements according to the scoring sheet they integrate their subjectivity with the meaning content of the statements. The substantive meaning as a general subjective expression becomes transitive when the participants relate their feelings and thoughts to the statements in the evaluative choosing process. The statements become substantive again when they are placed in the continuum (on the Q-sorting sheet). In the end, the filled-out Q-sorting sheet represents the whole person experiencing a specific theme and moving into a substantive subjective view on the theme (Allgood, 1999).

After the participants' transitive meaning becomes explicit through the Q-sorting process, the factor analysis begins.

8.6.4 Factor Analysis

The factor analysis⁵⁴ process involves three levels:

- 1) The factor analysis, which is a statistical and technical procedure executed by a Q-method software data program⁵⁵ (Atkinson, 1992; Schmolck, 2002).

⁵⁴ I define factor analysis as the whole process from the statistical procedure until the factor interpretation is finished.

⁵⁵ There exist different software programs for Q-method analysis specifically. For example PCQ, PQ-method and Qanal.

- 2) The researcher's factor interpretation based on the written report, from the software program (PQ-method).
- 3) Interview with one or two persons who correlate on each factor.

8.6.4.1 Factor analytical data program process

The factor analysis data program (PQmethod) is specifically designed for Q-sort data (Atkinson, 1992; Schmolck, 2002). Each Q-sort in the research study is entered as raw data into the statistical program that executes the factor analysis. The program correlates each Q-sort with other Q-sorts. This intercorrelational matrix is then factor analysed. I will further explain the factor analytical process in terms of the most important features in the written report that is created by the software program in terms of my PhD project.

8.6.4.2 Factor analysis in Q-methodology- statistical procedure

Generally, factor analysis is a method for classifying variables. Charles Spearman is known as the inventor of factor analysis along with Cyril Bert, Godfrey Thomson and L.L. Thurstone (Brown, 1980). In Q-methodology the correlation and factoring of persons was practiced in the early development of factor theory, but it was through Stephenson's innovative thoughts that the separate methodology became possible. Stephenson, according to McKeown and Thomas (1988), "*(...) placed the "factoring of persons" on a more secure psychometric foundation by proposing a way out of the 'units of measurement' cul de sac: all observations in Q-technique are premised on a common unit of measurement, namely, 'self-significance'"*" (p. 48).

The variables in Q-methodology are the Q-sorts or the subjects. More precisely the factor analysis is a method for determining how persons have classified themselves in terms of the conditions of instruction. The persons, who are like-minded on a topic, will sort in a similar manner and they will end up on the same (Brown, 1980). When the participants' Q-sorts have been collected and then correlated, the statistics of the factoring process are the same as R-method applications. As earlier mentioned in this methodology chapter Q and R-methodology don't argue over statistical features such as how factor significance is determined, rotation, and so on. It is the deeper methodological consideration that they disagree with each other about and not the technical procedures.

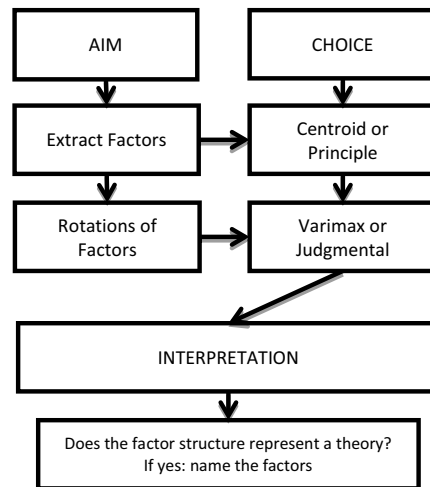


Figure 14: Factor analytical data program process

Figure 14 visualises the main procedures in the statistical process of achieving interpretable factors. In Q-methodology the first aim is to extract factors that are based on the Q-sorts. To extract the factors one has a choice of either choosing the Centroid or Principal Component method⁵⁶, in the PQmethod software. Once that decision has been made one can move over to the next aim of the statistical procedure, which is rotation of the factor extraction. In terms of the rotation process the researcher has to decide on Varimax or judgmental rotation. After the factor analytical data program process procedure is finished the interpretation of the statistics begins based on the written report PQmethod produces. The main question in the interpretation process is to name the factors in relation to the meaningful theory the factor or factors represent. The statistical procedure will be explained further before I explain the interpretation phase in depth.

8.6.4.2.1. Centroid or Principal Components factor extraction?

In the PQ-method software one can choose either Principal Components or the Centroid method for extracting the factors. According to McKeown and Thomas (1988), Stephenson preferred the Centroid method to alternative factoring techniques. However, it is possible to use Principal Components, which is a more mathematically precise factor system. The main difference is that the Centroid factor solution is inherently indeterminate and generative. This means that the Centroid method produces an infinite number of solutions any of which are mathematically correct. However, there is no point trying to extract as many factors as possible because it would be impossible to interpret. The aim is simple structure, where each factor has high loadings.

⁵⁶ I will explain the different methods for factor extraction in the next paragraph.

The Centroid method for factor extraction consists of two stages (Cureton & D'Agostino, 1983):

Thurstone adopted a two-step procedure. At the first step he obtained an arbitrary factor matrix, with orthogonal (uncorrelated) factors of decreasing magnitude. Because each factor had loadings smaller on the average than those of the preceding factor, the last factor would then be the last one whose loadings were larger than those one would expect to obtain as a result of the sampling errors and the errors of measurement of the variables. This step was termed the initial factoring step. The second step consisted in applying to the initial arbitrary factor matrix a linear transformation designed to yield interpretable factors. Because this transformation was equivalent to a rotation of the original axes in a geometric model, this step was termed as the rotational step (p. 33).

To proceed further with the factor extraction in terms of the Centroid method, one has to sum the correlations of a given variable with all the variables and divide that by the sum of all correlations of all variables with each other. This should give an estimate of the loadings. Another important aspect of the Centroid method is that some variables (Q-sorts) can be positively loaded and others negatively loaded on the same factor. In the Centroid method of extraction the aim is to add positively to make it possible to take out as much variance as one can with each new factor. Once the loadings are transformed into positive values, one has done a rotation of the factors (Cattell, 1978).

By contrast, Principal Components factor analysis produces only one mathematical solution, and can be looked upon as deterministic and reductionist. Said in other words, in the Centroid procedure there is more freedom in the factor analysis than in Principal Components. The advantage of choosing the Principal Component method is that it pulls out more of the variance of the earlier unrotated factors. The procedure of Principal Component method for factor extraction proceeds in this way:

(...) one takes the totals for the columns and multiplies each column (and corresponding row) by a fraction of this total, thus weighting each variable differently-giving "to him that hath". When this weighting and column totalling is repeated several times the result converges on a set of limiting values for the loadings. Residuals are then taken and the weighting process is repeated, taking out factor after factor, as in the Centroid process (Cattell, 1978, p. 29)

According to Brown (2008) there is an agreement that Principal Component analysis gives an exact solution, which means that it maximises the proportion of variance accounted for each factor, and it minimises the amount of residual variance after each extraction. However, it does not separate the unique from common variance, which then can mean that it is less accurate than the Centroid factor analysis in estimating the original correlations, which are based on what is common between Q-sorts. Further Brown emphasises that the uniqueness of Principal Component analysis is nullified if the extracted components are submitted to any

kind of rotation because the rotation will destroy the maximum variance character of the specific factors which was what made Principal Component analysis unique to start with.

Centroid factor analysis, which was introduced by Thurstone (Brown, 2008, p. 2):” *proceeds by directing a vector through the centre of gravity (centroid) of a cluster of data-points (...)*”.

The Centroid method tries to minimise the residuals like Principal Component analysis but for unweighted variables, which means that it only approximates a maximum variance solution. This is why the Centroid method is seen as indeterminate because it does not hit the target accurately, which means that there are a numerous number of solutions. This perspective of Centroid analysis was what attracted Stephenson and which most statistical psychologists rejected and instead relied on Principal Components. This freedom of the Centroid method provided a possibility of using it in many ways since it does not have precise features or precise rules that can be overlooked. Rotating the original Centroid factors to some new location is not an abuse of the statistical so-called rules. As mentioned above, Stephenson criticised factor analysis that was too abstract, statistical and insufficiently related to psychological needs. Stephenson’s aim was to develop a more pragmatic analysis. So in that way his argument for keeping the Centroid factor extraction perspective was practical and it was compatible with Kantor’s interbehaviorism, Pierce’s abductory logic, and theoretical rotation, which all are heavily pragmatic.

According to Brown (1980) it does not matter whether the specific factoring is Principal Components or Centroid. The factor structures in Principal Components and Centroid methods do not differ so much from each other. The point here is not to be concerned with whether they differ or not, but with the principles and products of factor analysis as they are applied in Q-studies and not with the statistical means by which these specific principles are influenced or these products realised. However, it is valuable to discuss what happens in factor analysis.

Further by showing the main principles in the statistical factor analytical part one can understand that there is no point in proceeding with both of the factor extraction methods. I tried out both of them, before I decided on whether I should choose Centroid or Principal Component method in the PQmethod software. The reason for not proceeding with both is that this is not a comparative study between the two methods, but the aim is to choose the method that is most reasonable for my type of research. In choosing the “right” method for my research I took both psychological and statistical considerations in the decision making process, and decided to use Principal Components Method, because Principal Components

Method and Centroid Method did not show any difference in statistical information. Therefore I chose what is mostly used in Q-study articles: The Principal Components method. Since both the methods gave me a clear picture of the factors and factor structure, I did not have any reason not to choose Principal Component analysis.

8.6.4.3 Correlations

In practice, factor analytical researchers do not know the number of factors or the factor loadings before doing the actual statistical procedure. However, it is possible to explore this through examining the correlations between the variables. This approach is often named *Exploratory Factor analysis* or *Data reduction perspective*.

(...) The researcher may not have any idea as to how many underlying dimensions there are for the given data. Therefore, factor analysis may be used as an expedient way of ascertaining the minimum number of hypothetical factors that can account for the observed covariation, and as means of exploring the data for possible data reduction (Kim & Mueller, 1978, p. 9).

So in this way, the correlation between the variables (Q-sorts) contributes to the reduction of data in an exploratory way.

The first result of the correlation in the PQmethod software is an unrotated correlation matrix of each Q-sort with the factor in question. The factor analysis is usually performed on matrices of correlations in an attempt to simplify them. Before the Q-methodological factor analysis can be understood it is essential to explain the logic of correlation matrix.

8.6.4.3.1 Correlation matrices

The unrotated correlation matrix that the PQmethod program produces (see appendix 1) does not actually give any meaning to the researcher apart from the eigenvalues and explanatory variance, but it is the starting point for the factor analysis in searching for significant factors. To determine whether a factor is significant or not is not a straight-forward process (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The variation of statistical and theoretical criteria can be used in the determination of significant factors. Eigenvalues and explanatory variance are the most known statistical criteria to use in this process. In statistical terms the most common criterion to use is the *eigenvalue* where a factor's significance is estimated by the sum of its squared factor loadings. Factors are seen as significant when they have *eigenvalues* higher than 1.00 and those with *eigenvalues* that are less than 1.00 are considered too weak to be granted much attention. One retains only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. This criterion was proposed by Kaiser (1958) and is probably the one that is most used to decide on factors significance.

Table 4: Eigenvalues

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Eigen value	19.7546	6.3392	4.6634	1.8843	1.5959	1.3992	1.3046	1.2096

The table above shows the eigenvalues from the unrotated correlation matrix that the PQmethod software produced from my empirical data. All the 8 unrotated factors have eigenvalues exceeding 1.00. In statistical terms one could say that all 8 factors are significant. However, as mentioned this is not the only criterion for searching for significant factors.

The explanatory variance for each factor and the total variance are also important to be aware of in the search for significant factors. In table 5 below the explanatory variance for the unrotated factors in my research are shown. One can see that factor 1 explains 40% of the total variance in all of the 8 factors, factor 2 explains 13 %, and factor 3 explains 10 % of the total variance and so on. In general statistics, this would mean that factor 1 is larger and more important than factor 2 and 3 in terms of the related variables. However, in Q-methodology explanatory variance is not so important. Often factor 1 has a higher percentage of explanatory variance, because most Q-sorts load on factor 1. This does not mean that the other factors are less important. This reasoning will be further explained when I present my rotated factor matrix.

Table 5: Explanatory variance in unrotated factor matrix produced by PQmethod software

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Explanatory variance	40	13	10	4	3	3	3	2

Q-methodology literature emphasises that researchers should exercise caution when such statistical criteria are used. Factors in Q-methodology that are statistically significant can contain no meaning. According to Brown (1980) it is possible to extract a factor where the *eigenvalue* is higher than 1.00 but where the factor loadings on the specific factor are not significant⁵⁷. It is also important to be aware that choosing factors only out from statistical criteria may lead researchers to overlook a factor that can hold a special theoretical interest. In summary, one can say that it is important to distinguish between the theoretical and statistical significance in determining the Q-factors. However, one needs to look at the statistics before one can explore the theoretical and psychological features. In terms of my project I did not pay so much attention to the eigenvalues and the explanatory variance, of choosing the correct

⁵⁷ I will come back to factor loadings and significant levels later in this method chapter.

number of significant factors. As long as the Eigenvalue was over 1.00 and the total variance was not too low I was satisfied, even though this was not my main statistical criterion for choosing significant factors. This means that I paid more attention to the rotated factor solution, with its loadings on correlations between the factors in relation to my research question, purpose, theory and concourse. In this way I took care of the emphasis on theoretical considerations rather than only highlighting the statistical criteria. Furthermore, McKeown and Thomas (1988) say that common sense is the best guide when one is deciding on the importance of the factors, which is their contextual significance in relation to the problems, purposes and theoretical considerations in the research project.

8.6.4.4 Rotation

To obtain interpretable factors it is necessary to get a best estimate of the factors in terms of a weighted average of the Q-sorts (their loadings) on the different factors. One gets that by rotating the factors using Varimax or judgmental rotation in the PQmethod software. The Varimax method of orthogonal rotation is the one that is most used in Q-methodology for achieving interpretable factors (simple structure).

The purpose is to maximise the purity of saturation of as many variates (Q-sorts) as possible on one or the other of the m factors extracted initially. Simple structure enhances orthogonality if the data sustain it – since, in the optimum case, Q-sorts will have high loadings on one factor with near-zero loadings on the other(s). Simple structure enhances interpretation insofar as factor-types bear a fairly direct correspondence to ‘known quantities’ – that is, actual Q-sorts or traits in R – with amount of “muddling” due to mixed and no cases being held to a minimum (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 52).

The goal in factor analysis is to pick the simplest solution from the complexity of rotations. One of the most important things in achieving simple structure factors is that the factor loadings that correlate high on one factor correlate towards zero on the other factors. Mixed factor loadings⁵⁸ will make this process difficult. Also the higher the loading there is on the factors, the better rotation solution there is.

8.6.4.4.1 Varimax rotation

Kaiser (1958) developed the Varimax rotation that is considered the most popular method for rotating factors. Varimax rotation aims to achieve simple structure by keeping the factor axis orthogonal, which means that the factors are uncorrelated and that the communalities and the capability to reproduce the original correlation matrix are identical to the original factor analysis (Kline, 1994).

⁵⁸ Mixed factor loading means that the persons correlate on more than one factor, but don't load significantly on any one of the factors.

Orthogonal rotation is explained as:

Orthogonal rotation shifts the factors in the factor space maintaining 90 degrees angles of the factors to one another to achieve the best simple structure (...). In the theory, the results of an orthogonal rotation are likely to be replicated in future studies since there is less sampling error in the orthogonal rotation due to less capitalization on chance that would occur if more parameters were estimated, as is the case in oblique rotation (Keiffer, 1998, p. 13).

Orthogonal Varimax rotation aims to maximise the sum of the variances of square loadings in the factor matrix. This gives each factor loadings, which are either high or near zero. This procedure is applied to the squared loadings rather than the actual loadings. The squared loadings are standardised by dividing them by the sum of squares in the factor row. This makes the variables have the same weight in the factor solution (Kline, 1994).

This perspective on factor rotation makes the interpretation easier because:

(...) after a Varimax rotation, each original variable tends to be associated with one (or a small number) of factors, and each factor represents only a small number of variables. In addition, the factors can often be interpreted from the opposition of few variables with positive loadings to few variables with negative loadings. Formally Varimax searches for a rotation (i.e., a linear combination) of the original factors such that the variance of the loadings is maximised (Hervé, 2003, p. 3).

Additionally, it is important to highlight that often Principal Component factor analysis is chosen together with Varimax rotation in processing the Q analysis. But it is possible to choose the Centroid factor analysis together with Varimax, and Principal Component with judgmental rotation. The argument for choosing Varimax together with Principal Component is for the precise mathematical solutions they produce, and the reason for combining the Centroid method with judgmental rotation is theoretical and takes into consideration the free abductory role of the researcher in terms of the data material. In addition the Varimax rotation can show that rotating a Q-sort can be very interesting out from theoretical assumptions.

I chose Varimax rotation together with the Principal Component method for extracting factors. The reason for that is because I had no theoretical reasons for proceeding with judgmental rotation. According to Brown (1980) depending on the research question there can be good reasons to abandon simple structure for judgmental rotation⁵⁹, by putting the factor axis into new positions so it is centred more on the actual data variables which the researcher chooses to get into focus. In this process the other factor loadings of other Q-sorts will change. Some will become more pure while others will be mixed, but the underlying relationships that are summarised in the correlation matrix will not change. Stephenson

⁵⁹ Judgmental rotation is based on the philosophical principles of Pierce (abductive logic), Brunswick (psychological cues), Kantor (interbehaviorism) and Polanyi (tacit knowledge). By not proceeding with judgmental rotation I chose not to go further into these philosophies, apart from Pierce's that I will discuss in terms of the interpretation of the factors.

(McKeown & Thomas, 1988) emphasised that the Centroid method is the first choice for judgmentally rotating factors, because it is indeterminate and frees the researcher to follow abductive logic, and to get closer to the research question from any number of different angles that theory might recommend. Also, when a particular Q-sort holds a special interest that emerges from the Varimax rotation it can be a mixed case in the overall factor matrix. In this case one can achieve a theoretical advantage in determining that Q-sort as a reference variate by using judgmental rotation to increase its loading on one factor. In my case I did not have any special interest nor did I have a special relationship with the informants, and therefore there was no theoretical reason to use judgmental rotation⁶⁰. In other words I had no reason for abandoning the simplest structure.

8.6.4.4.2 Rotated correlation matrix

After choosing the Principal Component method for extracting factors and, choosing Varimax rotation for rotating the factors, the PQmethod program produces a rotated correlation matrix. This matrix in terms of my project is shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Rotated correlation matrix from my research study

<i>Number</i>	<i>Q-sort</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Q-sort</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>
1	Kari	0.6814X	-0.0612	0.0076	26	Sture	0.7594X	0.1998	0.0504
2	Eva	0.7519X	-0.2021	-0.0411	27	Sunny	0.4245X	0.3492	0.1117
3	Julie	0.7038X	-0.1215	0.4687	28	Nina	0.6141X	0.1517	0.0340
4	Mette	0.5649X	0.2321	-0.0380	29	Dina	0.8516X	0.0677	0.0551
5	Sidsel	0.7631X	0.0716	-0.0104	30	Berit	0.8112X	0.0584	0.0480
6	Per	0.8005X	0.0594	0.1862	31	Karl	0.3549X	0.0906	0.2571
7	Eli	0.4716X	0.2010	-0.1013	32	Mary	0.6173X	0.0935	0.1369
8	Lill	0.7521X	0.0040	0.1183	33	Marcus	0.6669X	0.0761	0.0385
9	Kjersti	0.7628X	0.0310	-0.2216	34	Henry	0.6571X	-0.1775	0.2839
10	Peggy	0.7246X	-0.1369	0.0373	35	Pamela	0.8662X	-0.1260	0.1975
11	Vivian	0.6703X	-0.1333	-0.0321	36	Sofie	0.4113X	0.3059	0.1775
12	Elisabeth	0.6844X	0.1898	-0.0836	37	Sue	0.6756X	0.1546	0.3309
13	Mari	0.8182X	0.0965	-0.0059	38	Hillary	0.7630X	0.0551	0.1825
14	Maria	0.7014X	0.2830	0.2770	39	Are	0.0604	-0.0673	0.9672X
15	Anne	0.6214X	-0.1286	0.2166	40	Atle	0.0694	-0.0423	0.9702X

⁶⁰ I will not explain judgmental rotation any further because I chose not to proceed with that type of rotation in this project.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Q-sort</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Q-sort</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>
16	Torill	0.5820X	0.2042	-0.0829	41	Mina	0.0633	-0.1035	0.9594X
17	Linda	0.7444X	0.0549	-0.0605	42	Jane	0.0546	-0.0485	0.9769X
18	Ann	0.8423X	-0.0190	0.2278	43	Truls	0.0382	-0.0525	0.9462X
19	Camilla	0.7761X	-0.0687	0.0523	44	Alpha	-0.0309	0.8830X	-0.1212
20	Stefan	0.5896X	0.2266	0.2804	45	Delta	0.0258	0.9069X	-0.0782
21	Trude	0.7601X	0.1194	-0.0018	46	Bravo	0.1020	0.9287X	-0.1046
22	Snefrid	0.8264X	0.2079	0.1010	47	Charlie	-0.0409	0.9276X	0.0173
23	Hanna	0.8105X	0.2254	-0.0366	48	India	0.0517	0.9039X	0.0218
24	Lotta	0.8490X	0.1126	0.0369	49	Lima	0.1057	0.8925X	-0.0934
25	Erna	0.7391X	-0.1187	0.2387	<i>Sum</i>	<i>% expl Var</i>	39	12	12

The goal of rotation in factor analysis is: “(...) is to simplify a matrix of correlations such that they can be explained in terms of a few underlying factors” (Kline, 1994, p. 28). The table above shows the rotated correlation matrix, where it has become clear which respondents belong to which factor. The factor loading shows how much each variable or person correlates on each factor. In other words factor loadings are correlation coefficients, which indicate which Q-sort is similar or dissimilar to the complex factor array for that type (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In other words, the loading on the factor shows how much each sort is connected to the factor. Clearly defined factors have Q-sort loadings that are large on one factor and small on the other factors. This is called simple structure. This process is achieved by a further rotation, which in this case is conducted by Varimax rotation. When the rotation process is proceeds by choosing the simplest structure that is possible, then the number of factors is chosen. The matrix presents correlations in connection with X defining Q-sorts. One needs the factor analysis to clarify the content of the factors. In this way the factor analysis simplifies the interpretation process by extracting factors through focusing on typological segments of the subjective phenomenon shared by participants.

In deciding whether this factor solution was good enough, I considered the loadings on each factor, how many loading there were on each factor, the significance levels, the total explanatory variance for the 3 factors, the correlation between the factors, and some theoretical considerations. From the rotated correlation table (table 6) one can see that I have chosen a 3 factor solution, where 38 persons load on factor 1, 6 persons on factor 2, and 5 persons on factor 3. On factor 1 there are 19 Q-sorters that load over 0.70, and at the same time load towards zero on the other factors, which I consider very satisfying and significant

for interpreting the factor. On factor 2 all the defining loadings load over 0.80, which also is very satisfying and significant. On factor 3 all the Q-sorters load over 0.90. Since there are many high loadings on each factor, the factors are very clear, which means that the rotation process has achieved the simplest structure. Brown (1980) emphasises that there should be at least 3 loadings on each factor. In my empirical data there are more than 3 loadings on each factor, and therefore this criterion has also been met.

Another thing that is important in choosing the most satisfying rotated correlation matrix is the significance level of each factor loading (Brown, 1980). This can be calculated by the formula: $SE = 1/\sqrt{N}$ = the number of statements in the Q-sample. Since the career meaning Q-sample contained 54 statements the standard error of factor loadings is $SE = 1/\sqrt{54} = 0.136$, and by multiplying 0.136 with the standard error 2.58 the significant level for each factor loading is 0.35. Therefore all loading over 0.35 is significant at the .01 level. From the table all defining Q-sorters are significant at .01 levels. This is also very satisfying for the interpretation of the factors.

The total explanatory variance for this 3 factor solution is 63 %. Factor 1 has 39 %, and factors 2 and 3 have 12 % each. Firstly, this shows a good overall percentage and secondly, that factor 1 is stronger than the two other factors. The total explanatory variance is not such an important consideration in Q-methodology, but it shows which factors are the strongest. In terms of my 3 factor solution factor 1 has a higher percentage of explanatory variance than the other factors because it has more loadings, and not because it contains more information than the other factors. According to Brown (2010) it is possible that the factor with highest percentage of variance represents the minority of the general population from which the Q-sorters were selected. Further, the weakest factor in terms of the variance can represent the majority of the general population. This can be explained because in Q-methodology there is no representation on the respondent side, and therefore there is no guaranty about which view is represented most by the population. As mentioned earlier, one cannot generalise back to the population in Q-methodology.

Together with the actual factor loadings, the number of persons who define a factor, and the significance level for the loadings, the correlation between the factors is also an important consideration. The lower the correlation between the factors (relationship between the factors), the clearer the factors are. The software program produces a correlation table, which is shown below. The correlations between the 3 factors are very low (see table 7 below), which means that the factors are clear, and confirms that the three factor solution is a very

satisfactory solution for interpretation. Also it gives the certainty that these factors exist in the concourse. How strong the factors are in society is difficult to say, if not impossible, and it is not a goal to determine the strength of the factors in the concourse in Q-methodology. What would give meaning to my research was an important perspective when I made the decision of how many factors to choose, and not just statistical considerations. Since the 3 factor solution also split the P-set into 3 education backgrounds, I thought that would be very interesting in terms of my research goal.

Table 7: Correlation between factors in my research project

Factor	1	2	3
1	1.0000	0.0976	0.1720
2	0.0976	1.0000	-0.1168
3	0.1720	-0.1168	1.0000

8.6.4.5 Factors, z-scores and factor scores

In the PQmethod written report there are tables of the different factors and the Q-sorts connected to the different factors (see appendix 2-15). These tables give an overview of the factor scores, factor loadings and z scores in relation to the chosen number of factors, which in this connection are the 3 factors. The overview of the factor, distinguishing statements, consensus statements, factor scores, difference between the factors and z scores for each item (statements) are the most important elements for the interpretation of the factors. The question that can be raised is how does the PQMethod software calculate these different tables, and what decides the calculation of the different factors and the content of each factor.

As mentioned earlier, a factor is defined as a linear combination of variables, which in this connection are persons (Brown, 1980). In other words, a factor in a Q-factor analysis represents persons who correlate similarly in terms of sorting the statements. More explicitly, a Q-factor analysis calculates which Q-sort (person) represents which factor. One important thing is that the PQmethod software calculates which statements and Q-sorts are distinguishing and which statements express consensus. In this sense, factor weighting, calculation of z-scores and factor scores, and the standard error are important.

In determining which Q-sort represents which factor, factor weighting is important. Factor weighting reflects which Q-sorts are closer to a factor than other Q-sorts. In other words factor weighting is a technical matter for calculating which Q-sort represents the factor most. The formula for weighting the factor is expressed by Spearman (Brown, 1980, p. 242):

$$w = \frac{f}{1 - f^2}$$

McKeown and Thomas (1988, pp. 53-54) explain this formula in this way: “(...) where f is the factor loading and w its weight (...)”. Let us look at respondent 1 and 36 in factor 1 in my data material to find out the factor weight between those two Q-subjects. In my data material for respondent 1 $f=0.6814$, and the factor weight is 1.2719, and for respondent 36 $f=0.4113$, and the factor weight is 0.4907, and this implies that respondent 1 will count $1.2719/0.4907 = 2.59$ times much as respondent 36 in factor 1. In other words, the higher the factor loading is, the more it belongs to the factor. The procedure is that all Q-sorts are weighted in terms of the factor to which the Q-sort belongs.

After finding the factor weight for each Q-sort belonging to each factor, each original statement score is multiplied with the factor weight of the appropriate Q-sort. All the weighted scores for each statement are summed. The next step is to calculate the z-scores for each item (statement). The calculated z-scores make it possible to compare the scores for the same statements in all 3 factors (Brown, 1980). These z-scores for the items (statements) are transformed into factor scores (for example +6 to -6) for practical use. In terms of the transformation from z-scores to factor scores it is possible to select two statements (items) with the highest z-scores and give them values from +6, the three next items a value of +5 and so on. When this process of calculating z-scores and factor scores is completed; these scores can be compared and one can decide whether the Q-sample items (statements) are distinguishing, which implies that the statements are placed significantly differently in the factors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In terms of my data material this means which statements are distinguishing in factors 1, 2 and 3.

To be able to determine if factor scores in the different factors are significantly different, the PQ method program calculates the error of each score and integrates these into the calculation of standard error of difference between factors in terms of the given statement⁶¹ (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). “*Under these conditions, difference scores are expected to follow a normal curve so that we will be willing to accept as significantly different ($p < 0.01$) those scores that differ by an amount in excess of 2.58*” (Brown, 1980, p. 245). Since the issue of reliability is involved in determining the standard error for the factor scores, calculation of the factor reliability has to be estimated before identifying the distinguishing statements (items). The lower the error is the higher is the factor reliability⁶².

⁶¹ For more information about the formula and estimation of standard error and standard error of difference see Brown (1980): page 244-247.

⁶² For more information about the estimation of factor reliability see Brown (1980): page 244.

All these calculations are taken into consideration when the PQmethod software estimates and produces the different tables for the factors in terms what items are distinguishing and what items show consensus among the factors. In others words, when the weighted factors are calculated, the program also calculates the average factor score for each factor in terms of how the statements have been Q-sorted. In table 8 below I present a selected overview of some statements and their related z-scores and factor scores in terms of the three factors. The whole overview is presented in appendix 7, 8, 9 and 11.

Table 8: Statements related to Z-scores in terms of their factors

No.	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
		z-score	Factor score	z-score	Factor score	z-score	Factor score
10	Having a meaningful career	1.699	6	0.949	2	1.631	5
33	I am an agent in my life	1.526	6	-0.127	-1	0.314	1
43	I value success as something that is not about success	1.524	5	-0.105	0	1.143	4
6	The culture that I am surrounded by	-0.373	-1	-0.426	-2	0.701	2
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-0.399	-1	1.409	5	-0.702	-6
54	My experience of my competence	-0.734	-2	1.457	5	-0.052	0
11	My former experience in life	-0.776	-2	-1.631	-5	-1.684	-6
4	When I choose the road	-0.842	-2	0.769	2	0.203	1
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	1.123	3	-0.635	-2	0.845	3

In most research applications the factor interpretation has its basis in factor loadings. In Q-methodology the factor interpretations are based on the factor scores. The main issue is to produce a *factor array* or a Q-sort model, one for each factor in which the scores range from +6 to -6 (in my study). Below one can see a Q-sort model for each factor (figure 15, 16, 17) with the statements that contribute to defining the factors. The models are based on the tables on factor arrays for each factor and the tables that show us an overview of the distinguishing⁶³ statements in each factor, which the PQ-method program produces (Appendix 11, 12, 13, 14).

⁶³ Distinguishing statements are the statements that define the factor. Each factor has distinguishing statements that are different for each factor.

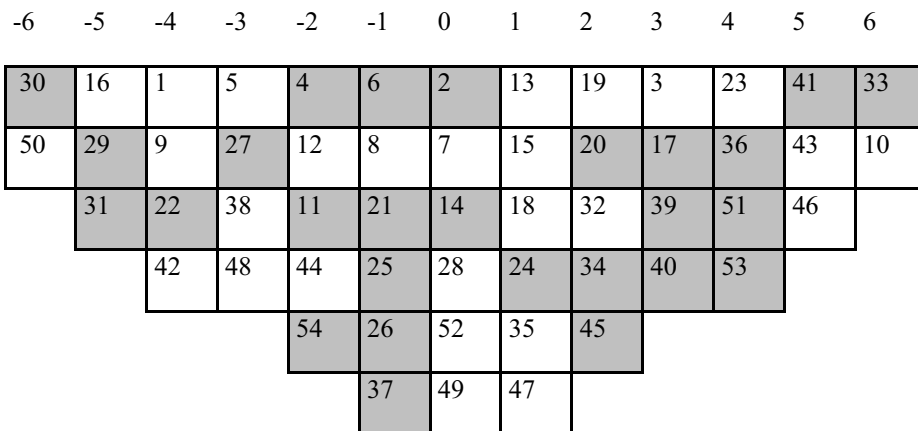


Figure 15: Factor structure for factor 1: Existential meaning.
 (The grey cells indicate distinguishing statements for the factor)

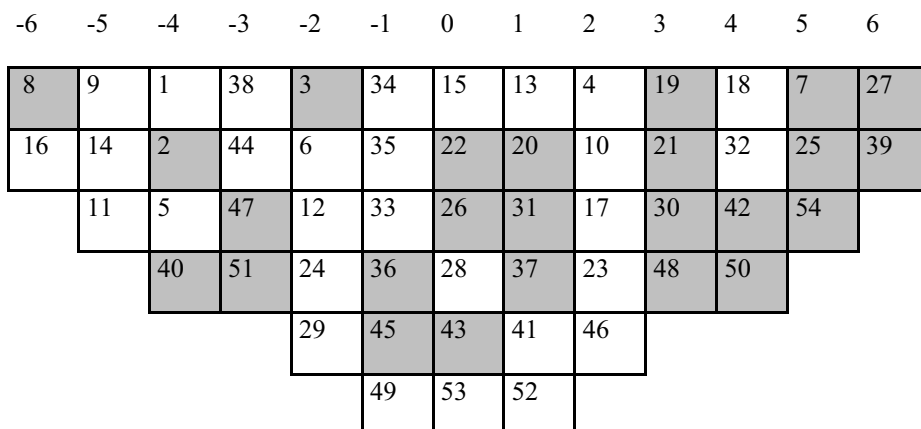


Figure 16: Factor structure for factor 2: Relational meaning.
 (The grey cells indicate distinguishing statements for the factor)

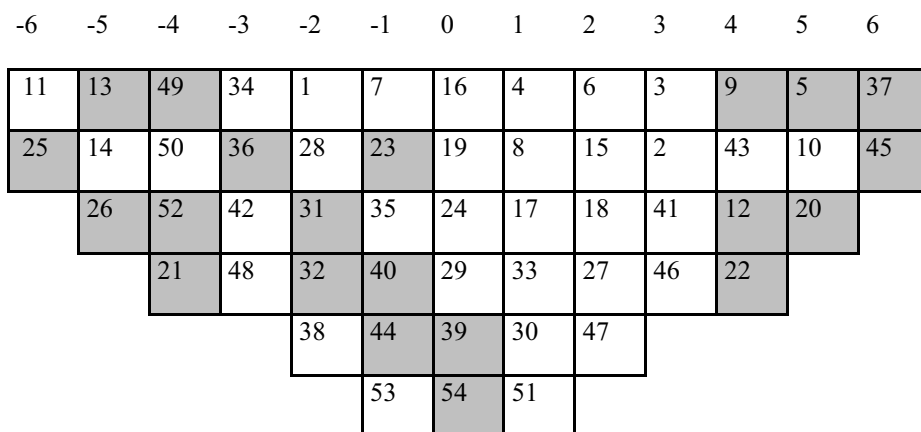


Figure 17: Factor structure for factor 3: Career success.
 (The grey cells indicate distinguishing statements for the factor)

The next step in getting to know my factors is the interpretation of the Q-sort models presented above. So far I have explained and discussed what happens in the PQ-method software data program process that produces a written report in the end. The report from the data program is the foundation for the factor interpretation. I will further go into depth about how to interpret the factors based on the Q-sort model for each factor.

8.6.4.6 Factor interpretation

In Q-methodology the factors have to be interpreted. Stephenson (1983) calls this process *ars explicandi* and *ars intelligentia*, which mean explication and understanding. The factor theory in Q-methodology is clearly analytical and explicatory in its form. However, when the factors are going to be interpreted, meanings are in focus and these are the specific understandings connected to the factors. Stephenson acknowledges that the concept of understanding is a diffuse term. Having this in mind, understanding factors is a complex matter.

Factor interpretation in Q-methodology studies is applied through examining the statements that describe the factor (Brown, 1980). The abduction principle is practiced during the interpretation of the factors. The requirement is not based on logic but on the discovery of behavioural operations, which gives security in that the concepts are related to the phenomenon that one is investigating. This operant perspective keeps close to the facts by basing concepts upon evident behaviour. The operant definition of a factor is not necessarily defined as *a-priori*, but in terms of those behaviours, values and preferences that result in the pattern of the total array of statements.

There is no set strategy for interpreting the behaviour, values and preferences in the factors; it depends on what the researcher is trying to accomplish. However, one has to pay careful attention when interpreting the factors. Stephenson (1983) emphasised that one has to focus on the theory that Q-methodology deals with, for example, feeling, otherwise the interpretations can be misleading. Feelings are unique and subjective to each of the participants, but if one can manage to grasp what the participants mean, then the researcher can ask questions about their social implications:

The beginnings, however, are in *feeling*, a common element running through a factor from one end of it to the other, in such a way that the statements of the Q- sample arrange themselves in a perfect order, each statement in its appropriate place, like pieces of a jig saw puzzle fitted neatly together. This may seem impossible, given the random nature of the statements. Yet when one sees it, it is evident that the statements, like words shift their meanings in factors, in company with those around them. The factors have to be substantial, their concourse comprehensive (p. 94).

Peirce's law of mind is the main perspective behind this understanding; new meanings form in feelings. So in this way feeling is the raw material of mind. The law of affectability is the basis for this thinking about how new ideas form from the concourse by the confluence of feeling that is the basis for the factor interpretation.

As mentioned above, the statements' correlations with the participants are the most interesting in Q-methodology. The factor analysis report tells the researcher how many factors there are, the distinguishing statements for each factor and the consensus statements among the factors. This data helps the researcher interpret the factors. The numbers of factors are dependent on how the participants sorted the statements and each factor expresses a common perspective or view held by the Q-sorters who represent the factor. The goal for the factor interpretation is to find out what these perspectives or views are (Brown, 1980).

To investigate what meaning the factors contain, one uses the report explicitly, by focusing on the tables: factor arrays, distinguishing statements and consensus statements (Appendix 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15). In the end one can, if needed, complete the interpretation process with interviews.

8.6.4.6.1 Interviews

After interpreting the statistics, one can interview one or two persons who represent each factor. According to Brown (1980) interviewing one or more participants in Q studies is often overlooked. The interview gives the participant an opportunity to further explain his or her ranking of the statements. The researcher has an opportunity to clarify points, which may be unclear. This interview also provides an opportunity for the researcher to test out his or her interpretation of the factors, and see if the participant agrees with the interpretation. Usually the participants who correlate highest in each factor are selected to be interviewed. The participants' subjectivity has the highest value in Q-methodology, and that is why the interview and dialogue can be an important part of the research study (Brown, 1980), especially if one is uncertain about one's interpretation. I chose to interview participants from each factor. The reason for that is that even though the factors became very clear to me, I wanted to get a more in-depth understanding of the factors and how the participants reflected on sorting the statements. In my evaluation of whether to interview or not I emphasised that even though the distinct differences were so clear to me and I was quite sure of my interpretation I wanted more information about the context in which they were sorted.

8.6.5 Summary

So far I have mentioned the significant parts in the factor analytical process, which is the basis for the factor interpretation. As mentioned above, after collecting the data by having the participants to sort the sample of statements guided by the condition of instruction and filling in the scoring continuum sheet, one punches the data into the PQmethod software (Schmolck, 2002). The researcher goes through an evaluative process that ends with a decision about how many factors one thinks to choose. Then the software writes out a report in which all the statistical information is presented. The most interesting information in the research report are the participants who define the factors, the data matrix, correlation, factor loading and factor scores, the distinguishing statements, and the consensus statements that describe the different factors. Before I present the interpretation of the factors, I will discuss the most vital approach or perspective in Q-methodology, namely the principle of abduction. This principle is the basis for the interpretation phase of a Q-methodological research.

8.7 Abduction

I have mentioned the principle of abduction in terms of judgmental rotation, but the principle is not only directed towards that specific type of rotation; the whole methodology is abductive.

Abduction is a critical thinking process for looking for or discovering a pattern in a phenomenon and suggesting a hypothesis (Pierce, 1878)⁶⁴. Where deduction explicates and induction verifies, abduction creates hypotheses. For example in my project about meaning and meaning construction in career choices I am interested in discovering possible patterns or hypotheses about persons meaning in making career choices. So in this way, I have an abductive role, and the abductive process involves putting my mind into the minds of the Q-sorting participants. It is a process of discovering a synthesis of meaning (Stephenson, 1953) about how my participants experience their meaning construction in relation to career choices, and the desired outcome is to acquire insights into the concourse.

Analysing the data is a process of giving meaning to each part of the data as it stands as a fact (Kvalsund, 1998). "Facts" are the information about what happened and are the end result of a sorting and scoring process. In this process different kinds of understandings are in transition: How did one reach a conclusion? What does the fact mean? In Q-methodology the researcher

⁶⁴ Pierce's article "How to make our ideas clear" in *Popular Science Monthly* has been impossible to obtain. He is constantly referred to in current articles and books about abduction and Q-methodology, for example Stephenson (1953) that I have used in this dissertation.

investigates the facts of factor scores that are related to the participants' opinions. The Q-sorter reacts to a set of statements from the stimulus of the condition of instruction. Kvalsund calls this the intentional schema where the participants describe themselves through the statements or through other types of instructions in which for example, they describe who they would like to be. This process is a form of intentionality that means that the participants know from the instructions what to do with the statements and they sort accordingly.

The process of sorting the statements in Q-methodology includes persons' reality; their subjectivity, which is their thoughts and feelings (Kvalsund (1998). It is the participants' subjectivity that is made explicit in the Q-sorting, which can be seen as a form of agency. In the process of trying to understand this agency one must include the underlying principles in the action process, which is related to the understanding of the process itself as well as to the end product. Kvalsund sees this process in relation to the gestalt principle of figure-ground where each element obtains its meaning and position in relation to the self. It is well known in Q-methodological research that the original meaning of the statements that are categorically determined in the analytic mode through the Fisher balance block design will change. The meanings change in relation to the conditions of instruction and what is in figure and background for the participants in the actional movement of comparing statements and relating them to their selves.

Ambiguous statements particularly have this nature. They seem to have the power to move thoughts as well as feelings and thereby understanding into a transitive mode changing their substance, a transformation into new and different meanings, opening up for the possibilities of new substantiality as well (Stephenson 1985, p. 521). The end has the possibility to become something wholly different than the beginning (Kvalsund, 1998, p. 324).

Stephenson emphasised this gestalt process when he underlined the possibility of discovering something new in the factor scores that is different from what the researcher might have expected in the construction of the design categories. The whole idea is to reveal something new, which means to discover something that could not be discovered initially. This field of discovery emerges through operant factors. Stephenson (1953) refers to William James (1890) in relation to this process; specifically the substantial and the transitional parts of a statement. Both these aforementioned parts are included in Q-methodology by the structure of the design and through the process of the sorting and the factor analysis.

In summary, researchers can have theoretical expectations of what the end product will look like and contain, but the inclusion of feeling and thoughts in the wholeness of the sorting and scoring process, can change the substance of the end product in a different direction.

8.7.1 The logic of abduction

8.7.1.1 *Q-methodology and Newton's fifth rule*

Everyone in the scientific world has probably heard about Newton's four rules of reasoning, which is the methodological foundation for modern science. The four rules support hypothesis testing for structural information and the condition of testability and falsification. Newton's fifth rule was discovered "sleeping" among his papers (Stephenson, 1979).

Rule V: These things which neither can be demonstrated from the phenomena nor follow from them by argument of induction, I hold as hypotheses. And such hypotheses, namely thematic hypothesis, have a place in natural philosophy, as they do in all creative work. (p. 354).

Charles Pierce (Stephenson, 1979) introduced the question: "Where does the hypothesis fundamentally arise?", and this question can be supported by Newton's fifth rule. Stephenson suggested that the fifth rule was an attempt to deal with the induction of new hypotheses and that Q-methodology solves this problem. Also Q-methodology and the problem of induction can be described as what Pierce (1878) called abductive methodology, as explained below.

Including the fifth rule in the methodological foundations Newton acknowledged the subjectivity in constructing new knowledge about a phenomenon, and that in some cases it is impossible to predict what the results of the rule may be in a strictly objective sense. As we know, this is not a difficulty in terms of Q-methodology and its technique in which it is possible to transform all subjectivity into an operant factor structure, which provides a basic theory of consciousness. In other words the fifth rule contributes to the methodological and philosophical foundations of Q-methodology by emphasising that it is possible to discover hypotheses after the experiment. What Q-methodology accomplishes in terms of Newton's fifth rule is that it gives the researcher a large number of hypotheses (where the factors and the statements of the Q-sample are tested,) that needs the inductive act of the researcher who has to understand what the structure implies. In this way all meaning is therefore empirically grounded. I will further discuss the logic of abduction, which can be said to have its basis in Newton's fifth rule.

As noted above, Stephenson (1972) explains the logic of abduction by distinguishing the concepts that he called "explaining metaphysic" and the "understanding metaphysic". The former relates to the theoretical structure of the Fisher balance block design, which is an analytic process of making the theoretical truths logical.

Kvalsund (1998, p. 325) explains the analytical process in this way:

The meaning of analytical is as follows; the truth has its power in terms of the linguistic-logic construction alone. The premise and the conclusion acquire their meaning from within their own closed system, and are as logics not dependent for their truth upon the contingencies of the empirical or practical world, which is determined by its synthetic nature. This is the nature of the ideal world, or the world of ideas as they are constructed in theory.

Stephenson (1953) highlights this assumption by stating that testing a theory in a Q-methodological approach as an explanatory force is to introduce analysis of variance, which means that its analysis is only important in the relation between the independent variables or effects in the design and the orthogonal factor structure, which is also called the dependent variables. In this way the nature of the ideal world is expressed by the prior logic or theory. Stephenson also underlined that there is no room for alternative explanations or understandings in this type of hypothetical deductive reasoning system. Kvalsund expresses the principle of explanatory analytic logic operating in Q-methodology as follows:

The beginning and the end are the same – the only difference is the systematic distribution of the theoretical variance in its real life “imposed” manner, which is the dependent variable. The interest in the “explaining metaphysics” is not the only one, and perhaps not even the primary one in Q-methodology although it is necessary for the abductive logic to operate (p. 325).

In taking up the difference between R-methodology and Q-methodology again there is a main difference within the abduction context: in R-methodology, when the distributed variance cannot be accounted for by the hypothesis one has to start from the beginning again to find better theories and hypotheses. This is not the case in Q-methodology. The new hypothesis can be discovered by the logic of abduction. The concept of “understanding metaphysic” goes beyond the beginning hypothesis as the only possible way of obtaining the meaning of the operant factors. The factors in Q-methodology speak their own language in a surprising way.

Through the Q-sorting process persons are forced out of their theoretical or logical modes into the understanding mode. As a researcher one has to try to understand how the factor scores disclose the participants’ perspective out from the statements that have been sorted as meaningful. In interpreting the factor scores one is dependent on the design and the participants’ feelings, the conditions of instruction and the comparison with other statements in the factor arrays that shed light on each function of the statement in its context, pointing to a complex system of interaction. Brown (1980) stresses that the participants in Q-methodology research switch between the statements and their possible meanings before deciding each position in relation to the whole; meanwhile comparing them to all the other statements from the perspective of the condition of instruction. In the Q-methodology factor

analysis the results or the facts of the factor scores are interdependent of the other factor scores as well as the intention and the attention of the participant who sorts.

This gestalt figure-ground exchange comes from the evaluative process of the Q-sorter, the sentences in relation to the design and the logic of the theory in process. This process is, according to Kvalsund (1998), synthetic and not analytic and in this way this type of factor analysis is interdependent in relation to interpretation and not exclusive as it would be in analysis of variance. The “explanation metaphysic” has a tendency to be reductive while the “understanding metaphysic” opens up to other possible solutions. In this way the logic of abduction is seen in the context of discovery and not in the traditional R-methodological context of verification. This does not mean that one should not see the connection between abduction, deduction and induction. The relation between abduction, induction and deduction is discussed below in relation to Q-methodology.

8.7.1.2 Deduction, induction and abduction

Deduction in research is often related to quantitative research where theory is used to make a specific prediction (Heppner, Kivilighan, & Wampold, 1999). Ottens, Shank and Long (1995) explain the deductive argument as following:

(...) (a) any A is a B, (b) C is an A, (c) therefore C is a B. We rewrite is as follows: (a) it is a (Rule) that ‘any A is a B,’ (b) it is the (Case) that ‘C is an A,’ therefore it is a necessary (Result) that ‘C is a B.’ (p 203)

In relation to the constructed Fisher balanced block design in this research project there is a rule that any statement “A” within the category of “adf” contains the portion of intentionality/human agency “B” in it that cannot belong to the category of “bef”, because that category includes human agency but not intentionality (Kvalsund, 1998). From the theory part one can see that the rule provides the means for detecting from the text that statement “C” is also an “A” because it also expresses intentional human agency among other things. From this one can conclude that as a result “C” is a “B”. The logic helps one to derive cases from the rule and one can see this application functioning in the hypothetic deductive reasoning.

Inductive reasoning is often seen in relation to qualitative methodology (Heppner, Kivilighan, & Wampold, 1999). Inductive logic can be as follows:

(...) (a) it is the (Case) that ‘C is an A,’ (b) as the (Result) of observations, we see that ‘C is B,’ (c) therefore there is a certain probability that the (Rule) ‘Any A is B’ is true (Ottens, Shank, & Long, 1995, p. 203).

According to Kvalsund (1998) the latter example is a reverse of the former. The expectation is from the case to the rule that any statement is an “A” when the theory of intentionality and

human agency is true. However, in abduction one has to relate to the unexpected result where there is no specific rule about how to determine and search for a meaningful outcome. In that sense the investigator has to work hard to discover a pattern that explains the puzzle and the confusion:

(...) (a) as the (Result) of observation, we have the strange, puzzling, or nonmeaningful observation that “C is a B”; (b) But if we had the (Rule) that “Any A is B”, then our observation becomes ordinary and plausible, because it can be hypothesized to be a meaningful (Case) of “C is an A (Ottens, Shank, & Long, 1995, p. 204).

Kvalsund (1998) uses the quote above to explain the abductive principles in relation to hypotheses and transitive statements. When it is not possible to make use of deduction from a known rule the researcher can find alternative meanings that might also include rules that are more precise and synthetic. In the logic of abduction it is easier to find alternative hypotheses than in the logic of deduction. As previously mentioned, having an abductive perspective on science opens up to different solutions, meanings, and rules, while in deduction the researcher has to start from the beginning again and construct new hypotheses to find deduced truths. In Q-methodology, when a participant positions a statement in the forced distribution which does not fit in with expectations from the research design, based on the initial theoretical framework, it challenges the logic of deduction. This implies that the research result cannot be explained by the rule constructed from the theoretical point of view, or the researcher’s point of view in the beginning of the design construction, and therefore one has to look for new theories, perspectives or hypotheses (Kvalsund, 1998).

For example, looking at the categories “adf” and “bdf”, a specific statement “adf” can become a “bdf” in terms of how a participant interprets it, which can be very surprising for the researcher. However, when one goes more in-depth into this specific Q-sort the researcher can discover a rule, for example, that all “adf” statements for a specific participant have a tendency to become “bdf”, for instance, because of lack of awareness. The researcher should check out if this specific rule is a governing principle for this sorter thus changing the statement from “adf” to “bdf”. If this was confirmed one could rewrite the initial rule such as if there is a lack of awareness then all “adf” are transformed into “bdf” for this participant. If this proposition is true for that participant it might be hypothesised for all participants who lack this awareness (Kvalsund, 1998).

This example is an explanation of abductive logic in practice. This happens in the factor interpretation in Q-methodology and implies that abduction is a type of context, and that the factor analysis is a tool used for the analysis of facts that are discovered in the research.

8.9 Summary

As a short summary one can say that Q-methodology offers a perspective on human subjectivity, which combines many quantitative and qualitative aspects as well as modern and post-modern approaches to research. Both the participants' inner experience about a theme and their feeling relation to the Q-sort statements become conscious, resulting in important knowledge about the quality of the theme and the subjective phenomenon that are measured and investigated.

In this chapter I have argued for using Q-methodology in terms of career research for developing knowledge in the field. I have given a brief introduction to Q-methodology as a scientific methodology for investigating persons' subjectivity, discussed the difference between Q- methodology and R-methodology, and related the basic elements in Q-methodology to my project. In relating the basic elements to my research, I have already started the interpretation phase. In the next chapter I will extend my presentation of the factors and interpret them in terms of possible meanings.

9. Factor presentation and interpretation

9.1 Introduction

The aim for this research is to study university graduates subjective experience of making career choices in relation to career meaning and career meaning construction. As mentioned in the introduction for this PhD thesis, I have constructed one main research question, and two secondary research questions that belong to the two main parts of this dissertation: the theory part about meaning and meaning construction in terms of persons' career and career choices, and the empirical parts where I aim to present empirical data based on the theory presentation and discussion. The research question that belongs to the empirical part of this dissertation is: *"What subjective factors can be significant in persons' career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices?"* This research question will be the tool and the guidance for the presentation and interpretation of the factors that emerged in my Q-methodological study.

In the previous chapter about Q-methodology, I presented the science of philosophy behind Q-methodology and the steps taken to conduct a Q-methodological study from the beginning to the end point, by showing examples from this study. In this chapter I will go more into depth into the statistical report that the PQmethod data program produced. This means that I will interpret and present the factors as reported by the data program. For the solution I chose, I will base my presentation and interpretation on the distinguishing statements (11, 12, 13, 14) for each factor, consensus statements (Appendix 15) for each factor, a comparison among the three factors, and interview with one participant on each factor. Choosing to interview a participant on each factor helped me understand the factors' picture in a more nuanced way, and also strengthened the validity of the factors that emerged. The goal for interviewing was to do a member-check of the factors, and to understand the paradoxes in the factors.

Since I presented an in-depth argument for my choices of a three factor solution in the methodological chapter, I will only give attention to the knowledge of subjectivity in terms of persons' career meaning construction in relation to career choices that exists in each factor. In other words I will concentrate on the qualitative content of the factors, and not so much the statistical part about how the factors emerged.

In terms of the statistical report, three factors emerged that were statistically and theoretically significant. I have chosen to call the factors 1.): Existential meaning, 2.): Relational meaning and 3.): Career success meaning. Further on in this chapter I will present the content of these factors. I am aware that the factors are only a perspective, but in presenting and interpreting

the factors I will refer to the persons in the factor, and the factor as a singular term. At the end of each factor presentation and interpretation I will look at the factor in terms of my experimental design, and see which cells are most represented in the factor. While this is said, I will not pay so much attention to the design, but it can give some perspectives that contribute to the interpretation phase. In the interpretation process I will have the abduction principle in the foreground and the design in the background.

9.2 Factor 1: Existential meaning

Of the 38 participants who loaded on factor 1, 33 were female, 6 were male. These individuals experience their career choices as a search for existential meaning. The emerging subjective pattern in this factor indicates: a belief in agency and freedom in relation to one's context in choosing meaningfully, career is more than a job; where the persons' career success is experienced as personal that means that it is only the person who can define what career success is about. The concepts of agency, freedom, career more than a job, and success as personal defined are emphasised as existential perspectives, therefore I chose to call this factor existential meaning. These themes function together in a cyclical interdependent manner. The themes for this factor will be presented below, based on the factor array, distinguishing statements (appendix 11, 12) and consensus statements (appendix 15). All interpretations were member-checked by a participant who defined the factor.

9.2.1 Agency and freedom together with others

Agency and freedom in relation to the persons' external environments and cultures as well as other persons are emphasised in this factor in terms of choosing a meaningful career. The persons who load on this factor have a strong belief in freedom and agency in deciding upon meaningful career choices. The statements that describe this theme are shown in table 9 below.

From the table below, especially statements 33 (+6⁶⁵) and 41(+5), show that their experience of agency and freedom is important for them. Other statements like 36 (+4), 17 (+3), and 40 (+3) also confirm the freedom and agency view by highlighting the "I": I consciously choose, I define career success and intuitively I know my heart path. Statement 3 (+3) acknowledges that the context influences, but it is still the persons' choice to choose something meaningful for them.

⁶⁵ The number in parenthesis refer to the statement's factor score.

Table 9: Statements that describe agency and freedom

Nr	Statement	Factor score
33.	I'm an agent in my life, my freedom to choose what I want to do in my career has been vital	+6
41.	I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake	+5
36.	I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others	+4
17.	I define career success as something more than climbing up the ladder, it means for me a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	+3
40.	Intuitively I know my heart's path and I'll follow it with great dedication	+3
3.	I am not reproduced of my culture, but I am aware that I am influenced by it, therefore choosing something meaningful to do is my choice	+3
47.	I am I and you are you. I can only listen to myself in terms of choosing a career: that gives me place to strive for doing something meaningful	+1
49.	I cannot control what the environment communicates about my competence	0
2.	The culture that I am surrounded by does not give me adequate information and knowledge about what is meaningful to choose in terms of my career	0
42.	I don't feel autonomous; the environment controls me in finding meaning in my career	-4
1.	I like the ideas of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	-4
16.	I don't feel that I have a "path with heart" and I feel helpless and alone	-5
50.	I act on what others believe in, which is success	-6
30.	When I choose a life partner, it will be with my career development in mind	-6

Statements 30 (-6), 50 (-6), 16 (-5), 42 (-4) and 1 (-4) that are placed on the minus side of this factor's Q-sort model confirm and emphasise the factor's belief in freedom and agency in persons' career and making meaningful career choices. Statement 30 (-6) that emphasises that their life partner is important in their career together with statements 33 and 41 that are placed on the positive side in this factor that emphasises agency and freedom, can imply that it is their choice only that fully explain how their career develops and their life partner has nothing to do with it, because they are free agents. Statement 50 (-6) that highlights other persons' beliefs confirms this factor's belief in their agency and freedom, since this statement is placed on the minus side. Statement 16 (-5) and 42 (-4) also confirm agency and freedom, because the persons don't feel alone or helpless and they don't experience that the environment controls them. Statement 1⁶⁶ (-4) also backs up the importance of persons' agency in making choices. This factor doesn't believe in taking career tests, it emphasises agency and control and not believing in suggestions from others as the truth for one in making meaningful career choices. Statement 47 (+1) that is placed in the factor's neutral zone emphasises the importance of the person making the career choice. The placement of this statement may

⁶⁶ Consensus statement among the three factors

imply that this factor presumes that the person who is going to choose makes the choice, and nobody else, and therefore this factor reacts indifferently to the statement; of course it is the person who is choosing could be a viewpoint of this factor. Statement 49(0) is also placed in the neutral zone and highlights the environment's control over the person's competence. This placement in relation to this factor's view of agency and freedom can imply that the environment's control has no meaning or goes into the background, because the persons are of course agents and free to construct their own view of their competence, the environment does not have control over the person. This indifference also becomes evident in terms of the placement of statement 2 (0) in the neutral zone. Statement 2 underlines that the culture does not give predicated information in terms of meaningful career choices. The reasoning for this placement could be that predicated information from the culture is not relevant for this factor. It is the persons, who are agents and free to predicate information that is meaningful for them. Even though this factor highlights agency and freedom, it does appreciate other persons' influence and their contexts in their meaningful career. The statements that describe this perspective are shown in table 10. Statement 36 (+4⁶⁷) and 53 (+4) emphasises the importance of other persons and cooperation with others in their work. This factor also emphasises a heart's path that includes other persons (39:+3). Statements on the minus side of this Q-sort model confirm this relational view (5, 44 and 11). Statement 5 (-3) highlights that relation and context seldom affects them in developing beliefs about themselves, which this factor to some extent disagrees with. This implies that they experience and believe that they are influenced both by others and the context. Statement 44 (-2) emphasises that others disturb their construction of career goals, which this factor to a certain extent disagrees with. This implies that statement 44 is in agreement with the positive side of this factor which highlighted agency and freedom, pointing to the fact that others do not disturb them in making career goals. They also emphasise that former experiences have influenced them to some extent (11: -2).

Though this factor acknowledges the influence of external relations in choosing meaningful career choices, there are some nuances in how external relations stimulate this factor. The most relational statements on the positive side of this factor's Q-sort model include the importance of other persons in their work activity (statements 36: +4 and 53: +4). However, most of the relational statements on the negative side of this factor include contextual, cultural and environmental influences in choosing meaningful (statements 44: -2, 11: -2 and 5: -3).

⁶⁷ The numbers in parenthesis refers to the statement number and factor score of that specific statement.

This could indicate that the persons that define this factor truly emphasise the importance of others in their working life where they act out their career, but in the process of constructing meaning into their career choices they don't emphasise others in contributing to make meaningful choices apart from acknowledging that their meaningful career includes others and to a little extent that they are influenced by others.

Since persons on this factor truly and deeply values agency and freedom in constructing meaning into their career choices, the acknowledgement of other relations influencing them as a part of their meaningful path while at the same time not experiencing others as a disturbing element in their career meaning construction phase could seem like a paradox. However, when one looks at the situation more closely, one can see that in the construction process the persons on this factor act independently but once they have made the choice, acknowledging others becomes stronger in their working life. How natural is this for a free agent? Being in relation to other persons or to a context can imply that persons must give up some of their agency and freedom, which this factor does not seem to be willing to do in their career meaning construction phase. What about when the person acts out their career in their work life where other persons are important for them, are they willing to let go of their strong value of agency and freedom? This can also indicate a fear of dependency in the career meaning construction phase and choosing process, by emphasising that others do not contribute to their meaningful choices. This seeming paradox will be addressed in the discussion.

Statements 13 (+1) and 8 (-1) that emphasise mutuality are placed in the neutral zone of this factor, which can seem at first glance a paradox, since the persons who define this factor experience the importance of others. However this factor primarily believes in agency and freedom, together with the importance of others. This can imply that this factor reacts indifferently to the concept of mutuality (statement 13) because first and foremost persons on this factor need their agency and freedom to choose meaningfully. In mutual relationships there is a need for letting go of some agency and freedom which this factor prizes highly. Statement 8 highlights that persons wish to believe in mutual relationships but they need to choose for themselves in terms of a meaningful career. The indifference to this statement could imply that persons don't see mutuality in relationships as important in choosing meaningfully. In addition, listening to others is not a theme for this factor; rather agency and freedom are foremost. Therefore the content of statement 13 is reacted to indifferently and placed in the neutral zone. This confirms that the persons in this factor value agency and

freedom. This implies that this factor confirms the value of independence, which is important to them in making meaningful career choices.

Table 10: Statements that describe the relational context

Nr	Statement	Factor score
36.	I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others	+4
53.	It's fun to work with others	+4
39.	My heart's path has many people on it	+3
13.	Through mutuality I am guided towards the right career for me	+1
8.	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships but I can't listen to others when it comes to choosing a meaningful career. I don't want to be affected by others	-1
44.	Opinions from other human beings are disturbing my attempt of making intentional goals to get a job	-2
11.	My former experiences in life such as school and leisure activities have not consciously affected my career choice.	-2
5.	My belief about my capabilities is rarely influenced by my relations, environment and my life context.	-3

9.2.2 Career more than just a job

Statements that describe this theme are shown in table 11. A career that is something more than a job is something that this factor emphasises as having great value (10 and 23). Statements 41(+5) and 51 (+4) emphasise together with statements 10(+6) and 23 (+4) a view of desire and self-determination as vital in choosing a meaningful career that is more than a job. Career as something more than a job is confirmed also on the negative side of the Q-sort model. Statements 29 (-5) and 27 (-3) emphasise payment and security as a motivation in one's career, which this factor does not agree with. This can be seen in connection to the positive side of the Q-sort model, where the factor emphasises that it is more a meaningful career than just a job. This factor has also a view of one's meaningful career as a heart's path that includes other people (39:+3 and 40:+3) even though this view is not so highlighted. Persons' view of their career that includes many people in it, confirms this factor's relational view. In acting out their career, the importance of others is significant, and acting out their career is more than just doing a job. Statement 6 (-1) and 7 (0) that are placed in the neutral zone confirms this factor's view of career as more than a job. This factor seems to react indifferently to the issue of security and survival in choosing meaningful. This means that this is not relevant for this factor, choosing a meaningful career is more than security and survival.

Table 11: Statements that describe career more than a job

Nr	Statement	Factor score
10.	Having a meaningful career means that I must look at it as more than a job	+6
41.	I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake	+5
23.	I don't like work for works sake, there must be more in life to motivate me	+4
51.	My past and present as well as projections of the future have shaped me in my striving for choosing a meaningful career that is based on self-determination and what can I do to experience success	+4
39.	My heart's path has many people on it	+3
40.	Intuitively I know my heart's path and I'll follow it with great dedication	+3
7.	Even though I am scared to take a job that doesn't fit my interests, I can imagine taking it in order to survive	0
6.	Having a job for the sake of a job is the first step in my needs hierarchy, when I have achieved that I have the freedom to choose whatever I want	-1
27.	I choose security in terms of pay an not insecurity in terms of a meaningful career	-3
29.	My aim is to earn a lot of money in my career, and that is only possible through god colleagues	-5

9.2.3 Personal success

Career success is in this factor valued highly in persons' meaningful career. In this factor a meaningful career is more than a job, where personal career success is important. Statements that describe this theme are shown in table 12. Statement 43 (+5) points to, success as something more than status and it is the persons' themselves who decide and act on what is successful. Statement 46 (+5) confirms this view by stating that experiencing success on one's own terms is important in relation to the organisation. Statement 17 (+3) highlights that career success is related to what the person wants and what the organisations wants, and not climbing up the career ladder. Therefore one could say that in this factor success is defined as personal.

Personal success is also reflected on the negative side. Statements 9 (-4), 22 (-4) and 12 (-2) that are placed on the negative side; all contain elements of climbing up the career ladder as a goal for achieving success. On the positive side of the Q-sort model career success was defined as something personal. The disagreement with the statements on the negative side, contributes to this factor's view about career success as not something to do with climbing up the career ladder, but the persons must define success in relation to their career context.

Table 12: Statements that describe personal success

Nr	Statement	Factor score
43.	I value success as something that is not about status, but something that is about my intentional acts and interests	+5
46.	To me having a meaningful career means job-satisfaction. For me being satisfied implies experiencing success on my own terms that also fits the organizations criteria for success and satisfaction	+5
17.	I define career success as something more than climbing up the ladder, it means for me a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	+3
12.	I love climbing up the ladder	-2
9.	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal for my career: and that is why I don't need any help from others, I only need intentional and conscious goals	-4
22.	Climbing up the ladder in an organization, and one day becoming the boss; is what gives me motivation and a belief of experiencing career success	-4

9.2.4 Experimental design

In terms of the experimental design, as reflected in the Q-sample structure, subjective meaning construction, intrinsic motivation and intentionality, and call and career as a psychological success is most representative for this factor.

9.2.5 Summary of factor 1

As a summary of factor 1, one can say that persons on this factor highlight agency and freedom in constructing meaning into their career choices, where an external context does not contribute to their meaning construction phase, yet at the same time other persons are a part of their meaningful career path. Others persons become especially important in acting out their career in their working life. A meaningful career in this factor is experienced as more than just a job; where career success must be personally defined in relation to the organisation.

9.3 Factor 2: Relational meaning

Six participants loaded on factor 2, 3 were male and 3 were female. These persons experience their career choices as a search for relational meaning. The emerging subjective pattern in factor 2 indicates a belief that relation and context are important for them in making meaningful career choices. Themes that are important in this factor are security and survival, relational and cultural meaning construction, relational career view, and external career success. This factor also emphasises that independent career choices are not relevant. These themes function in a cyclical, interdependent manner and not independently from each other. The themes will be described below, with its basis in the factor array for this factor, distinguishing statements (appendix 11, 13), consensus statements (appendix 15) and interview with a participant in this research.

9.3.1 Security, pay and survival

Statements that describe this theme are shown in table 13. This factor views security, pay and survival as important in persons' career (27: +6 and 7: +5). In an interview with a participant that loaded on this factor the importance of security, pay and survival was explained by emphasising the importance of what culture communicates: *Where I come from the most important need is survival and security. To be able to survive, I need an income so I can feed my family. Making sure my family survives and has food on the table is the most meaningful for me to do in my career*⁶⁸.

Table 13: Statements that describe security, pay and survival

Nr	Statement	Factor score
27.	I choose security in terms of pay and not insecurity in terms of a meaningful career	+6
7.	Even though I am scared to take a job that doesn't fit my interests, I can imagine taking it in order to survive	+5

9.3.2 Relational and cultural meaning construction

Relations and context are also important in this factor. Statements that describe this relational view in this factor are shown in table 14 below. It seems that this factor is aware of persons' life context (11:-5 and 5:-4), culture and environment (42:+4 and 2:-4) together with their relations (39:+6, 50:+4, 5:-4 and 8:-6) as having affected them in constructing what is meaningful for their career choices. This is evident in terms of their success (50:+4), belief about their competence (54:+5), their experienced autonomy (42:+4 and 54:+5), and their belief about their capabilities (5:-4).

⁶⁸ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main lines in the interview about the theme.

Table 14: Statements that describe relational and cultural career construction

Nr	Statement	Factor score
39.	My heart's path has many people on it	+6
54.	My experience of my competence and autonomy is seldom driven by my personality; not telling me much about what the right thing to do is	+5
25.	Sometimes what we daydream about in a career does not suit us at all	+5
50.	I act on what others believe in, which is success	+4
42.	I don't feel autonomous; the environment controls me in finding meaning in my career	+4
19.	My awareness about how my values have affected me in my career choices has been more helpful, than what my personality tells me	+3
2.	The culture that I am surrounded by does not give me adequate information and knowledge about what is meaningful to choose in terms of my career	-4
5.	My belief about my capabilities is rarely influenced by my relations, environment and my life context	-4
1.	I like the idea of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	-4
11.	My former experiences in life such as school and leisure activities have not consciously affected my career choice	-5
8.	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships but I can't listen to others when it comes to choosing a meaningful career. I don't want to be affected by others	-6

This relational view seems to trust the environment and other persons who are a part of that context in constructing their meaningful career, rather than their selves (39:+6, 50:+4 and 42:+4). Statement 8 that emphasises not listening to others in choosing a meaningful career is placed on -6, which implies together with the relational statements on the positive side that listening to others is a prerequisite for choosing a meaningful career. In statement 8 there is an element of mutuality. One could suspect that this factor also believes in mutuality, since statement 8 is placed in the -6 cell. I chose to ask the participant I was interviewing about mutuality and the response was: I never think about mutuality as something important. I think of my culture, family and friends as important for me in choosing and placing meaning in my career choices. When I think of mutuality now, maybe it is important for me, because I also hope others in my family and culture will listen to me when they are choosing a meaningful career. Even though I don't represent an independent thought I represent the culture, so do the others in my culture, so yes, maybe it is mutuality. But it is not what is in my foreground when I talk and reflect about a meaningful career, what is in foreground is what others say I should choose⁶⁹. The participant's perspective on mutuality can confirm why statement 13 (+1): "Through mutuality I am guided towards the right career for me" was placed in the

⁶⁹ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

neutral zone in this factor; probably because persons on this factor are not aware that their view of constructing career meaning and choosing meaningfully can indicate mutuality.

Statement 54 (+5) that highlights that competence and autonomy are rarely developed by one's personality, and they do not give persons directions about what to do is placed close to the positive relational statements (39:+6), 50:+4 and 42:+4), which can imply that the persons don't trust their personality regarding what to do, but rather the external environment. It is the external environment that drives their competence and autonomy. Statement 25 (+5) that highlights that one shouldn't always listen to daydreams is also placed close to these relational statements (39:+6, 50:+4 and 42:+4) on the positive side. This can imply that independent daydreaming is not what one should listen to; rather it is safer to listen to the context and other persons. Statement 19 (+3) alone tells us something about the importance of values in this factor and of not listening to one's personality. Seeing this statement together with the other relational statements in this factor (39:+6, 50:+4, 42:+4, 19:+3, 2:-4 and 8:-6), it seems that the value here is contextual, cultural and relational. This again confirms that this relational view lies deep within the persons loading on in this factor. Also statements 54 (+5) and 19 (+3) together confirm that persons' personalities do not help them much. Even though this factor experiences their meaning construction as relational, cultural and contextual they don't rely on career tests to suggest options for them (1⁷⁰:-4). This can imply that they have to make choices and reflect for themselves when they are taking the test. These choices and reflections aren't reliable if one sees this statement in relation to the other contextual and relational statements. In other words it seems that this factor is more dependent on the context and other persons in achieving a meaningful career. This could seem like a paradox since, career tests are often looked upon as an external assessment tool that comes with clear suggestions and answers of what to choose. This paradox will be taken up in the discussion about the factors.

An interview with a participant on this factor confirmed this interpretation, where the external context, culture, family and friends are very important to persons on this factor in constructing meaning into their career choices: what my culture says, what my family says, what my friends say is good to choose, I will probably choose. What is meaningful for my culture and close relations, I will choose. Because what they say is meaningful is meaningful for me in my career. What my personality tells me or my daydreaming tells me has no relevance. I am not sure if I am aware of what my personality tells me, because I have never

⁷⁰ Consensus statement between the factors

thought about my personality as something to be aware of in making career choices or finding meaning. I have been taught not to believe in daydreaming. What is important is the reality I live in and come from, which is my culture⁷¹.

9.3.3 Relational career view

The statements that describe this theme in the factor are shown in table 15. The persons' view of a meaningful career is also relational, where they emphasise the otherness (21:+3 and 30:+3). Looking at statement 21 (+3) in relation to the other relational elements in this factor can imply that doing something meaningful for others is more meaningful than what one's heart says. Statement 30 (+3) also highlights the otherness in terms of one's career, where the person's life partner is looked upon as important in their career development. Even though the persons don't emphasise what their hearts say, they feel that they have a path with heart (16:-6).

Statement 40 which emphasises intuition, heart's path and dedication is placed on -4 in the Q-sort model. This could seem like a paradox since this factor clearly emphasises a heart's path. This may imply that the content of statement 40 is defined in terms of independence. More specifically; a person's intuition, dedication and hearts path is important in a meaningful career. Independence in terms of intuition, dedication and hearts path is something this factor does not seem to indicate as important for experiencing a meaningful career. This factor has a strong indication that the persons' hearts path is relational, and not independent. Therefore, in this factor statement 40 is placed on the minus side of the Q-sort model. As a summary one could say that this factor emphasises is a path with heart that is relational, and not independent (16: -6 and 39: +6).

One of the participants in this study that loaded on this factor communicated a strong reaction to statements 21 and 40: Others know my heart's path and they are in my heart's path, therefore I will not follow my individual heart's path, but I will follow my heart's path that includes many people on it, like family, friends and culture. Sometimes my inner feeling says something different than what my family and cultures say, but where I come from, and what I have learned through my culture is that others that have much more experience than I do, therefore listening only to what my inner feeling says is not an option. Others know what is

⁷¹ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

best for me. I want to give something back to them, therefore choosing something that is meaningful for others is very important⁷².

This participant's reaction to the statements shows that the heart's path includes others, like persons, culture and environment that are valued in their career choice. Statements where the independent I comes through, will not be looked upon as valuable for the career choice or the meaning construction of career.

Table 15: Statements that describe relational career view

Nr	Statement	Factor score
39.	My hearts path has many people on it	+6
21.	Climbing up the career ladder is not an egotistical act; I want to do something meaningful for others: therefore I choose a career that is not very congruent with what my heart says	+3
30.	When I choose my life partner, it will be with my career development in mind	+3
40.	Intuitively I know my hearts path and I'll follow it with great dedication	-4
16.	I don't feel that I have "a path with heart" and I feel helpless and alone	-6

9.3.4 External career success

Statements that describe external career success are shown in table 16. To some extent career success is also meaningful for the persons on this factor, but it is highly related to the external relational world (32: +4), and has nothing to do with climbing up the ladder (17: +2) like factor 3 emphasises. Family and other relations seem to be more important (32:+4 and 50:+4) than climbing up the ladder. Even though statements 17 (+2) and 46 (+2) about career success have elements of independence in relation to the environment, it seems that they emphasise the external parts in these statements in terms of career success if one looks at them in relation to statement 50 (+4). Also it can imply that the environment and other persons come first, and the "I" comes in second. Statement 9 (-5) that emphasises climbing up the career ladder as a goal and help from others is not necessary, and statement 14 (-5) that highlights that the workplace definition of success is not important, are placed on the minus side of the Q-sort model and confirms that the environment and others persons comes first. In other words the career success is defined by others, but not by others in terms of career tests. This theme about external career success and the interpretation were confirmed by the interview.

⁷² This is not a direct transcription but a summary of the theme that was taken up in the interview.

Table 16: Statements that describe external career success

Nr	Statements	Factor score
50	I act on what others believe in, which is success	+4
32.	I am not interested in normal rewards of a successful career, family is more important	+4
46.	To me having a meaningful career means achieving job-satisfaction. For me being satisfied implies experiencing success on my own terms that also fits the organisations criteria for success and satisfaction	+2
17.	I define career success as something more than climbing the ladder; it means a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	+2
9.	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal for my career: and that is why I don't need help from others, I only need intentional and conscious goals	-5
14.	I know I will not measure my career success by careful reflections about what my workplace asserts as successful	-5

9.3.5 Independent choices are not relevant

Statements that describe this theme are shown in table 17. Statements 44 (-3), 47 (-3) and 51(-3) are placed on the minus side in the Q-sort model for this factor, and they contain strongly elements of agency, freedom and rejection of other persons' opinions. This confirms the overall view of this relational factor. The persons don't believe and don't experience the independent view that is communicated in these statements. Statement 48 (+3) that is placed on the positive side emphasises that their inner voice rarely drives their destiny, which can imply that persons on this factor define the inner voice as independent, and therefore they will not listen to it. Also statement 48 has an element of relational quality: one should listen to others later. In terms of the highly relational value in this factor, this can imply that one should listen to others, and not their independent inner voice in terms of their career choices. This interpretation of the relational quality was something that the participant I chose to interview confirms.

Table 17: Statements that describe independent choices are not relevant

Nr	Statement	Factor score
48	My inner voice seldom directs my destiny; later I must listen to others	+3
44.	Opinions from other human beings are disturbing my attempt of making intentional goals to get a job	-3
47.	I am I and you are you. I can only listen to myself in terms of choosing a career. That gives me place to strive for doing something meaningful	-3
51.	My past and present as well as projections of the future have shaped me in my striving for choosing a meaningful career that is based on self-determination and what can I do to experience success	-3

The statements that are placed in the neutral zone of the Q-sort model (Table 18) are mainly based on independent internal subjective experiences about success (31:+1, 26:0 and 22:0), internal control (20:+1), belief in one's own talents (37:+1), intentional acts (43:0), view of

one's own competence (45:-1), and independency and free choice (41:+1 and 33:-1). In terms of this relational factor, these statements that are placed in the neutral zone have no meaning or are not relevant to the factor, because these statements highlight independency in terms of meaningful career and choices. What are meaningful in this factor are relations and the context. There are two statements that are relational and placed in the neutral zone (36:-1 and 53:0). These statements have a relational dimension in them by emphasising the importance of working with other persons, but also an independent dimension in them that has the main power: I consciously choose to (...) and it's fun to (...). Seeing these two statements in relation to the other statements that are placed in the neutral zone and to the overall view in this factor it can imply that they are placed in the neutral zone because of the independent power that lies implicit in the statement together with the other independent statements in the neutral zone. The interview with a participant confirmed this by highlighting that one doesn't consciously choose to work with others or that one thinks it is particularly fun to work with others: Others are important in my career, but what I think does not matter as long as I please my culture and family and friends. Pleasing is not something negative, like your culture would think. Consciously choosing to work with others and what I think is fun in my work does not really matter. What others think I should consciously choose is important for me and if others think it is amusing to work with others, that is something else. I choose and act on what my culture and family says I should do in my career, instead of searching inside myself⁷³.

⁷³ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

Table 18: Statements that describe the neutral zone

Nr	Statement	Factor score
31.	I am not getting the marks and higher education I need so my dreams of climbing up the corporate ladder are not realistic	+1
20.	Awareness about my personality traits and knowledge about job possibilities gives me an internal feeling of control that helps me to find a career to which I can be dedicated	+1
37.	The goal for me in my career is not to give gifts back to society, because of what society has given me: first and foremost I believe in my talents	+1
41.	I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake.	+1
26.	I am afraid of climbing to high in my career; I might unintentionally fall off the ladder and hurt myself	0
22.	Climbing up the ladder in an organization, and one day becoming the boss; is what gives me motivation and a belief of experiencing career success	0
43.	I value success as something that is not about status, but something that is about my intentional acts and interests	0
53.	It's fun to work with others	0
45.	My work identity is not determined by my view of the actual job, but through my view of my own competence	-1
36.	I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others	-1
33.	I'm an agent in my life, my freedom to choose what I want to do in my career have been vital	-1

9.3.6 This factor's view in terms of the experimental design

In terms of the experimental design as reflected in the Q-sample structure relational meaning construction, objective meaning construction, intrinsic motivation⁷⁴, intentionality, job, calling and psychological success are most represented in this factor.

9.3.7 Summary of factor 2

This factor represents a clear relational and contextual view, where the main focus is in what the context and persons' relations can do for them in finding their meaningful career. This comes clear in the factor's experience of career meaning construction and the view of a meaningful career. Also when it comes to career success it is relational and dependent on the culture, context and life context. In other words it is the context that has the power, and one's own reflections become irrelevant in this case of constructing meaningful career choices.

9.4 Factor 3: career success meaning

Five participants loaded on factor 3; 2 were female and 3 were male. These individuals experience their meaningful career choices as a search for career success. The emerging subjective pattern in this factor indicates a belief that achieving success by climbing up the

⁷⁴ Intrinsic motivation may seem to be a paradoxical here since intrinsic motivation is based on self-determination for acting out and constructing meaning, but the factor's definition of intrinsic motivation has its base in the external relational environment. This means that the motivation for listening to the external culture, environment and other persons has become a deep value inside the persons in this factor for acting out the career meaning and for constructing career meaning. Therefore it has become an inner motivation and not just an external one. In other words it has become the persons' intention and intrinsic motivation to rely on the external source. This will also be taken up in the discussion about the factors.

career ladder is meaningful for one in making meaningful career choices. Three themes seem to be in focus on in this factor for achieving a successful career that is meaningful: independency, career success, career as more than just a job. All these themes are related to each other, and function in a cyclical interdependent manner. The themes will be described below, with basis in the factor array for this factor, distinguishing statements (appendix 11, 14) and consensus statements (appendix 15). An interview with a participant is also included in the interpretation part for validating the interpretation of the factor.

9.4.1 Independency

Statements that describe independence are shown in table 19. In opposition to factor 2, this factor emphasises an independent view of a belief in one's self to achieve meaningful career choices (37:+6, 45:+6 and 5:+5). This belief in persons' selves gives them an internal control and autonomy to choose meaningfully that is not controlled by the environment (20:+5, 49:-4 and 42:-3). Even though the persons who define this factor emphasise an independent belief in their selves and internal control, they have placed statement 33(+1), which highlights agency in their life, and freedom to choose what they want, in the neutral area. This can imply that they take their agency and freedom for granted, what is important for them is their belief in their selves and their internal control. It could also imply that the factor does not need agency for confirming their independence in terms of their career meaning construction; they might get information from their feelings, beliefs and knowledge about themselves instead. This can seem like a paradox because; is not a feeling of inner control a part of freedom and agency? The participant that was interviewed in this factor explained that he doesn't look at his freedom and agency as a need in choosing and constructing meaning into his career choices. What is important for him is feeling that he is in control over what is meaningful. Further the participant explained that of course he has the freedom and he is an agent in his life and can choose what he wants in life, but in terms of experiencing and making meaningful career choices his internal feelings and beliefs are much more vital: Agency and freedom for me is action outwards, but experiencing meaning in making career choices is something that is about what I feel inside where control over my own beliefs are vital⁷⁵.

⁷⁵ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

Table 19: Statements that describe independency

Nr	Statements	Factor score
37.	The goal for me in my career is not to give gifts back to society, because of what society has given me: first and foremost I believe in my talents	+6
45.	My work identity is not determined by my view of the actual job, but through my view of my own competence	+6
5.	My belief about my capabilities is rarely influenced by my relations, environment and my life context	+5
20.	Awareness about my personality traits and knowledge about job possibilities gives me an internal feeling of control that helps me to find a career to which I can be dedicated.	+5
33.	I'm an agent in my life, my freedom to choose what I want to do in my career has been vital	+1
49.	I cannot control what the environment communicates about my competence	-4
42.	I don't feel autonomous; the environment controls me in finding meaning in my career	-3

Statements that describe the context are shown in table 20. Like factor 1, awareness about the context's influence is also present in this factor (11:-6 and 3:+3). It seems that the contextual and relational influence lies in the background and the "I" lies in the front (3:+3, 2:+3, 41:+3, and 11:-6). This view of the context may seem very similar to factor 1, but this factor seems to experience that persons' past experiences have influenced them in choosing meaningfully more than factor 1 experiences. Statement 11 is placed -6 in this factor, but in factor 1 it is placed at -2. This something that the participant I interviewed confirmed by stating: Of course what I have experienced in past has affected me in reflecting what is meaningful to choose. Especially my experience of taking higher education has been influential⁷⁶.

Looking at statements 3 (+3), 2 (+3) and 41 (+3) that emphasised the context's influence as real, but not in control, in relation to statement 37 (+6), 45 (+6), 5(+5) and 20 (+5) that highlighted persons' belief in their selves and the importance of having an internal control can imply and confirm that the reflection of what is important is the independent persons, who control to choose what is meaningful in their own career. Even though the context exists, but it has not affected them in constructing their meaningful career choices.

Statement 50: *I act on what others believe in, which is success (-4)* contains elements of success and contextual power. Even though persons on this factor view success as important, they don't want to do what others believe in. Therefore this can imply that this statement was placed on the minus side because of the contextual aspect in the statement. It is import for persons on this factor to construct meaning that is important for them, and not everybody else.

⁷⁶ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

Table 20: Statements that describe the context's influence

Nr	Statements	Factor score
3	I am not reproduced of my culture, but I am aware that I am influenced by it, therefore choosing something meaningful to do, is my choice	+3
2.	The culture that I am surrounded by does not give me adequate information and knowledge about what is meaningful to choose in terms of my career	+3
41.	I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake	+3
51.	My past and present as well as projections of the future have shaped me in my striving for choosing a meaningful career that is based on self-determination and what can I do to experience success	0
11.	My former experiences in life such as school and leisure activities have not consciously affected my career choice	-6

Even if this factor does acknowledge the relational and contextual effect, it seems that it does not to believe in mutuality or look upon relations as something that is important (Table 21) in one's career (13:-5 and 36:-3). It seems that this factor reacts indifferently and does not agree with the importance of mutuality between persons (8:+1). This comes through both in the choosing process of a meaningful career and in one's working career (8:+1, 24:0 and 53:-1). It may seem a paradox that persons both disagree and are indifferent to the subject of mutuality, but it could make sense to look at it together within the overall factor structure where the importance of mutuality is not emphasised and therefore becomes irrelevant, because it is not important for them.

Looking at mutuality statements 8 (+1) and 13 (-5) together could imply that the persons in this factor react to the concept of mutuality in statement 8, and listening to others and the influence of others are irrelevant and therefore statement 8 is placed in the neutral zone. Statement 13 is placed on the minus side of this factor because the statement strongly highlights mutuality in one's career, and nothing else. Statements 53 (-1) and 24 (0) highlight the working career and how one's meaningful career develops, and that it is enjoyable to work with others. The indifference to statements 53 (-1) and 24 (0) could be that this factor does acknowledge others and their existence, but that is irrelevant in experiencing a meaningful career that is based on climbing up the ladder. It is the persons themselves who control what is meaningful, and not developed in dialogue and conjunction with others. The placement of statement 36 (-3) that emphasises that persons intentionally choose to work with others which this factor disagrees with implies that they don't choose co-operating for their career meaning with others consciously. In addition, in relation to statement 53 (-1) and 24 (0), this implies that others exist but their role is irrelevant, and is not chosen. The factor's indifference and reaction to the concept of mutuality, other persons' role, the contexts' existence and the

importance of the individual's control in constructing meaning in career choices was something that was confirmed by the interview.

Table 21: Statements that describe relations and mutuality

Nr	Statement	Factor score
8.	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships but I can't listen to others when it comes to choosing a meaningful career. I don't want to be affected by others	+1
24.	My dedication, animation, and coherence in my intentional career is developed through others face to face	0
53.	It's fun to work with others	-1
13.	Through mutuality I am guided towards the right career for me	-5
36.	I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others	-3

9.4.2 Career success = meaningful career

Like factor 1 and 2 career success is also an important aspect in this factor, in making meaningful career choices, and having a meaningful career (Table 22). This factor views career success as climbing up the ladder (9:+4, 12:+4, and 22:+4). Being intentional seems to be important in achieving one's goal, which is career success (9:+4 and 43:+4). Persons also seem indifferent to the fact that others are interrupting them in making intentional goals (44:-1). This can imply that other persons are irrelevant for them in making intentional goals; they make the goals themselves, and others are not a part of that phase. It also seems that the persons who define this factor are not afraid of climbing too fast up the ladder (26:-6). Even though this factor highlights an independent view of career choices and meaning, the persons are also aware of that, to be able to climb up the ladder they need to see their goals of career success in relation to the organisation they work for (14:-5). Looking at statement 14 in relation to all the other statements that confirm the independent goal of climbing up the ladder could imply that the persons are fully aware that they are dependent on the work place to achieve their meaningful career, namely, climbing up the ladder. Without having the same successful goals as their workplace, they are not able to achieve what is meaningful for them. Statement 17 (+1) is placed in the neutral zone, even though it emphasises career success. This factor emphasises career success as climbing up the career ladder, therefore it seems right to say that this statement was placed in the neutral area because the statement does not contain positive elements of climbing up the ladder. This emphasis on climbing up the ladder as the goal for carer success was confirmed by the interview.

Table 22: Statements that describe career success

Nr	Statement	Factor score
9.	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal for my career: and that is why I don't need help from others, I only need intentional and conscious goals	+4
43.	I value success as something that is not about status, but something that is about my intentional acts and interests	+4
12.	I love climbing the ladder	+4
22.	Climbing up the ladder in an organization, and one day become a boss, is what gives me motivation and a belief of experiencing career success	+4
46.	To me having a meaningful career means achieving job-satisfaction. For me being satisfied implies experiencing success on my own terms that also fits the organizations criteria for success.	+3
17	I define career success as something more than climbing up the ladder; it means for me a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	+1
44	Opinions from other human beings are disturbing my attempt of making intentional goals to get a job	-1
26.	I am afraid of climbing to high in my career; I might unintentionally fall off the ladder and hurt myself	-5
14.	I know I will not measure my career success by careful reflections about what my workplace asserts as successful	-5

9.4.3 Career more than a job

Statements that describe career more than a job is shown in table 23. Like factor 1, this factor also emphasises that a meaningful career is more than a job (10:+5). This is also confirmed by statement 23 (-1) that emphasises that there must be more than just work that motivates, statement 29 (0) that highlights money as a motivator and statement 7 (-1) that underlines the importance of survival. These statements (23 (-1), 29 (0) and 7 (-1) are placed in the neutral zone. This can imply that money, work for just work, and survival has no meaning for the persons on this factor in their career and therefore a career must be more meaningful, than just a job.

Also this factor doesn't believe so much in achieving a calling as meaningful (52:-4 and 34:-3). In addition, when it comes to the career view, this factor views it independently. The persons don't have a goal of doing something in their career that could be meaningful for others or for the society they take part in (21:-4 and 37:+6). Having a heart's path seems to be indifferent for this factor (39:0, 16:0 and 40:-1). This implies that heart's path is not a level in their meaningful career, nor is it a part of their construction phase of achieving a meaningful career.

Table 23: Statements that describe career more than a job

Nr	Statement	Factor Score
37.	The goal for me in my career is not to give gifts back to society, because of what society has given me: first and foremost I believe in my talents	+6
10.	Having a meaningful career means that I must look at it as more than a job	+5
39.	My heart's path has many people on it	0
16.	I don't feel that I have a "path with heart" and I feel helpless and alone	0
29.	My aim is to earn a lot of money in my career, and that is only possible through good colleagues	0
23.	I don't like work for works sake, there must be more in life to motivate me	-1
7.	Even though I am scared to take a job that doesn't fit my interests, I can imagine taking it in order to survive	-1
40.	Intuitively I know my heart's path and I'll follow it with great dedication	-1
34.	My career and interests have guided me in finding my calling	-3
52.	When I hear my call it comes from within that I share with others	-4
21.	Climbing up the career ladder is not an egotistical act, I want to do something meaningful for others: therefore I choose a career that is not very congruent with what my heart says	-4
25.	Sometimes what we daydream about in a career does not suit us at all	-6

Seeing statement 10 (+5) in relation to the career success statements which emphasise climbing up the ladder (9:+4, 12:+4, 22:+4, 46:+3, 26:-5 and 14:-5), and the statements that highlight independency and a belief in one's self (37:+6, 45:+6, 5:+5, 20:+5, 49:-4, and 42:-3) could imply that a meaningful career has something to do with achieving success and the only person who can control that is the person who wants to achieve that success. Statement 25 (-6) also confirms the view of career in this factor that it is more than just a job. This could imply that one should follow one's dreams, and not just take a job, but go for the dream, which in this factor seems to be success by climbing up the ladder. This emphasis on career as climbing up the ladder as a dream for this factor was confirmed by the interview.

9.4.4 Experimental design

In terms of the experimental design, as reflected in the Q sample structure subjective, intrinsic motivation, intentionality and career as a psychological success are most representative for this factor.

9.4.5 Summary of factor 3

This factor represents a clear view of independency, where the main focus is the persons' own individual control and belief about themselves, through internal contact withdrawn from others' control, to achieve career success in their meaningful career. This becomes evident in both their career meaning construction and their view of a meaningful career, which is

climbing up the ladder. In other words it is the persons themselves that have the power, with the context in the background, to achieve a career that highlights career success through climbing up the ladder.

9.5 Consensus among the factors

Despite the fact that the three factors that were presented and interpreted in this chapter are clear and very different, there exist 3 consensus statements among the factors. These consensus statements are shown in table 24 below.

Table 24: Consensus statements between the factors

Nr	Statement	Factor score		
		1	2	3
1.	I like the idea of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	-4	-4	-2
28.	I don't plan to take any career test to find a job as the tests aren't reliable	0	0	-2
38.	My need for competence, autonomy and relatedness is not important for developing dedication towards my career	-3	-3	-2

9.5.1 Career tests

Statements 1 and 28 contain elements of career testing that is either positively constructed (1) or negatively constructed (28). In terms of the placement of these two statements in all three factors they are either disagreeing (1: -4⁷⁷, -4⁷⁸, -2⁷⁹) or seem indifferent (28: 0, 0, -2) to a certain extent to the fact that career tests are important in constructing and choosing a meaningful career. Even though they are consensus statements and they all communicate either a disagreement or an indifference to testing, they have different meaning and different reasoning in terms of why they are placed where they are placed.

Statement 1 I have already discussed in factors 1 and 2. As a reminder, I could say that factor 1 placed statement 1 in -4 cells, which means that it disagrees with the statement. This disagreement can be seen together with the overall factor meaning as logical, because this factor has a strong belief in agency and freedom to construct and choose a meaningful career, and therefore it doesn't believe in career testing that can come with suggestions and doesn't require that persons reflect. This could seem like a paradox, because career tests often make room for reflection when taking the tests and receiving the results. This could imply that the persons on the factor have a lack of awareness about what a career test can do in terms of their reflections about what is meaningful. In addition, these persons on this factor have a negative

⁷⁷ Factor score in factor 1

⁷⁸ Factor score in factor 2

⁷⁹ Factor score in factor 3

attitude towards taking career tests as a requirement for making meaningful career choices; they would rather trust their freedom and agency, which is much more important and significant for them. The placement of statement 1 in factor 2 has another reasoning and logic, even though it is placed in the same cell (-4). This factor has a strong belief in other persons, the external culture and context, and therefore it doesn't believe in career tests because then persons have to reflect for themselves about what to fill out in the test. The factor doesn't react to the element of others giving suggestions in the statement. In interviewing a participant in factor 2, the interpretation about the factor's negative attitude towards tests was confirmed: What is important and what I need in choosing meaningfully is not taking a career test; where I have to fill out what I like or dislike in relation to my personality and world of work. What my culture, family and other personal relations communicate is much more significant for me in choosing meaningfully⁸⁰. In factor 3, statement 1 has another reasoning and logic (-2), than factor 1 and 2. Factor 3 has a strong belief in persons' selves because they have a goal of climbing up the ladder, therefore career tests will not contribute to that goal, because it is the person who is in control of climbing up the ladder, and suggestions from a general career test will not contribute to that internal control of climbing specific career ladders. A further explanation could be that the persons in this factor have found their place in their career, therefore taking a career test will not help them in climbing up the career ladder, and taking a career test will not give the persons in this factor directions about how and where to climb up the career ladder, so in that manner they need to trust their selves regarding how and where to climb up the career ladder. The interview with a participant on factor 3 confirmed this interpretation: I see it as irrelevant for me to take a career test. Career tests are for people that are lost, and don't know what to do. I have chosen my road, and what is meaningfully for me in my career. I have found my place in my career. The future road for me choosing meaningfully and reaching my goal is to reflect and find out what possibilities can give me opportunities for advancing and achieving a higher position. Career tests will not give me that information⁸¹.

Statement 28 is placed in the neutral zone of factor 1(0) and 2 (0), and placed between the minus side and the neutral zone in factor 3 (-2). As mentioned above concerning factor 1 the persons have a strong value in agency and freedom, therefore statement 28 which emphasises career tests and its reliability negatively, is placed in the neutral zone, because career tests and

⁸⁰ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

⁸¹ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

reliability are not relevant or meaningful for them in choosing a meaningful career, and therefore the content of the statement becomes indifferent to factor 1. In factor 2, the persons also react negatively to career tests (see description of statement 1 above), because they emphasise the external environment, culture and relations in finding meaning. Therefore statement 28, that emphasises career tests' reliability negatively, is placed in the neutral zone, because as mentioned persons in this factor don't believe in taking a career test for choosing meaningfully (see description of statement 1 above), and therefore this factor reacts indifferently to the negative attitude about career tests' reliability in this statement. In factor 3, statement 28 is placed in -2 cells. This implies that to some extent the factor disagrees with the content of the statement: it disagrees that the career tests are not reliable. As also mentioned factor 3 emphasises persons' own belief in their selves for climbing up the career ladder. So looking at this statement in terms of the overall factor meaning, and in relation to statement 1, the persons in this factor would probably not take a career test, but they think they are reliable to a certain extent, but not for their career goal: climbing up the ladder.

9.5.2 Dedication in their career

Statement 38 that communicates a negative attitude towards need for competence, autonomy and relatedness in terms of developing a dedication in their career, is in all 3 factors (-3, -3 and -2) placed on the minus side. Even though this statement is also a consensus statement between the factors, each factor has a different logic and meaning in terms of the statement in relation to the overall factor meanings in all 3 factors.

In factor 1 the overall meaning is in agency and freedom to construct its personal career meaning in relation to its context. The reasoning and logic of the placement of statement 28 in terms of the overall factor meaning is that the factor highlights the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness in persons dedicating themselves in their career, and therefore, they placed this statement on the negative side because the statement has a negative attitude to competence, autonomy and relatedness. The same reasoning can be seen in factor 3, where persons also reacted negatively to the negative attitude towards the content of statement 38, because they have a need for competence, autonomy and relatedness in succeeding climbing up the ladder, which is their dedication in their meaningful career. The interpretation of statement 38 in factor 3 was confirmed by the interview: For me in order to have a dedicated career where I experience meaning in living out my dream in my career, I have to be in control and have a strong belief that especially my own competence and my own personal independence can contribute to my advancement in my career. Experiencing relatedness is not

so important, but I have to somehow relate to the workplace where I act out my career⁸². In factor 2 there exists another reasoning of the placement in relation to the overall factor meaning, than in factors 1 and 3. This factor disagrees to some extent to the negative attitude in statement 38 like factor 1 and 3, but looking at the overall factor meaning for factor 2 it might seem as a paradox, since factor 2 doesn't highlight the importance of competence and autonomy for choosing meaningfully and acting out their career meaning, but highlights relatedness as very important. If one looks more carefully into the overall factor meaning it makes sense, and the statement transforms into another meaning than in factor 1 and 3. Since factor 2 believes in the external world for choosing meaningfully, the placement of the statement might imply a heavier weighting on the need for relatedness for developing competence and autonomy in one's dedicated career. This factor trusts others involvement in the process of becoming dedicated to one's career so what others think is a valuable competence can be important and can influence the development of one's autonomy. In interviewing a participant in factor 2 about this theme it became clear that the participant viewed his autonomy and competence through his external context: what my family, wife, friends, culture communicate to me about what is meaningfully to choose in my career, gives me valuable information about how I view my competence, and what I should be dedicated to. You can say that my personal independence or autonomy is activated through others⁸³. In other words, the reason for statement 38 being placed in the neutral area is that the statement makes no sense for the factor because it has negative elements about relatedness, and the person's view of competence, autonomy and relatedness has equal weight in the statement, something this factor seems to disagree with, therefore reacts indifferently to.

As a summary one can say that the consensus statements give an overall picture of what the similarities are, but they also give one more information and knowledge about each factor. These consensus statements gave information about how the factor reacts to career tests, and to not needing competence, autonomy, and relatedness in persons' career dedication. But, this knowledge in turn implicates different aspects in each factor as mentioned above in the explanation of the meaning and reasoning for the consensus statements for each factor.

⁸² The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

⁸³ The reference to the interview is not a transcription, but represents the main thoughts about the theme in the interview.

9.6 Summary of factor presentation and interpretation

In this chapter I have presented and interpreted the 3 factor solution I chose from the statistical factor analysis. The aim was to answer the secondary research question for the empirical part of this PhD thesis: *What subjective factors can be significant in persons' career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices.* Three factors were significant, and I chose to name the factors: existential career meaning, relational career meaning and career success meaning. Existential meaning highlighted the importance of 1) agency and freedom in relation to one's context, 2) career as more than a job, and 3) personal success. Relational career meaning highlighted the importance of 1) survival and security, 2) the external context as controlling, and 3) external success. Career success meaning highlighted the importance of 1) one's own independency, belief in one's self and internal control, 2) climbing up the ladder as a goal for one's success, and 3) viewing one's career view as climbing up the ladder. Also I presented and discussed the consensus between the factors, and what different meanings the consensus statements can have in each factors.

What do these factors actually imply? In the next chapter I will discuss the factors in terms of relevant theory that I discussed in the theory chapter and relevant research that has been done in the field. By discussing my results in relation to theory and research, I will bind my thesis together and answer my main research question which is: *How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?* Also I will discuss possible implications from persons' experiences (factors) for the career counselling field, and reflect over the strengths and weaknesses of my research.

Part IV – Discussion, implications and summary

10. Introduction: aim and summary of the study

The purpose of this PhD dissertation is to describe and discuss the subjective experience of persons with university education background in making meaningful career choices. On this background one main research question and two secondary research questions were developed. The main research question is: *“How do university graduates subjectively experience their career choices in terms of the concepts career meaning construction and career meaning?”* To be able to answer this question I divided the main question into two secondary questions, which belong to the theoretical and empirical parts of my dissertation, respectively: *1. What theoretical understandings can lie in the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning? 2. “What subjective factors can be significant in university graduates’ career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices?”* In the first secondary research question about what type of theoretical understandings can lie in the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning I did an extensive theoretical inquiry into different philosophical and empirical perspectives/theories in science of philosophy, general counselling and career counselling that could contribute to an in-depth understanding of the concepts of meaning, meaning construction and career meaning. The focus was on the word *meaning* as a noun and verb (Carlson, 1988) on Frankl’s (1978) perspective on finding meaning, May’s (1978) perspective on constructing meaning. Further in the theoretical investigation, the emphasis was on Holmberg’s (1994) distinctions of meaning in terms of objective, subjective and universal meaning, objective-, subjective-, relational meaning construction in a career perspective. Further, I argued that the human agency concept where the focus was on intrinsic motivation and intentionality was an important aspect of constructing career meaning. Further, the career construct and career meaning was discussed and defined as: career meaning as a job, as a psychological success for the person or as achieving a calling. This theoretical investigation was the background and frame of reference for constructing the experimental design and for conducting the Q-methodological study.

In addressing the second secondary research question about what subjective factors are significant in persons with university education in relation to their career meaning and meaningful career choices, the Q-methodological study gave me grounds to choose a solution of three factors. I called these factors 1) existential career meaning 2) relational career meaning and 3) career success meaning.

I will discuss these three factors, what they communicate about career meaning and meaning construction in career choices, and what the consequences can be for persons in viewing meaning and meaning construction in terms of the factors view.

In this first part of the discussion I will discuss five themes: 1) the relationship between theoretical and phenomenological meaning in term of this research, 2) the relationship between meaning as a verb and meaning as a noun in terms of the empirical results, 3) the theories that the three factors represent in terms of the those presented in part 2 as well as other relevant theories, 4) possible consequences of the factors view of career meaning and career meaning construction, 5) the consensus among the factors.

10.1 The relationship between theoretical and phenomenological meaning

As mentioned above three factors emerged in the empirical study, as three types of discourses about how meaningful career choices are experienced and constructed. Each factor experiences differently the process of choosing meaningfully, the content of a meaningful career and the goal(s) for a meaningful career. These meaning construction perspectives relate to the perspectives of theoretical and phenomenological meaning. Holmberg (1994) emphasised that theoretical meaning is something that is constructed, imposed and projected in persons' lives. The factors emerged from the theoretical basis that I used to construct statements. This theoretical basis (different theories on the theme of meaning, career meaning construction and carer meaning) that I projected, imposed and constructed in the statements hopefully would meet the subjectivity of the participants. However, even if the statements succeed in meeting the subjectivity⁸⁴ of the participants when they are sorting the statements in terms of the sorting condition, for example, most like me to not like me, and even if these sorted statements form the basis for emergent factors, this does not imply that the factors are describing phenomenological meaning. According to Holmberg (1994) phenomenological meaning is a type of meaning that exists in the present life of the person. Since the meaning that describes the factors contains persons' experience of making meaningful career choices, it can't be phenomenological meaning according to Holmberg because the participants' view of making meaningful career choices is based on their memory of past experience. In other words the meaning that is communicated in the factors has become reconstructed based on the participants' experience of the phenomenon, and therefore it is constructed and not experienced here and now. In this way meaning is theoretical because meaning is not

⁸⁴ If the participants manage to discriminate the statements, for example, from most like me to not like me, one interprets that as the statements succeeded in meeting their subjectivities.

experienced in present, but based on earlier experiences of how persons remember their career choices.

In terms of general phenomenological philosophy (Husserl, 1936/2001) all phenomenological studies are based on persons' memory and experience from past-time completed phenomenon. In this sense this perspective goes against Holmberg's (1994) perspective on phenomenological and theoretical meaning. Even though persons have to connect to their feelings, so that the research can measure subjectivity here and now, the focus is still on the memory of what they have experienced. In that way the meaning can be understood as phenomenological, and not just theoretical. Therefore, one can say that, the emergent factors are both theoretical and phenomenological meaning perspectives in terms of career meaning and career meaning construction.

When it comes to the actual sorting process of the statements both theoretical and phenomenological meanings become evident. One could say that the sorting process can reflect phenomenological meaning when the participants sort the actual statements because the participants connect with their feelings and reflect on whether each statement describes them or not, or if it is neutral for them. One could ask the question whether the meeting with the statements about meaningful career choices produces phenomenological meaning, when the participants are actually sorting the statements. In the meeting with the statements and sorting them the participants experience new meaning and new reflections and as a result produce phenomenological meaning for themselves. However, the factors as a whole give me as a researcher theoretical meaning based on the participants' phenomenal worlds. This perspective is not actually any different from phenomenological studies in which the participants discover new reflections in the process of being interviewed about a phenomenon, and thereby produce phenomenological meaning for themselves, and when the interviews are analysed into categories, the categories give the researcher theoretical meaning based on the researcher's glasses in relation to their theoretical world view (the researcher construct theoretical meaning from the categories), based on the participants phenomenal world. In terms of Q-methodological studies and phenomenological studies, both phenomenological and theoretical meaning is produced. Therefore, one can say that this Q-study produces theoretical and phenomenological meaning in terms of persons' career meaning and career meaning construction, which is the basis for their career choices.

10.2 Relationship between meaning as a verb and meaning as noun

In addition to emphasising both theoretical and phenomenological meaning as the core for the factors that emerged, splitting up the concept of meaning into verb (process) and content (noun) can be useful for in depth understanding of meaning in career choices. This is in alignment with Carlson's (1988) emphasis on understanding the word meaning as a noun and as a verb.

Factor 1 experiences career meaning construction and career choices in terms of existential meaning, where agency and freedom play an important value in the career meaning construction process. By using agency and freedom to construct meaning, the persons on factor 1 will intentionally achieve a career meaning that contains existential meaning that may indicate a self-actualization tendency as the career goal. As one has seen earlier, meaning as noun in this factor is existential meaning. To explain this further, the existential meaning is the descriptor for what created meaning, an orienting mechanism and the pattern of significance for constructing meaning into one's career choices. In other words the concept of existential meaning is the frame of reference of the persons' career meaning construction process. The existential meaning frame orients, functions as a descriptor and a significant pattern for the career meaning construction process. Meaning as a verb in this factor connects to agency and freedom as important concepts for the person to use in the process of constructing meaning, so that the descriptor of what is created, existential meaning, can be achieved. More explicitly, existential meaning is the frame of reference, and agency and freedom are used to achieve existential meaning in one's career.

Factor 2 experiences its career meaning construction and career choices in terms of relational meaning, where other persons, culture and social matrix play a significant value in the career meaning construction process. By using other persons, the culture and social matrix to construct career meaning, the factor 2 persons will intentionally achieve a career meaning that contains relational meaning that is important for both the other persons in the culture and social matrix and the person who is constructing the meaning. The career goal(s) for this factor is to achieve a meaningful career that pleases the culture and is secure. Meaning as a noun in this factor is relational meaning, because relational meaning is the orienting mechanism, pattern and significance as well as the descriptor for creating meaning. Meaning as a verb in this perspective is based on the actions of other persons, the culture and social matrix that influence the person. In other words this factor's use of external power helps persons construct career meaning that is relational in the form of being other-directed. More

explicitly; relational meaning is the frame of reference, and other persons, culture and social matrix are used by factor 2 to achieve relational career meaning.

Factor 3 experiences its career meaning construction and career choices in terms of career success meaning, where independency, inner feeling of control, self-efficacy and autonomy play an important part in the career meaning construction process. By using the above-mentioned values to construct career meaning, the factor 3 persons expect to intentionally achieve a career meaning of career success as climbing up the career ladder in organisations as its goal. Meaning as a noun in this factor is career success meaning. Career success meaning functions like an orienting mechanism, a pattern of significance and the descriptor of what creates meaning. Meaning as a verb includes the activities of using inner feeling of control, self-efficacy, autonomy and climbing up the career ladder in the meaning construction process, so that the descriptor of what meaning is created, career success meaning, can be achieved. In other words, career success meaning is the frame of reference, and independency, inner feelings of control, self-efficacy and so on are used by persons to achieve career success meaning in their career.

10.3 Discussion of the empirical results

The three factors show the different nuances in career meaning and career meaning construction in persons' career choices, and that focusing on meaning and meaning construction does not necessarily imply something spiritual and existential. The focus on meaning and meaning construction in terms of career choices creates knowledge about how persons experience meaningful career choices, values that are important for them in constructing meaning into their career choices, and what such career meaning constructions may indicate as persons are working in their career.

In my discussion I have firstly chosen to give an overview of the wholeness of each factor in terms of relevant theory that I discussed in the theory chapter, further I have chosen to give place to what consequences the factors' experience of meaningful career choices can have in terms of how persons can develop meaning construction in their career choices and in relation to persons' agency^{85 86}. Based on the factors that emerged, not all the theory that I presented and discussed earlier will be used in this part. The reason I have chosen persons' agency to be the main discussion theme is that in the factors, I have seen that there might be a tension

⁸⁵ I am aware that discussing the factors' agency is not the only perspective available for discussion, but from my perspective it is a very important aspect of making meaningful career choices.

⁸⁶ By persons' agency I mean how persons use their agency in constructing career meaning and when they act on that career meaning

between how persons construct career meaning for their career choices and how persons can act out their meaningful career choices in their career context. This implies that in the meaning construction process, persons use their agency to become aware of their career meaning, which they act upon in their career world, by choosing based on their career meaning they constructed in meaning construction process. More explicitly; focusing on person's agency; I will discuss the factors agency in the construction process and in the factors career context.

This tension acts differently in each factor. In factor 1, the meaning construction phase is not based on what persons have acted on in their career world, but it is rather based on their independent construction in relation to their freedom and agency to construct what career meaning they want. After constructing meaning the persons act on that specific meaning out in the career world. The tension here can be between freedom and individual agency in the construction phase and acting out their meaningful career, where the person might have to let go some of their freedom to be able to work with others, and achieve a meaningful career. In factor 2, the persons are much more relational in terms of career meaning construction and acting on their career meaning out in the world. Their career meaning construction and action are much more based on what others think and feel is best to do in choosing and acting meaningfully. The tension here can be between what others think and feel is best to act on, and what is meaningful for the single person that is going to choose and act on. In factor 3, the career meaning construction phase is closely connected to persons' inner self in relation to climbing up the career ladder to achieve career success, and is not related to others in their career world. The tension here can be between trust in their selves, and needing others to act out their meaningful career, and for achieving their goal: climbing up the ladder.

In discussing persons' agency I have chosen mainly to use relational theory that is mainly represented by John Macmurray (1957/1999) who I shortly introduced in the theory chapter, and gestalt perspectives that I have not introduced at all in the theory part of this dissertation. The reason for this decision is because in the interpretation of the factors, I discovered that relational paradoxes in terms of persons' agency were relevant, and that gestalt perspectives on relational quality and Macmurray's perspectives on relational agency could contribute to a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the relational paradoxes. I had no knowledge that the relational perspective and paradoxes would be so pertinent when I wrote the theory part of this dissertation; therefore, I have presented Macmurray's relational perspective and gestalt perspectives on relational quality in more depth in the discussion part about persons'

agency. This can be argued for in terms of both research and abductory principles, where the emphasis is to discover new knowledge about the phenomenon that is being investigated.

10.4 Empirical data and theory

In order to come further than just acknowledging the empirical data as valuable discoveries about career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of university graduates subjective experience in making meaningful career choices, I will try to lift the empirical data to a meta-level. By this I mean that I will discuss and try to elevate the empirical data to a second level of analysis, where theory and implications play a large role. I will go further into depth about what the most important values for the factors may imply for the career meaning construction phase and for what the important values may indicate when persons act out their career.

For discussing the factors career meaning construction in terms of their career choices I have made a figure (theoretical construct) for each factor that visualises what the persons in the factors experience as important for their career meaning construction process in terms of their career meaning, to make meaningful career choices. This means that the career meaning construction is looked upon as the process of achieving career meaning, which again is the basis for persons' career choices. These three views of career meaning construction processes can be defined as three views of meaning construction agencies, where different concepts in each agency are looked upon as significant for constructing career meaning so that persons can make career choices that are meaningful for them. These views are interpreted in relation to relevant theories that were discussed in the theory chapters (part 2) of this dissertation and to other theories that can be useful in discussing the data that emerged. Also I will discuss possible paradoxes and challenges with the factors experience of choosing meaningfully in terms of persons' agency.

10.4.1 Existential meaning approach: factor 1

This factor represents a personal meaning approach that is highly emphasised in post-modern career counselling approaches (Chen, 2001), where it is up to the persons themselves to take responsibility for constructing career meaning in their career choices and career. Since this factor has a focus on the independent person, this factor represents an overall social constructivist perspective, where it is the persons themselves that construct their career reality, and in that reality they construct their personal meaning (Kelly, 1955). In other words, this view pays attention to the individual self as fundamental for meaning exploration process (Chen, 2003).

The individual self can be defined as:

(...) achieved by differentiating from others (i.e., the individual self contains those aspects of the self-concept that differentiate the person from other persons as a unique constellation of traits and characteristics that distinguishes the individual within his or her social context)...and is associated with the motive to protecting or enhancing the person psychologically (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001, p. 1).

To say it differently, persons' career meaning construction is based on how the factors view their self, and what is unique career meaning for them, and not what is meaningful for others. By constructing career meaning that is unique for them, persons take care of their individual self that is constructing, and in that way the career meaning becomes existential to them.

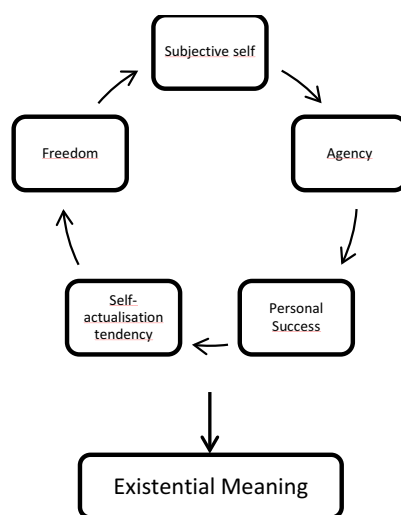


Figure 18: Core points of factor 1

In the figure 18 above I have visualised the theoretical components that factor 1 emphasises as important in constructing meaning into its career choices⁸⁷. Subjective self, freedom, agency, personal success and self-actualisation tendency are seen as necessary for being able to construct career meaning that is existential in persons' own reality. In other words, this factor truly emphasises meaning that is personal and existential, and in that sense this factor might point to making career choices that have a self-actualisation tendency (Rogers, 1961), even though the factor description does not give explicit information about self-actualisation as a need or value for constructing meaning into career choices. Since the factor views career as more than a job, and freedom and agency are a large part of the factor, I believe that I have data to indicate that self-actualisation is a part of this meaning construction process. A self-

⁸⁷ I have not taken every perspective that is shown in the factor interpretation, but selected out significant perspectives that show the overall factor view.

actualisation tendency can be understood as a motivation to realize one's full potential. This means that meaning construction has a goal to construct career meaning that can contribute to persons realizing their fullest potential in their career (Rogers, 1961).

At the top of figure 18 shown above about factor 1's meaning construction process, the subjective self lies in front of the career meaning construction process. This implies that the other concepts in the figure are sub categories to the subjective self. Without the subjective self, the concepts of freedom, agency, personal success and self -actualisation tendency will not be important or function in the career meaning construction process. Career meaning construction in this sense can be called subjective meaning construction (Holmberg, 1994), where the subjective person (I) is in charge of the meaning construction process. In this subjective career meaning construction process freedom, agency and personal success are important for persons being capable of constructing meaning into their career choices. By emphasising the subjective approach to career meaning construction in terms of career choices, agency, freedom and personal success, this factor represents a deep value of existentialism. Being free to construct the career meaning one wants and to define it as existential is similar to the view of May (1983) and Sartre (2003).

May and Sartre also highlight the concept of responsibility. Even though this factor does not communicate any explicit information about responsibility, one can implicitly assume that in being able to construct career meaning that is existential, persons take responsibility for their selves, and decide and construct career meaning that is valuable for them. Freedom and responsibility operate in persons' existence, and this existence is the persons' context, environment and culture. In line with May (1983), it seems like this factor emphasises that persons need to go into their selves, and construct meaning from their selves that is integrated within the culture (the self does not exist in vacuum), and not from the external culture, even though the culture, context and environment is there and influences but it doesn't take away the persons' freedom and responsibility. Sartre (2003) stressed that it is not the circumstances, environment and culture that decide for the person, but it is the persons that through their agency (still within the limit of their culture) construct meaning that is meaningful for them and not the environment per se. Sartre also underlined the importance of choosing positively, that includes taking responsibility for their selves and choosing authentically for themselves; on the basis on who they are and not on others requirements. In this way the career meaning construction phase is highly independent, where meaning construction, agency, freedom and responsibility lie within the persons themselves. This is a very complex phenomenon, because

persons do not exist alone, and constructing career meaning independently is always happening within their culture. I mentioned in the theory part that May (1989) raised the question about who is the culture. He emphasised that persons exist in the culture, and it is the persons that define the culture they are a part of. In this perspective, even though the persons in this existential factor emphasise independency in constructing meaning, they construct career meaning for themselves within the culture they have defined.

This factor's emphasis on persons' agency in constructing career meaning can be looked upon in relation to the theoretical concept of human agency. This factor sees itself in relation to its context, which is an interactional perspective on human agency (Bandura, 1989), but the persons do not experience themselves as being disturbed by other persons. The most important perspective in this human agency perspective is a belief about persons and their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives (Chen, 2001). Bandura (2001) calls this exercise of control capacity personal agency. In the personal agency paradigm, there is a need for persons being intentional in order to be capable of constructing career meaning into career choices. Intentionality does not come out so clearly in this existential meaning factor, but implicitly intentionality is important for this factor. Since this factor is concerned with persons' own freedom and agency to construct meaningful career choices, the persons who define this factor are intentional in consciously taking actions in using their freedom and agency to construct meaningful career choices and that is what intentionality is about. For this factor, constructing personal meaning becomes purposeful and intentional with the existential descriptor as the orienting mechanism and governing pattern: I define what meaning is meaningful for me in my career choices. Therefore persons' career goals become purposeful and intentional because they consciously construct career goals that are meaningful for them (Richardson, 2004).

Also in this existential meaning factor, personal success is important for experiencing a meaningful career that is based on meaningful career choices. Personal success is defined as a subjective perspective in career, where it is the persons themselves that define what is successful. Hughes (1958) defines subjective career success as the persons' reaction to their career experiences that are feeling, bodily and cognitive based in themselves. He also highlights the importance of interpreting and reinterpreting persons' career experience and career success consciously. Questions such as: what constitutes my career success?, and by asking that question persons interpret and reflect about their career experience, and by doing that persons can act on the new discovered knowledge about their career success. This type of

career success is a post-modern and non-linear view where a path with heart is emphasised as self-referent to the person. Out from this persons become engaged and dedicated in their careers. This post-modern view of success is internally driven and called “protean career” (Hall, 2002). Protean career is defined as a career in which career goals are personally meaningful to the subjective self, and not created by the organisation or society. In achieving these personally meaningful and successful career goals, the persons’ subjective identity is adapted into these goals for achieving success (Mervis & Hall, 1996).

Subjective career success can be linked to the concept of job satisfaction, where the emphasis is on the correspondence between persons and organisations as an indicator for how satisfied persons experience themselves in their career. Satisfaction is an internal indicator, but takes the organisation into consideration. However, too much focus on the internal indicator could lead to difficulties in the correspondence between the person and the organisation (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969), and thereby a person might not experience the level of career success the person desires. This factor may have too much weight on the internal indicator to satisfaction (what is subjective and personal to me), and not take the organisation or the general environment so much into consideration, and thereby persons may have difficulties experiencing the career success that they desire for their existential career. The self-actualisation tendency in this factor may imply and contribute to a large weight being placed on the internal indicator for job satisfaction and thereby the focus on subjective career success.

10.4.1.1 Challenges for the agency and freedom perspective in an existential meaning perspective

In the factor presentation and interpretation chapter there was a possible paradox discovered that was about agency and freedom in terms of how persons construct career meaning and act on the career meaning in their career. It seems that this factor has high values of freedom and agency in both meaning construction and in acting out one’s career. In the construction phase it seems that persons value their subjective independent self by highlighting that they don’t need others and others don’t disturb them when they are constructing career meaning into their career choices, however, in acting out their career they want to act it out with other persons. The questions I raise are: Is it possible for persons to have the same degree of freedom and agency in both constructing career meaning and acting out their desired career, based on their career meaning construction? What does it actually mean to be a free agent in constructing career meaning? Is it a totally independent process where others cannot contribute, or is it a process that includes participation of others thus implying that the person

gives up some of their freedom and agency? Do the persons have to give up some of their freedom and agency to be able to act out a career with other persons? Is there a fear of dependency in the process of career meaning construction?

The split that was discovered between the career meaning construction process and acting out one's career is a complex phenomenon. The split can be understood as on the one hand, one is an agent free to construct whatever career meaning one wants and needs, and on the other hand, one acts out that free independent career meaning together with others. Being an absolutely free agent as a person to construct whatever meaning one wants and needs and being an agent self that acts out one's career meaning together with others are two polarities that can be in conflict or can challenge each other. According to Allgood and Kvalsund (2003) being an agent self, will always be relational by definition within one's interacting environment. Being an agent requires action in the world with others, which then again can threaten persons' freedom to construct career meaning. In other words being a totally free agent to construct whatever career meaning one wants and being a free agent together with others can produce possible conflicts between the construction phase and the action phase of the person's career. This represents a possible challenge between the career meaning construction process that is independent based on free agency, and acting in one's meaningful career that is relational. Might this split lead to a tension between one's subjective self and one's need for being free agent and one's action in one's career, where relationship to others is a need? Does this imply that persons are egocentric, and only will proceed in the career meaning exploration process on their own behalf, because they have a need to be free to have a meaningful career? Or is it a need for being both independent and relational; a need for taking care of their agency and freedom? I will try and discuss these questions below in relation to John Macmurray's (1991; 1992; 1957/1999) perspective on agency and freedom.

Macmurray (1992; 1957/1999) discusses persons' freedom and agency in terms of relational perspectives, such as dependence, independence and interdependency. Further he defines persons' freedom in relation to persons' action in the world or community. In other words, persons' freedom to construct meaning is dependent on persons' action in their community. This means that how persons act in their community - dependently, independently or interdependently - influences persons' actual freedom. More specifically, Macmurray's (1992) perspective on persons' freedom is closely linked to the action sphere, which is dependent, independent or interdependent in persons' community. Persons' action "*expresses the nature of the agent*" (Macmurray, 1992, p. xviii) in their community. Macmurray's

perspective on nature is related to his concept of human life. To be human and live a life is constituted by living in relationships with others. So persons in relation constitutes the understanding of human nature, and to be in relationship with others requires being in (inter)action with each other. In other words to express our nature is bound up with the ability to exercise our agency, with the relation of the self to the other (Kvalsund, 1998). According to Macmurray (1992), persons who act based on their own nature, act freely. This implies that the concepts of freedom and agency in persons' community are closely linked to each other.

Even though Macmurray (1992) defines persons' freedom in terms of persons' own nature to act and as such it may seem very independent, the core component of agency and freedom is a relational component of interdependency between: I-you (Kvalsund & Allgood, 2008). This need for freedom to construct career meaning is, according to Macmurray (1992), dependent upon the other's need for freedom to construct meaning as well. The other is in Macmurray's texts other persons in their community. In the need for freedom to construct career meaning, one is dependent on a reciprocal interdependence with other persons in their community that are also free and act out from their own nature. In other words, the autonomous individual is conditioned by this interdependence (Kvalsund, 1998). More specifically, persons are reliant on and develop by the degree of boundaries generated by other persons' level of activity in community (Kvalsund & Allgood, 2008). This active interdependency is a prerequisite for being able to be truly free in constructing career meaning in community. In other words, *"Each of us impacts on all others. We are all responsible for one another. Freedom is the gift we give and receive from each other"* (Macmurray, 1992, p. xiv). Further Macmurray emphasises that being a participant of community is a rational convenience for freedom. Living in a community requires that persons must give up some of their autonomy for the sake of other persons and for the sake of continuing freedom for themselves.

What does this view of freedom and agency contribute to in terms of the tension between independent subjective career meaning construction and the relational action of acting out meaningful career? Does the perspective that Macmurray gives us on freedom and agency imply that freedom and agency must be seen in relational dimensions, and persons who are constructing career meaning in their career choices must be aware of this? Let us take for granted that Macmurray's perspective is realistic and trustworthy.

As I have mentioned above, the factor that is the ground for this discussion has an individual perspective on freedom and agency for constructing meaning. In other words, this existential factor does not experience Macmurray's (1992) perspective where freedom and community

must be seen in a reciprocal interdependence as important and significant for their career meaning construction process. In this sense “interdependence” is the need and prerequisite for achieving freedom for being able to construct meaning in this factor, and not interdependency as Macmurray highlights as important. “Interdependence” is the concept that Macmurray argued against. “Interdependence” emphasises that every person in the world is independent, and persons can act on their independency in every circumstance. Living in an “interdependence” community requires that every other person has an individual perspective on meaning construction in terms of their meaningful career, and all act on their freedom. To be totally free to construct career meaning implies a totally independent community, where persons do not get influenced by anybody other than their own self to construct career meaning. For this independent view and value to be possible, everybody in the community must experience themselves as independent; therefore this is a requirement for having an independent meaning construction experience.

How realistic is that? In this view of “interdependence”, might there be a fear of dependency in constructing meaning into their career choices? A fear of dependency can imply a fear for being influenced and controlled by other persons (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003; Macmurray, 1992). In other words, this fear can contain so much fear towards others’ influence that the person might withdraw from others in the construction phase of constructing career meaning. This factor indicates a negative attitude toward what others can contribute and in that sense, is a fear of negative motivational forces and a negative phase of independence for constructing career meaning. In other words, this factor defines others’ contribution as a negative motivational force for constructing career meaning. Having a negative motivational force for constructing meaning implies that the motivation for constructing career meaning lies outside the autonomous individual, and is not intrinsically inside the individual. Having a fear of others using power over one for the intention of controlling one is a negative motivational force (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003). According to Kvalsund (1998), when persons who are negatively dependent with negative motivation they are controlled by the external forces that lie out in the community. In other words, the “I” is controlled by the “You” and constructing career meaning in such a negatively dependent paradigm implies that the external forces construct the career meaning for the person that is in a career meaning construction exploration process. Also together with this fear of negative motivational force, this factor’s view can be looked upon as a negative aspect of the independence phase. Kvalsund claims that being independent is very important for the person

to develop in life but if the person that is independent also excludes other persons the value of independence become a negative phase of independence. Kvalsund underlines that persons cannot develop alone in the world, one needs other persons, to get to know one self, and this also becomes evident for the meaning construction phase; one needs others, to develop and construct career meaning. Instead of including other persons into the construction phase, one excludes other persons in this factor in an “interdependent” community. Therefore, this factor may indicate a negative independence phase.

One can also look at this fear of power and control another way. At the same time as persons in this factor might fear dependency and negative motivational forces in the construction phase of career meaning, they use power over themselves for the intention of self-control. This self-control is then a positive motivational force for constructing meaning and a positive phase of independency (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003). By fearing dependency and fearing negative motivational force, persons want to control themselves in order to be free to construct the meaning they desire. In this way, this factor uses both positive and negative power, and therefore uses positive motivation towards one self, and fears negative dependent motivational force. However, by overdoing the fear of dependency and self-control can lead to “interdependent” utopia realities, where the persons try to act out their meaningful career.

This “interdependent” otherness can lead to a power play between persons, where persons try to push themselves forward using their freedom and independent agency no matter what in order to accomplish their goal of achieving an existentially meaningful career in which they can be self-actualised. In such a power play persons are not willing to give up their value of independent freedom and agency to act out their meaningful career. On the other hand, giving up some freedom and agency when persons are acting out their career meaning, can also be misguided because the meaning persons have constructed for their meaningful career was constructed on the basis of independent freedom and agency, but when acting out their career that has the basis in their career meaning construction exploration, persons have to give up some of the freedom they used to construct career meaning to be able to act out their meaningful career with others. According to Kvalsund (1998) in reality where persons act out their meaning, there is always less independent freedom, than in the meaning construction world (persons inward construction process), because in acting out the meaning there exists other persons that one must relate to. This can imply that persons might also have to give up some of their career meaning that was constructed in the construction process, because they have to take others into consideration when they are acting out their career meaning. This

paradox, where including others when acting out their career can lead to letting go of what is meaningful for them, and not including others in the career meaning construction and acting out their meaning, can lead to competitive power plays between persons and is not appropriate for any persons in their career. It seems that if interactions are to become real, whatever persons do, they have to let go of something. The important aspect here is that persons are aware of the contexts or the community forces. Including others in the career meaning construction phase might be the most sensible thing to do because when acting out their career, persons will have a capacity to include others without letting go of their aim and meaning. In this way one can look at the dependency sphere as a positive aspect and asset of constructing career meaning, where others are not a negative element, taking away something from the person that is constructing. Questions that might be asked are: What can others do and contribute to so that I can construct and act out a career that is meaningful for me? The basic key to freedom is such a perspective, and according to Macmurray (1992) is self-transcendent in action. The persons' capacity for self-transcendent action is unfolded through the other, in relation to the others' resistance and support. In this perspective if persons don't receive resistance or support, it is impossible to act. Sustaining and building the reciprocity between the self (I) and You is also the key to self-expression and self-actualisation (Kvalsund, 1998). Further, the core to satisfactory action and freedom is being active in community with others. Being autonomous in this perspective is to be an active agent in terms of and through others.

10.4.1.2 Summary of discussion about agency and freedom

In this discussion I have explored the tension between 1) independent agency and freedom, and 2) acting out career meaning in persons' career, where other persons exist. As a conclusion one can say that a person in this existential meaning factor might need to become aware of and include others in the career meaning construction process, so that their freedom and agency can be used in acting out a career that includes others. In that way, agency promotes real freedom and relational authenticity in their careers in the meeting with other agents in the community, without losing their individual selves.

10.4.2 Relational meaning approach: factor 2

Figure 19 shown below visualises the central theoretical concepts in factor 2's view of career meaning construction in relation to their career choices⁸⁸. Collective self, external relations, external success, pay and security and extrinsic motivation are seen as important theoretical concepts for the career meaning construction process so that the persons can construct a meaningful career, where the aim is relational meaning.

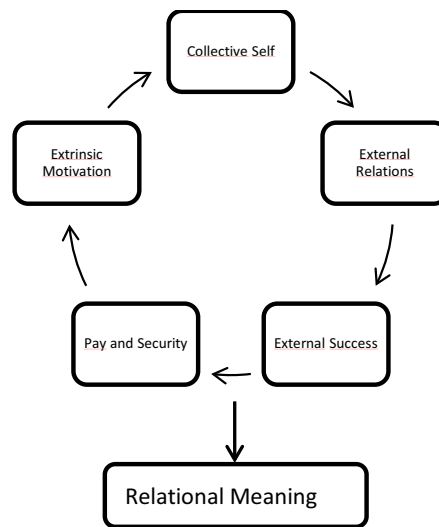


Figure 19: Core points of factor 2

In opposition to factor 1 that emphasised the subjective self as prerequisite for constructing career meaning, this factor emphasises the collective self as the basis for making meaningful career choices. According to Sedikides and Brewer (2001) the collective self is achieved by one's presence in a social or cultural group and discriminating the group one belongs to from other relevant external groups. This collective self-perspective changes the perspective on the person from a unique person to a person who is a member of a social or cultural group (Flores, Ramos, & Kanagui, 2010). The motive for the collective self in a person is to protect and enhance the group in which one is a member. For the career meaning construction process this implies that the aim is cultural, and persons find the meaning for their career choices within the cultural or social group in which they are members. Since the persons categorise their selves as cultural beings, and construct meaning from what the culture defines as meaningful, one can say that they have developed a cultural identity. Cultural identity is defined in social psychology as the likeness with some persons and distinctiveness from

⁸⁸ I have not taken every perspective that is shown in the factor interpretation, but selected out significant perspectives that show the overall factor view.

others, and in this way persons are capable of reflecting over whom they are in terms of the cultural group, and who they are not in terms of the cultural group one belongs to (Owens, 2006). This external career meaning construction view represents Holmberg's (1994) perspective on objective meaning. Holmberg's perspective on objective meaning is emphasised as culturally and socially based. What is defined in the culture and the social matrix as meaningful is also defined as meaningful for the person who is a part of the culture and social matrix. This perspective can also be defined as a social constructionist approach to career meaning construction. In a social constructionist approach in terms of the career context, the meaning construction phase is culturally and socially based (Stead, 2004). In this perspective independent meaning does not exist, the meaning is already set in the culture, and the person adopts this meaning into their self. This view can remind us of Frankl's (1978) perspective on meaning, where the person must search for meaning outside of their selves, out in the objective valued based world. Based on Frankl's perspective, I will call the process of career meaning exploration in this factor the process of finding meaning. The reasoning for using the term "finding meaning" is because this factor has an external meaning perspective.

This perspective of finding career meaning can seem as totally external and not beneficial for persons, and as an extrinsic motivational process of creating a meaningful career. This extrinsic motivation comes through in the whole process of finding meaning, where concepts such as, security and pay, career success, and extrinsic motivation for action influences the process of making meaningful career choices that lead to relational meaning as the content of their meaningful career. Such an external action Bandura (2001) calls proxy agency. Bandura emphasised that proxy agency is a type of agency that persons commit to when they search externally for persons who have more expertise than themselves for finding meaning in their career choices.

When it comes to this factor's perspective on career, concepts such as security, payment and survival are important for finding meaning in career choices. These concepts come from the traditional motivational source for working (Peterson & González, 2005). In some ways this career perspective can be defined as doing a job. In this dissertation the concept of career as a job is viewed as one discourse in the career view paradigm, where the goal is just to have work so that one can have food on the table and have a secure income. Also this view of career can be looked upon as externally motivated, where the actual job is not important but the outcome of the job as payment and security is more important (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). For this factor the focus on outcome is also internally driven, and meaningful.

In the sense that payment and security are important, the favourable outcome for career success is externally defined by the work environment and, therefore, is objective (Hall, 2001). As mentioned in the theory chapter on career success, objective success is often defined in terms of payment (Baumeister, 1991). In factor 2's view success is not about earning a lot of money, but it is about earning money for survival. The objective approach to success is viewed in terms of the work environment and organisation: What does the work environment communicate about success? This type of success perspective can be seen in the concepts of satisfaction and satisfactoriness, which indicates the correlation between the person and the work environment. How satisfied persons are in their career can determine how successful persons feel in their career, and how satisfied the workplace is with the person, can determine how successful a person feels in their career. In this view of finding career meaning, there is a high weight on the work environment; what the work environment communicates about career success (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). This overly weighted perspective on work environment, according to Lofquist and Dawis, leads to a correlation problem between the person and the environment, and can lead to stagnation in persons' career, because the persons act upon externally defined success, and not on internally defined success.

Deci and Ryan (2000a) would define this type of extrinsic motivation as introjected motivation, where the emphasis is on external locus of control for action. A person whose motivation is introjected has internalised the external meaning that exists in the culture or social matrix for psychological reasons such as fear for letting their culture down. Being a disappointment to their culture for not choosing a meaningful career that is already defined in the culture may be such a strong feeling for them that they accept the cultural norm. As it comes through in the factor description and interpretation the externally defined career meaning construction and career view lies in the persons' heart and therefore it is an indication that the strong emphasis on finding meaning that is defined by the culture is integrated into their collective self. One could ask the question whether this type of motivation has become intrinsic since it has been integrated into their heart, which then indicates that the motivation to have a meaningful career lies within the person and not outside the person as one might think at first. Deci and Ryan assert that this is not possible, that intrinsic motivation must lie within persons' self from the beginning of the meaning construction activity regarding their career choices.

The figure that I showed in the beginning of the discussion of this relational meaning factor shows how the collective self, determines which concepts are acted on in the process of achieve meaning in careers. There are many aspects of this relational meaning view that are worthy of discussion, but I have chosen to go further with the discussion about externally developed career contra internally developed career in relation to their agency.

10.4.2.1 Externally motivating meaningful career

In reflecting about the consequences of this factor's relational meaning perspective in terms of its agency in its career, I have more questions, than answers. This relational factor has a "we" focus where the culture and external relations represent what is meaningful for what the individual persons should view and act on as meaningful in their career. In other words, this "we" focus could be looked upon as a tension between acting upon the persons' own desires or the culture's desires. The question that can be raised in terms of this factor's view of career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices is: Who is the best to listen to, the culture or one's self in making meaningful career choices? Does this culture-based identity perspective in find meaning in persons' career choices and in their careers imply that persons sacrifice their needs and wants to find their meaning in their careers? Would this imply that persons don't find the personal meaning that is emphasised in career literature as important? Or is this culture-based meaning really their personal meaning? Could it also seem like persons choose what their duty is and not what is their pleasure? Would this mean that this factor would not cope well in a changing society not being able to adjust to all the changes they need to consider in their career? I will try and answer these questions by discussing concepts such as taught meaning, restricted freedom, introjection, projection, self- sacrifice, and challenges of dependent relationships. Most of the focus will be on relational theory, and when focusing on relational theory I will focus on the two polarities: the positive and negative dependency spheres⁸⁹.

This view of cultural and relational meaning can be interpreted in the terms of restrictions of freedom and taught meaning (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Restrictions of freedom and taught meaning refers to the view that persons have limited choices to choose from, don't have the freedom to choose what they want for themselves in achieving a meaningful career, and that persons learn from the culture how to make career choices. In this sense the meaning that

⁸⁹ I am aware that many different and nuanced perspectives exist on relational perspectives (for example positive dependency, negative dependency, positive independency, negative independency, positive interdependency, and negative interdependency). I have chosen to focus mainly on the negative and positive aspect of dependency relationships, since this plays a large role in the factor interpretation. Also it is possible to interpret this factor as positively dependent and negatively dependent towards others, culture and community.

persons place in their career choices is taught from the culture to which they are belonging and is not acted upon based on the persons' freedom. This can seem as paradoxical, since freedom and personal self-constructed meaning in career choices has been emphasised as a very important need for being able to achieve a meaningful career (Chen, 2001).

What happens when persons don't experience this freedom that is emphasised in the literature as a prerequisite for constructing meaning in their career and choices? Do these persons decrease or increase their sense of inner control because they don't experience freedom in constructing meaning? Cochran (1997) emphasised that for persons to act in terms of their desires, they have a need for a sense of inner control for being able to act as an agent and not as a patient. However, by also needing freedom, would that not challenge the need for inner control for the person? By believing in that one is free in the world, and has all the choices one chooses to have, may indicate that the need for inner control in constructing career meaning into career choices would be challenged because the more choices one has in achieving a meaningful career the less control the person has. In career literature and general choice literature it has been emphasised that with freedom to choose what one wants to do in one's career, one can be challenged by the need for inner control. It is not automatic that with a high level of freedom one will experience a high level of inner control. It may be that a person would experience a high level of freedom and at the same time experience a low level of inner control (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). This may imply that persons who experience their career meaning construction in relation to their career choices as controlled by the culture, have a higher level of felt and experienced inner control, because they don't experience meaningful career choices around every corner. What is meaningful is already determined and therefore personal freedom to choose and construct meaning in terms of their self will not challenge their inner control, because persons don't construct meaning for themselves, and therefore they don't experience the challenge between freedom and a sense of inner control in terms of their agency. In terms of control as discussed above it might also indicate that the control lies outside in the culture and that control is introjected by the person so that it becomes their inner control.

This "we" focus in the finding meaning phase can be interpreted as being restricted by persons' low level of freedom as their career meaning is taught to them through their upbringing in terms of their culture. In terms of relational theory, this relationship between the person and the culture is categorised as a You-I relationship (Kvalsund, 1998; Macmurray, 1992). The "you" is categorised as the culture, and has a stronger authority than the

independent persons (“I”) choosing meaningful career choices for themselves (Kvalsund & Allgood, 2008). Persons learn to know themselves through others: I learn to know myself through my culture and social relations. In this way, persons develop a culture-based identity and self (Flores, et al., 2003) through a dependency relation and this can imply that they are controlled by the You. According to Macmurray (1992) this situation can be categorized as a dependency sphere of agency. If persons rely on other persons in the culture to let them choose meaning for them, they are dependent on other persons. A prototypical dependent relationship is often categorized as a relationship between parent and child, where the child is dependent on the parent in order to survive. The child cannot develop without the parent that has the authority and life experience (Kvalsund & Allgood, 2008). This dependency relationship is categorized as positive if this relationship is seen as a necessity for the child to transform and develop (Kvalsund, 1998) and negative if the power of the dependency relationship is preserved inappropriately (Kvalsund & Allgood, 2008). To transform this parent-child relationship into this relational meaning factor, one could say that a dependency relationship towards other persons within their culture in finding meaning in their career can be positive if it leads to growth and transformation but if the dependency relationship is used to control how the person finds meaning it becomes negative. It can also be interpreted in terms of extrinsic motivation for action that is often categorised as a negative relational influence (Kvalsund, 1998) for choosing meaningfully career choices.

According to Macmurray (1992) the purpose we choose for our career or life in general, should be a social purpose. Persons are a part of a community, and therefore they should devote themselves to the common good. Every person has a place in society. Persons’ duty is to serve others. Further, Macmurray highlighted that if persons are judged in terms of serving their community, then they are made into instruments for doing something. If persons are at their best by listening to what their culture has to say about meaningful career choices then persons are acting out from their nature. However, if the purpose or meaning does not belong to the person but belongs to the society or culture then the meaningful career choice for the person is false. If other persons in their culture are telling the persons what to do, what to choose, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good of the culture, then the culture and themselves are denying the right to be real persons. More specifically, self-sacrifice implies that I am the one who chooses to sacrifice myself. This does not imply that if other persons determine what one should do, it is self-sacrificing. The person chooses to self-sacrifice oneself. In other words, one chooses to self-sacrifice one’s needs and wants, on the basis of

the cultures and other persons' wants and wishes. As a result of this self-sacrifice, one loses one's freedom, and becomes a machine. In this way the ideal of communion undermines freedom. In transforming these thoughts from Macmurray into this relational meaning factor, the implications can be positive if persons who are choosing and acting out their meaningful career listen to what the culture and others say, because that is for the common good and the persons' best. However, if this relational factor chooses self-sacrifice because of what the culture says and does not choose meaning for itself, it is negative. In other words, if persons only connect to the meaning that the culture expresses, without listening to their selves, the career meaning is negatively introjected and is still objective within the persons. In such cases persons choose to self-sacrifice their selves to the culture, their needs and wants are swept away, and the aim for finding meaning becomes a duty rather than a pleasure for them. If persons listen to themselves in directing the focus to their culture, then the process of finding meaning becomes a positive introjection, where the objective meaning that persons integrate becomes subjective, and again becomes a personal meaning for the persons.

In opposition to factor 1 that viewed and experienced that other persons do not contribute to their construction of career meaning, this relational factor views and experience other persons' contributions as very important and positive for their development of a meaningful career and for choosing meaningfully. The main difference in terms of these two factors is that factor 1 fears dependency, while this relational factor is attracted to other persons, in what can be categorised as a dependent relationship between the culture and the person that is choosing and acting meaningfully. What does this dependency relationship imply for persons that are strongly addicted to their culture? Are they negatively dependent on others or positively dependent on others? In discussing the negative aspect of being dependent⁹⁰ upon others and their culture sense, the concepts of introjection and projection become relevant for discussion. One interpretation could be that persons who belong to this negative dependent relational view introject what the culture emphasises as important meaning in their career and they then project the meaning back onto the culture. Sartre (2003) would call the introjection negative choice, because the meaningful career choices have not been made by the subjective being but have been made by the external culture. Projection is a process of attributing one's own feeling, thoughts and desires onto the external structures such as other persons (Clarkson, 2004). In this case persons are aware where the meaning comes from, so they attribute the meaning back to the culture. What about ownership of the meaning? Would persons that view

⁹⁰ The negative aspect of being dependent is defined as the other controls the person, for the other's best interest.

their meaningful career choices through negative dependent relational meaning have the same ownership to the meaning they have chosen for their career choices as those persons who chose out from a positive relational meaning? Let us think about the scenario of discovering that the career choice that was chosen was not meaningful for the person. What happens when persons find out that their career choices are not meaningful? Will they take responsibility for this failure, or will they project that failure back to what the culture communicated about what is meaningful to choose? Projection is often used as a defence mechanism; when the persons do not face the pain of choosing wrongly, and instead of facing the pain they blame the culture, rather than acknowledging that they were mistaken to introject the meaning from the culture as the truth for making successful meaningful career choices. In this sense the consequence of this factor's meaningful career choices as negative dependent meaning becomes a tension between the polarity of introjection and projection. Another consequence in viewing this factor as a negative phase of dependency is that being too dependent on others can wear out⁹¹ the persons who are acting upon dependency on others in their career, and they can fall into a feeling of career stagnation⁹². If persons in a relational meaning perspective feel that others know what is best for them in a changing conditions in terms of their career, without reflecting what is best and most meaningful for them to do they can experience themselves as constrained by what others feel and think about a meaningful career choices in changing conditions. This consequence can wear out persons and as a result they can lack the energy to counteract possible manipulation to act on what is best for the working organisation, rather than what is best for them. It has been emphasised in most career-counselling literature (Chen, 2001) that the persons themselves must choose what is meaningful. Persons in our rapidly changing society must have the freedom, agency and inner control to choose and construct meaning for themselves in their career. Without such capacities in changing career conditions, persons would feel lost in their selves. Having too much weight on the dependency sphere in relations (being controlled by the other) can cause a vacuum and stagnation because persons adapt too much to the changing conditions in their career, and can lose their self in the adaption process, because others persons have the solutions for what to do in a changing career. Then again they introject what others do as the only solution, without reflecting for themselves how they act in changing career conditions.

⁹¹ Wearing out a person indicates that the person gets tired. In this dependency perspective a person gets worn out by always doing and acting in terms of the other.

⁹² Career stagnation can be understood as a person's career stops developing. Another way of saying it could be: My career is standing still.

Being controlled by the other implies a relationship that is asymmetrical, because the other has more power and uses it, deliberately over the person that is acting and choosing meaningfully.

What could be positive in being dependent on other persons and their culture? Kvalsund (1998) and Macmurray (1991) emphasise that dependency can also be something positive for the person. They call being dependent on others as a positive aspect of persons' development interdependency. This relationship is categorized as an I-You relationship, which indicates that persons are interdependent on each other. In other words, being interdependent on others and the culture indicates a positive phase of dependency relationship, where the person (I) has the same weight as You. Being in a positive dependent relationship acknowledges the other's role in one's life and career, and also oneself (Kvalsund, 1998). This positive dependency perspective can be looked upon in relation to communion theory. Communion theory emphasises becoming a self in community with others. Communion refers to the persons' participation in some larger organism in which the person is a part, and is manifested in union, openness, love and intimacy (Bakan, 1966, p. 15). Persons that recognise that they are a part of something larger than themselves, experience participation as being close to someone or something (Hermans & Hermans, 1995). Angyal (1965) emphasises that persons who identify themselves through a communion perspective have a desire for harmony, fitting into an environment and participating in something larger than their self through union with a specific social or cultural group. The person's self is expressed by such specific motives as interpersonal contact. Even though this perspective of desire for union does not come through explicitly in the sorting of the statements, the interview with an informant expressed this view by emphasising other persons in his culture as important, and that other persons lie in his heart. This perspective is a symmetrical perspective on relationships.

Earlier I discussed the question of whether persons who act dependently in terms of others would have an ownership to their career meaning that they acted upon. If we look at it again from a positive dependency perspective, it might look differently. If the factor is defined as interdependent, and not negatively dependent, then persons and their community will share the career meaning ownership. This would imply that the persons introject career meaning as their subjective personal meaning, and is acted on in their personal subjective career meaning. In this way the persons acknowledge both their role and others role. It might also indicate responsibility for their decisions in making meaningful career choices, and acting on that responsibility in terms of their meaningful career. For example, if persons act on the career

meaning, that was not after all meaningful for them, they would in an interdependent relationship take responsibility, and not just project the meaning and the failure of choosing wrongly back to the culture. Acknowledging the failure of acting out their false career meaning, and reflecting what they can choose now that is more meaningful for them in terms of their culture would then be the result of this positive dependent relationship. Self-sacrifice would not be a question in this perspective because one is aware that one's career meaning is shared with others in their community. Macmurray (1992) emphasised that in choosing to sacrifice oneself by being negatively dependent, one also sacrifices what is best for the community. The community of other persons are better off when one not only reflects what is best for the community, but also reflect what is best for one in relation to the community that one is a part of. In reflecting about what is best for one in relation to one's community, a social purpose is chosen for one's meaningful career, and by acting in terms of this social purpose, one constructs meaning in dependent relationship; the dependency is transcended into interdependent perspective.

Persons can be a part of a positive dependency relationship to other persons, culture, and social matrix and where they specifically act out their career, namely the workplace. Being aware that other persons can support them and challenge them can give persons a feeling that they belong in community (Deci & Ryan, 2000a) and can also support the meaningful career they have chosen. Being part of positive dependent relationships can contribute to adaptability. In newer career literature there is an emphasis on the need for persons who are career adaptive (Savickas, 2000), which means being able to cope with changing conditions in persons' career, whether it is changing a career or the workplace conditions where persons act out their specific career (Eggerwein, Krieshok, Ulven, & Prosser, 2004). Being aware of the positive influences of others, persons can approach them in the process of changing conditions, and thereby become more adaptive to those changing conditions because they can get the support that they might need. In that way, the dependency sphere becomes positively motivating to the person to adapt to new conditions. In other words, a positive dependency sphere can help persons obtain and achieve career meaning in a developing and changeable career by getting support from others to become more adaptive.

I have not discussed the possibility whether this factor emphasises mutuality as the frame for being a part of a larger context. It came through the factor interpretation, that this factor did not place mutuality statements on either the positive side of the sorting schema or the negative side. However, the factor can have a tendency to acknowledge the mutuality concept. It was

discovered through the interview that, the participant had not thought of the importance of others' roles as mutual. One reason for that can be because the word mutuality that was used in the statements that were placed in the neutral zone was understood as being theoretical and not practical relating to subjective experience.

10.4.2.2 Summary of discussion about relational career meaning

In this discussion I have explored possible consequences for their career choices in terms of relational meaning. I have categorised the relational meaning as a type of dependent meaning, which can be looked upon as both positive and negative. It seems to me that the consequences of positive and negative dependent meaning construction lie in the heart of introjection-projection, and career adaptability. It can be important for the person to become aware of the possible negative outcomes of having too much weight on the negative dependency sphere, without touching the positive dependent sphere in terms of career meaning, and their agency, both in terms of placing meaning into their career choices and when they are acting out their career choices in working organisations.

10.4.3 Career success meaning approach: factor 3

The third factor represents a traditional⁹³ career view, where the aim is to climb up the career ladder. In other words the career meaning construction and career meaning is constructed in terms of persons climbing up the career ladder perspective. The theoretical model (figure 20) below shows the main elements in this career success view; what persons view as important for constructing meaning into their career choices⁹⁴. These main elements are independence, internal control, self-efficacy, perceived autonomy, and climbing up the career ladder, which helps the persons to achieve their career meaning; namely career success.

⁹³ Saying that the factor represents a traditional career view is based on Herr and Cramer 's (2001) description of traditional career views.

⁹⁴ I have not taken every perspective that is shown in the factor interpretation, but selected out significant perspectives that show the overall factor view.

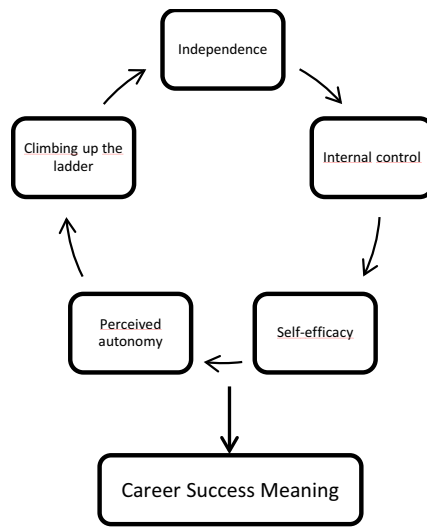


Figure 20: Core points of factor 3

When it comes to the career meaning construction perspective, this view like factor 1 represents a subjective meaning construction process that is represented by Holmberg's (1994) perspective on subjective meaning. Holmberg highlighted this perspective in terms of the individual life, where persons constructed and knew what type of meaning that was mostly valued for them. Also the emphasis is on the independent self (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001) in this factor. In terms of the subjective meaning construction value, this factor can also be looked upon in a social constructivist perspective, similar to factor 1.

In a social constructivist approach in a career context, career meaning construction and career meaning is looked upon as an individual and idiosyncratic process (Young & Collin, 2004). In other words, a social constructivist approach to career meaning and construction has a high independent value. The person (I) figures in the front with the context in the background of career meaning construction phase. This perspective on constructing meaning into career choices is internally driven, which implies that persons construct and make meaning internally excluding the context around them as contributing to their meaning construction. According to Young and Collin constructing meaning internally means that the person assimilates career meaning into already pre-existing schemes. Incorporating career meaning into already pre-existing schemes means that what is meaningful for the person already exists in the person, and making new meaningful career choices fits what already exist in the person, and that is assimilation. Iyengar (2010) highlight this value of independency in terms of choosing as individualism. Persons who are raised in an individual based western society are taught to have focus on the "I" in their own self when they are choosing, and that they can develop in

any way they want to, based on their free choices. To transfer this thought of taught individualism to this view of career meaning construction, implies that persons are taught that the subject (I) is in charge of constructing meaning that is meaningful for them and the context is not included in this process. Persons just continue this strategy of constructing career meaning for themselves throughout their lifespan. Having this independent value of meaning construction would help persons have an inner control and inner feelings of what is meaningful for them.

A need for experiencing inner control and inner feeling for constructing career meaning in terms of career choices can be seen in relation to the concept of internal locus of control. The concept of internal locus of control refers to the belief that persons can control the events that influence them (Judge & Bono, 2001). Persons that need a high level of internal locus of control for constructing meaning into their career choices believe that constructing career meaning is primarily a result of their own action and behaviour. Also persons with high internal locus of control assume that their endeavours for achieving a meaningful career will be successful. This internal locus of control approach is closely related to the concept of self-efficacy that was introduced by Bandura (1986). The concept of self-efficacy implies that if persons expect the mastery of situations and tasks in life, they have a greater chance of actually mastering the specific situation and task (Bandura, 2001). For example in this career success meaning factor the persons expect to and need to experience climbing up the career ladder for experiencing a meaningful career. This belief and need for climbing up the career ladder can guide them when persons are making new career choices where the aim is to climb further up the career ladder so they can succeed in achieving a meaningful career. It is only persons that can control the event or situation of making new career choices so they achieve their goal for their career, namely climbing up the career ladder. Further in this self-efficacy perspective the importance of believing that one will not give up when meeting obstacles is highlighted, the environment does not control the person, if the person does not let the environment control them (Bandura, 1986). In this perspective of career meaning construction, it is important to have a positive belief that one will climb up the ladder no matter what the obstacles might be. Deci and Ryan (2000a) emphasise that perceived autonomy is important for persons to experience self-determination in their career. Perceived autonomy is closely related to inner locus of control and self-efficacy. If persons experience their selves as autonomous, they have a better chance of experiencing their life as self-

determined. In other words, it seems that this factor believes in self-determination to climb up the career ladder that might have an aim of glorifying their selves.

Expressing their self in terms of climbing up the ladder is called a linear perspective on career development (Baumeister, 1991), where the aim and intention is to climb up as fast as possible. A linear perspective of career, by climbing up the ladder, is emphasised as the core to glorifying the person's self. By achieving this goal of climbing up the ladder to achieve career success, the persons' need for recognition of their self is completed. In achieving a meaningful career by constructing career meaning in terms of climbing up the ladder to achieve career success it seems that the basic goal is to express the self.

The view of persons expressing their selves in a meaningful career by climbing up the ladder in this factor implicitly acknowledges that persons are dependent on the organisation wherein they act out their careers. This perspective is in alignment with Herzberg's (1959) theory on satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Herzberg theory emphasised that persons who viewed their career through work content such as recognition and advancement seemed to be satisfied, and thereby have success in their career. Also Pritchard's theory (1969) is in alignment with this perspective on career success, where the emphasis is on the person's cognition about what to do to achieve career success. Satisfaction that is a basis for career success comes from persons' own evaluation of what is satisfying for them in a career in a working organisation. Lofquist and Dawis (1969) theory of work adjustment also fits this factor's aim of achieving satisfaction by reaching career success. Lofquist and Dawis distinguish between satisfactoriness and satisfaction. The goal is to have correspondence between satisfactoriness, which is the work environment's indicator, and satisfaction, which is the person's internal indicator for satisfaction. Having too much weight on either satisfaction or satisfactoriness will lead to problems with the correspondence between the workplace and the person. In terms of this factor, there might be an indication of too much weight on the satisfaction concept, because it is mainly the persons that want to and do climb up the career ladder with some help from the organisation.

So what are the consequences of such a career meaning construction view? I would like to ask the question, how realistic is such an independent view of career meaning construction, where others are not a significant part of this construction phase? Is it possible for a person to achieve career success, by climbing up the career ladder, without much help from others? Is it possible that this career meaning view also has a fear of dependency similar to factor 1? What about the person's agency, and freedom in terms of acting out such a view? One paradox that

came through the interview with a person on the factor was the distinction between the meaning construction, which was experienced as an inwards process, and agency and freedom, which was experienced as an outgoing process in acting out a career? I will continue to discuss these questions.

10.4.3.1 Inward need for career meaning construction that becomes an integrated meaning construction process and career action process

In discussing factor 3, I have more questions than answers. It was emphasised that this factor's meaning construction was independent, where persons don't need their agency and freedom, because using agency is something a person applies when they are acting out their meaningful career and not when they are constructing (then they use their own thoughts and feelings, thereby being independent and free). What can be the reason for this independent view of meaning construction? At one level, this independent inward career meaning construction without using one's agency seems logical because agency is about one's capacity to act out in the world (Bandura, 2001). However, having the achievement of career success by climbing up the ladder as a central goal in one's career in my view, is pointing to an external perspective on achieving a meaningful career, and therefore there is eventually a need to act outwards in the world, and not just reside within one's feelings and inner control.

I ask the question: Doesn't achieving this career meaning goal by climbing up the career ladder imply an external career meaning construction, where one finds meaning out in the world by acting out one's intentional goal of wanting career success together with one's internal feelings. Would not persons be better off applying an interactive perspective of subject-object in terms of career meaning construction rather than a firm focus on the subject in the construction process? Isn't it so that to achieve career success as the career meaning by climbing up the career ladder one might have an advantage by directing one's self externally by using one's relational agency to achieve one's goal through consciously interacting with other persons and the work organisation?⁹⁵ What can be the possible negative and positive consequences of viewing career meaning and career meaning construction as a sole agency acted out from an internal individual process? Further in this discussion I will focus on independent agency and relational agency.

⁹⁵ I am aware that this factor acknowledges that to achieve one's goal of climbing up the ladder in one's career, one has to have the same goal as the working organisation for achieving career success, but it seems to me that first and foremost in this factor one trusts oneself in constructing meaning, and once one has constructed meaning for climbing up the ladder, one has to relate to the working organisation to achieve one's goal. In other words it seems that this factor has a sole independent construction view, and when one is going to act out one's meaning in their career context one has to relate to the external world in a structural manner, to achieve one's goal, even though other persons don't contribute to one's career meaning. Therefore I have concentrated the discussion on independent agency and relational agency in constructing meaning and in acting out one's meaning.

The possible lack of awareness of needing relational agency and other persons to achieve their goal of climbing up the career ladder can imply that one's inner feelings and thoughts are the most important and contribute to one's approval of one's meaningful career. This can be seen in connection to Allgood and Kvalsund's (2000) Q-study article on career experiences in Norway, where one of the factors emphasised self-reliance⁹⁶ as central for career choices. In other words it is the inner feeling of control that guides one, rather than other persons' approval of one's career meaning construction process. Therefore the persons don't view that their agency and freedom are needed to complete the goal of climbing up the career ladder, because inner control is an inward perspective according to the persons, and agency is an external perspective in terms of career action. In other words, the meaning construction process indicate a goal of expressing oneself, since the feelings and thoughts are so strong. Together with the indication of expressing oneself, this factor has subjectivity as the primary force for constructing meaning in one's career choices. Persons own cognitive processes, imaginations and feelings are the main source for constructing meaning in career choices. Interactions with others seem less significant, than their inner communications with their subjective self.

What can be the positive consequence of being in contact with one's self in constructing career meaning for climbing up the career ladder, and withdrawing contact from the external other, or external environment? In an individualistic perspective, factor 3's view can reinforce one's belief in oneself, and reinforce listening to oneself, and not losing oneself to authorities when one is constructing meaning. Even though this perspective is an individual perspective, it does not mean that the persons are not in relation or contact with anything when they are constructing meaning; persons don't live in vacuum (Kvalsund, 1998). One could interpret that the persons are in contact with their feelings, which guide them in constructing meaning. In this case the relation and contact is between something different than me and me. This does not mean that the contact zone⁹⁷ must be between oneself and something external to one's own organism. The contact could also be between some different parts in the person's organismic field. For example, this contact could be that I have contact with my feelings. The contact zone is then between oneself and one's feelings, or between one feeling that the person is identifying with and a disturbing feeling that seem to conflict. This relationship is separated out of the wholeness, in such a way, that the person is aware of the contact between

⁹⁶ Persons' inner feelings, thought processes and imaginations

⁹⁷ I am aware that the concept of contact zone is complex. I will only discuss the concept in terms of factor 3.

self and feelings here and now, "the contact is between the I and something different, an 'it' or object within the internal field" (Kvalsund, 1998, p. 16). In this way, one has an internal communication between the self and one's belonging feelings. As mentioned previously, a positive aspect is that in having an internal communication one might build up a trust in oneself. In communicating with oneself and one's inner feelings, one can reflect about oneself as a person in their career: what is meaningful for me?

This inward career meaning construction can be analysed from an individualistic and relational perspective of agency. The question that can be raised is: what does it mean to act with an independent view of internal meaning construction? A meaning construction that is independent can imply an independent agency. Agency is often defined in relation to one's organismic existence as an individual person that is established in self-protection, self-expansion, self-assertion, formation of separations, and mastery of the environment. Hermans and Hermans (1995) described agency as self-esteem, self-confidence, strength, and pride and emphasised that this way of being can indicate that the self is experienced as an autonomous entity strong enough to cope with the existing situation, which in this perspective is climbing up the ladder. This is a rather independent approach to agency where the strong autonomous person is highlighted as the primary force for agency. This implies that persons who construct meaning in terms of climbing up the ladder need a strong autonomous self to be able to achieve such meaning in their career, and this strong autonomous self is something one can say this factor has. However, is it enough to just have this inner feeling, inner control and strong autonomous self as support to be able to act in terms of climbing up the ladder, or is it utopian?

According to Macmurray this autonomous self is not enough. A self as an agent implies integrating one's self with other selves, into an interdependent relationship (Macmurray, 1992). Kvalsund (1998) and Macmurray (1957/99) emphasise that a fully independent meaning construction is not possible, and cannot be done only in an inward process perspective, devoid of any external relational dimensions operating as object relations in the internal contact field. Acting out a meaningful career as fully independent persons who are acting out their career in the world is not realistic and is utopian (Macmurray, 1992). According to Macmurray (1957/99) and Buber (1987), persons have an inborn tendency to communicate; therefore relations are the foundation for persons' existence. In other words, a person cannot act and communicate alone, but a person must act together with others (Macmurray, 1957/99). The same applies to persons' individual meaning construction phase.

Persons do not construct meaning alone. It is through others one gets to know oneself (Macmurray, 1992), and thereby it is through others one gets to construct meaning for oneself, and on that basis act out one's career. To transform Macmurray's and Kvalsund's words into the individualistic career ladder context; persons need others, and act with others to become conscious about climbing up the career ladder as meaningful. With this argument it can seem that this factor might have a blind spot, even though persons on the factor emphasise that they need the working organisation to be able to achieve success. At the same time there is an indication in this factor that the persons don't need other persons both in the construction phase and when they are acting out their career.

To a certain degree autonomous individuals are important for the meaning construction phase and acting out their career, because it is important to distinguish what is my meaning, and what meaning belongs to you, and act upon what is my meaning and aim for my career. Person must learn to take care of themselves (Macmurray, 1992), and find their place in their meaningful career, but it might not be sufficient for developing a meaningful career where the person have found their place. In other words, being able to construct meaning that leads to career success, by climbing up the career ladder, cannot be done alone, one needs the other to know that climbing up the ladder is meaningful for me and possible. This is in alignment with Mead's (1981) perspective on the development of the self. Mead in Kvalsund (2003) underlines that persons can only become self-conscious by involving themselves in and experiencing the social act, by identifying others reactions to their behaviours, even so in the field of internal contact and dialogue with oneself as symbolic interaction with others reactions to oneself. This means that persons that want to climb up the career ladder need to become self-conscious about their goal by participating in community with others. More explicitly, persons need to have been influenced by others in their community for becoming self-conscious about their career goal. This is also in line with the factor description, where factor 3 emphasises former experiences as influential. In other words, the persons' former experiences in school or leisure activities have been integrated into their self, and become meaningful. Mead emphasises that in order to understand the subjective self and self-consciousness one has to look at the self in communicative forms:

(...) the receiver responds to the sender's behaviour and reflects this response in order to enable the sender to integrate this response in his own perceptual field, and to transcend this response in order that his 'I' may relate to the response, which then becomes 'me'. His 'me' thus contains the other person's view of 'me' integrated in the self-structure so that 'I' can form an opinion myself. Mead thus divides the 'self' into an 'I' and a 'me' (Kvalsund, 2003, p. 126).

According to Mead the self is divided into “I” and “me”. The “I” is the reaction to the attitudes of the others, and the “me” is the attitudes of others that the persons adopt into their self (Kvalsund, 2003). In other words it is “I” that has the possibilities to be agent and therefore the internal force that creates “me”, since all actions the “I” does to the environment and others, it also does to itself. To say it differently, the “I” in persons of factor 3 is based on reactions of attitudes of others in their school activities or leisure activities toward their climbing up the ladder and the “me” in factor 3 is the attitude of climbing up the career ladder from former experiences that is integrated into their self. It is valuable for persons to become aware of this communication that can reinforce their individual self, which is important for this factor. The internal- external relationships that determine how the self develops could help these persons more to become aware of where the career meaning comes from, if it is meaningful for them to climb up the career and how to proceed to achieve their career goal. Therefore, directing one’s subjective self outwards could be advantageous for the person that is constructing career meaning; in other words, using one’s relational agency outwards in relation to one’s subjective self, in constructing career meaning. Through becoming aware of the communication between “I” and “me”, one could reinforce the career meaning. To say it differently, having both an internal and external perspective, could contribute to positive elements such as; it is through others that one gets a mastery feeling (self-efficacy) that it is possible to climb up the career ladder, and control external events (perceived autonomy). It seems that the other may have more real weight than it has got in this independent meaning construction. What might be the reason, for this independent view? It may seem that others are not relevant, and the person doesn’t see or has not experienced what others can contribute to in their meaning construction. Persons might fear that others might take away their internal feeling and thoughts, and their belief in their talents and competence, and thereby not contribute to the aim of climbing up the career ladder. This perspective might indicate a fear of dependency or a fear of regressing to it (Kvalsund, 1998), and therefore the persons might exclude others in their meaning construction in order to protect themselves.

Apart from the positive aspect of having a strong autonomous unit, in a relational perspective this belief in their self might turn out to be negative. In a relational contact perspective, a negative aspect of fear of dependency could be isolation, where the person withdraws from contact from the other, if the other doesn’t explicitly contribute to the person’s goal of climbing up the ladder. Macmurray (1957/1999) highlighted that contact with the other, whether it is persons, organisations or community in general, is central for persons’ life

development, which also includes persons' career (Macmurray, 1992). This emphasis on being in contact is based on the philosophy about persons as a part of a developmental field, where the person is influenced and also influences others (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003). Persons are not fully influenced by the other, neither is the person fully free to develop as an independent agent in society. The person's being is created in the contact between possibilities through life experiences and society's development. The person's organism and external environment stand in relation to each other. This relation is the contact zone⁹⁸ with the external environment (Kvalsund, 1998). As mentioned previously, when a person is in contact with something, it does not only imply something external from the individual, being in contact can also imply something within the person's organism. Hostrup (1999) defines the concept of contact zone in 3 categories: 1) inner zone, 2) outer and 3) between zones. The inner zone draws attention to what happens inside a person's body. This can for example be pain, temperature, pleasure/unpleasure. The outer zone draws attention towards the outer world, or more explicitly, the impression from the persons environment; impressions that happens outside of the person's body. Between zones draws attention towards their mental work. This means that the person receives information about their experiences, fantasies, interpretations, plans, explanations and so on. In this zone, it is explored more about the realities, than only the perceptible for the person. All these levels of contact zones cooperate, and they influence each other, and together they represent a gestalt; one holistic experience. For example the outer zone receives some perceptions about being successful of climbing up the career ladder. This information activates the between zone, and memories, experiences, evaluations and so on about similar perceptions is organised into a foreground-background pattern. Dependent on this organisation the inner zone is influenced, and bodily impulses answers this information (feelings, pulse, temperature and so on) that comes from the between zone. All this information is organised as a holistic experience: I need to climb up the ladder to become successful. In terms of this factor, being in isolation and withdrawn from contact implies that the person leaves the outer contact zone, where the external other exists, but the person is still only in contact with the inner contact zone.

To get a greater understanding of the possible negative and positive consequences of this perspective of career meaning construction and career action it would be valuable to refer to the contact, withdrawal and return cycle. This cycle functions like a wave where acting

⁹⁸ The concept of contact zone is a complex phenomenon. It will be impossible to discuss this concept in depth. I will discuss in briefly in terms of factor 3.

persons direct their attention towards others in order to influence and be influenced by others, and then they withdraw from contact with the aim of reflecting on their experience of being in contact with others, and then again returning to the contact of others (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003). According to Kvalsund (Allgood & Kvalsund, 2003) the withdrawn phase of the contact cycle is negative, even though being withdrawn from contact is in the overall contact cycle looked upon as positive, because it gives possibilities to return from withdrawal with greater understanding, that is, to see that I got something from the other. For example: You helped me become aware of that climbing up the ladder is truly something I want. But the withdrawal phase is negative for the person alone, because to withdraw from contact is negative because the action stops, and the person feels forced to stop and reflect about what happened in being in contact. For example, if the person is thinking: I am not in contact with you, because I am only in contact with myself for reflection about what went wrong, or what you took away from me, it is negative. In this example something has happened to the person that implies that the person feels that he or she needs to stop their action in the world. For example the person stopped their action because she or he feels that other person took away his or her possibility to climb further up the ladder, because he or she opened up for discussing the possibility of climbing up the ladder with other working colleagues. A person's action in their context is positive when he or she does not have to stop, and can act out their career meaning without needing to stop and reflect what went wrong. But this does not mean overall that this process is negative: this process of action can become positive, if the withdrawal opens up a possibility for a greater understanding of one self in relation to their intention of action. In other words, it becomes positive as soon as the withdrawal transforms to a phase of reflection about what you gave me in my process, that is, a better understanding for being able to climb up the career ladder. Also the withdrawal becomes negative if the person who has reflected about his or her experience in being in contact, never leaves the withdrawn position and returns to the outer contact zone again, because the experience of reflecting has scared them for example. In this way, persons have a need for having a strong individuality, for being able to be in and return to contact and (inter)action with others in their career, without losing their own selves and their desires. Furthermore, persons need to take care of their selves. Factor 3 can show tendencies for having a strong individuality and having a strong belief in oneself in constructing career meaning, which is a positive aspect. The negative aspect in terms of the contact circle becomes clear if persons don't return into the contact circle because of negative experience being in contact with other persons that did not contribute to their strong individuality and their intention of climbing up the ladder, and that

negativity can for example contribute to isolation in their career. If persons don't return, it could also lead to stagnation in their career. This could imply that persons burnout in their career or stagnate without wanting to, and also because they have defined themselves into the box of climbing up the career ladder, without enough awareness⁹⁹ of needing others' fresh impulses and stimuli in the construction process and action process of achieving career success meaning, they may not get anywhere with their careers. In others words, persons do not seem to acknowledge explicitly interaction with others to achieve their career meaning of climbing up the career ladder for achieving career success in acting out their career, and thereby might not be able to achieve their goal. Another consequence might be that in every attempt of trying to climb up the career ladder, the person might not get anywhere because they have withdrawn from contact with others, and not returned to the contact zone with other persons and their working organisation.

In returning to the contact circle and zones, persons can learn that others don't necessarily take away things from them, but can help and support their way up the career ladder (Hall, 2002). Also persons can learn to take the risk and trust other persons' contributions, and then understand that they also can contribute to others' development of meaning construction (Macmurray, 1992). Persons need their relational agency, to achieve their goal in their meaningful career, but they also need each other, and this implies that persons need to open up their independent agency to include others into their relational agency, and act upon the relational and integrated agency, rather than their independent agency.

10.4.3.2 Summary of the discussion about career success meaning

I have in this discussion, discussed both the possible negative and positive consequences of viewing meaning construction as independent, and what possible consequences such a view could have in acting out their career successfully. The central aim in this discussion is to explore the possibility that persons might have an advantage by becoming aware of the contact zone, so that they see the positive elements of being in contact with the other, and develop their meaning construction in relation to the other, and not withdrawing from the other in all circumstances, believing it is possible to construct meaning in isolation from the other, and acting on their career meaning alone. In other words, persons could have an

⁹⁹ I have mentioned that this factor does to some extent acknowledge others and the working organisation where they act out their career, but the factor only acknowledge that other persons exist in the world and in the context where the career is acted out, but it doesn't believe so much that other persons contribute to the process of climbing up the ladder. When it comes to the working organisation, the factor acknowledges that one is dependent on the organisation to be able to climb up the ladder. But mainly in the factor one does the meaning construction and climbing by oneself, with little help from the organisation and other persons.

advantage of being conscious about their need of applying their agency to construct meaning in terms of being able to climb up the career ladder to achieve career success, and in using their agency to open up to and interact with others.

In the process of achieving a meaningful career based on climbing up the ladder there could be tension between independent career meaning construction and others' contribution to achieving that goal. To achieve one's career goal, one will have the advantage of becoming aware of the conditions of climbing up the career ladder, especially that one needs to act upon the external world, where other persons exist, and in fact use one's agency capacity. One cannot, or rather it seems insufficient to just rely on one's inner feeling and inner control, one needs to include others, and not just the working organisation as a structure and their definition of success, in one's agency in order to receive career success in one's career, otherwise one might act in isolation which is rather unrealistic in today's society. By becoming aware of others' positive role, one might experience that one can help others, and also succeed in climbing up the ladder through the help of others. This is a relational meaning construction process, rather than an independent meaning construction process, where the focus is on relational agency rather than independent agency. This emphasis is also in alignment with new research in the career field (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). Also, opening up for a relational agency might as well contribute to a better correspondence between the concept of job satisfaction (person) and concept of job satisfactoriness (work organisation), rather than just a focus on job satisfaction (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). Having a better correspondence between the two concepts indicates a better chance for the persons in factor 3 to achieve career success by climbing up the career ladder.

10.4.4 The missing link

So far I have discussed the concept of career meaning construction and career meaning from the perspective of the person's agency to construct career meaning and act on that specific career meaning. By this I mean, how persons' experience their selves in terms of choosing meaningful career choices, either in terms of their subjective selves (independency), agency and freedom, inner feeling of control, or the culture and social influence. In this discussion I have discussed the concept of career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of the hypothesis that the career meaning is always constructed from a condition, whether it is the person's culture or the person's freedom and so on.

In terms of the factor presentation and interpretation of the three factors, one major theme in the career counselling field, namely career tests, was not viewed as significant for career

meaning construction. This was surprising for me as researcher, since career tests are major assessment tools used in career counselling (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Below, I focus on what career tests could contribute to, in terms of persons' career meaning construction.

10.4.4.1 Career tests as both an objective and subjective perspective on career meaning construction

According to the 3 factor views in this study, persons who are constructing career meaning into their career choices does not experience or view career tests as important for them in constructing career meaning. So I ask the question: what contribution can career tests make in the person's meaning construction? I will discuss this question by relating it to the three factors.

The theory chapters (part 2) presented the perspective that career tests can be seen in relation to an objective perspective to meaning construction, where the meaning is given to the person by the results of a career test. The test profile is used to impose and project career meaning onto the person. This type of career meaning can be categorized as theoretical because the meaning is already made for the person, without the person subjectively constructing it, although he or she responds to the stimuli of the external test constructs (Holmberg, 1994). Another way of looking at career tests in terms of the concept of career meaning is interactive in that the test profile is not given before the scoring of the person's answers. In this way there is an interaction between the test constructions' pre-existing meaning (theoretical) and the personal meaning (phenomenological) attributed to the questions.

An objective career meaning approach can be understood as representing a positivistic worldview (Campbell & Ungar, 2004) about personality, traits and measured vocational interests. Career tests measure personality traits and vocational interests and use those rather stable self-construct (Dweck, 1999) measurements as the basis for career choice. This positivistic approach is not used today, rather career tests and the resultant profiles are seen as helping tools used as basis for reflection and discussion in career counselling sessions (Amundson, 2003a; 2003b).

Relating career tests to factor 1, one can wonder if factor 1 doesn't see the importance of career testing, due to its prejudice about the objective world. In terms of factor 1, where the emphasis is on existential meaning, this objective meaning approach could contribute to persons' career meaning construction by focusing on the objective self, the more stable personal disposition, characteristics and special dispositions (Holland, 1997). A person's personality type, preferences and aptitudes are internalised in the person's subjective self.

These elements don't need to be treated as static profiles; instead the information from career tests can be used in counselling dialogues to investigate the person's experiences and desires in terms of a meaningful career. The information that is based on the profile of the measured (objective) self can be interpreted in a more active engagement of the subjective self. Since the factor believes so highly in freedom and agency persons can use their freedom and agency to reflect of what the profile communicates about them, and how this can contribute to their meaningful career. Using aspects of the objective self and the subjective self may be helpful in concretizing one's meaning into one's career choices. Persons can reflect and use their freedom to either reject the career tests' projected and objective meaning or integrate the meaning into their subjective self. In the latter case, the objective career meaning becomes subjective career meaning.

In terms of factor 2, where the emphasis was on relational meaning, the objective meaning approach could contribute to emphasising one's subjective self and role in the environment. The objective profile could make clear one's values, aptitudes, capabilities and special dispositions in terms of one's culture. When I say culture in this sense, it is not a stable objective and externally defined culture. May (1989) emphasised as mentioned earlier that culture is something that is defined by you and me, and therefore culture is the persons constituting it. In other words, persons can become aware of their profile (themselves) through what the general others think and feel. This requires active engagement from the person in meeting the objective meaning. By active engagement I mean that the person can reflect upon him/herself while taking the career test, and also discussing the profile in career counselling sessions. By doing so, the career test can contribute to building up a trust in one's own ability in choosing meaningfully. This process can build a relationship among objective, subjective and collective selves.

In terms of factor 3, where the emphasis is on career success meaning, the objective meaning approach could contribute to its strong inner feeling of control. A career test and the profile that is discovered can contribute to one's self-concept, which is important for climbing up the career ladder. The career test profile can contribute to identifying the part of vocational identity that is needed to climb up the career ladder, and from there one can reflect on which possibilities one has in climbing up the career ladder. Also in this matter, the objective career meaning becomes subjective.

10.4.4.2 Summary over objective meaning contribution

In my reflections over which themes did not come through the empirical work, the objective approach to meaning was the clearest perspective that did not come through as significant for the participants. Not being significant for the participants can of course be because the participants don't have any experiences in taking career tests. I have discussed some actual contributions an objective approach can make in a meaning construction by relating career tests to the important themes in each factor. I have tried to emphasise that such objective meaning, can become subjective through a reflective process about the test results in terms of one's own experience of constructing meaning into one's career choices.

10.4.5 Summary over the discussion of existential meaning, relational meaning, career success meaning and objective meaning

I have addressed why it is important to focus on meaning and meaning construction in terms of career choices, related the factors to relevant theory, and discussed the possible tensions the factors can meet. Also I discussed the contributions an objective perspective to meaning can make towards persons' meaning construction in terms of the three factors.

The interesting thing to discuss further could be: what possible career counselling implications could these factors have, and what would happen when the different factor views meet each other in counselling situations. By this I mean, what happens when a person from factor 2, for example, meets a career counsellor from factor 1? Will the counsellor be able to meet the other person, when the value of career and meaning in their career choices is so different? This will be the last part of my discussion before I reflect upon what I could have done better. I will then present some final reflections.

10.5 Implications for career counselling –value based career counselling

In terms of the career meaning and career meaning construction that was important for the persons in terms of the factors, one could ask if the participants' views represent their career values or career meaning. What is actually the difference between career values and career meaning? Are persons' career meaning constructed by their values? Holmberg (1994) emphasised that values are not the same as meaning¹⁰⁰; meaning either entails values or values entails meaning. According to Chen (2001) one of the most significant variables that influence persons' career preference is their value system. Brown (1996) highlighted that persons' values influence and create central aspects of their career development. Values do not come out of a vacuum, but they are embedded in and develop from a deep sense of

¹⁰⁰ I discussed this theme in the theory part.

persons' beliefs. This view of passion, faithfulness and dedication expresses the persons' fundamental beliefs and faith about being and living. In other words, persons give meaning to their value system, and values exist because they mean something to the person. As values influence persons' life in general, they influence persons' career choices (Chen, 2001), and they will then also influence persons' meaning construction in terms of their career choices implicitly or explicitly. So one might say that persons' values influence career meaning and career meaning construction, or that values are affected by the career meaning construction and career meaning. Therefore in focusing on meaning and meaning construction in career counselling, it is important to also focus on career values and how they affect the person's career. One could say that the different theoretical models I constructed for each factor represent career values that the participants apply in constructing career meaning. These models can be viewed as different values in being an agent in one's career. In other words, the participants use their value-based agency to construct career meaning that is important for them.

10.5.1 Factors meeting with each other

In the discussion about what consequences the factors can meet in their meaningful career, it was emphasised that the factors represented three different types of agency that may have implications for how persons construct and act out their meaning in their career. The different agencies that were discovered in the empirical part of this dissertation can have implications for career counselling.

In reading general career counselling literature (Arthur & McMahon, 2005), one might get the impression that being an active agent in a meaningful career, implies one approach; namely; persons who are active agents in their career have a need to influence the external environment to be able to act in their desired career. What if the need for influencing the external environment is not meaningful for some persons? Does that mean that they are not agents, and will not be able to construct meaning that is meaningful for them? These are questions that are relevant for career counselling practice, because a counsellor's beliefs in terms of being an agent as a meaningful value will not necessarily mean the same for the client.

Having a focus on career meaning construction and career values in career counselling is important for both the client and the counsellor. Career meaning, career construction and values are subjectively defined within the person in relation to their context and environment. Therefore it is important to be aware that the counsellor's values and meaning in life and in

their career can be different from the clients. Counsellors must be aware not to try and transfer their own values, and career meaning onto the client. Let us take the scenario of the different factors meeting each other for career counselling. What happens then?

Imagine a counsellor on factor 1¹⁰¹ that emphasises the value of freedom, independent agency, independent meaning construction together with relations in acting out one's career, counsels a client on factor 2 that emphasises meaningful values as relational meaning construction, where other persons have a significant authority over the factor's meaning construction. If counsellors are not aware of the differences between them and their clients the counselling processes may stagnate. What can happen in that counselling process? If career counsellors that emphasise factor 1's experiences are not aware that their own view of meaning construction and career meaning will not be based on similar experiences, values or universal truths as their clients, the counselling process may meet some challenges. For example, since factor 2 has a deep belief in others and what their culture believes is meaningful to choose in their career, it may indicate that clients want the counsellor to tell them what to choose. Given that factor 1 counsellors emphasise freedom and their own agency in constructing meaning into their choices, they may not want to tell clients what to choose in terms of their meaningful choices but to help them by facilitating the counselling process from the belief that persons are free and that having a meaningful career is personal. From these polarities of expertise and freedom challenges may arise if counsellors are not aware and cannot meet clients in their subjectivities. Another way of looking at this challenge is that if factor 2 clients want the counsellor to be an expert and tell them what to choose, refusing to use their own freedom to become aware of what is meaningful for them, and not what is meaningful for the culture, the counselling process can stagnate. It is important that the counsellor and the client are aware of such problematic, and get together and discuss what is valuable to do in the career counselling process. The career counsellor's empathic attitude for understanding the client's perspective would also help in exploring what is valuable to do in the career counselling process. If the counsellor has a worldview about how to choose and how to construct meaning, that is a total mismatch with the client's worldview, would that imply that the counsellor should discuss the mismatch with the client and be prepared to refer the client to a counsellor whose worldview was a better match. Otherwise the counselling would be in danger of being inauthentic.

¹⁰¹ I have chosen factor 1 as the counsellor, since that factor is represented by counselling educated persons.

Challenges in the meeting between factor 1 and 3 can also arise in the counselling process in cases where factor 3 views represent the clients' view and factor 1 represents the counsellor view. Since factor 3 doesn't experience or need others' involvement for climbing up the career ladder, and factor 1 believes in working with others when they are acting out their career a challenge may develop in the counselling process. If counsellors are not aware of views that are different from theirs, the process can stagnate or conflict can develop. So the question is how the client and career counsellor meet in ways appropriate for both the client and the counsellor. Below I will discuss some implications for career counselling in terms of the main career meaning and values concepts that were discussed earlier and the consequences the factors can meet in their career¹⁰².

10.5.1.1 Implications for career counselling

Chen (2001) outlines five implications for how to proceed with focusing on meaning in career counselling, which I will discuss in terms of the three factors. The first implication is *facilitating subjectivity*. To facilitate subjectivity in career counselling implies discussing career options and career issues from the client's phenomenological world or perspective. The challenge in such perspective is to help activate the clients in exploring, clarifying and understanding their personal career meaning and meaning construction related to their former and present experiences. The emphasis on former and present experiences generates future career meaning and meaning construction. In such a perspective the clients becomes aware of what is meaningful for them, what has been meaningful for them and what might be meaningful in their future career. All exploration should lead to the reflection of what is meaningful for the clients. In terms of the results of what is meaningful for the persons in the three factors, one could apply the narrative method (Cochran, 1997) for exploring what is meaningful for them in terms of their former and present career experiences. In general, for all three factors, the counsellor could ask the clients to write down significant happenings in the past and present that have been valuable and meaningful for them in terms of their career.

In factor 1 the counsellor can focus on how the subjective self has influenced the clients' agency, freedom, need for personal success and need for self-actualisation tendency in former and present career experiences. In factor 2 the counsellor can focus on how the clients' collective self has been developed and influenced by the need for external relations, the need for extrinsic motivation, need for pay and security and external success. In factor 3 the counsellor can focus on how the clients' independence has been developed and influenced by

¹⁰² I will not take every aspect of the factors into consideration, but I will use some themes in each factor to present examples.

the need for internal control, the need for self-efficacy, the need for perceived autonomy and the need for climbing up the career ladder.

The second implication is *intention*, which according to Chen (2001) is the critical part in the clients' subjective world. As mentioned in the theory part intentionality plays a significant role in constructing career goals. In exploring the clients' meaning, the counsellor can help the clients become aware of their career intention. To become intentional the clients need to make sense of their career experiences, since the experiences are the foundation for their meaning construction. When clients have become aware of their career meaning related to their experiences, they can own the career meaning and then construct intentions toward their career future, and make focused meaningful career choices. By focusing on what the factors believe is meaningful for them in terms of their career experiences, one can determine the factors' career intentions. By focusing on how the different concepts they viewed as important and significant for the factors in the meaning construction phase in the next step of the career counselling process, one will focus on what goals the clients want to achieve in applying the different aspects of meaning construction in terms of their career experiences. For example, for factor1, what goals do the clients have in applying freedom and agency? What intentions do the clients have in applying freedom, agency and personal success for achieving self-actualisation in their existential meaningful career? The same procedure can be applied to the other two factors by focusing on the elements in terms of important former and present career experiences. One can focus on career goals and intentions for the future, based on the main elements of what is important for the clients in the meaning construction phase.

The third implication is *understanding the client's context*. This means that the clients' meaning should always be interpreted in the context where the meaning is constructed, and not out from the counsellor's beliefs. This will lead to minimizing misinterpretation of the clients' meaning construction, experiences and feelings that are related to the career meaning. Also in understanding the clients' context, the counsellor should help the clients reflect upon their context in relation to their career meaning. The clients would become more aware of their meaning construction process, if they reflect on different contextual influences. Such contextual differences could be personal, familiar, interpersonal, social, cultural and environmental. In this way clients can become aware of the nature of contextual meaning construction. To relate this implication to the three factors, the career counsellor by focusing on facilitating what the clients' subjectivity and intention communicates about the clients' meaning construction also helps the clients become aware of the context where the career

meaning has emerged in relation to their subjective selves. In factor 1 the clients can become aware how the existential meaning has emerged as a deep value for them in terms of their context; that can include other persons, familiar, social, cultural and environmental influences. In factor 2 the clients can become aware of how and in what ways the power of others persons has become important, whether their career meaning is personal to them or if it is owned by others. In factor 3, the clients can become aware of how their context has been affecting them in the process of meaning construction, which might indicate that their career meaning is not as independent as they believe it to be after all.

The fourth implication is *constructing interpretations*. In taking the context into consideration, career counselling helps the client to understand their experiences constructively. This means according to Chen (2001) that career counselling facilitates flexibility and creativity in interpreting meaning. To interpret meaning does not imply a linear process, but a flexible process. In proceeding in this way clients may understand that it is possible to reinterpret meaning in accordance with their life experiences. In other words one way of interpreting does not mean that there is one explanation for events in the clients' career. Meaning can be reconstructed from its original context, because the context might have changed. Also looking at the meaning from a different perspective can alter the originally meaning. This is a process of growth and change. Reframing meaning might also facilitate change in effort and attitude within the client, which can influence the contextual meaning that can lead to more effective coping strategies. In terms of the three factors, the career counsellor can facilitate the process of reframing the clients' career meaning into another perspective if there is a need. Here the career counsellor can facilitate the process of becoming aware of the possible paradoxes in the clients' view and experience of meaning construction. In factor 1, career counsellors and clients can address the question whether the concept of freedom in terms of meaning construction can imply something else in the clients' process of acting out their career. In that way, career counsellors and clients reframe the meaning into another context where the meaning is actually acted out. In factor 2, career counsellors and clients can address the question of whether the process of meaning construction can imply something else than just wanting to choose the meaning of what the culture communicates; for example whether the process of meaning construction is an act of fear of disappointing the culture which clients may have a strong dedication towards, or is it actually in their hearts. In that way the process reframes the career meaning into something different, from what clients may be first aware of. In factor 3, career counsellors and clients

can address: if in climbing up the career ladder it is important to include others in the process, or can it only be done alone. In that way clients can achieve knowledge about the possibility and consequences of including others more in the career construction process, and what type of meaning that can imply. One reframes the original meaning into a different perspective that might help clients to look at their self in terms of their career meaning construction in a different way that can lead to growth in their life career.

The fifth implication is *projecting action*. According to Cochran (1997) the basic element in career counselling is the clients' future, but the past and present are not forgotten. Career counselling facilitates the exploration of meaning of clients' past and present experiences. Past and present experiences are the ground for the process of exploring future career action. To explore future career action requires that counsellors help clients to project their meaning construction onto their possible career future. This projection process has to correspond with clients' ability to act. This action projection focus highlights the necessity to learn. The learning approach creates a rationale for reconstructing past and present meanings, as well as constructing new meaning into the clients' perspective on career. In other words this career counselling process will facilitate the clients' learning, acting, reconstructing, projecting and intending. Career counselling becomes then a process of learning opportunities for active engagement. In terms of the three factors, this phase of the career counselling process is the place to investigate possible consequences the meaning construction has for one's career future. In factor 1, career counsellors and clients can investigate what possible consequences the meaning construction phase has for the clients' process of acting out their career. One can address the factor's value of freedom and agency, in terms of the consequences of working together with others. What can happen, and what is the clients' projection of their career meaning in their career action process; are the clients aware that their deep value of freedom might change when they act out their career meaning? Are the clients willing to decrease some of that value? In factor 2, career counsellors and clients can investigate, for example, the consequence of the clients' value of listening to others, and the consequence of emphasising externally defined career success. Are the clients aware of the possibility of manipulation in terms of emphasising externally career success? How do the clients project their career future in terms of their relational meaning? In factor 3, career counsellors and clients can investigate, for example, the consequence of acting out their career meaning alone, or together with others. How do clients project a future with others, or how do they project a future alone and try to climb up the career ladder on their own?

I have in this section shown how it is possible to address the focus on meaning and meaning construction in career counselling. I have only taken up a few perspectives from each factor, and therefore, it is not possible to show the whole complexity of a career counselling process in terms of career meaning construction and career meaning. In addressing the possible consequences of the factor's view of career meaning and career meaning construction in terms of one's career choices, one becomes aware of the consequences, and can choose for oneself if one wants to open up one's perspective or not. Clients have the chance to learn and discover what might happen in their world of action. By focusing on that, possible challenges might be easier for clients to address when the challenges are actually met in the career world. Also it is important to note that these five implications are not a universal way of approaching the empirical results, there are many ways of approaching career counselling, and this is one way of showing how it can be addressed in practical career counselling.

10.6 Final comment on this research

The three factors that emerged in this study have created more knowledge about persons' subjectivity in the career field, as well as challenges and complexities in this field. This new knowledge gives opportunities to develop the career choice field further so that persons can be more prepared in choosing meaningfully, and being aware of possible consequences that might appear in person's career action.

One can also ask the question is there something in this research that is missing? In all research there is always something missing, because lots of information the researcher meets in the process of investigating the theme is not taken into consideration. One cannot follow every hunch as a researcher. However, one can wonder what other types of data could contribute to this perspective and theme. Other types of data could lift this research onto another level and look at the complexity in different ways than I have done. By saying this, one could ask: what further research would be interesting to do in developing this field further?

From my point of view the most interesting research area would be a longitudinal study of persons on these factors, and how they experience their meaning construction process in terms of their working life. In this way, one would get firmer knowledge about the experience of the career action world in terms of the person's meaning construction world, and how relations between meaning construction and career meaning operate. In such a perspective one would obtain knowledge about the challenges and the complexities that I questioned in the discussion that would again lead to possible approaches for the career counselling field.

10.6.1 Personal research reflections: what could I have done better?

As I approach the end of this dissertation, I present some reflections about this research project as a whole. Applying meaning and meaning construction to concepts about career and career choices is complex. My final question is then: is the reality about meaning and meaning construction in relation to persons' career and career choices so complex that it is impossible to understand? This dissertation shows a minor part of the complexity in terms of the theme on meaningful career choices. The complexity that the reader is presented with is not the only construction that exists about the phenomenon. I can say that as a researcher I have not had the intention of communicating that I understand completely what other persons' experience in terms of the research topic about meaning, meaning construction career choices and career, but I have tried to communicate how it is possible to understand the research topic. It is possible in my view to understand some parts of others' reality in terms of meaning, meaning construction, career and career choices, but never the whole reality of the other. Persons' complex reality in terms of their meaningful career choices, what drives persons in making meaningful career choices, invites the researcher to deal with those complexities in a humble way. A meeting between the researcher's views about the research topic and the persons as agents in their context can create only a limited understanding of the other. A solution for this reality is that the researcher can only present a humble research version of what has come through the theoretical and empirical investigation. Who can then decide whether this research is trustworthy?

According to Paldanuis (2002) research can only be trustworthy if it is applicable. If graduate university students meet the possible challenges in acting out their meaningful careers as I have discussed about the different views of what is significant in making meaningful career choices, then the research is trustworthy. If career counsellors address the challenges with the different factor views of making meaningful career choices with their clients, and if the clients get new awareness about their strategies for making meaningful career choices, then this research is also trustworthy. The different factor views are also trustworthy in the sense that factors represent self-referent views that are significant, but the significant question is how one can apply these research results in the realities in which the research participants act. By showing the complexity in the concepts of meaning and meaning construction in terms of persons' career choices, I believe that the research is applicable for persons and career counsellors. However, I would also say that the research being applicable would not only refer to the practice field, but also to the research field in the career counselling field where

new perspectives on theory can be developed by viewing different theories together in relation to empirical data collection as I have done.

Since investigating meaning is a complex process, I decided to divide the complexity in two parts; a theoretical investigation on what understandings can lie in the concepts meaning and meaning construction and how one can apply meaning, and meaning construction in a career perspective, and an empirical part where persons' subjectivity was measured in relation to the theoretical perspectives in terms of career, career choices and meaning. By emphasising the complexity of the concept meaning, meaning construction, career, and career choices, one can criticise this study in many ways.

10.6.1.1 Criticism and reflections around theoretical choices

In the theoretical investigation I tried to combine general meaning perspectives with career perspectives. The question I am reflecting about now is could I have chosen other theories to analyse my research topic? My answer to the question is; yes and no. This answer to the question is how I see the problematic in doing research on meaning, meaning construction and career. It is problematic to try to integrate theory into the concept of persons' meaning world, because going into depth about persons' meaning world one is in the subjective realm, and when the researcher has applied theory into the subjective meaning perspective of persons one has already projected meaning onto persons; and thereby has decided what meaning can be applied to persons (Carlsen, 1988) regarding their meaningful career. The researcher can meet the challenge of projection by including multiple theories and perspectives and not just one theory or perspective in the research. In choosing several theoretical perspectives I had the intention of showing a holistic picture of meaning, meaning construction in terms of career and career choices. In having such intention, it is easy to jump into the black hole of trying to show every perspective that is possible, and lose the line of the theory investigation by combining too many theories. In terms of not losing the line in the theoretical investigation, I had to make some choices that I should have reflected on more before I went into the wormhole of meaning. I am aware of the fact that I based most of my choices of theory on my personal theory. I have been interested in persons' meaning and career for a long time, explicitly and implicitly. So my choices of theory were mostly based on what I believe is important in terms of investigating meaning, meaning construction, career choices and career, and how I believe a line runs through the chosen theories. By using one's own personal theory to make decisions is supported by Hunt (1987). He argues that researchers should start with their self when they are doing research. This inside-out perspective is opposite of the outside-

in perspective that has been normative in the general research field. In the outside-in perspective the researcher's self has not been considered as part of the process. Beginning with ourselves is an inside-out perspective, which includes the researcher. In terms of Hunt's perspective I started with myself and chose the research theme and theory out from my perspective of the theme. The criticism towards using oneself as a research tool has been emphasised as danger of "research bias". "Research bias" can imply that using oneself as a research tool can lead to a skewed perception in the research. This can lead to misrepresentation, distortion, skewedness of scientific results because of systematic errors made in deciding on collecting theoretical perspectives, treating the data, or data analysis from the researcher's perspective (Brown , 1996). In addition, by choosing theory out from my theoretical worldview the empirical part of my dissertation has also been influenced by my personal theory. However, I believe that my research is not damaged by my subjectivity, but I have of course affected the whole research process, and not just the selection of theory.

10.6.1.2 Criticism towards the empirical work

In Q-methodology the researcher often chooses the concourse, experimental design, the method of constructing the Q-sample and the statements based on theory or interviews to secure a reasonable nr of statements from the concourse. If the research field has already been investigated, a structure for constructing statements might already exist that the researcher can use. If a lot of research has not been carried out, the researcher often chooses to interview some participants to try and get hold of a structure for making the Q-sample. One could also read through theory and by doing so discover a theoretical structure that is the basis for the population of statements. However, even if the researcher chooses to interview participants or read theory in order to find structure, in the end the researcher chooses the strategy to acquire the structure, and chooses which structure is best for developing enough statements to represent the concourse. I chose theory from reading, and by doing so I created an experimental design, on which I based my Q-sample on. By using Q-methodology, and by giving the participants a place in which to express their own subjective voice on the meaning construction, the research became less intrusive than some other research approaches, at least in the scoring phase of the psychological event as a subjective measurement agency of the persons.

In Q-methodology it is common practice that the researchers participate in their own study (Brown, 1980). In reflecting about my researcher role I have become aware that when I constructed my experimental design my personal theory was involved. The three effects of the

research design represent some of my personal theory. The meaning construction effect and especially the subjective and relational construction view represent a meaning construction view I truly believe in. I know the objective meaning construction view exists, but I am not so engaged in it, and it doesn't particularly represent my personal theory. The consequence of this is that the subjective and the relational meaning construction views might have been heavily weighted in the statements, and the different objective meaning construction views might have been less precisely presented in the statements. For example, I used many of the same words, to describe persons' subjectivity in terms of objective meaning construction: for example career tests, personality and so on. When it came to the human agency effect that I also truly believe in: how one's own acts have an influence on persons' meaning construction and view of the career concept, I experienced that that perspective did not come out so clearly in the factors. This might have been because in many of the statements the human agency perspective, especially the level of intentionality, is implicitly and not explicitly communicated. Also one could question whether the human agency effect lies implicitly in the relational and subjective meaning construction cell because the concept of human agency plays a large role in subjective and relational meaning construction phases. When it comes to the career concept effect, I am closely connected to the calling perspective and career as a result of psychological success but I am more distant to the perspective on career as a job. This came out through the statements, where the perspective on career as a job, did not necessarily come explicitly through in some of the statements. For example I used the same words as job and work too many times, and I am aware that the words job and work could imply other subjective meanings than just the act of performing a job.

One could ask if these challenges have been a result of my "research bias". I would say no, because the research is trustworthy, but it might have become more nuanced if I had been more aware of the challenges involved in using my personal theory. If I would do this research again, I would use more discriminating and varied words in constructing the statements. By discriminating the statements more, one might have acquired a more nuanced field of stimuli and thereby a more nuanced picture than what is presented. Even though I used the balanced block design to balance the statements, I believe I could have balanced the statements in a more nuanced manner and been more aware of the influence of my personal theory on the statements. I would also have tried to ensure that the themes for each cell came through more explicitly in the statements. Also in choosing to base my statements on theory (theory constructed), one might also wonder if the statements are too much theoretically based

leading to statements communicating perspectives that other persons apart from the researcher don't understand or relate to; for example, calling. Of course most persons understand the word, calling, in one way or another, but might not manage to relate the concept of calling to their experience. By discriminating the calling concept more, using different words the participants may have been able to relate the calling concept more to their experience. The same problematic can be about the concept of mutuality, where the participants understand the word in one way or another, but can't relate the mutuality concept to their experience, but by differentiating the concept more, by using different words, the mutuality concept might have come stronger through factor two¹⁰³.

In thinking of what I could have done better in choosing theory and in constructing the Q-sample (statements), it may have been an advantage to conduct and categorise some qualitative interviews that I could have used to inform the construction of the experimental design and the sample from the concourse. The advantage of that is that the subjectivity of persons would have come more in the foreground in the design construction, which is in line with doing research on career meaning and meaning construction. Since Q-methodology is a method for measuring subjectivity, I think I could have had more balanced statements and more discriminated statements, that were not only based on theory, but also on persons' subjective communication¹⁰⁴, that was the context for the empirical Q-study.

I met a problem in my first factor analysis that could have been avoided, if I had discriminated the statements better and thought differently about the P-set. I had first intended to just have counselling graduates sort the statements, and in the end it turned out that only one factor was significant. It might have been different if I had discriminated the statements better and chose people in that specific group that I had expected to have different views. To "fix" the problem I went to two other different university graduate groups; economic and multicultural groups; that I thought could represent different and less homogeneous views than the counselling education group. My hunch was confirmed and the empirical data turned out very interesting and clear. However, my intention to just focus on counselling graduates for the research study disappeared in this frustration of not getting more than one significant

¹⁰³ It appeared that factor 2 had not thought about mutuality in its view, but by interviewing one participant I discovered that her view of constructing career meaning was mutual. This could have been discovered through the factor interpretation if the statements about mutuality had been more discriminated.

¹⁰⁴ I am aware that the theoretical statements are a way of trying to meet persons' subjectivity, but by focusing more on persons' communicative subjectivity so that persons could meet the statements easier, and react in relation to their experience, could give a more nuanced picture of their subjective experience. Focusing on just theory to construct statements can lead to an un-nuanced picture of the topic if the researcher is not aware enough that not all statements are understood.

factor. One can ask if choosing participants explicitly in terms of getting more factors is correct in terms of research bias. In my view Q-methodology promotes creativity, where there is not just one way to proceed in choosing participants. The P-set in Q-methodology is chosen from the universe of persons who have something to say about the theme that is investigated (Brown, 1980), and this invites the researcher to choose persons explicitly that he or she thinks could represent different views or factors.

I discovered similar problems when I interpreted the factors. Factor 1, represents my values and personal theory and was easy to interpret within my perspective, even though I tried to problematize the factor's view. Factor 2 and 3 are views that challenge me as a person, and I became very critical to the views, and maybe in some way arrogant, even though I also tried to see the positive side of the factors since factors 2 and 3 are as valuable as factor 1. I had difficulties "living into" the factors because they provoked my values and me. I had to learn to listen to the factor and not myself in that case, which was difficult. Since I participated in my own study one could assume that this would help me in interpreting the factors, but it only helped me interpret the factor that I represented, and not the other factors. Therefore, I experienced that it was more difficult interpreting and discussing those factors. In this perspective I was also aware of the danger of researcher bias, because I acknowledged the challenge of discussing and interpreting the factors.

These cases show the problematic in bringing one's personal theory into one's own research, and at the same time being distanced from it as well. It is important to have distance to one's own personal theory, but it is also, at the same time, important to bring one's personal theory into research. By bringing one's personal theory into the research, one decreases the danger for "research bias". The challenging part is to be aware of it throughout the whole research process. I have learned that it is important in this process to have enough distance to my own personal theory or in other words, be objective enough in my own research, and also acknowledge my part in the research. Experiencing this has helped me become a more reflective researcher.

Hunt (1987) and Brown (1996) both say that it is important to acknowledge the researcher's active participation i.e. the subjectivity and awareness of oneself, as an instrument in research. This is why researchers start with themselves. All researchers have their own background story that they bring explicitly or implicitly into their research. Everyone has a personal ground from which to choose one's specific research theme. The information that is gathered in by the researcher is dependent on the researcher's interest, experienced needs, values,

wishes, and beliefs. All the personal facts exist and influence the research consciously or unconsciously. This is important to be aware of. An important question is how do the researchers place themselves in their own research? The answer to this is complex, but if one starts with oneself as Hunt (1987) recommends, one becomes aware of oneself as a researcher, and can bring oneself into the research, One can then have a fair chance of being able to be distanced enough from oneself, and decrease the danger for “research bias”.

Even though I have made some mistakes, I have reflected about them, I don't emphasise that my research tells everything, and is the universal truth about university graduates' subjective experience about career meaning construction and career meaning in terms of their career choices. What is important is that different voices has been reached and made the participants experience explicit through Q-methodology. The different voices gives a picture of how university graduates experience the phenomena career meaning construction, career meaning and career choices, and what type of challenges persons meet in their career based on their meaningful career choices. The view that came through the empirical work was existential career meaning, relational career meaning and career success meaning. These different views represent different challenges that the person will meet. The existential career meaning factor will meet the challenge of freedom contra working with others, the relational factor will meet the challenge of listening to one self or other persons or culture, and the career success meaning factor will meet the challenge listening to one self or opening up to others to get help and support of others to be able to climb up the career ladder. I believe that these results give researchers important knowledge about the relationship between the actual meaning construction phase and the career action world, where the career meaning is acted out.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Unrotated factor matrix

Q-sorts	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1	0.6604	-0.0374	-0.1752	0.0882	-0.0045	0.3281	-0.0504	0.0806
2	0.7047	-0.1183	-0.3119	0.2237	-0.0645	0.2360	0.2666	0.0811
3	0.7598	-0.3641	0.1412	-0.1646	-0.2100	0.0094	0.0325	0.0583
4	0.5706	0.2208	-0.0110	0.3174	-0.1836	-0.0934	0.4512	0.1411
5	0.7515	0.0810	-0.1274	-0.0654	-0.2636	-0.1447	-0.1234	-0.1355
6	0.8226	-0.0469	0.0097	0.0193	-0.0090	0.1483	-0.1938	0.0206
7	0.4644	0.2322	-0.0588	0.6465	-0.1142	-0.1261	0.0258	-0.0737
8	0.7568	-0.0509	-0.0656	0.0560	-0.2159	-0.3096	0.0625	-0.2441
9	0.7082	0.1766	-0.3151	-0.1350	0.0295	-0.0639	0.0872	-0.2382
10	0.6995	-0.1146	-0.2065	0.0330	-0.3535	-0.1322	0.0619	0.0306
11	0.6343	-0.0710	-0.2465	-0.0834	-0.0460	0.2406	0.5098	-0.0416
12	0.6743	0.2175	-0.0969	-0.1218	0.3595	0.1305	0.0401	-0.1239
13	0.8090	0.0994	-0.1207	-0.0133	-0.2427	0.0807	0.1464	-0.0135
14	0.7671	0.0737	0.2343	0.0784	-0.0865	-0.0968	0.0838	0.1801
15	0.6324	-0.2190	-0.0408	0.2189	0.0534	0.1210	-0.1001	0.4308
16	0.5760	0.2262	-0.0661	0.3304	0.1139	0.0242	-0.2551	0.0294
17	0.7222	0.0976	-0.1721	0.1126	0.3529	0.0224	-0.0439	0.0697
18	0.8624	-0.1335	-0.0137	-0.1116	0.0724	0.0500	0.0010	-0.0940
19	0.7602	-0.0682	-0.1652	-0.3579	-0.0222	0.0242	0.1413	0.1790
20	0.6523	0.0241	0.2271	-0.1989	0.2435	-0.2245	0.0171	0.2501
21	0.7642	-0.0561	-0.0699	0.0054	0.0221	-0.2635	0.1122	0.1760
22	0.8487	0.1234	0.0267	0.1295	0.1452	0.2176	-0.1582	-0.1533
23	0.8100	0.2203	-0.0660	0.0515	0.2014	-0.0101	-0.2905	-0.0756
24	0.8486	0.0870	-0.0846	-0.1007	-0.0366	-0.0897	-0.0165	0.0155
25	0.7526	-0.2218	-0.0428	-0.1238	0.2973	-0.0127	0.0584	-0.2200
26	0.7732	0.1460	-0.0031	-0.1325	0.1611	0.1116	0.1118	-0.1958
27	0.4737	0.2200	0.2045	0.1282	0.4316	-0.3837	-0.0018	0.0081
28	0.6229	0.1144	-0.0136	0.3754	0.1480	-0.4457	0.0769	-0.2312
29	0.8495	0.0403	-0.0977	-0.0851	0.1802	0.0842	-0.1411	0.1459
30	0.8077	0.0363	-0.1002	-0.1531	0.1053	-0.0078	0.0785	-0.0364
31	0.4037	-0.0754	0.1778	0.3160	0.1121	0.5108	0.0484	-0.3113
32	0.6384	0.0059	0.0308	-0.5214	0.2122	-0.0635	0.0527	0.1139
33	0.6670	0.0528	-0.0664	-0.1224	-0.2937	0.1764	-0.3223	-0.2259
34	0.6742	-0.2978	-0.0254	-0.1186	-0.1467	-0.0178	-0.2774	0.1843
35	0.8684	-0.1997	-0.1060	-0.0820	-0.1654	-0.0636	0.0557	0.0748
36	0.4681	0.1454	0.2324	0.3178	0.0138	0.1892	-0.0896	0.4803
37	0.7376	-0.0617	0.2051	0.1241	-0.2675	-0.1414	-0.2703	-0.0958
38	0.7848	-0.0490	0.0123	-0.1228	-0.2966	-0.0040	-0.1891	-0.0447
39	0.2282	-0.6379	0.6961	0.0053	-0.0233	0.0179	0.0698	0.0041
40	0.2403	-0.6197	0.7114	0.0200	-0.0189	0.0476	0.1091	-0.0689
41	0.2257	-0.6619	0.6679	-0.0018	0.0141	-0.0015	0.1292	-0.0908
42	0.2264	-0.6290	0.7160	0.0205	0.0191	0.0026	-0.0057	-0.0666
43	0.2044	-0.6139	0.6934	0.0735	0.0963	-0.0228	-0.0582	-0.0322
44	0.0452	0.7750	0.4389	-0.1841	-0.1968	0.0408	0.0131	0.0116
45	0.1112	0.7693	0.4744	-0.1497	-0.1006	0.1362	-0.0179	-0.0203
46	0.1832	0.8044	0.4508	-0.1296	-0.1039	-0.0285	0.0494	0.0078
47	0.0658	0.7264	0.5749	-0.0610	-0.0123	-0.0637	-0.1150	0.0293
48	0.1544	0.7069	0.5446	0.0375	-0.0412	0.0956	0.1323	-0.0349
49	0.1849	0.7690	0.4371	0.0407	0.0387	0.0814	0.1540	0.0221

Appendix 2: Q-sample of statements with design categories

Nr.	Statement	Design category
28	I don't plan to take any career test to find a job as the tests aren't reliable	ADF
7	Even though I am scared to take a job that doesn't fit my interests, I can imagine taking it in order to survive	ADF
35	My intentions behind my job choices are always congruent with my actions	ADF
43	I value success as something that is not about status, but something that is about my intentional acts and interests	ADG
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education I need so my dreams of climbing up the corporate ladder are not realistic	ADG
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving job-satisfaction. For me being satisfied implies experiencing success on my own terms that also fits the organizations criteria for success and satisfaction	ADG
18	Without a clear intention to direct my career purpose it remains just a strong intuitive feeling and vision, and not something real	ADH
19	My awareness about how my values have affected me in my career choices has been more helpful, than what my personality tells me	ADH
34	My career and interests have guided me in finding my calling	ADH
1	I like the idea of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	AEF
45	My work identity is not determined by my view of the actual job, but through my view of my own competence	AEF
27	I choose security in terms of pay and not insecurity in terms of a meaningful career	AEF
14	I know I will not measure my career success by careful reflections about what my workplace asserts as successful	AEG
15	To experience success means having a good match between my co-workers and my personality	AEG
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization, and one day becoming the boss; is what gives me motivation and a belief of experiencing career success	AEG
20	Awareness about my personality traits and knowledge about job possibilities gives me an internal feeling of control that helps me to find a career to which I can be dedicated	AEH
25	Sometimes what we daydream about in a career does not suit us at all	AEH
54	My experience of my competence and autonomy is seldom driven by my personality; not telling me much about what the right thing to do is	AEH
6	Having a job for the sake of a job is the first step in my needs hierarchy, when I have achieved that I have the freedom to choose whatever I want	BDF
10	Having a meaningful career means that I must look at it as more than a job	BDF
11	My former experiences in life such as school and leisure activities have not consciously affected my career choice	BDF
26	I am afraid of climbing to high in my career; I might unintentionally fall off the ladder and hurt my self	BDG
17	I define career success as something more than climbing up the ladder; it means for me a match between what I want to achieve and what the organization wants to achieve	BDG
21	Climbing up the career ladder is not an egotistical act, I want to do something meaningful for others: therefore I choose a career that is not very congruent with what my heart says	BDG
40	Intuitively I know my heart's path and I'll follow it with great dedication	BDH
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give gifts back to society, because of what society has given me: first and foremost I believe in my talents	BDH
33	I'm an agent in my life, my freedom to choose what I want to do in my career has been vital	BDH
23	I don't like work for works sake, there must be more in life to motivate me	BEF
42	I don't feel autonomous; the environment controls me in finding meaning in my career	BEF
4	When I choose the road for my career, I focus on what can prevent negative experiences	BEF
12	I love climbing the career ladder	BEG

Nr.	Statement	Design category
51	My past and present as well as projections of the future have shaped me in my striving for choosing a meaningful career that is based on self-determination and what can I do to experience success	BEG
49	I cannot control what the environment communicates about my competence	BEG
52	When I hear my call it comes as a clear voice within that I share with others	BEH
16	I don't feel that I have a "path with heart" and I feel helpless and alone	BEH
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire for its sake, and not for everything else's sake	BEH
36	I consciously choose to work in co-operation with others	CDF
44	Opinions from other human beings are disturbing my attempt of making intentional goals to get a job	CDF
47	I am I and you are you. I can only listen to myself in terms of choosing a career: That gives me place to strive for doing something meaningful.	CDF
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal for my career: and that is why I don't need help from others, I only need intentional and conscious goals	CDG
30	When I choose my life partner, it will be with my career development in mind	CDG
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships but I can't listen to others when it comes to choosing a meaningful career. I don't want to be affected by others	CDG
24	My dedication, animation, and coherence in my intentional career is developed through others face to face or in spirit	CDH
3	I am not reproduced of my culture, but I am aware that I am influenced by it, therefore choosing something meaningful to do, is my choice.	CDH
39	My heart's path has many people on it	CDH
53	It's fun to work with others	CEF
2	The culture that I am surrounded by does not give me adequate information and knowledge about what is meaningful to choose in terms of my career	CEF
5	My belief about my capabilities is rarely influenced by my relations, environment and my life context	CEF
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards of a successful career, family is more important	CEG
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money in my career, and that is only possible through good colleagues	CEG
50	I act on what others believe in, which is success	CEG
38	My need for competence, autonomy and relatedness is not important for developing dedication towards my career	CEH
48	My inner voice seldom directs my destiny; later I must listen to others	CEH
13	Through mutuality I am guided towards the right career for me	CEH

Appendix 3: Statistical characteristics of the factor solution

Eigenvalues and expl. Variance

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Eigenvalues	19.7546	6.3392	4.6634	1.8843	1.5959	1.3992	1.3046	1.2096
% expl.Var.	40	13	10	4	3	3	3	2

Correlation between factor 1, 2 and 3

Factors	1	2	3
1	1.0000	0.0976	0.1720
2	0.0976	1.0000	-0.1168
3	0.1720	-0.1168	1.0000

Factor Characteristics

Factors	1	2	3
No. of Defining Variables	38	6	5
Average Rel. Coef.	0.800	0.800	0.800
Composite Reliability	0.993	0.960	0.952
S.E. of Factor Scores	0.081	0.200	0.218

Standard Errors for Differences in Normalized Factor Scores

(Diagonal Entries Are S.E. Within Factors)

Factors	1	2	3
1	0.114	0.216	0.233
2	0.216	0.283	0.296
3	0.233	0.296	0.309

Appendix 4: Descending array of difference between factor 1 and 2

No.	Statement	Type1	Type2	Difference
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	1.140	-1.345	2.484
51	My past and present as well as projections	1.382	-1.041	2.423
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	1.123	-0.635	1.758
14	I know I will not measure	0.118	-1.565	1.683
33	I am an agent in my life	1.526	-0.127	1.653
43	I value success as something that is not about status	1.524	-0.105	1.630
47	I am I and you are you	0.392	-1.116	1.508
36	I consciously choose to work	1.259	-0.166	1.425
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	1.405	0.112	1.292
53	It is fun to work	1.328	0.054	1.274
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	-0.153	-1.290	1.137
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-0.638	-1.662	1.024
45	My work identity is not	0.846	-0.158	1.004
24	My dedication animation and coherence	0.499	-0.473	0.971
34	My career and interests have guided me	0.689	-0.257	0.946
11	My former experiences in life	-0.776	-1.631	0.855
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	1.480	0.665	0.815
17	I define career success as something more	1.192	0.412	0.780
10	Having a meaningful career	1.699	0.949	0.750
35	My intentions behind my job choices	0.362	-0.261	0.623
20	Awareness about my personality traits	0.741	0.128	0.612
15	To experience success means	0.389	-0.083	0.472
44	Opinions from other human beings	-0.759	-1.221	0.462
23	I don't like work for works sake	1.256	0.878	0.377
5	My belief about my capabilities	-1.038	-1.376	0.338
16	I don't feel that I have	-1.441	-1.757	0.316
38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-1.031	-1.254	0.223
1	I like the idea of career tests	-1.157	-1.339	0.183
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-1.254	-1.417	0.163
49	I cannot control what the environment	-0.046	-0.156	0.110
13	Through mutuality I am guided	0.439	0.344	0.095
28	I dont plan to take any career test	0.010	-0.045	0.055
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-0.373	-0.426	0.053
52	When I hear my call	0.043	0.078	-0.035
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-0.795	-0.401	-0.395
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	0.854	1.339	-0.485
39	My hearts path has many	0.888	1.540	-0.653
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-0.651	0.008	-0.659
19	My awareness about how my values	0.514	1.220	-0.706
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-0.621	0.106	-0.727
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-1.399	-0.540	-0.859
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	0.319	1.295	-0.976
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-1.255	-0.048	-1.208
7	Even though I am scared	0.220	1.468	-1.248
4	When I choose the road	-0.842	0.769	-1.611
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-1.371	0.254	-1.625
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-0.561	1.139	-1.700
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-0.399	1.409	-1.809
54	My experience of my competence	-0.734	1.457	-2.190
48	My inner voice seldom directs	-1.061	1.185	-2.247
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-0.849	1.519	-2.368
42	I don't feel autonomous	-1.294	1.244	-2.538
30	When I choose a life partner	-1.462	1.089	-2.551
50	I act on what others believe in	-1.674	1.235	-2.910

Appendix 5: Descending Array of Difference between factors 1 and 3

No.	Statement	Type 1	Type 3	Difference
36	I consciously choose to work	1.259	-0.930	2.189
13	Through mutuality I am guided	0.439	-1.669	2.108
53	It is fun to work	1.328	-0.357	1.685
34	My career and interests have guided me	0.689	-0.994	1.683
23	I don't like work for works sake	1.256	-0.370	1.625
14	I know I will not measure	0.118	-1.496	1.614
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	0.854	-0.650	1.504
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	1.140	-0.305	1.445
52	When I hear my call	0.043	-1.366	1.408
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-0.399	-1.702	1.303
49	I cannot control what the environment	-0.046	-1.312	1.267
51	My past and present as well as projection	1.382	0.144	1.238
33	I am an agent in my life	1.526	0.314	1.212
39	My hearts path has many	0.888	-0.034	0.922
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-0.561	-1.474	0.913
11	My former experiences in life	-0.776	-1.684	0.908
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-0.651	-1.558	0.907
17	I define career success as something more	1.192	0.488	0.704
24	My dedication animation and coherence	0.499	-0.131	0.629
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	1.405	0.781	0.624
35	My intentions behind my job choices	0.362	-0.213	0.575
19	My awareness about how my values	0.514	-0.034	0.548
28	I don't plan to take any career test	0.010	-0.533	0.543
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	1.480	1.086	0.394
43	I value success as something that is not about status	1.524	1.143	0.382
7	Even though I am scared	0.220	-0.149	0.369
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	1.123	0.845	0.278
10	Having a meaningful career	1.699	1.631	0.068
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	0.319	0.538	-0.219
48	My inner voice seldom directs	-1.061	-0.785	-0.276
47	I am I and you are you	0.392	0.669	-0.277
15	To experience success means	0.389	0.688	-0.299
42	I don't feel autonomous	-1.294	-0.968	-0.326
50	I act on what others believe in	-1.674	-1.287	-0.387
38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-1.031	-0.639	-0.392
1	I like the idea of career tests	-1.157	-0.598	-0.559
44	Opinions from other human beings	-0.759	-0.149	-0.610
54	My experience of my competence	-0.734	-0.052	-0.682
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-1.371	-0.662	-0.709
45	My work identity is not	0.846	1.631	-0.785
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-0.638	0.174	-0.813
20	Awareness about my personality traits	0.741	1.584	-0.843
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	-0.153	0.891	-1.043
4	When I choose the road	-0.842	0.203	-1.044
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-0.373	0.701	-1.074
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-0.849	0.545	-1.394
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-1.399	0.051	-1.450
16	I don't feel that I have	-1.441	0.144	-1.585
30	When I choose a life partner	-1.462	0.279	-1.742
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-0.795	1.345	-2.140
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-0.621	1.819	-2.440
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-1.255	1.274	-2.529
5	My belief about my capabilities	-1.038	1.600	-2.638
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-1.254	1.534	-2.788

Appendix 6: Descending Array of differences between factor 2 and 3

No.	Statement	Factor 2	Factor 3	Difference
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	1.409	-1.702	3.111
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	1.139	-1.474	2.613
50	I act on what others believe in	1.235	-1.287	2.522
42	I don't feel autonomous	1.244	-0.968	2.212
13	Through mutuality I am guided	0.344	-1.669	2.013
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	1.339	-0.650	1.988
48	My inner voice seldom directs	1.185	-0.785	1.971
7	Even though I am scared	1.468	-0.149	1.616
39	My hearts path has many	1.540	-0.034	1.575
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	0.008	-1.558	1.565
54	My experience of my competence	1.457	-0.052	1.509
52	When I hear my call	0.078	-1.366	1.443
19	My awareness about how my values	1.220	-0.034	1.254
23	I don't like work for works sake	0.878	-0.370	1.248
49	I cannot control what the environment	-0.156	-1.312	1.156
27	I choose security in terms of pay	1.519	0.545	0.974
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	0.254	-0.662	0.916
30	When I choose a life partner	1.089	0.279	0.809
36	I consciously choose to work	-0.166	-0.930	0.764
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	1.295	0.538	0.757
34	My career and interests have guided me	-0.257	-0.994	0.737
4	When I choose the road	0.769	0.203	0.567
28	I don't plan to take any career test	-0.045	-0.533	0.488
53	It is fun to work	0.054	-0.357	0.411
11	My former experiences in life	-1.631	-1.684	0.053
35	My intentions behind my job choices	-0.261	-0.213	-0.048
14	I know I will not measure	-1.565	-1.496	-0.069
17	I define career success as something more	0.412	0.488	-0.076
24	My dedication animation and coherence	-0.473	-0.131	-0.342
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	0.665	1.086	-0.421
33	I am an agent in my life	-0.127	0.314	-0.441
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-0.540	0.051	-0.592
38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-1.254	-0.639	-0.615
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	0.112	0.781	-0.668
10	Having a meaningful career	0.949	1.631	-0.682
1	I like the idea of career tests	-1.339	-0.598	-0.741
15	To experience success means	-0.083	0.688	-0.771
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	-1.345	-0.305	-1.039
44	Opinions from other human beings	-1.221	-0.149	-1.072
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-0.426	0.701	-1.127
51	My past and present as well as projections	-1.041	0.144	-1.185
43	I value success as something that is not about status	-0.105	1.143	-1.248
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-0.048	1.274	-1.321
20	Awareness about my personality traits	0.128	1.584	-1.455
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	-0.635	0.845	-1.480
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	0.106	1.819	-1.714
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-0.401	1.345	-1.745
47	I am I and you are you	-1.116	0.669	-1.785
45	My work identity is not	-0.158	1.631	-1.789
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1.662	0.174	-1.837
16	I don't feel that I have	-1.757	0.144	-1.901
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	-1.290	0.891	-2.181
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-1.417	1.534	-2.951
5	My belief about my capabilities	-1.376	1.600	-2.976

Appendix 7: Z-scores factor 1

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES	No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
10	Having a meaningful career	1.699	28	I don't plan to take any career test	0.010
33	I am an agent in my life	1.526	49	I cannot control what the environment	-0.046
43	I value success as something that is not about status	1.524	2	The culture that I am surrounded by	-0.153
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	1.480	6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-0.373
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	1.405	25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-0.399
51	My past and present as well as projections	1.382	21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-0.561
53	It is fun to work	1.328	37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-0.621
36	I consciously choose to work	1.259	8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-0.638
23	I don't like work for works sake	1.256	26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-0.651
17	I define career success as something more	1.192	54	My experience of my competence	-0.734
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	1.140	44	Opinions from other human beings	-0.759
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	1.123	11	My former experiences in life	-0.776
39	My hearts path has many	0.888	12	I love climbing the career ladder	-0.795
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	0.854	4	When I choose the road	-0.842
45	My work identity is not	0.846	27	I choose security in terms of pay	-0.849
20	Awareness about my personality traits	0.741	38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-1.031
34	My career and interests have guided me	0.689	5	My belief about my capabilities	-1.038
19	My awareness about how my values	0.514	48	My inner voice seldom directs	-1.061
24	My dedication animation and coherence	0.499	1	I like the idea of career tests	-1.157
13	Through mutuality I am guided	0.439	9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-1.254
47	I am I and you are you	0.392	22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-1.255
15	To experience success means	0.389	42	I don't feel autonomous	-1.294
35	My intentions behind my job choices	0.362	31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-1.371
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	0.319	29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-1.399
7	Even though I am scared	0.220	16	I don't feel that I have	-1.441
14	I know I will not measure	0.118	30	When I choose a life partner	-1.462
52	When I hear my call	0.043	50	I act on what others believe in	-1.674

Appendix 8: Z-scores factor 2

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES	No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
39	My hearts path has many	1.540	22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-0.048
27	I choose security in terms of pay	1.519	15	To experience success means	-0.083
7	Even though I am scared	1.468	43	I value success as something that is not about status	-0.105
54	My experience of my competence	1.457	33	I am an agent in my life	-0.127
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	1.409	49	I cannot control what the environment	-0.156
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	1.339	45	My work identity is not	-0.158
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	1.295	36	I consciously choose to work	-0.166
42	I don't feel autonomous	1.244	34	My career and interests have guided me	-0.257
50	I act on what others believe in	1.235	35	My intentions behind my job choices	-0.261
19	My awareness about how my values	1.220	12	I love climbing the career ladder	-0.401
48	My inner voice seldom directs	1.185	6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-0.426
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	1.139	24	My dedication animation and coherence	-0.473
30	When I choose a life partner	1.089	29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-0.540
10	Having a meaningful career	0.949	3	I am not reproduced of my culture	-0.635
23	I don't like work for works sake	0.878	51	My past and present as well as projections	-1.041
4	When I choose the road	0.769	47	I am I and you are you	-1.116
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	0.665	44	Opinions from other human beings	-1.221
17	I define career success as something more	0.412	38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-1.254
13	Through mutuality I am guided	0.344	2	The culture that I am surrounded by	-1.290
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	0.254	1	I like the idea of career tests	-1.339
20	Awareness about my personality traits	0.128	40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	-1.345
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	0.112	5	My belief about my capabilities	-1.376
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	0.106	9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-1.417
52	When I hear my call	0.078	14	I know I will not measure	-1.565
53	It is fun to work	0.054	11	My former experiences in life	-1.631
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	0.008	8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1.662
28	I don't plan to take any career test	-0.045	16	I don't feel that I have	-1.757

Appendix 9: Z-scores factor 3

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES	No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	1.819	39	My hearts path has many	-0.034
10	Having a meaningful career	1.631	54	My experience of my competence	-0.052
45	My work identity is not	1.631	24	My dedication animation and coherence	-0.131
5	My belief about my capabilities	1.600	44	Opinions from other human beings	-0.149
20	Awareness about my personality traits	1.584	7	Even though I am scared	-0.149
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	1.534	35	My intentions behind my job choices	-0.213
12	I love climbing the career ladder	1.345	40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	-0.305
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	1.274	53	It is fun to work	-0.357
43	I value success as something that is not about status	1.143	23	I don't like work for works sake	-0.370
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	1.086	28	I don't plan to take any career test	-0.533
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0.891	1	I like the idea of career tests	-0.598
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	0.845	38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-0.639
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	0.781	32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	-0.650
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	0.701	31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-0.662
15	To experience success means	0.688	48	My inner voice seldom directs	-0.785
47	I am I and you are you	0.669	36	I consciously choose to work	-0.930
27	I choose security in terms of pay	0.545	42	I don't feel autonomous	-0.968
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	0.538	34	My career and interests have guided me	-0.994
17	I define career success as something more	0.488	50	I act on what others believe in	-1.287
33	I am an agent in my life	0.314	49	I cannot control what the environment	-1.312
30	When I choose a life partner	0.279	52	When I hear my call	-1.366
4	When I choose the road	0.203	21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1.474
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	0.174	14	I know I will not measure	-1.496
16	I don't feel that I have	0.144	26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1.558
51	My past and present as well as projections	0.144	13	Through mutuality I am guided	-1.669
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	0.051	11	My former experiences in life	-1.684
19	My awareness about how my values	-0.034	25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1.702

Appendix 10: From consensus to disagreement

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
28	I don't plan to take any career test	0	0	-2
38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-3	-3	-2
35	My intentions behind my job choices	1	-1	-1
1	I like the idea of career tests	-4	-4	-2
15	To experience success means	1	0	2
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	5	2	3
10	Having a meaningful career	6	2	5
17	I define career success as something more	3	2	1
24	My dedication animation and coherence	1	-2	0
11	My former experiences in life	-2	-5	-6
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	1	4	2
44	Opinions from other human beings	-2	-3	-1
19	My awareness about how my values	2	3	0
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-1	-2	2
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	5	1	3
49	I cannot control what the environment	0	-1	-4
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-5	-2	0
20	Awareness about my personality traits	2	1	5
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1	0	-5
39	My hearts path has many	3	6	0
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-5	1	-2
4	When I choose the road	-2	2	1
52	When I hear my call	0	1	-4
34	My career and interests have guided me	2	-1	-3
7	Even though I am scared	0	5	-1
23	I don't like work for works sake	4	2	-1
43	I value success as something that is not about status	5	0	4
33	I am an agent in my life	6	-1	1
53	It is fun to work	4	0	-1
45	My work identity is not	2	-1	5
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1	-6	1
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	3	-2	3
14	I know I will not measure	0	-5	-5
47	I am I and you are you	1	-3	2
16	I don't feel that I have	-5	-6	0
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	2	4	-2
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0	-4	3
36	I consciously choose to work	4	-1	-3
54	My experience of my competence	-2	5	0
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-2	-2	4
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-3	6	2
13	Through mutuality I am guided	1	1	-5
51	My past and present as well as projections	4	-3	0
48	My inner voice seldom directs	-3	3	-3
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	3	-4	-1
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-1	1	6
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-4	0	4
30	When I choose a life partner	-6	3	1
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1	3	-4
42	I don't feel autonomous	-4	4	-3
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1	5	-6
50	I act on what others believe in	-6	4	-4
5	My belief about my capabilities	-3	-4	5
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-4	-5	4

Appendix 11: Factor Q-sort values for each statement

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1	I like the idea of career tests	-4	-4	-2
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0	-4	3
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	3	-2	3
4	When I choose the road	-2	2	1
5	My belief about my capabilities	-3	-4	5
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-1	-2	2
7	Even though I am scared	0	5	-1
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1	-6	1
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-4	-5	4
10	Having a meaningful career	6	2	5
11	My former experiences in life	-2	-5	-6
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-2	-2	4
13	Through mutuality I am guided	1	1	-5
14	I know I will not measure	0	-5	-5
15	To experience success means	1	0	2
16	I don't feel that I have	-5	-6	0
17	I define career success as something more	3	2	1
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	1	4	2
19	My awareness about how my values	2	3	0
20	Awareness about my personality traits	2	1	5
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1	3	-4
22	Climbing up the ladder in a organization	-4	0	4
23	I don't like work for works sake	4	2	-1
24	My dedication animation and coherence	1	-2	0
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1	5	-6
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1	0	-5
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-3	6	2
28	I don't plan to take any career test	0	0	-2
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-5	-2	0
30	When I choose a life partner	-6	3	1
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-5	1	-2
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	2	4	-2
33	I am an agent in my life	6	-1	1
34	My career and interests have guided me	2	-1	-3
35	My intentions behind my job choices	1	-1	-1
36	I consciously choose to work	4	-1	-3
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-1	1	6
38	My need for competence autonomy and relatedness	-3	-3	-2
39	My hearts path has many	3	6	0
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	3	-4	-1
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	5	1	3
42	I don't feel autonomous	-4	4	-3
43	I value success as something that is not about status	5	0	4
44	Opinions from other human beings	-2	-3	-1
45	My work identity is not	2	-1	5
46	To me having a meaningful career means achieving	5	2	3
47	I am I and you are you	1	-3	2
48	My inner voice seldom directs	-3	3	-3
49	I cannot control what the environment	0	-1	-4
50	I act on what others believe in	-6	4	-4
51	My past and present as well as projections	4	-3	0
52	When I hear my call	0	1	-4
53	It is fun to work	4	0	-1
54	My experience of my competence	-2	5	0

Appendix 12: Distinguishing statements factor 1

No.	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
33	I am an agent in my life	6	1.53*	-1	-0.13	1	0.31
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	5	1.40*	1	0.11	3	0.78
51	My past and present as well as projections	4	1.38*	-3	-1.04	0	0.14
53	It is fun to work	4	1.33*	0	0.05	-1	-0.36
36	I consciously choose to work	4	1.26*	-1	-0.17	-3	-0.93
17	I define career success as something more	3	1.19*	2	0.41	1	0.49
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	3	1.14*	-4	-1.34	-1	-0.31
39	My hearts path has many	3	0.89*	6	1.54	0	-0.03
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	2	0.85	4	1.34	-2	-0.65
45	My work identity is not	2	0.85*	-1	-0.16	5	1.63
20	Awareness about my personality traits	2	0.74*	1	0.13	5	1.58
34	My career and interests have guided me	2	0.69*	-1	-0.26	-3	-0.99
19	My awareness about how my values	2	0.51	3	1.22	0	-0.03
24	My dedication animation and coherence	1	0.50*	-2	-0.47	0	-0.13
35	My intentions behind my job choices	1	0.36	-1	-0.26	-1	-0.21
14	I know I will not measure	0	0.12*	-5	-1.57	-5	-1.50
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0	-0.15*	-4	-1.29	3	0.89
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1	-0.40*	5	1.41	-6	-1.70
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1	0.56*	3	1.14	-4	-1.47
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-1	-0.62*	1	0.11	6	1.82
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1	-0.64*	-6	-1.66	1	0.17
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1	-0.65*	0	0.01	-5	-1.56
54	My experience of my competence	-2	-0.73*	5	1.46	0	-0.05
44	Opinions from other human beings	-2	-0.76	-3	-1.22	-1	-0.15
11	My former experiences in life	-2	-0.78*	-5	-1.63	-6	-1.68
4	When I choose the road	-2	-0.84*	2	0.77	1	0.20
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-3	-0.85*	6	1.52	2	0.54
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-4	-1.26*	0	-0.05	4	1.27
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-5	-1.37*	1	0.25	-2	-0.66
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-5	-1.40*	-2	-0.54	0	0.05
30	When I choose a life partner	-6	-1.46*	3	1.09	1	0.28

Appendix 13: Distinguishing statements factor 2

No.	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
39	My hearts path has many	3	0.89	6	1.54*	0	-0.03
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-3	-0.85	6	1.52*	2	0.54
7	Even though I am scared	0	0.22	5	1.47*	-1	-0.15
54	My experience of my competence	-2	-0.73	5	1.46*	0	-0.05
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1	-0.40	5	1.41*	-6	-1.70
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	2	0.85	4	1.34	-2	-0.65
18	Without a clear intention to direct my	1	0.32	4	1.30	2	0.54
42	I dont feel autonomous	-4	-1.29	4	1.24*	-3	-0.97
50	I act on what others believe in	-6	-1.67	4	1.24*	-4	-1.29
19	My awareness about how my values	2	0.51	3	1.22*	0	-0.03
48	My inner voice seldom directs	-3	-1.06	3	1.19*	-3	-0.79
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1	-0.56	3	1.14*	-4	-1.47
30	When I choose a life partner	-6	-1.46	3	1.09*	1	0.28
10	Having a meaningful career	6	1.70	2	0.95	5	1.63
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-5	-1.37	1	0.25*	-2	-0.66
20	Awareness about my personality traits	2	0.74	1	0.13*	5	1.58
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	5	1.40	1	0.11	3	0.78
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-1	-0.62	1	0.11*	6	1.82
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1	-0.65	0	0.01*	-5	-1.56
22	Climbing up the ladder in a organization	-4	-1.26	0	-0.05*	4	1.27
15	To experience success means	1	0.39	0	-0.08	2	0.69
43	I value success as something that is not about status	5	1.52	0	-0.11*	4	1.14
45	My work identity is not	2	0.85	-1	-0.16*	5	1.63
36	I consciously choose to work	4	1.26	-1	-0.17*	-3	-0.93
34	My career and interests have guided me	2	0.69	-1	-0.26	-3	-0.99
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-5	-1.40	-2	-0.54	0	0.05
3	I am not reproduced of my culture	3	1.12	-2	-0.64*	3	0.85
51	My past and present as well as projections	4	1.38	-3	-1.04*	0	0.14
47	I am I and you are you	1	0.39	-3	-1.12*	2	0.67
44	Opinions from other human beings	-2	-0.76	-3	-1.22	-1	-0.15
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0	-0.15	-4	-1.29*	3	0.89
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	3	1.14	-4	-1.34*	-1	-0.31
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1	-0.64	-6	-1.66*	1	0.17

Appendix 14: Distinguishing statements factor 3

No.	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
37	The goal for me in my career is not to give	-1	-0.62	1	0.11	6	1.82*
45	My work identity is not	2	0.85	-1	-0.16	5	1.63*
5	My belief about my capabilities	-3	-1.04	-4	-1.38	5	1.60*
20	Awareness about my personality traits	2	0.74	1	0.13	5	1.58*
9	Climbing up the ladder must be the goal	-4	-1.25	-5	-1.42	4	1.53*
12	I love climbing the career ladder	-2	-0.80	-2	-0.40	4	1.34*
22	Climbing up the ladder in an organization	-4	-1.26	0	-0.05	4	1.27*
2	The culture that I am surrounded by	0	-0.15	-4	-1.29	3	0.89*
41	I have the freedom to act out my desire	5	1.40	1	0.11	3	0.78
6	Having a job for the sake of a job	-1	-0.37	-2	-0.43	2	0.70*
27	I choose security in terms of pay	-3	-0.85	6	1.52	2	0.54*
30	When I choose a life partner	-6	-1.46	3	1.09	1	0.28*
8	I wish I could believe in mutual relationships	-1	-0.64	-6	-1.66	1	0.17*
16	I don't feel that I have	-5	-1.44	-6	-1.76	0	0.14*
51	My past and present as well as projections	4	1.38	-3	-1.04	0	0.14*
29	My aim is to earn a lot of money	-5	-1.40	-2	-0.54	0	0.05
19	My awareness about how my values	2	0.51	3	1.22	0	-0.03
39	My hearts path has many	3	0.89	6	1.54	0	-0.03*
54	My experience of my competence	-2	-0.73	5	1.46	0	-0.05*
44	Opinions from other human beings	-2	-0.76	-3	-1.22	-1	-0.15*
40	Intuitively I know my hearts path	3	1.14	-4	-1.34	-1	-0.31*
23	I don't like work for works sake	4	1.26	2	0.88	-1	-0.37*
1	I like the idea of career tests	-4	-1.16	-4	-1.34	-2	-0.60
32	I am not interested in the normal rewards	2	0.85	4	1.34	-2	-0.65*
31	I am not getting the marks and higher education	-5	-1.37	1	0.25	-2	-0.66*
36	I consciously choose to work	4	1.26	-1	-0.17	-3	-0.93*
34	My career and interests have guided me	2	0.69	-1	-0.26	-3	-0.99
49	I cannot control what the environment	0	-0.05	-1	-0.16	-4	-1.31*
52	When I hear my call	0	0.04	1	0.08	-4	-1.37*
21	Climbing up the ladder is not an egotistical act	-1	-0.56	3	1.14	-4	-1.47*
26	I am afraid of climbing to high	-1	-0.65	0	0.01	-5	-1.56*
13	Through mutuality I am guided	1	0.44	1	0.34	-5	-1.67*
25	Sometimes what we daydream about	-1	-0.40	5	1.41	-6	-1.70*

Appendix 15: Consensus between factor 1, 2, 3

Nr	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
1.	I like the idea of career tests so I can relax and be happy with their suggestions	-4	-1.16	-4	-1.34	-2	-0.60
28.	I don't plan to take any career test to find a job as the tests aren't reliable	0	0.01	0	-0.05	-2	-0.53
38.	My need for competence, autonomy and relatedness is not important for developing dedication towards my career	-3	-1.03	-3	-1.25	-2	-0.64