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**Doctoral Thesis**

## Metaphysical labour: Flexibility, performance and commitment in work-life management

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**Metaphysical Labour**

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**Copenhagen  
Business School**  
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

# Metaphysical Labour

Flexibility, Performance and Commitment  
in Work-Life Management

**Anders Raastrup Kristensen**

Doctoral School of Organisation  
and Management Studies

PhD Series 2.2010

## **Metaphysical Labour**



# **METAPHYSICAL LABOUR**

**FLEXIBILITY, PERFORMANCE AND COMMITMENT IN WORK-LIFE MANAGEMENT**

By Anders Raastrup Kristensen

Doctoral School in Knowledge and Management

Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy  
Copenhagen Business School

Anders Raastrup Kristensen

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*Flexibility, Performance and Commitment in Work-Life Management*

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In the memory of Birgit V. Lindberg

## **Abstract**

This thesis offers a critical contribution to the theories of work-life balance. Within the contemporary theoretical perspectives on work and life the individuals are constructed as being responsible for work-life balance by turning it into a problem of the personal behaviour, decisions, psychological traits and family condition of the human subject.

In this sense the everyday problem of balancing between work and home is reduced to be primarily an individual problem and decision. When the problem of work-life balance is raised in this way, it is difficult for companies to offer managerial and organizational solutions that do not automatically exclude this as an individual problem. It might be possible for managers and organizations to help the employees in achieving work-life balance, but it is fundamentally a challenge that the individual employees must solve.

The thesis offers a different perspective on the relation between work and life. This perspective is not based upon the individual employees' perception and hence constitution of work-life balance. Instead, it is argued that the constitution of the relation of work and life is to be found in its effects. These effects are not established in the constitution of the boundary between work and home, but are rather recognized by how the employees determine and define activities and tasks as work. For example, is it work to send email in the evening? Is it work to read an article at the weekend? Is it work to update a profile on Facebook? The question is therefore 'what is work?' and not 'what is the boundary between work and home?'

This is a metaphysical question. Metaphysics is therefore not only something that concerns philosophers, but is in fact something that is relevant for everyday and managerial problems like work-life balance. The reason we have to turn to metaphysics is that work is not simply physically given to us anymore. The work of an increasing number of employees is today recognized as being flexible and immaterial. The consequence of this is not only that the boundary of work and home is blurred, but moreover that work as such is becoming imperceptible. It is not something we can see.

It is not something that is given to our experience. It cannot be defined by pointing to its materiality, results or pre-established criteria like working time and working place.

To define what work is we have to ask something else. This is the fundamental question of this thesis. We should not ask the question of ‘what work is’, because we cannot simply answer this anymore, but what we can do is to raise the question of ‘that by which work is given as work?’ This is to ask what the criteria that go beyond our definitions and constitution of work are. For example, when asking oneself if it is work to send email in the evening and we decide that it is work if *we do it for more than 30 minutes*. We establish a transcendental rule (“that by which work is given as work”) in our constitution and definition of what work is for me.

This simple shift of focus will be named work-life management. Work-life management is concerned with the real constitution of the relation between work and life by how it can be found in its constituting effects (e.g. that sending email is work if it is done for more than 30 minutes). In this sense the perspective of work-life management turns the theories of work-life balance on their head, because it begins with the constituting effects and not the constituting cause of the human subject.

In the thesis this transformation is shown and analyzed in two case studies. It is revealed in the empirical analysis that the employees (unknowingly) are metaphysicists who, when they talk and discuss the balance between work and home, constantly return to arguments of what work is and by which rules they can determine something as work.

It is demonstrated how the employees relate the discussion of what work is to matters of flexibility, performance and commitment. For the employees these are three central problems of contemporary work that cannot simply be solved. For example, when one is committed to one part of life it is not taken away from another part of life. This means that the employees have to be committed to several aspects of life at the same time, e.g. to show commitment to work and children simultaneously. In relation to flexibility this is discussed as the blurring of the boundaries between work and non-work, which means that the productivity of the employees is not restricted to the site of work. They

can be productive both at work and outside of work. The discussion of performance is raised in relation to the blurring of production and reproduction, which means that reproduction as initial condition for production is inseparable from production, for example, when matters of employee performance constantly are raised as employee satisfaction. The question of 'what work is' is in this sense discussed and raised in three different ways.

From a metaphysical perspective these three discussions of 'what work is' are interesting, because they break with the principle of contradiction, which says that "the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect" (Aristotle, 1994: 1005b). The contemporary work is increasingly difficult to define on this principle. Instead, it is argued in the thesis that this principle should be replaced by the principle of univocity. Univocity means that being "is said in one and the same 'sense' of everything about which it is said" (Deleuze, 1990: 179). If we relate this to our discussion of the being of work ('what work is') then the consequence is that the essence of work should not be found in a remote and abstract principle (as it is the case with the unattainable balance), but rather be found as a constituting principle by which it has been constituted. In this sense it is a principle we only can talk about *as that by which it is given as work*, which is to say that we can only locate and find it as a principle transcending our empirical constitution of what work is.

These metaphysical perspectives (the ontological principle of univocity and the methodological invention of a transcendental empiricism) are inspired by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (see e.g. 1990; 1994). The philosophy of Deleuze is transcendental empiricism, because it is not concerned with *the given* but with *that by which the given is given* (Deleuze, 1994: 140). It is an empiricism of the transcendental or as Scott Lash (2007b: 64) puts it: "an empiricism of the virtual".

Philosophy in general and the philosophy of Deleuze in particular are important for the development of the perspective of work-life management. Rather than imposing the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze I attempt to draw on its consequences, for example, what are the consequences of thinking about the relation between work and life univocally?

By focusing on the impacted, it is possible to raise a critique of work-life balance that is neither imposed from an empirical or theoretical standpoint, but rather from a transcendental standpoint. It is a transcendental critique which not only criticizes the contemporary perspectives for the effects that they produce, but moreover attempts to create new ways of constituting and conditioning the relation between work and life.

The thesis is divided into four parts.

The first part addresses the methodological and ontological questions of deploying philosophical theories of work-life balance and organization sociology. In this sense this section is concerned with philosophy and metaphysics as a transcendental empirical science.

In the second part the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance are presented and problematized. By relating to the discussion of theoretical problems within theories of work-life balance of the object, the condition, the subject and the effects of work-life balance, an attempt is made to replace the contemporary ways of constituting the problem of work-life balance. In doing so the perspective of work-life management is developed.

The third part of the thesis consists of the empirical analysis based on the empirical material. In three chapters the problematic forms of flexibility, performance and commitment are discussed. The chapters study how, when and in which sense the employees define and determine various activities as work. For example, do they work when ill? And if they do, does it then change how they work and how they think about work? This is an example of the constituting effects that is addressed in the empirical analysis.

The fourth part suggests some possible inventions in the practice of managing and organizing work and life. It focuses on appraisal interviews, work-life strategy and how managers can ask and discuss the relation of work and life as a matter of constituting

effects and what I call ‘productive rules’ they invoke in their management of work and life.

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## Introduction

Three years ago, I met Thomas. He was happy not only because his wife was expecting their first child, but also because he had just started distance working two days a week. What struck me in this interview was that Thomas said that he expected, on the one hand, that distance work would lower the level of stress and increase personal satisfaction and, on the other, that he expected to be more willing to work extra hours and to work while being ill. As he said: “It would be easier to call the office and say that I won’t be in today [and work from home]”. It really did not make sense for me. How could Thomas, by working more and maybe even with a headache, be more satisfied and less stressed? It was my first interview for the thesis and it could of course be an exception, a case of madness. But I soon met other employees who expressed similar thoughts about work and life. It made me start working on a metaphysics of work and life that could relate these conflicting expressions in a way that would make sense. What else can a philosopher do?

The present text is a philosophical reflection and experiment upon the constitution and management of the relation between work and life. It is a philosophical reflection upon the contemporary models of conceiving the relation between work and life, and an experiment in metaphysics to go beyond the human subject as the essence of work-life balance in an effort to push the limit for the possible experience of the relation between work and life.

In this introduction I will present the basic metaphysical question and concern about the relationship of work and life, which is ‘what is work?’ In relation to this discussion, I will shortly introduce a new perspective on work and life, which is based upon a critique of the theories of work-life balance. This new perspective is work-life management. The next section is a short introduction to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, which plays a major role in the thesis. Then I present the empirical cases of the thesis. Finally, I describe the structure of the thesis.

## **The Metaphysical Question: What is Work?**

In his article ‘Capitalism and Metaphysics’, Scott Lash argues that contemporary capitalism is becoming increasingly metaphysical (2007: 3). By adding ‘metaphysical’ to capitalism he will not just coin yet another notion that captures the nature of capitalism like post-capitalist society (Drucker, 1993), cognitive capitalism (Dyer-Witheford, 2004; Vercellone, 2005; 2007; 2008; Virno, 2007) and immaterial labour (Hardt and Negri, 2001; Lazzarato, 1996; 2004). He also points to metaphysics as an important theoretical aspect and analytical level if one wants to define what contemporary capitalism is. The metaphysical is that which transcends the physical (Lash, 2007a: 1-2). In this sense metaphysics is the ground of the physical world. It provides us with the categories, concepts and classifications in which we can think about something. It is important to be aware that metaphysics is not just a matter of a mental image but rather it is about the metaphysical constitution of something. In that sense it is very material (see also Kornberger et al., 2006: 71). This is also why it is a very interesting ‘level’ of thought to focus upon when doing academic studies of something. Some researchers would even say that without metaphysics everything would be very abstract (Vähämäki and Virtanen, 2006: 213). Hence, metaphysics is something that is dealt with in almost all kinds of scientific research as a matter of defining the principles on which the scientific argument can be built. However, this is not the way that Lash discusses metaphysics. He raises metaphysics as a matter of ‘the image of thought’ (see also Deleuze, 1994: 129-167) on which we can recognize contemporary capitalism. It is in a similar way that I will focus on metaphysics in this text.

According to Lash one of the most interesting aspects of contemporary capitalism is that it is intensive rather than extensive, which implies that it is difficult to define work in the extensive terms of labour time and space (2007: 4, 6, 12). This relates to the increasing discussion that has been had over the last decades about what work is. Most of this discussion, which has taken place within several theoretical disciplines, has been concerned with the issue of boundaries. Examples of this discussion are organizations are boundaryless (Ashkenas, 1999; Shamir, 1999), career is without boundaries (Arthur

and Rousseau, 1996; DeFilippi and Arthur, 1994), companies are without boundaries (Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992), families without borders (Wajcman et. al., 2008), boundaryless management (Blomberg and Werr, 2006), and that “the boundaries between virtual and real worlds may become blurred” (Schön, 1983: 162).

One of the theoretical disciplines where this discussion has been most prominent is work-life balance. The discussion within theories of work-life balance often refers to this problem of defining what work is by the name of blurring of the boundaries of work and life (see e.g. Hyman et al., 2003; Lewis, 2003a; Lewis, 2003b; Spoonley et al., 2002; Wajcman et al., 2008; Waring, 2008). This is why I have decided to focus on the problem of the relation between work and life, because it is in relation to the problem that it might become most clear to us that it is difficult to define what work is by referring to extensive terms like time and place.

The boundary of the factory or the company no longer defines the nature of work by marking the difference between work and non-work. Work is not necessarily carried out at the work place or within given work time, but is something that can be done everywhere and anytime. In this sense work and home are not exclusive terms but rather inclusive terms, which have the consequence that the boundary between these spheres of life is not given. The boundary is dynamic, individual, ever changing and is a matter of constant constitution and reconstitution. The boundary is not only defined by the organization but is to a high extent a definition carried out by the individual employees. Several studies have focused on this individual constitution of boundaries between work and home (see e.g. Clark, 2000; 2001; Desrochers and Sergeant, 2004). This kind of boundary management is often related to knowledge work, but as it will be shown later is also a critical issue for non-knowledge workers. In this sense it has become an everyday problem that employees have to face: how to set the limit between work and home?

To define the boundaries of work employees must turn to ethics and even metaphysics. For example, they must ask themselves if it is okay not to answer a mail sent from a co-worker even though it is after normal working hours, if they should work while being

sick, or if they should call reading scientific articles at the weekend ‘work.’ These questions of individual self-reflection and social interaction become a matter of ethics in the sense that they have to invoke various individual rules to guide their activities and how they reflect upon these. But it is furthermore a matter of metaphysics because they constantly have to ask themselves the question: what is work? It might come as a surprise to most people that metaphysics is a part of our everyday life and is such a worldly and empirical problem – and not just a problem that has to be dealt with by philosophers.

The nature of work is no longer given. Work is metaphysical in the sense that it is not something perceivable. It is not simply a thing that we can see or talk about. It is something that we constantly have to create as an object in order to determine its nature. This does not only refer to the simple fact that labour could be said to be metaphysical in the sense that it is not characterized by being physical labour and that the physical boundaries of work have disappeared. It also refers to the fact that the question of metaphysical labour is one that never can be answered as such since we cannot define once and for all what work is. It continuously pops up again every time we try to do so. This activity of sending mail at 23.17 might be called work today and not tomorrow. Moreover, it is a metaphysical question in a very special sense. It is a rather peculiar metaphysical question since the question of the nature of work cannot be answered independently of working human beings. This means that the metaphysical question is never the abstract question of what work is, but rather questions like: Where is work? In which sense is it work? Who is working? How much do I need to do to call it work? When is it work? These kinds of questions are involved in the employees’ quest for determining the essence of work every day. The title of the thesis refers to the fact that metaphysics is always a matter of being in labour; it is not something that is given but is always becoming.

When talking about metaphysical labour it becomes clear that work as such breaks with the classical principle of contradiction that is defined by Aristotle like this: “The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect” (1994: 1005b). Metaphysical labour contains several activities that are

both work and non-work at the same time. For example, learning (personal activity or competency development?), social arrangement (work or not work?), and illness (should you work or not?). It is exactly because these activities do not follow the principle of contradiction that they are so problematic for employees to determine. In fact, they cannot be determined at all, they are undetermined or unresolvable problems or questions. And it is in this sense that they have to be answered over and over again.

It is simply not possible for the employees to determine what work is by subsuming the difference between work and home under the point of contradiction. This is what we normally would do when talking about finding our point of balance between work and home; that is, a point that is neither work nor home by being both work and home. Balance is a point that relates work and home by separating them, or put differently, balance is the ground of the opposition between work and home.

In this thesis I study three forms of work that are problematic because they break with the principle of contradiction. They are flexibility, performance and commitment. For example, when one is committed to one part of life it is not taken away from another part of life (see e.g. Bielby and Bielby, 1989: 777). In relation to flexibility this is discussed as the blurring of the boundaries between work and non-work (e.g. Kanter, 1977; Lewis, 2003a; 2003b; Lopata and Norr, 1980). Within theories of performance they discuss what value is in relation to the debate about performance criteria as ends or means (see e.g. Cardy, 2003). The question of 'what work is' is in this sense asked in different ways within these scientific fields. Within the theories of flexibility the problem is that work to a higher extent is not defined by place and time, theories of commitment struggle with the definition of the commitment that is put into work because this is difficult to define in terms of identity or role, and finally, the theories of performance fight with the problem that they do not know what creates value and hence work.

The thesis does not attempt to solve these problems or answer these questions. Instead, these questions point to a fundamental problem of modern management, which is the metaphysical question of the essence of work. It is a question that not only the

management and the organization are faced with everyday, but also employees have to focus upon and find individual solutions to. These individual problems and solutions are what I will discuss as self-management. The basic question of self-management is to define and constitute what work is since it is not pre-given or pre-established.

However, we have to be careful not to mistake the question of ‘what is work’ with ‘what is balance’. These two questions are radically different. Balance is always a point between something given as the grounds of its opposition, whereas the question of the nature of work constitutes the relationship between something yet to be constituted. This is why I prefer to say that it is a relation between work and life (and not one between work and home). Where balance is an internal ground between two (or more) given states then it is the relationship that constitutes what work is external to its terms. This means that it is not a ground on which the opposition between them can be based; rather, the relationship is based on the principle of indiscernibility between work and life. It is this principle or operation of indiscernibility that conditions the relationship between work and life.

Work has within many branches and jobs lost its classical physical boundaries of working place and working time. It is difficult for employees to define what work is by referring to extensive terms like time and place, which means that they have to invoke other terms to define the essence of work. The metaphysical question ‘what is work?’ is therefore not only something that concerns philosophers and scientific researchers; it is also a question all working people have to ask themselves every day: Is emailing in the evening work? When am I too sick to work? When is competence development work and not just my personal interest? These kinds of questions are asked by people every day, maybe for themselves and not openly, but they nevertheless constantly have to figure out what they consider to be work.

## **Why Work-Life Management?**

In the scientific perspective of work-life balance this relation of work and life is often described as the perceived balance of the human subject, i.e. the human state of being in or having balance. But what constitutes this balance has so far been an endless quest in

the human mind and between the various social roles of the human subject. In the words of David E. Guest the model of work-life balance has not yet been able to account for “what constitutes a balance between work and the rest of life” (2002: 259). This is the point of departure for this thesis because we need to know how the relation of work and life is constituted if we want to make it manageable.

The contribution of the thesis is the development of a philosophical perspective on the relation of work and life. I call this perspective ‘work-life management’, because it addresses how the relation between work and life can become determinable and manageable. This new perspective is developed from a critique of the current theories of work-life balance. The perspective of work-life balance covers a variety of concepts that have been deployed to explain the complex relationship between the domains of work and non-work, for example, work/family balance (Hochschild, 2000), work-family enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006), work-family role synthesis (Kossek et al., 1999), work-family integration (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004), work-family conflict (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998), work-family interface (Voydanoff, 2002), work-family fit (Pitman, 1994), work-family spill-over (Grzywacz et al., 2002), work-family reconciliation (Lewis, 2006), and border theory (Clark, 2000) (See chapter 3 for a review of the literature).

These perspectives can be divided into two paradigmatic positions: a psychological perspective, which sees work-life balance as a problem of balancing the self-identity of being human (e.g. Bailyn and Harrington, 2004; O’Reilly and Chatman 1986), and a sociological perspective that sees it as problem of balancing multiple roles (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2001; Lewis, 2003a; 2003b). The first position argues that the balance is constituted in the human subject, whereas the latter position says that it is constituted between the multiple roles that the human subject has in life. Both perspectives strive to find the balance between work and life in the human subject that is believed to constitute the boundary between the spheres of work and home.

What constitutes a healthy work-life balance has been central to several studies over the years. However, these studies often end up with the conclusion that the constitution of



work-life balance changes over time and varies from individual to individual. There are no general rules that constitute a healthy work-life balance, because these rules depend on the needs and interests of the individual employee. The result is that work-life balance is always a personal decision of the employees. Thus, the creation of a balance between work and life is turned into an individual problem.

This was not my experience when interviewing for this thesis. I came to realize that we need a management perspective on work and life. The employees and managers often talked about work-life balance as a personal matter that they were missing and were striving for. However, it appeared to me that when they spoke about these matters they did so not only in a personal and individual way; they also became particular individuals by speaking about the relation of work and life. In other words, they were individuated by how they spoke about work and life.

Consider the following example. Isabel is 33 and single. To her work-life balance is a continuous process because when “you are in one situation you have another one in the back of your mind, and when you are in the other situation then you have the first one on your mind”. Isabel can be physically present at home but her mind might be somewhere else. For her this is a particular problem that constitutes her experience of work-life balance. This experience is not given by the way work affects her life outside of work. It rather concerns how Isabel thinks about her work and home. This made me wonder, as the work-life balance of someone appears not to be constituted by what this person was missing and hence striving to obtain, but by the form of various problems in which they could experience work-life balance. Isabel, for example, experienced difficulty in being mentally present, because both work and home activities could be present in her life all day long. This meant that Isabel did not say *what* constitutes the relation between work and life, but rather *how* it was constituted for her.

By focusing on the constitution of the relation of work and life it was neither the needs of the employees nor those of the company that struck me as important; rather, it was the way that the employees created the relation between work and home by talking about it. Because they hereby expressed the way they became individuals and how the

relation between work and life was problematic for them. Just notice the differences between the way that Catty, Dennis and Peter talk about work and life:

In fact I believe that because corporate life takes over so many parts of life, the sensible thing to do is to be professional about your free time

I feel fine about the job, I think it suits me, I can close it and go home and have my family life

They get me relatively cheap and then I have my good home life that I can take care of

You can almost see them in front of you. They express who they are. But they also express a relation of work and life that makes them distinct from each other. Catty wants to control the relation by professionalizing her free time, Dennis likes to keep work and home life separated and Peter argues that his pay check is too small for the company to expect more than the standard number of work hours. I do not set out to determine the general nature of work-life balance. Instead, I will study how the relation of work and life in practice becomes determinable when the employees talk, argue and discuss matters concerning work-life balance.

As I continued to focus on these matters, I noticed that the employees often talk about their experience of work and life as problems regarding their flexibility, performance and commitment. Again I did not pay much attention to the way their utterings caused their actual state of balance, but more how they spoke about the relation of work and life and the problems they stated this relation in. This was interesting from a philosophical perspective, because the determinable relation is something that can be managed. Not the actual relation of work and life that is perceived by the employees, but how the relation becomes perceivable for the employees. This implies that work-life balance is not only a problem to be solved, but foremost a problem that needs to be constituted. The thesis studies these problems of flexibility, performance and commitment in which the relationship of work and life is constituted.

Traditionally we would invoke theories of work-life balance, flexibility, performance and commitment to explain the empirical findings. However, this is not the intention here; instead, these theories are what need to be explained. This also means that the knowledge created in this thesis is not expressed by means of abstract theories, but is expressed by developing certain forms of problems in which the constitution of the relation between work and life seem to take place. Hereby it is not only a recreation of the theories of work-life balance but furthermore of the theories of flexibility, performance and commitment because it is shown how these as problematic forms take part in the constitution of the relationship between work and life.

This means that the problem of work-life management is not the individual problem of achieving work-life balance, but rather the problem of how the relation becomes constituted in the expressions of a singular human subject. Consequently, it is a problem of individuation rather than an individual problem of the human subject since the problem does not belong to the individual but to the relationship between work and life in which the individual becomes and is formed as a singular individual. Whereas the theories on work-life balance focus on the essence of human nature in various ways like role and psychological state, the perspective of work-life management focuses on how the expressions of work and life are formed within human subjects' expressions and argumentations about work and life. For example, how the employees are formed as performing, flexible and committed human subjects. In these problematic forms a relationship between work and life is created and expressed. However, it is important that what is expressed is not a human essence as a particular human state, for example, that the human being is out of balance or does not know how to draw the line between work and home. We have to make a distinction between the personal individualization and the impersonal individuation (see Rajchman, 2001: 8). It is not a matter of particular individuals but singular individuations. Individuation does not regard the essence of something but immanent forces that are expressed inside the constitution of something (see Sørensen, 2003: 53).

The theories of work-life balance have so far focused on the boundary between the spheres of work and home. They have hereby paid attention to the physical boundary that is given in time and space, which means that the boundary is defined in terms of working time, working place and working identity (see e.g. Desrochers and Sergeant, 2004; Smith et al., 1997). However, it has become increasingly difficult to define this boundary in extensive terms as a consequence of immaterial labour and knowledge economy (see also Lash, 2007a). Many employees experience this blurring of the boundary of work and home every day when they work from home, but also in the way that it is difficult to define whether an activity like reading an article, thinking about the meeting tomorrow, or getting a great idea in the shower should be regarded as work or not. It was not possible for them to define these kinds of activities as work or not by referring to given standards like working time and working place. The activities were carried out at all times of the day and everywhere. On the one hand, they did something that could be said to be an act of work in the shower, while mowing the lawn, watching sitcoms on the television, being in the car, doing the dishes, talking to their children and in their lunch break. On the other, they did a lot of activities that normally could not be related to work during working time at the company like talking to children over the phone, reading private emails and updating Facebook profiles. This does not only point to a blurring of the physical boundaries of work and home; it furthermore points to the fact that work has become increasingly immaterial and more difficult to define in extensive terms like space and time. The blurring of boundaries therefore can be seen as a consequence of the intensification of work, which means that it is both possible to work and non-work at the working place *and* not to work and work at home. This intensification of work can also be recognized when we say that there is a lot of stress and pressure at work, work is fast and furious, there is too much tension at work or I need to wind down.

It is exactly to deal with these kinds of problems that I have created the concept of work-life management. There are a number of problems that the contemporary perspectives of work-life balance have not been able to resolve. First, they cannot account for “what constitutes a balance between work and the rest of life” (Guest, 2002: 259). As a consequence they cannot create a managerial concept of work-life balance,

because we need to know how the relation between work and life is constituted in order to manage it. Second, the contemporary perspectives cannot address these matters without turning them into an individual problem of the employees since they are the only ones who can experience the demands and pressures of work and home. They feel the pressure on their bodies and minds. Third, it is problematic that these perspectives mostly address the impact of demands of work and home in a reactive way, because they often act only on the consequences and impact of work and home on the individual human subject. Fourth, the theories of work-life balance have so far turned the relation of work and life into a point of balance between work and home, because they do not discuss the relation of work and life itself but the human subjects' perception of work and home. It has therefore been a matter of the experience of the relation and how the relation has affected the human state of balance. Consequently, they have been more concerned with human nature than the relation of work and life. Fifth, as a result of the focus on the human subject they have not thought about the constitution of the relation but on the constitution of the perception of work and home. Thus, the conditions of the relation of work and life have been addressed in relation to how the individual human subject experiences the relation of work and home, which have constituted the individual boundary between work and home as a condition.

## Thinking with Deleuze

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) plays a major role in this thesis. Deleuze is part of the same generation of French thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Serres. Members of this generation are often labelled under the broad term of post-structuralism even though most of them refused to be categorized in this way (e.g. Foucault, 2000: 433). Deleuze aggregated from the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1948. In 1953 his first book on Hume was published. Besides this, some of his most renowned works are *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (2005 [1962]), *Bergsonism* (1991b [1966]), *Difference and Repetition* (1994 [1968]), *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1992 [1968]), *The Logic of Sense* (1990 [1969]), *Foucault* (1999 [1986]) and some of his co-authored books with the French psychoanalyst Félix Guattari like *Anti-Oedipus* (2000 [1972]), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1999 [1980]) and *What is Philosophy?* (2003 [1991]).

At first it might seem a rather strange or peculiar choice of theory or philosophy to impose on the study of the subject of work-life balance. Deleuze's philosophy is often regarded as complicated and almost enigmatic (see e.g. Styhre, 2002c: 463) so what could this kind of philosophy possibly offer to the study of something as down to earth as work-life balance? I will argue that Deleuze has much to offer to the methodology and the ontology of the thinking of the relation work and life. As I will show in the thesis it is possible by deploying Deleuze's philosophy to the theories of work-life balance to think of the constitution of relation between work and life in itself and not the constitution of the perception of the relation, which typically is the case.

In this sense the thesis can be seen as a contribution to the accumulating deployment of Deleuze within critical approaches to organizations studies (see Carter and Jackson, 2004 for review; Fuglsang and Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen, 2003; 2005). His philosophical ideas have inspired researchers to study various fields (see e.g. Boje, 1995; Clegg et al., 2005; Fuglsang, 2007; 2008; Fuglsang and Born, 2002; Kristensen et al., 2008; Linstead, 2002; Linstead and Thanem, 2007; Nayak, 2008; Pedersen, 2008; 2009; Styhre, 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2004; 2006; ten Bos, 2007a; 2007b; White and Sproule, 2002; Wood, 2002; Wood and Ferlie, 2003). One could say that the adoption of the philosophy of Deleuze had a late start compared to other so called post-structuralist theories like that of Foucault and Derrida, but he is defiantly picking up speed and momentum (see also Styhre, 2002c).

He is often heralded within organizations studies as the affirmative thinker of difference, rhizomatic organization and immanence against representation, state, commonsense and hierarchic organizations. However, it is a slightly different kind of Deleuzianism that can be found in this thesis. It is not the wild man of difference and rhizomatic thinking, it is a more subtle and quiet philosopher. His thought is not deployed in striving for the romantic dream of individual freedom and liberty from the restricting hierarchies of organization and pains of work or in the need for creating lines of flight on which we can escape the evil organizations. As Bryant remarks, "this is not a call for wild and undisciplined creation that would renounce all method out of hand and advocate instead

a sort of vulgar associationism” (2008: 76; see also Pedersen, 2009: 80). For me Deleuze is not the lonely traveller against the molar organization, but a philosopher whose way of thinking can inspire us to think differently about various subjects. For me Deleuze is primarily a metaphysician like he also characterized himself in a late interview.

I feel myself to be a pure metaphysician. Bergson says that modern science hasn't found its metaphysics, the metaphysics it would need. It is this metaphysics that interests me (Villani, 1999: 130, quoted in Smith, 2003b: 49).

The philosophical project of Deleuze does not aim to go beyond or to overcome metaphysics (Deleuze, 1995a: 136). Instead it is to create concepts for ever changing problems, that is, *to do* what philosophers have done and *not just repeat* what they have said (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 28). Put differently, it is a matter of “defocusing the problem in order to ‘produce the problematic’” (Sørensen, 2005: 121). It is in relation to this methodology that we should understand the Deleuzian definition of the task of philosophy as a creation of concepts (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003). This perspective on philosophy is inspired by Nietzsche, who writes that philosophers “must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them, present them and make them convincing” (1968: 220; see also Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 5). Concepts are not ready-made, given to us “from some sort of wonderland: but they are, after all, the inheritance from our most remote, most foolish as well as most intelligent ancestors” (Nietzsche, 1968: 221; see also Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 5).

This means that the present thesis is a work of philosophy and should be read as one. In this sense it cannot be seen as belonging to the theories of work-life balance. It is something else. However, it is hoped that the interventions, problems, concepts and ideas presented here can converge with this massive scientific body of knowledge and maybe be fruitful and productive in the development of the understanding of work and life. “If it is a success, it should function, not only in relation to itself, but in relation to

the outside,” as Paul Patton writes (1981: 47, quoted in Burchell, 1984: 45). In other words, it is a thought that should engage with an outside. To think *with* Deleuze means to do philosophy in a similar way, but this is exactly not to repeat what he did. It is to pose new kinds of problems in other areas as in this case the constitution of the relation of work and life. The purpose is not simply to translate Deleuze’s philosophy into a language of work-life balance but to produce some practical effects by doing so, for example, by being able to understand the problem of work and life in a radically different way than what is presented in the current perspectives, which means that it is possible to suggest new solutions to deal with the problem of work and life.

The philosophy of Deleuze is then not simply applied to the scientific field of work-life balance or to apply philosophy to a given empirical field. This would reduce the philosophy to a mere theory. As we will see later it is rather a matter of constructing a transcendental empirical field inhabited by problematic forms of flexibility, performance and commitment in which the relation between work and life can be expressed and by various types or conceptual persona who give expression to the relation between work and life. It is a science of metaphysics on the relation of work and life, which means that it will be concerned with nothing else than the relation and the problematic forms in which it is expressed and the types who are expressing it.

This of course changes what we should think of as empirical as it is not *what is given*, but rather *how the given is given*, which is to say that we rather than speaking about the empirical should turn to the transcendental empirical. In this sense the thesis can be said to be a transcendental empiricism, because it is not concerned with *the given* but with *that by which the given is given* (Deleuze, 1994: 140). It is an empiricism of the transcendental or as Scott Lash (2007b: 64) puts it: “an empiricism of the virtual”. Hence I examine the transcendental relation of work and life and how this relation is actualized in various expressions of employees, managers and organizations. I will return to this discussion later in the thesis. But it is important to notice this radical change of focus on the empirical, because it will have some rather crucial implications for the methodology of this thesis as we will see later. In this sense I will say that one of the contributions of this thesis is transcendental empirical deployment of the philosophy



of Deleuze to the thinking of the relation of work and life. It is my hope that the methodological and ontological discussions of the consequences of this deployment can be of value within the reception of Deleuze in cultural studies and organization studies.

In this thesis I will quote several of Deleuze's works. However, his books on Hume (1991), Kant (1995b), Nietzsche (2005) and the magnum opus *Difference and Repetition* (1994) will play a more profound role, because they explicitly address the subject of transcendental empiricism that is deployed as methodology. In relation to the ontological discussion of univocity, it would have been possible to discuss all of Deleuze's books. However, I do not believe that this would have brought more clarity on the matter. Instead, I have limited myself to a number of books in order not to confuse the reader by invoking the various vocabularies that can be found in Deleuze. He relates implicitly to the univocity of being in all of his works, but he does so in distinct ways since his philosophy always tries to establish constituting principles within the object that he is working with. It would therefore have been possible to draw more explicitly on several of his books, for example the ones on Spinoza (1988; 1992). But I have chosen not to do so since the ambition of the thesis has never been to write a book on Deleuze, but rather to show how it is possible to think philosophically on the subject of work and life with Deleuze.

My reading and understanding of the philosophy of Deleuze will be informed and inspired by people like, for example, Clare Colebrook (2002; 2005), Poul Patton (2000), Daniel W. Smith (1996; 1998; 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2007a; 2007b; 2009), Melissa McMahon (2004), Ian Buchanan (1999; 2001; 2008), Ronald Bogue (1989), Patrick Hayden (1995; 1998), Christian Kerslake (2002; 2004), Peter Hallward (2006), Alain Badiou (2000), Levi R. Bryant (2008) and Alberto Toscano (2006). The reason for this is that it is these people who have established the international philosophical reception of Deleuze.

## **Empirical Cases**

The employees and managers I interviewed for this thesis worked for two major Danish companies: the telecommunications company Blue and the biotech company

Red (pseudonyms). Both companies are known as frontrunners in Denmark within the area of implementing new forms of work-life benefits for the employees. They have put a lot of organizational resources in the development of a variety of work-life initiatives to support the work-life balance of its employees. These initiatives include, among others, flexible working schedules, part-time work, and teleworking. In fact, Red recently won a national work-life balance prize. The multinational is world leading in bio innovation and employs more than 2000 people in Denmark. They offer up to twelve months paid maternity leave and six months paid paternity leave, and the development of a company health care centre. On a strategic level, Red has developed a strategic life-cycle approach to work-life balance, which had to be practically implemented as an intranet-based online 'tool box'. Here managers and employees can find useful information regarding work-life balance issues and company policies in different stages of life. Furthermore, work-life balance is also on the agenda in the appraisal interviews that managers and employees have every six months. In these interviews, general problems and issues relating to work-family conflict can be discussed. Blue employs about 20.000 people, and is the leading telecommunication company in Denmark. They have received a lot of publicity for their campaign Daddy's hug ('Fars kram'), which aims to inform the employed men in the company about their opportunity to have ten weeks paternity leave. When a man in the company becomes a father he receives a laptop bag including baby bottle, bib and information material about the possibilities for fathers to take paternity leave. It has resulted in an increase in fathers on paternity leave from 13% to 96% in six years (DR, 2008).

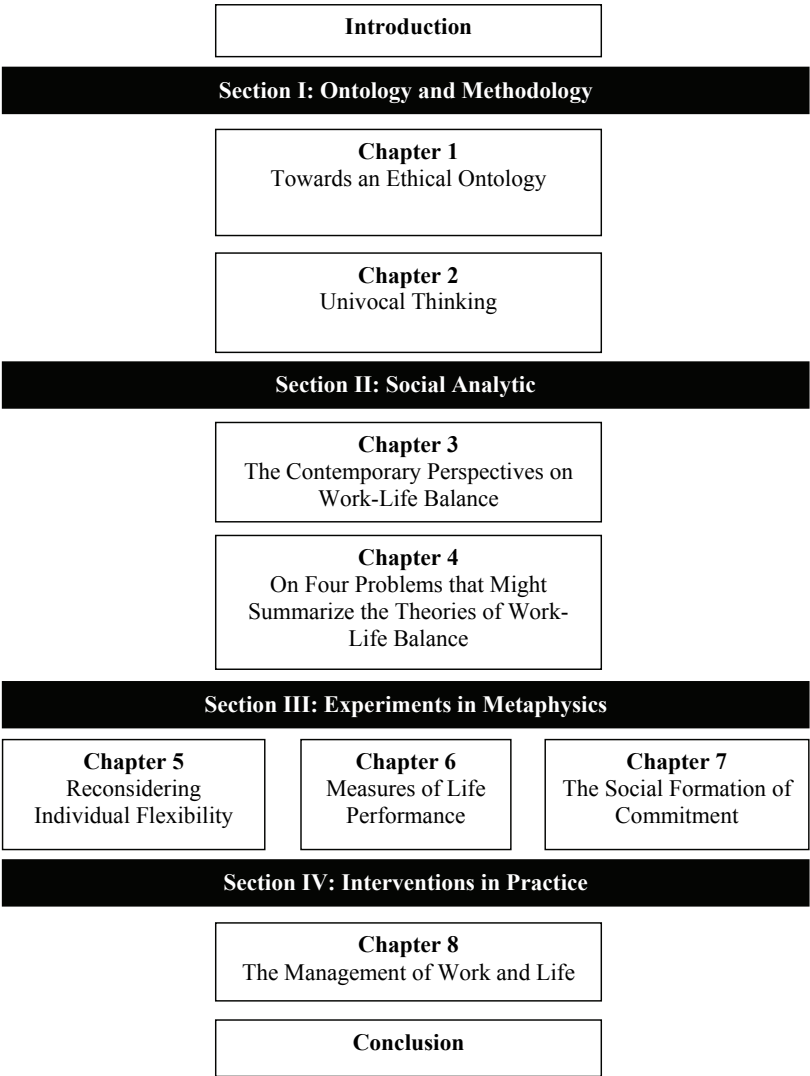
The discussion of work-life balance is not only interesting for management but also for the research on management. The reason for this is that it by definition is not limited to the work place. Rather, it seems to demarcate the limit of work and non-work. Hence, it is also a concept that pushes the boundary of management. The management of the company is no longer restricted to the work place but spread out to all parts of life. What they are managing is not only a body capable of working but also a mind capable of living for work. The great contribution of the research on work-life balance to management is therefore that they have introduced the life of the employees in an

organizational setting. In general, the aim has been to adjust the level of work to the level of resources of the employees by integrating the needs and interests of the company and the needs and interests of the employees (see e.g. Becker and Huselid, 1998; Felstead et al., 2002). This approach has been implemented in policies and programs such as flexible working arrangements (Hill et al., 1998; Hill et al., 2001), child and elder care (Hill et al. 1998), parental leave (MacInnes, 2005), sick-leave (Johansson, 2002), and job shares (Perrons, 2003). However, the focus of work-life balance has appeared to be how to separate the life and work of the employees in an effort to make them equal in terms of interest and needs. The solution to the problem of work-life balance has often been that employees should work less or not work at all (e.g. sick-leave, parental leave and job share) or integrating work and non-work (e.g. flexible working arrangements, and child and elder care). By focusing on work and life as two separate spheres that needed to be integrated, leveled, or balanced the research on work-life balance has failed to address how *the relation* between life and work is constituted.

From the perspective of work-life management life as the limit of productivity is internal to productivity itself. For management this thought is not new. Life is the productive force that is put into work. Contemporary companies speak about life as a productive force in terms of individual development, intellectual and knowledge-producing work, and social life (Lazzarato, 2004), and, in Frederick Taylor's scientific management from the beginning of the twentieth century life is described in terms of the work-power and time that the workers put into work (1998). It is this transformation of life into work that has been the focus for management to create value. Life as the limit of work is not outside of work but is the very condition of work. Work-life management is about how life becomes a condition in work. The thesis is structured in the following way.

# Structure of Thesis

Fig. 1: Structure of the thesis



In the first section of the thesis I discuss the ontological and methodological implications of applying the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to the scientific field of work-life balance.

Chapter 1 is a discussion from the philosophical perspective of Kant and Deleuze on the kind of knowledge that is produced by the thesis. A philosophical perspective on the relation between work and life implies a different understanding of knowledge. For philosophy knowledge often consists of identifying the causes and principles that produce the object of knowledge and the elements in which it is composed (Gracia, 1984: 1). However, this is not the way that knowledge is thought about in this thesis. Instead of addressing the knowledge of *what is given*, I will focus upon the knowledge about *how the given is given*. In this sense it is a metaphysical science rather than a science of nature that is concerned with the transcendental determination and conditions of *that by which the given is given* (transcendental). It is argued that this kind of metaphysical science is involved with “the conditions of real experience” (Deleuze, 1991b: 23).

Chapter 2 concerns the fundamental ontological principle of univocity set forward in this thesis and how this principle affects our way of thinking. It argues against equivocal thinking that it is anthropomorphic. This critique also goes to post-modern thinking that even though they would properly claim that the human as such is dead and gone, still it seems to invoke some kind of anthropomorphism in their thinking. The argument is not that these theories hereby are founded on the human, but rather that they are at best founded on a myth that is never questioned.

In chapter 3, I analyze how knowledge is created within the current perspectives on work-life balance. The way in which these perspectives have founded the knowledge of work-life balance on the human subject results in a particular way of understanding the problem of work-life balance. For these perspectives it is primarily a matter of the human state in balance. The aim of the thesis is thus to develop a philosophical perspective that does not restrict work-life balance to a question of the human state of balance. In doing so, I will show that these perspectives are limited. They approach work-life balance as an individual problem of the human subject. I am critical towards

this understanding because it reduces all questions of work-life balance to the level of the individual human subject. The consequence of this is that problems regarding work-life balance can only be dealt with as an individual problem by the individual employee.

Chapter 4 contains an in depth discussion of how it is possible to rethink the categories and concepts deployed with the research on work-life balance by means of the philosophy of Deleuze. The chapter begins with four problems regarding the object, condition, subject and effects of work-life balance that have been discussed within the theories of work-life balance. By addressing these four problems I attempt to create a new and different understanding of the relation of work and life, which I call work-life management. This understanding is based upon the relation of work and life in itself and not upon the perception of the relation of work and life. The chapter explains the consequences of the radical reversal of the problem of work-life balance from the personal problem of the human subject to the metaphysical question of the relation of work and life.

The following three chapters are empirical analyses of flexibility, performance and commitment. These chapters are collected under the heading ‘experiments in the metaphysic of work and life’. They do not aim at representing what work-life balance is, but rather seek to invent and experiment with how it is possible to think about the relation between work and life in practice (see Hayden, 1998: 79-80).

In chapter 5, I show how employees in an inbound call centre in Blue change the way they deal with themselves as employees after the implementation of a distance-working arrangement. Especially, it looks at changes in the willingness of employees to work extra hours, or to work when ill. I argue that flexibility is neither something intrinsic nor extrinsic to employees; rather, it consists of rules or strategies that employees deploy in regulating and governing their own lives. Flexibility therefore has to be found in the ways that employees constitute themselves as individual humans between work and family life.

Chapter 6 examines how conditions for balancing between work and domestic life are affected by changes in the measurement of employees’ productivity. Such measures

range from working hours to performance. Its empirical point of departure is Red. It is argued that the changes in measurement of value render home life and work life indiscernible. There is no longer a given or institutional division between work and domestic life, i.e. it is not possible for the employee to leave work at the office. Hereby, balancing between work and domestic life becomes a question of self-management. It does not only imply rules for border control (i.e. where should I draw the line between work and home?) but also rules for the productivity of the individual employees (i.e. should I consider this activity work?). The employees develop individual rules for when to interpret something as work.

In chapter 7 I argue that commitment is more than a matter of the employees identifying themselves with work, as they also are committed to ways of living outside of work that are regarded as being productive for the company. Thus, we should not understand commitment as individual investments of desire in work, but rather as individual expressions of a social desire, i.e. what is regarded as productive by the company. These matters are studied in Red. I show how the social formation of commitment works as a general principle for distribution and division of work and life. If the employees are regarded as being not committed by colleagues or management it can result in social exclusion and firing.

Chapter 8 shows that the relation of work and life can be managed. The empirical point of departure for this chapter is interventions in Red and Green (pseudonyms). The later is a consultancy that works primarily for the public sector and employs 450 consultants in Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Norway. In Green a strategic perspective on work-life balance was developed. Instead of focusing on the development of work-life balance policy, I turned work-life balance into a strategic human resource in which the various policies of the company were organized. In Red an approach to how work-life balance issues could be more directly and systematically included in the appraisal interviews was developed.

Finally, I summarize and point out the contributions of the thesis in the conclusion. This leads me to suggest some areas for future studies and implications of the recommended perspective on work-life management for management of work and life.



## **Part I: Ontology and Methodology**

## Chapter I: Towards an Ethical Ontology

In this chapter I will discuss the concept of knowledge. It is necessary to go into detail with the concept of knowledge to understand how the knowledge of the relation between work and life will be produced in this thesis. The ideas set forth in this thesis about how to think about the relation of work and life affect the ways in which we can talk about knowledge. Traditionally, the object of knowledge is based on the human subject's experience of the relation of work and life, but this is not the case in this thesis. Instead, the object of knowledge is based on the ontological relation between work and life and the various problematic forms in which the relation between work and life become determinable.

This change of focus from *epistemology* towards *ontology* can be seen in light of the 'ontological turn' in social theory (see e.g. Burrell, 2003: 528; Escobar, 2007). This turn to the ontological emphasis "the innermost constituent of reality itself", as Zizek put it (2004: 56) is not only the constitution of the experience of reality that must be accounted for but furthermore the constitution of reality in itself. Knowledge is therefore not only a matter of the foundation of experience but a matter of the foundation of metaphysics. This breaks with more traditional ways of thinking about science because the question of reality in itself will often be considered to be unthinkable and hence more a matter for metaphysics than science.

The knowledge produced in this thesis is not only based on metaphysics in general but on the metaphysics of Deleuze's philosophy in particular. Even though the philosophy of Deleuze has been used with organization studies, this perspective of Deleuze's philosophy is rarely to be found within organization studies. There are a few exceptions like Fuglsang (2007), Vähämäki and Virtanen (2006; see also Virtanen, 2004), Pedersen (2008; 2009), and Spoelstra (2007a; 2007b).

The perspective on Deleuze implies that it is the whole philosophy and the ethos of this philosophy that can be found here, and not a deployment of a selection of his concepts

found in the oeuvre of Deleuze. The problem with this kind of deployment of Deleuze's thoughts is first of all that the concepts never explain anything; they need to be explained themselves (see e.g. Deleuze, 2002: vii). The concepts are rather defined by their relation to other concepts, which means that they are not merely tools that can be used but always have to be thought of in relation to the problematic forms to which they refer (Bryant, 2008: 4; see also Fuglsang, 2007: 77). This failure in the deployment of Deleuze's philosophy often results in him being reduced to a normative freedom fighter against the molar state, organization and structure. But this is not the worst problem. It is that they often reproduce the same standpoint that they so badly want to criticize, or as Bryant puts it: "fail to establish the necessity of what they argue" (2008: 4-5). But how can we establish this necessity of what we are arguing for? This is a very difficult question that is the subject of this chapter as it not only involves ontology and methodology but also the relation between them by way of ethics.

What I want to say in this chapter is captured by Deleuze. The first book that Deleuze wrote ends with these two highly complicated sentences:

Philosophy must constitute itself as the theory of what we are doing, not as a theory of what there is. What we do has its principles; and being can only be grasped as the object of a synthetic relation with the very principles of what we do. (1991a: 133)

What these sentence mean and their implications are the subject of this chapter. Hence, I do not intend to explain what they express here, but only to provide the reader with some initial ideas of what Deleuze means with these sentences. First of all they say that philosophy is a theory of practice, an *ethics* (see also Fuglsang, 2007: 79; Morss, 2000: 188). Second, we have to make a distinction between morality and ethics since it is not a *given* theory of practice, but is *constituted as* a theory of practice (see also Stankovic, 2008: 5). Third, from this follows that it is *the practical thinking* itself that should be ethical (Goodchild, 1997: 39). Hence, the ethics in Deleuze's thinking is always embedded in an ethos as something that is done and carried out and thus cannot be reduced to represented moral codes (Goodchild, 1997: 39). Okay, that was the first

sentence, but now it gets really complicated. Why can being only be grasped in relation to ‘what we are doing’ and not in relation to ‘what there is’? In other words, why is it necessarily that ontology is ethical? The reason for this is rather technical.

Deleuze rejects the Kantian establishment of ground for ‘what there is’ in terms of the a priori concepts necessity and universality (1995b: 11). The reason for this is that they are given outside of experience. A priori concepts are connected to sensibility by necessity (McMahon, 2004: 13). In this sense Deleuze’s philosophy is groundless, because “*effect of experience [is] producing the structure of experience*” (Bryant, 2008: 205). Necessity can therefore not be founded on the ground of a priori concepts that exist independently of experience since there is nothing outside of experience. However, this does not lead Deleuze to suggest a philosophical perspective of anything goes – so far from it. Instead, Deleuze proposes that necessity and chance have to be established as immanent conditions of *what we do*: “being can only be grasped as the object of a synthetic relation with the very principles of what we do” (Deleuze, 1991a: 133). There is no reason or being beyond being that regulates being (Bryant, 2008: 206). Consequently, the principles that constitute being have to be found within being itself. These principles are not given as we just have argued, but have to be constituted inside the given, which means that the object of being is constituted and determined inside being. This is the fundamental principle within Deleuze’s philosophy that being is univocal (see e.g. Bryant, 2008). That being is univocal means that it “is said in one and the same ‘sense’ of everything about which it is said” (Deleuze, 1990: 179; see also Deleuze, 1994: 35). The idea of univocal being can almost be traced everywhere in his philosophy as an immanent organizing principle of his philosophy (see also Badiou, 2000; Smith, 2000). However, it is deployed in different senses from his 1953 book on Hume to *What is Philosophy?*, which he co-wrote with Félix Guattari in 1994. This idea of univocal being is what forms the alternative line of thought through the history of philosophy: Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Nietzsche that Deleuze so to speak invent in *Difference and Repetition* (1994: 35-42). To understand how being is constituted and determined, we have to turn to methodology.

Methodologically, the determination of being is concerned with the critical (“the very principles of what we do”). This could be of some relevance for the scientific field of critical management studies as Fuglsang (2007: 69) argues since this Deleuzian kind of thinking is deeply embedded in what it is criticizing. It offers an immanent critique. This means that it does not have a position outside of what it is encountering, “but rather as a part of critical practice itself” (Fuglsang, 2007: 69; see also Bryant, 2003). From a Deleuzian perspective we cannot talk about a non-critical management studies, because critique should not only be understood in a literary sense as *criticism*, but also in a philosophical sense, that is, critique as the determination of the transcendental elements (determinable forms, problems and modes of individuation) that constitute “the conditions of real experience” (Deleuze, 1991b: 23; see also Smith, 1998: xxiv). We will discuss this in detail later in the chapter. It is sufficient at the moment to say that critique is a necessary element in thinking and critique does not constitute being as such but the ethical principle on which being is given as object. In this sense it establishes and conditions the synthetic relation between the object of knowledge and the ethical principles (Deleuze, 1991a: 133). This synthetic relation is *not the given* de facto but “*that by which the given is given*” (Deleuze, 1994: 140). The synthetic relation is not “a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible” (Deleuze, 1994: 140). Numerous Deleuze scholars call this a method for transcendental empiricism (see Baugh, 1992: 133; see also Bell, 2005; Bryant, 2008; Hayden, 1998; Lapoujade, 2000; Lash, 2007b).

The task of this chapter is therefore, on the one hand, to develop an understanding of what metaphysical knowledge means and what the implications of this kind of thinking are, and on the other, to show how the methodological (transcendental empiricism) and ontological (univocal being) is connected and inseparable in ethics.

To do so, I will begin with Kant’s transcendental philosophy, because I would claim that Deleuze’s understanding of knowledge is on the one hand indebted to Kant, while on the other, it also breaks with Kant on important matters. In this sense the reading of Kant is deployed so we can better understand the way in which Deleuze conceives knowledge. My reading of Kant is, therefore, very much inspired by Deleuze’s reading

of Kant and the reception of Deleuze's encounter with Kant within the reception of Deleuze<sup>1</sup>.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, I address Kant's transcendental understanding of knowledge that is not based on an object given to the human subject, which is why Kant can be said to focus on the objectification of knowledge rather than the object of knowledge. Second, I discuss Kant's transcendental constitution of knowledge. For Kant, knowledge is constituted in the transcendental movement beyond the given representations. Knowledge is grounded in critique in the sense that it demarcates the possible limits of the deployment of reason, and hence what it is possible to recognize, claim and do. This ground is constituted in the transcendental movement that produces the knowable object of knowledge. Third, I turn to Deleuze's critique of Kant's understanding of categories as transcendental principles. Deleuze thinks Kant reduces the transcendental concepts to transcendent principles of categories. The problem for Deleuze is that Kant thereby makes the transcendental categories immanent to reason, which means that reason legislates over immanence. Instead, Deleuze wants to develop a real transcendental science in which concepts are only immanent to themselves. I then discuss how Deleuze develops from Kant's problematic constitution of knowledge a problematic constitution of the real and not the problematic experience of Kant. Finally, I analyze how the ground of knowledge is created and has the consequence that the foundation of knowledge becomes ethical.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze himself wrote a monograph on Kant (1995b), which in my opinion stands out from his other monographs on philosophers such as Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Deleuze thought of this book as a study of "an enemy" (1995a: 6) rather than a book on a philosophical friend, which could be said to be the case with the other philosophers that he wrote about. Besides the book on Kant, the inspiration from Kant is recognized in the discussions of concepts like transcendental, problematic and synthetic in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), the method of the drama in contrast to the Kantian schema (2004: 94-116), the subject of Deleuze's 1978 seminars (1978a; 1978b; 1978c; 1978d), and an article on 'The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics' (Deleuze, 2004: 56-72). The purpose is not to have a general discussion and analysis of the complex relationship between Kant and Deleuze. This would be an issue for a thesis in itself (see e.g. McMahon, 2004). Even though Deleuze thought of Kant as an enemy, there has nevertheless in recent years been a growing tendency to emphasize Deleuze's close relation to Kant. This reception of Deleuze does not say that Deleuze is a Kantian (Colebrook, 2002; 2005), but that several of his concepts are in debt to Kant. Besides Claire Colebrook this reception of Deleuze has been developed by Daniel W. Smith (1996; 1998; 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2007a; 2007b), Paul Patton (2000), James Williams (2005a), Christian Kerslake (2002; 2004), Levi R. Bryant (2008), and Melisa McMahon (2004) among others.

## **Kant's Objectification of Knowledge**

What is knowledge? Traditionally, knowledge is founded on the given nature of something. We might ask, for example, what is x? So it is in philosophic thought. Rationalism argues for instance that knowledge has to be based on reason whereas empiricism says that knowledge is given with our senses of the empirical. For realism, reality is an external given existing independently of the observer while reality is produced by mental acts in the case of idealism (Bains, 2006: 8). In this way, the conditions of knowledge for realists and idealists are either founded respectively in the given reality or in the given ideas.

Realism and rationalism are based on something given. To develop a different position where knowledge is not founded on something given we have to turn to Kant's transcendental idealism as it offers a different position where the foundation of knowledge is neither the given empirical world nor given transcendent ideas but the subject that can go beyond, or transcend, the given and thereby constitute knowledge about how the given is given (Parsons, 1992: 83).

The object of knowledge changes with Kant. This is known as Kant's Copernican turn. Our cognition should no longer conform to the object. Instead "objects must conform to our cognition" (Kant, 1990: B XV). The reason for this radical change of perspective is that Kant raises the problem of what can justify the relation between the concepts of understanding and sensible objects. Kant rejects, on the one hand, that the object should be the cause of our intellectual representations and, on the other, that the object should be caused by our understanding (Kant, 1990: A127-128; see also Kerslake, 2004: 485). Hereby he refuses the ways in which realism and idealism justify the object of knowledge.

He also rejects a third solution to the problem, which suggests the relation between our understanding and sensible objects should be justified by the existence of a transcendent God. This is not possible as we do not have any knowledge of God – because God is beyond the limit of human experience. Instead of trying to justify the object of

knowledge in the concepts of understanding, the sensible object or the transcendent God, Kant asks “what is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call ‘representation’ to the object?” (Kant, 1986: 71; quoted in Kerslake, 2004: 485). Representation is not simply a representation of the object in the subject. On the contrary, it is something in human beings. This is important because the object of knowledge then shifts from being the sensible object to the representation of the object in the subject (which is also why Deleuze later will criticize Kant for psychologism). Guyer writes that

Our knowledge of objects always takes the form of *judgment* and that judgment has certain inherent forms, discovered by logic, implies that there must be certain basic correlative concepts necessary for thinking of the *objects* of those judgments (“the metaphysical deduction”). (1992: 14)

This is the critical turn in Kant’s philosophy. The object of knowledge is not given to our experience or our speculative understanding. Rather, the object of knowledge is given as the problematic experience of the object in itself. It is beyond the limit of experience, for example, we cannot experience the thing in itself or God, which is why the experience of them always is problematic.

This implies that what conditions the conditioned object of knowledge is neither given as transcendent ideas nor as sensible reality. Instead, what conditions the object is constituted inside the conditioned object of knowledge. The object of knowledge is never given as such to our experience. It is a problematic experience, which means that the object of knowledge is always conditioned and given in problematic experience. Hence, the object of knowledge does not represent a given ground. We cannot say what knowledge is by simply determining the conditions on which it is given. Instead, we have to define the problematic experience and how the object of knowledge is conditioned in this problem. Knowledge is the transcendental as it is an indirect conditioning of the object of knowledge in the problematic experience (determinable forms). In this sense, we can say that Kant shifts our focus from asking what the object of knowledge is to focusing on how the object of knowledge becomes represented and



determinable. This means that we rather than the object of knowledge should talk about the objectification of knowledge. In other words, we should ask, how does the object become determinable as an object of knowledge? We do not have access to the thing in itself – and hence no knowledge of it, which is why we should speak about the objectification of knowledge.

## The Limits of Knowledge

Kant's aim is not certainty. We can never be certain about anything we can possess as knowledge. Instead, knowledge is constituted when the subject affirms more than it experiences. It goes beyond the mere sense data of the empirical world. In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant makes a distinction between phenomena and noumena:

Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called phenomena. But if I postulate things which are mere objects of understanding [but] not to one that is sensible... such things would be entitled noumena (intelligibilia).  
(Kant, 1990: book 2 chapter 3, 10)

It is possible to think noumena (a thing in itself), but we cannot experience it. For Kant, knowledge of the thing in itself will always be based upon our experience of the object but as we do not have any access to this object in itself we have to transcend the representation of it to make it knowable for us. Hence, knowledge is not derived from the experience of sensible objects but from the subject's transcendental experience of a priori objects. These a priori objects are not sensible objects given to our experience. They are problematic experiences of ideas constituted by ideas of reason. Knowledge is given with the subject's transcendence beyond mere experience and representation of things to the ideas of reason. This means that knowledge is transcendental. Kant writes that "I call all knowledge *transcendental* if it is occupied, not with objects, but with the way that we can possibly know objects even before we experience them" (1990: A12). In this sense Kant adapts a transcendental form of idealism in which knowledge is derived from the objectification of the object in itself, i.e. how it becomes an object of knowledge. This means that knowledge is derived from how objects in themselves

appear or become knowable to us. Objects in themselves become possible to experience and hence knowable to us in forms of problems. These problems are formed by categories and the pure forms of sensible intuition (time and space) in which we can perceive the object in itself. The object in itself becomes a possible object of experience in forms of categories and pure forms of sensible intuition. These are the necessary conditions for a possible experience. Thus the experience of possible objects is problematic in the sense that the object in itself is never knowable. The object in itself maybe beyond human experience but is not beyond human knowledge, because it is the object of knowledge. Even though Kant adapts a form of idealism, he does not mean that reality is mental. The explanation for this is that the necessary conditions for a possible experience are not subjective conditions of the experiencing subject. On the contrary, these are necessary conditions of thought (Kerslake, 2004: 486). In fact, Kant argues that the belief in knowledge of an object as based on subjective conditions is the source of all illusions (Kant, 1990: A396; see also Kerslake, 2004: 486).

Knowledge does not represent an object outside of the subject. Rather, the object emerges in the self-representation of the human subject (Colebrook, 2005: 1). Knowledge is internal to the human subject as what the subject experiences or what is given to the subject. However, knowledge is not simply a representation of the object in the human subject's experience. In this sense knowledge is represented or given to the subject, which means that there is only mediated knowledge (Colebrook, 2005: 2). Thus all knowledge is mediated. The perceived or experienced object is mediated by conditions of sensibility. There is no immediate knowledge of the object because we have only knowledge about what is experienced.

There is no absolute ground of knowledge. Instead, there is a subjective self-grounding ground because the subject is constantly aware of the fact that its ground is "nothing other than its self" (Colebrook, 2005: 3). In this sense, the representation of the object in the mind of the human subject marks a limit of possible knowledge. The consequence of this is that the subject is separated from represented objects. The represented objects then mark limits for the possible knowledge of the human subject. Hence, we should not talk about *what is known* but rather *what is knowable* from a Kantian perspective. It is

the human subject that constitutes this limit of knowledge by transcending the given. As Clare Colebrook puts it “the subject is the process of objectification” (2005: 2). Knowledge is based upon the process of objectification in which the human subject becomes the ground of its own knowledge. The object of knowledge is therefore neither something externally given to the subject nor something that is represented inside the human subject (Colebrook, 2005: 2). It is rather how the subject constitutes itself that is the objectification of knowledge for Kant.

## **The Conditions of Knowledge**

Knowledge is constituted in the transcendental movement beyond the given representations. In this sense knowledge is grounded in critique that demarcates the possible limits of the deployment of reason and hence what it is possible to recognize, claim, and do (Kerslake, 2004: 481). The conditions of knowledge are given inside of their constitution. They are derived from the constitution of a priori ideas as a possible object of knowledge. Deleuze writes,

A representation on its own is not enough to form knowledge. In order to know something, we need not only to have a representation, but to be able to go beyond it: ‘in order to recognize another representation as being linked to it’. Knowledge is thus a synthesis of representations. (1995b: 4)

Knowledge represents ideas but it is not simply a sensible object, which is represented in the mind of the subject. Rather, knowledge is what transcends the representation in the human mind (see also Williams, 2005a: 17). “Knowledge is a synthesis of representations” exactly because it goes beyond the representation of the given in order to understand how other representations are related to this (Deleuze, 1995b: 4). Hence, we can have knowledge about something without even experiencing it. In other words, we can know something a priori. Mathematics is a good example of this. We know a priori that it is true that two plus three equals five. A priori synthesis is independent of experience but is dependent of what is universal and necessary (Deleuze, 1995b: 11). The a priori synthesis makes it possible to go beyond the given experience. We need to

understand how experience is given to us and becomes an object of experience. In other words, we need to have an a priori understanding of the concepts in which we can experience objects to form knowledge about something. The a priori synthesis depends on an intrinsic relation to form a rule of knowledge, for example, in the statement that “work-life balance is always a matter of working less”, work-life balance depends on an intrinsic relation to working less. Kant makes a distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge. The a posteriori synthesis depends on experience to form a rule of knowledge. For example, we cannot know if it is true or not that Peter has a good work-life balance without basing this judgment on experience. For Kant this implies that the a priori synthesis is of a higher form of faculty than the a posteriori synthesis because “it finds *in itself* the law of its own exercise” (Deleuze, 1995b: 4). In the following section I discuss this principle in which knowledge is exercised.

## **The Transcendental Principles of Knowledge**

Kant’s transcendental or critical method investigates the laws by which knowledge is possible. By developing this transcendental method Kant, on the one hand, goes against empiricism because he claims that knowledge is not simply derived from the experience of something that is given to the human subject. On the other hand, Kant rejects rationalism because knowledge cannot be based on universals that are superior to reason. This means that reason cannot be based on or judged by universal ideas but must be judged by reason itself (see also Deleuze, 1995b: 1-2). Reason is its own tribunal and there are no “empirical and theological tribunals” that rule over reason (Deleuze, 1995b: 3). It has no transcendent being upon which it is judged. It is “an immanent critique—reasons as judge of reason” (Deleuze, 1995b: 3). This critique of reason is the essential immanent principle of the transcendental method (Deleuze, 1995b: 3). This means that knowledge is based on reason, which is not given as such. Reason is only given to itself and in so far as it is determinable in the object of knowledge. Thereby, we can only judge reason on itself. We cannot determine if reason is right, wrong, or a representation of something full of errors. We can only determine if reason is right by judging its own deployment and basing it on its own conditions of judgement. Reason is, therefore, a principle that demarcates the possibilities of knowledge. Hence, there can only be a

legitimate or illegitimate deployment of reason. Reason reasons over its own deployment by forming regulative ideas (Tampio, 2004: 17).

These ideas are not transcendent constituents of knowledge. The reason for this is that ideas are indeterminate for human subjects because they cannot be experienced or recognized, which means that the ideas can only regulate or guide our experience to knowledge about something. For example, we cannot determine the existence of God but we can reason the concept of God. In this sense, ideas regulate our reasoning by making us able to reason. Regulative ideas are necessary and universal conditions that make the concepts compatible (Kerslake, 2002; 2004). We can therefore not know the totalities of God, the World, and the Soul. For Kant this implies that ideas are 'problematic'. As Christian Kerslake explains

If ideas are complete determinations, but concepts are general, then ideas are problematic because they do not withstand coherent generalisation: this is their quality, that they cannot be recognised or experienced. (2002: 18)

The regulative ideas 'replace' the logical principles like non-contradiction and identity as grounds of knowledge. Hence the grounds of knowledge are no longer based on the objective but are subjective conditions. As Kant writes "reflection is the state of mind in which we first prepare ourselves to find out the subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts" (Kant, 1990: A260/B316, quoted in Kerslake, 2004: 488).

For Kant, knowledge is a priori representation that is not derived from experience (Deleuze, 1995b: 11, 13). But how can we state something as knowledge when we cannot refer to an empirical representation of it? Put differently, by which right (*quid juris*) can we state something about the given experience if this statement is not derived from the experience of the given but derives from the reason in itself? We cannot invoke a correspondence model because truth does not depend on the representational accuracy; rather, it is something that resembles the coherence model in which truth cannot be separated from the method in which it is established (see Deacon, 2000: 135).

The aim of creating knowledge is not to copy the empirical world. Something becomes knowable if it is compatible with other knowable facts, that is, the facts of knowledge are exercised according to the same immanent law of reason in which they are produced. This means that facts can coexist within the same possible experience. Facts only become compatible if they cannot exist under the same concept, that is, “one thing cancels another because their *concepts* are incompatible” (Kerslake, 2004: 489; italics added). Knowledge is conditioned by transcendental principles. Transcendental principles are, therefore, not given conditions of knowledge but are rather conditioning their own constitution of the possible object of knowledge in which they can be reasoned.

These principles of knowledge are a priori representations. They cannot be found in themselves as they are beyond mere experience and hence not are perceivable objects. However, they can be found in the way that they constitute the possible experience of an object. For Kant, transcendence does not mean to go beyond the given appearance of things to apprehend the essence of the thing in itself. On the contrary, knowledge is a pure object of metaphysics in so far as it can only be represented in and by reason (Deleuze, 1995b: 11). Knowledge is neither appearances nor products of our reasoning but “the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori” (Kant, 1990: A12, 59; see also Deleuze, 1995b: 14). Knowledge is transcendental in the sense that it “aims to uncover the conditions of possibility of *our* experience” (Tampio, 2004: 11). Hence, the aim of transcendental philosophy is not to know of the thing in itself but to investigate how the possible object of knowledge is given. For Kant, this object is given to us in the forms of categories: quantity, quality, reality, and modality. These are the categories in which the given becomes thinkable and we can make a priori judgement about the world. The given is perceivable to us in the pure forms of intuition (time and space). This means that knowledge as a principle does not designate what is true or false, but, rather what is reasonable and unreasonable and, hence, what are possible objects of experience. Knowledge demarcates the legitimate domain of experience, i.e. what it is possible to reason and impossible to reason. This means that knowledge is transcendental, i.e. to go beyond the given experience to a general possible experience (see Smith, 2007a: 4-5).

## Deleuze's Critique of Kant

Even though Deleuze himself is highly critical of Kant, he can also be seen as a predecessor of Kant. Deleuze's thinking and concepts are inspired and properly would have been very different if it was not for Kant. It is in particular Kant's idea about philosophy as a transcendental activity that can found in Deleuze's philosophy, but this is also where the ways of Deleuze and Kant become separate. Deleuze insists on a transcendental empiricism that breaks radically with Kant's idea about a transcendental idealism.

Deleuze criticizes Kant for making categories possible. Even though Deleuze defines philosophy in terms of creating concepts the aim of Deleuzian metaphysics is not to invent new categories. The reason for this is that categories are possible experiences of something, which means that categories work as transcendent principles of thought. Deleuze criticises Kant for reducing the transcendental concepts to transcendent principles of categories. He writes "the transcendental is what makes transcendence immanent to something = x" (Deleuze, 1991a: 111). In the case of Kantianism the transcendental is immanent to reason, which therefore legislates over immanence. The consequences of this is that "the concept becomes a transcendent universal and the plane [of immanence] becomes an attribute in the concept" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 44-45). Instead, Deleuze wants to replace categories with transcendental real concepts. For Deleuze concepts are real if they are not immanent to something but are immanent in their pure immanence. In other words, concepts are immanent to the pure being in itself if they are not categories of human beings.

This move from transcendental *categories* of being to transcendental *concepts* of being in itself makes it possible for Deleuze to claim that we can make metaphysics a real science – as a metaphysical science of the real or the empirical. The subject of metaphysics is being qua being. As Peter King writes, "the primary object of metaphysics is being—that the human intellect in its present condition is able to have knowledge of being as such" (2003: 17). The way human beings can have knowledge of being in itself is through the transcendental. One of Deleuze's favourite philosophers,

medieval thinker Duns Scotus, argues that metaphysics is “the transcending science, because it is concerned with the transcendentals” (Scotus, 1987: 2; see also King, 2003: 15). It is exactly in this sense that we can say that Deleuze’s philosophy is a science: a science of the transcendentals. It is a metaphysical science that is concerned with what is beyond the science of nature (Scotus, 1987: 2). James Williams writes

In Deleuze’s metaphysics, everyday objects are supplemented by strange and often counter-intuitive metaphysical entities. Indeed, this can be said of anything approached in ‘real world’ ostensible from or even through scientific deduction. All things have a metaphysical aspect that takes them beyond the boundaries of observation, common sense and current scientific theory. (2005a: 145)

The missing universal ground of knowledge does not mean that it is not a science – it is rather a *critical* science in the sense that it, on the one hand, creates new forms of problems and concepts in which we can understand and transform the real, and, on the other, criticizes the common sense assumption in the particular field of knowledge (see also Jones et al., 2005: 22, 152; Spoelstra, 2007a; 2007b).

In the following section, I will discuss how being in itself becomes an object for knowledge in the philosophy of Deleuze. He is inspired by Kant on this point because we encounter being in the form of problems, but as we will see there is a difference between Deleuze’s and Kant’s understanding of problems.

## **The Problematic Experience of Knowledge**

Deleuze writes with regard to Foucault that his greatest achievement is

The conversion of phenomenology into epistemology. For seeing and speaking means knowledge, but we do not see what we speak about, nor do we speak about what we see. (1999: 109)



If we take the statement as our point of departure, we cannot reduce knowledge to either seeing or speaking, i.e. to something purely empirical or transcendental. On the one hand, it is not possible to base knowledge on certain ground either in the ideas, language, and logic of signification or base it in the empirical realm. Neither is it possible to place knowledge beyond empirical and theoretical ideas as Deleuze writes about in his critique of the vulgar sense of phenomenology in the form of intentionality (1999: 108-109).

To overcome this metaphysical gap between seeing and speaking Deleuze argues that knowledge must be a result of setting problems (Kerslake, 2004: 501). However, Deleuze's understanding of problems differs from Kant's. Deleuze explains, "Kant still defines the truth of a problem in terms of the possibility of its finding a solution: this time it is a question of a transcendental form of possibility..." (1994: 161). *The Kantian method of transcendental reflection*, that is that only reason can judge reason, is replaced by *the Deleuzian method of transcendental problematization*, implying that ideas become problematic in the sense that regulative ideas are different in kind from concepts (Kerslake, 2002). It is exactly from this point on 'problematic ideas' in Kant that Deleuze takes his point of departure in developing a *transcendental empiricism* in opposition to Kant's *transcendental idealism* (Bogue, 1989). The difference between the two forms of transcendental thought is that transcendental idealism seeks to find the formal transcendental conditions of possible experience in the identity of categories, whereas transcendental empiricism aims at creating the genetic conditions of real experience in the differentiation of the idea (Lord, 2008: 1; see also Williams, 2005a: 30).

The philosophy of Deleuze is empiricism but not in a traditional sense. It differs from the traditional concept of empiricism on two points. First, knowledge is not derived from experience or from senses but from empirical ideas (Deleuze, 1991a: 107; see also Bell, 2005: 96; Buchanan, 1999). Second, the determination is not purely subjective, but is rather a matter of the expression of being (Deleuze, 1997: 194). There is nothing human or anthropological to knowledge. Third, it is therefore a matter of the *ontology* of sense rather than the *epistemology* of sense, because it is not a human subject that experiences how the given is given; this is expressed by being. Fourth, difference is

internal to being in itself and not external to being, which means that it is not a subject who thinks but being who thinks itself (Deleuze, 1997: 192-194). It is therefore more accurate to say that ‘it thinks’ than ‘I think’ (Bryant, 2008: 12). Fifth, ontologically speaking, knowledge is a matter that distinguishes between absolute knowledge (being’s knowledge of itself) and empirical knowledge (reflection of being in man), which means that absolute knowledge “distinguishes itself only by also negating the knowledge of indifferent essence” (Deleuze, 1997: 194). It is important to bear in mind that this is a distinction between absolute being and empirical man (and not historical man) (Deleuze, 1997: 194). Seventh, there are no distinctions between being and thought when ontology is seen as a matter of sense and not essence: Being “thinks itself and reflects itself in man” (Deleuze, 1997: 195)

The reason why the empiricism of Deleuze differs from other accounts of empiricism is that it is recognized by being a *transcendental empiricism* (see e.g. Baugh, 1992; 1993; Bell, 2005; Bryant, 2008; Hayden, 1998; Lapoujade, 2000). His philosophy is, on the one hand, *transcendental* because it goes beyond the certainty of essence and asks: “how can there be a given, how can something be given to a subject, and how can the subject give something to itself?” (Deleuze, 1991a: 87). And, on the other hand, it is *empirical* because it is raised from an immanent point of view: “how is the subject constituted in the given?” (Deleuze, 1991a: 87). This means that experience does not constitute how the object of knowledge is given to human subjects (Deleuze, 1991a: 108). For Deleuze, empiricism is transcendental because experience is not given to the subject. It is rather the subject that is transcended by problematic experience, which constitutes the subject inside the given. We do not experience problems. It is experience itself that is problematic exactly because it does not belong to a human subject. This implies that “subjectivity is determined as an effect” (1991a: 26). Knowledge is derived from this constitution of the subject. However, it is important that this experience is not personal as it is not given as the subject’s experience. It is an impersonal experience in which the subject is constituted. Ian Buchanan writes

Experience, then, is not something that a person has, or even has happen to one; it is, rather, what one is made of. This means, of

course, that experience itself cannot be personal but must be nonpersonal, which, in turn, demands that the very notion of experience must be rethought. (1999: 6)

How should we make sense of this impersonal experience that knowledge is based on? The impersonal experience is not something given to a human subject. Rather, it is a principle that constitutes the subject inside the given (Deleuze, 1991a: 87). These principles are articulated in and by the subject's constitution inside the given. These principles do not exist outside of this constitution. This implies that we cannot address knowledge from the distinction between subject and object (or thought and being) as the empirical given and the given subject. The constitution of the subject should not be thought of as a mental state. It is not the subject that is the fact of knowledge. Hence it is not the active already constituted subject of psychology that constitutes the world within which the subject lives (Hallward, 2006: 120). In the same manner the subjective entity ('I am') is the foundation of knowledge in a Cartesian sense. It is not the Cartesian cogito that is certain about itself that is the base of knowledge. Knowledge can neither be conditioned on the human consciousness, the reflectivity of the subject, nor in the object itself but must be conditioned in unconditioned thought. The question is not to explain the truth about recognition. Thus we arrive at the special trait of thinking that Deleuze recognized as empiricism, "nothing in the mind transcends human nature, because it is human nature that, in its principles, transcends the mind; nothing is ever transcendental" (Deleuze, 1991a: 24). This means that the mind is not active (organizing and connecting ideas) but is transcendent by the ideas that are connected in the mind. The mind is passive. The mind does not grasp knowledge. Everything happens in the mind. Hence we cannot understand empirical knowledge as an experience of something because "experience itself must be understood as a principle" (Deleuze, 1991a: 108). It is from this principle's constitution of the subject inside the given that knowledge of the produced object is derived. Knowledge is not about an essence but about a produced object and the transcending process in which it is produced. This implies that knowledge is derived from the production of an effect. The object of knowledge is not the sensible that is given to the human subject.

It is not a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible. (Deleuze, 1994: 140)

The object of knowledge is imperceptible from the perspective of recognition exactly because it is an object that refuses mere recognition. What is interesting from a Deleuzian perspective is not so much the object of knowledge in itself, but the processes of objectification in which the object of knowledge is produced. In other words, “that by which the given is given” (Deleuze, 1994: 222). But what is it that the object of knowledge is produced by? The object of knowledge is not given. It is produced. In other words, the sensible is a product or an effect of a transcendental principle. Deleuze writes that “empiricism truly becomes transcendental [...], only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible...” (1994: 56-57). It is a transcendental principle of the being of the sensible (see Smith, 1996: 38). This sensibility is, for Deleuze, invoked with a form of empiricism that breaks in a radical sense from Kant’s transcendental idealism, in which ideas can exist behind or outside of the sphere of experience. This principle is imperceptible as it is not something that we can perceive empirically. It is not mediated nor given to our experience. It is only given to our thinking. It is not an object of perception. It is an object for thinking (Deleuze, 1994: 140). For Deleuze, this object is an idea, but in a different way than Kant’s idea.

An idea ... is neither one nor multiple, but a multiplicity constituted of differential elements, differential relations between those elements, and singularities corresponding to those relations. These three dimensions, elements, relations and singularities, constitute the three aspects of multiple reasons: determinability or the principle of quantifiability, reciprocal determination or the principle of qualifiability, and complete determination or the principle of potentiality. There is therefore an empiricism of the Idea. (Deleuze, 1994: 278)

For Deleuze, the Idea is not the Kantian idea, which is “a concept which itself goes beyond the possibility of experience and which has its source in reason” (Deleuze,

1995b: 8). Deleuze criticizes the Kantian categories, as possible conditions of possible experience, for either being “too general or too large for the real” (1994: 68). For Deleuze, the conditions of a real experience are not larger than what they are conditioning (1994: 68). The reason for this is that the conditions of a real experience are not mediated by the identity of categories but by the immediate element of disparity (Deleuze, 1994: 69). The element of disparity is difference of difference. This element is an immanent principle both of the transcendental and the genetic constitution of real experience.

## **The Problematic Creation of Knowledge**

Deleuze argues that “you will know nothing through concepts unless you have created them” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 7). Hence, knowledge about something cannot be grasped by simply applying abstract categories to the empirical world of sensible objects (Buchanan, 1999). Instead, we need to create concepts to be able to know. Abstract universals do not explain anything but have to be explained themselves (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 7). How can we create knowledge about something if we do not have the categories or concepts in which the given can be given to us? And how can knowledge be said to be true if it is founded on concepts we have created by ourselves? If we want to create knowledge about something that does not yet exist, truth is not representational accuracy but the creation of problems that have practical relevance. Patrick Hayden puts it nicely,

The criterion for philosophical activity is not representational accuracy of how the world ‘really is’ as a closed system independent of experience but, given a theory of immanence, the success of the construction of concepts designed to respond to specific problems and real, particular conditions of existence. Thus for Deleuze the goal of an empiricist philosophy is practical: to make a positive difference in life, to invent, create, and experiment. (1998: 79-80)

For Deleuze, philosophy should not aim for truth by *representing* or *discovering* a hidden world. It should rather *denaturalize* the general imperatives for how we

represent and understand the given in order to make room to raise problems in new, positive ways. Truth lies in the effort of creating new forms of problems rather than finding the first principle, or as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “a concept always has the truth that falls to it as a function of the conditions of its creation” (2003: 27).

The act of creation is not only to invent new concepts but also to positively destruct problems in an effort to make it possible to state new forms of problems. So, creation is much more than inventing new solutions. It also involves creating new problems (see also Spoelstra, 2007a: 25). This focus on problems is not to say that we should not pay attention to solutions. It is simply to say that we need to address problems first because “the problem always has the solution it deserves, in terms of the way in which it is stated (i.e. the conditions under which it is determined as a problem)” (Deleuze, 1991b: 16). If solutions, in this sense, are inseparable from problems then we cannot address solutions, we need to employ the constitutive power of problems to be able to know (Deleuze, 1991b: 16). We have to develop concepts to apprehend something that does not yet exist but is about to come into existence. This is also why Spoelstra (2007a: 25) says that the method of Deleuzian philosophy is “not discovery but experimentation”. It is not concern about finding solutions but about creating problems in which something new can be created.

From a Deleuzian perspective what is studied does not exist outside of its creation, which implies that what is explained is always at the same time in the process of being created. In other words, how is *x* constituted inside the given? The question is not “what is *x*?” because knowledge is not something to be found in the transcendent idea but to be created immanently within the real. Knowledge is always a question of ‘what is it for me?’ (Deleuze, 2005: 77). This means that we instead should ask who and which one? (Deleuze, 2004: 94-96). These questions mean ‘what is expressed about being in the constitution of me?’ Knowledge is not based on abstract universals in which we seek truth; rather, the foundation of knowledge is subjective. However, it is not subjective in an ordinary sense as it is not based on an already given or constituted subject. It is, rather, subjective in the way that conditions of knowledge are created in the subject’s constitution inside the given. In this sense the subject is rather an impersonal becoming.

The subject does not become a person. The subject is a becoming of being. It is being which is expressed in the subject in the becoming. It is being in itself that becomes being in something other than itself. Becoming in a Deleuzian sense does not mean the realization of the individual subject but means that being in itself is constituted inside something else, for example, a subject. The immanent principles of creation are expressed in the constitution of the being in itself in something else, which means that they always have to be explained in their transcendental deployment, specifically, how the principles of creation can be located as immanent forces within a thing, a human subject, a relation of work and life.

So far we have spoken about Deleuze's concept of knowledge but it might be more to the point to say that Deleuze invents a theory of learning. Whereas Kant develops a theory of knowledge we could say that Deleuze develops a theory of learning (Clark, 1997: 70). The transcendental should not be traced from the given empirical realm (like knowledge) but should be explored 'on its own' (like learning) (Alliez, 2004: xi; 102; see also Deleuze, 1994: 164). Learning is therefore founded in metaphysical experiments rather than scientific experiences.

It is knowledge that is nothing more than an empirical figure, a simple result which continually falls back into experience; whereas learning is the true transcendental structure ... (Deleuze, 1994: 166)

From a Deleuzian perspective learning is a matter of not basing thinking on the human experience beyond the human condition. However, it is important that this mean that we should think beyond the *condition* and not the human. Thus, Deleuze is interested in going beyond the human condition but not in leaving the human behind (Ansell Pearson, 1999: 20-21). It is therefore a matter of expanding the possible experience of something by not basing this on the state of being human that is Deleuze's idea.

Learning is the appropriate name for the subjective acts carried out when one is confronted with the objectivity of a problem (Idea),

whereas knowledge designates only the generality of concepts or the calm possession of a rule enabling process. (1994: 164)

Learning is not mediated by reason, but by an ethical ethos about creation of possibilities of life. If we cannot found knowledge on reason what is then the principle of knowledge? For Deleuze, the basic question of a philosophical analysis is what makes its belief legitimate.

Hence, knowledge is not about seeking truth but rather about asking why the problem that is raised is necessary (see also Penner, 2003: 55). In this sense Deleuze's criticism of Kant is profoundly Nietzschean (see e.g. Deleuze, 2005: 93-94). This implies a different form of philosophical analysis, as Nietzsche writes "... it is high time to replace the Kantian question 'how are synthetic judgments a priori possible?' [Kant, 1990: B 19] with another question 'why is belief in such judgments necessary?'" (Nietzsche, 1972: 24). We need to believe to make a priori judgments possible – but do we want to believe in these judgments? For Nietzsche Kant not only poses the wrong problem but also gives the wrong answer that synthetic judgments a priori are possible because of the court of reason. Critique has to establish a court of reason based on pure reason, which should make it possible to distinguish legitimate and illegitimate deployment of the faculties (Tampio, 2004: 16). Hence, the problem with the Kantian question is that it focuses on justifying our prior idea rather than justifying why we should believe in this judgement. The point of critique differs for Kant and Deleuze in the sense that for Kant it is justification of reason while for Deleuze it is another sensibility of the real – the being *of* the sensible (Deleuze, 2005: 94). For Deleuze, the justification of thought as a principle of knowledge is not something outside of thought itself but is an ethics in which thought can be creative. In this sense, the foundation of Deleuze's knowledge will always be normativity or ethics.

## **Methodology as Ethical Ontology**

The ethical critique of work-life balance is enforced by this theoretical discussion. Deleuze and Foucault shared a common idea of philosophy. At Foucault's funeral ceremony Deleuze read the words of Foucault:



What is philosophy today [...] if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it is possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known? (Foucault, 1985: 8-9)

We might think that it is more cool and creative to think of philosophy like this. But why is it necessarily better to think differently than legitimizing what one already knows? I believe that it is impossible to answer the question *why* it is better from a Deleuzian perspective; rather, I think that it should answer by discussing *how* it is better. That is not to base it on moral principles but on principles of affirmation or creation. Maybe we should understand this in the sense that Deleuze speaks about ethics in a lecture on Spinoza:

The point of view of an ethics is: of what are you capable, what can you do? Hence a return to this sort of cry of Spinoza's: what can a body do? We never know in advance what a body can do. We never know how we're organized and how the modes of existence are enveloped in somebody. (1980: 3; see also 1988: 17-18; Spinoza, 2003 [Ethics, III, 2, scholium])

We can neither invoke accuracy nor precision as it is not a matter of representing a given empirical object. If thought cannot orient its practical activities towards something given outside of itself, it necessarily becomes a self-grounding practice. It is not possible to justify this practice by reference to any external means or foundations. Hence, critique cannot be based upon a transcendent principle, but must be based on an immanent principle. For Deleuze, this immanent principle is an ethical principle of creation or expression. This principle should always be discovered by how it is expressed or given expression to within the individual. In this sense it is more a proposition than a judgement. The ethical is so to speak expressed in the individuation of the individual (i.e., how the individual give expression to the relation between work

and life), which imply that it is both an ontological and ethical principle that can only be found within the constitution of the individual composite. It is an individuating difference or that by which each individual becomes distinct from all others. Hereby, the individual gives expression to a certain mode of existence in which the ethical principle has to be found. We could therefore, following Nick Nesbitt (2005), call it “the ethics of internal difference”. In this sense it is not an ethics that is based on the individual but rather one that is constituted in the individuation. This means that ethics is not an external form that is ‘moulded’ onto matter or subjects; it is not a transcendent form but a determinable mode “in the form of an internal Difference which establishes an a priori relation between thought and being” (Bryant, 2003: 10). As a consequence this ethical principle is not transcendent but, precisely, transcendental; it has to be found in the process of the individual constitution, i.e., in the individuation. However, it is important that we do not “define the transcendental as consciousness” (Agamben, 1999: 225), because immanence is not immanent to consciousness. It is rather the reverse that is the case; consciousness is a transcendental field, which is why we should think of the conscious as impersonal and pre-individual. Consciousness does not have the form of a transcendental subject (the primordial form of ‘I’) as is the case with Kant. This is why Deleuze (following Nietzsche) prefers to talk about the non-person: “‘he’, ‘one’, ‘He speaks’ or ‘One speaks’” (Deleuze, 1999: 7). So when Nietzsche speaks about ‘bad consciousness’ this should not be understood in a psychological sense; it does not belong to an individual, or to someone in particular. Nietzsche expressed it this way:

“Someone or other must be to blame that I feel ill” – this kind of conclusion is peculiar to all sick people, and in fact becomes more insistent, the more they remain in ignorance of the true reason, the physiological reason. (2007: 93-94)

We could put it in this way: I do not have a ‘bad consciousness’, it is ‘bad consciousness’ that has me. ‘Bad consciousness’ is a mode of existence that can be expressed *in* and not *by* the individual. In this sense we should not understand ‘bad consciousness’ as a moral code installed in the human subject; rather, we should see this as an expression of a certain form of ethics.

In relation to Spinoza (and Nietzsche) Deleuze writes that ethics is

A topology of immanent modes of existence [that] replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values. Morality is the judgement of God, the system of Judgement. But Ethics overthrows the system of judgement. The opposition of values (Good-Evil) is supplanted by the qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad). (1988: 23)

The ethical principle is immanent to the modes of existence; it does not exist outside of 'its' expression within these. It is correct that Deleuze is for immanence (see e.g. 2001), but what I believe is at least as important to recognize is that immanence is not a transcendent principle. Instead immanence constitutes a transcendental field. Hence we have to make a distinction between immanence in itself (pure immanence) and the expression of immanence in something else (transcendental field). However, it is important to notice that this expression of immanence in something else does not imply that it is expressed in the human subject or consciousness. Immanent is expressed in itself as immanence. We could hereby say that univocity is the operative function of immanence; the function that expresses immanence in something else than itself which is the transcendental field.

For me, then, the important aspect of Deleuze's ethical thinking is that it is univocal and not only that it is for immanence as such. It is univocal because what is expressed and who is expressing is expressed in a single voice (expression). There is no opposition between the expressed and the expression; they are enveloped and folded into each other. What is expressed (ethical principle) is to be found within the expressed (individuation), and who is expressing it (type) can be determined by referring what is expressed to the expression. Knowledge is therefore not based on a transcendent principle but on an immanent principle that transcends the constitution of modes of existence. Deleuze writes that

Law is always the transcendent instance that determines the opposition of values (Good-Evil), but knowledge is always the immanent power that determines the qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad). (1988: 24-25)

If knowledge is not simply something there is but is something that has to be created then the ethical question is not what something ought to be but what it might be? By what right can I claim that the philosophical perspective on the relationship of work and life is any better than the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance? I argue that work-life balance is not something there is a philosophy for. We can neither state that work-life balance is based on given facts nor rights. It is instead based on principles of creation, that is, in which problems might work-life balance be experienced. However, the values of creations according to which we can judge the constitution of problems are not given. This means that the problem of work-life balance cannot be judged by given moral values. Instead these constitutive values are themselves subject to judgement. In this sense the thesis forms an ethic and not a moral. Ethics differs from morals as it invents values in which it is judged by.

Ethics is not a given state of affairs but a preferred state of affairs against which existing states of affairs can be judge (McMahon, 2004: 138). This means that ethics is something that has to be invented or created. Thus it is not possible to speak about a given norm or rule but a normative that can come into existence – and in what sense this should be constituted, that is, which problem should it be based upon (see also Smith, 2009: 66). This implies that the ethical foundation of work-life balance always involves something new: it has to be reinvented constantly because it does not exist in itself. It is not a given transcendent norm that exists independently of its deployment. We could talk about the ethical as a constitutive principle in which the problem of knowledge is conditioned. The ethical foundation transcends the problem when the subject is constituted inside the given. The constitutive principle of ethics is not an object of science but a guide for scientific activity (McMahon, 2004: 86). From a Deleuzian perspective we cannot state the ethical as a factual right independent of its empirical deployment, as Kant does with the categorical imperative, but must rather state by the

ethical foundation by which we can say that this particular constitutive principle or value is the best one.

A Deleuzian science is profoundly ethical as it is not based on facts or rights. Rather, it is interested in the possible becoming of life rather than the being of human subjects. Hence, we are not interested in the actual essence of work-life balance but rather want to create another way of thinking about work-life balance, which makes it possible to have a different praxis about work-life balance. As Hayden writes “for Deleuze, it is never enough to ask what thought ‘is’ since the question is always that of what thought ‘becomes’” (1998: 7). The implication of this is that normative foundation is only expressed in the way that problems are actually constituted by human subjects. Hence it can only be traced in the actions, beliefs, and aspirations of human subjects. From a Nietzschean perspective we could talk about the normative as the creation of values, or the values of values. Values are not judged by principle according to which we can find the ‘right’ problem. Rather, values are transcendental principles that are evaluated by each other. The positive ethical task of philosophy is then to create concepts in which an immanent transcendental principle of knowledge can be deployed in the evaluation of the problem of knowledge.

This means that the method of philosophy aims at changing the world in which we live. As a consequence, ontology is primarily ethical and the ethical comes before ontology. This could be understood in a Levinasian sense as “metaphysics is an ethics” (Levinas, 1969: 78-79, quoted in Smith, 2009: 60-61). However, for Deleuze the Good is not prior to metaphysics and ontology as a transcendent Other, but is transcendental and immanent to the modes of existence (see also Smith, 2009: 61). This means that not only are ontology and knowledge always profoundly ethical but they are not so simply by referring to given empirical phenomenon. Instead they establish and refer to a transcendental field, which is “that by which the given is given” (Deleuze, 1994: 222; see also Bryant, 2003: 4). Whereas Levinas establishes an ethical relation to the transcendent Other, Deleuze constitutes a transcendental relation of knowledge between the ethical principle and modes of existence.

This transcendentalism has political implications, as Claire Colebrook writes

If we cannot begin from any founding (or transcendent) term, then nothing – neither justice, nor democracy, nor law, nor humanity – can be appealed to as a ground for political arguments. (2002: 89)

There is no given ground for political arguments; this ground has to be invented. It is this invention of new ground that makes it possible for a different way of thinking and expressing the relation between work and life that can open new forms of action and belief. The theory of knowledge is therefore not only a matter of epistemology but is an ethical concern with the possibility of thinking differently through the invention of new fields of knowledge (see also Agamben, 1999: 221). Hence the concern of this thesis is not only to develop an ethical ontology or metaphysics of the relation of work and life, but to invent a new form of knowledge of the relation of work and life in which a different practice take be possible.

This kind of thinking has some important methodological implications, which will be discussed in the following chapter. Two aspects and implications for deploying the univocal thinking of Deleuze to empirical studies are of particular concern: the constitution of a transcendental field (and not an empirical field belonging to human subjects), and what it means to think univocally (and not equivocally). In this sense the chapter should also clarify how this kind of univocal thinking differs from other theoretical positions.

## Chapter II: Univocal Thinking

The problem with the contemporary understanding of work-life balance is that it conceives of balance as something that is represented in or between human states, which implies that the human subject is “the point of construction or representation through which the world is constituted” (Colebrook, 2004: 284). This means that the current perspectives on work-life balance are based on a certain kind of anthropomorphism and knowledge and beliefs about what it is to be a human being. It is exactly here we have to be critical if we do not want to think of the relation of work and life as an individual problem. However, the idea here is not to state a different claim on the human nature; rather, it is to go beyond this particular way of thinking. The idea is not to suggest a new form of humanism, but to go beyond all kind of humanism by not basing knowledge on the nature of human being (see also Ansell Pearson, 2007; Land, 2006). In short, we need to go beyond the image of man to address what constitutes the relation of work and life. As a consequence of this I will suggest that thinking and knowledge of the relation of work and life are matters of ontology and metaphysics – and not anthropomorphism.

The important task of metaphysics is not to *uncover* what work-life balance is, but to *invent* what the relation of work and life can be and how it can be thought (see also Deleuze, 1991b: 15). The problems of work and life do not uncover something that already exists. On the contrary it invents “what did not exist” (Bergson, 1911: 58-59; quoted in Deleuze, 1991b: 15). Thus what becomes important for this kind of metaphysics is to create concepts in which the problems and the relations of work and life can be explored, spoken and thought. What are the presuppositions and consequences of the contemporary ways of thinking work and life, how can the thought of work and life be liberated from the image of man? The ambition of this thesis is to invent problems of work and life that make it possible to think of the relation in a way that breaks with contemporary ways of thinking. The goal is not to find a solution but to raise the problem differently. This means that the cure suggested here is to remove the image of the individual human subject that has for so long blocked our understanding of the relation of work and life.

## Univocal and Equivocal Thinking

Univocal thinking is more than simply a matter of renouncing the human subject as a condition of knowledge. The philosophy of Deleuze differs from most post-structuralists on this point because the subject is not formed through the logic of signification (Colebrook, 2004: 288), which means that the subject is not a product and effect of language or logic of signification (e.g. discourse, power and knowledge). From a Deleuzian perspective, this is an *equivocal* thinking, because what is represented (the subject) is represented by something other than itself (the logic). As a consequence two incommensurable levels of thought are invoked: the produced subject of signification and the logic of signification (Colebrook, 2004: 288-289). This critique of equivocally is often raised by Deleuze as a critique of analogy (see e.g. 1994: 37-39). Deleuze writes in relation to Spinoza,

Whenever we proceed by analogy we borrow from creatures certain characteristics in order to attribute them to God either equivocally or eminently. Thus God has will, understanding, Goodness, wisdom and so on, but has them equivocally or eminently. Analogy cannot do without equivocation or eminence, and hence contains a subtle anthropomorphism, just as dangerous as the naive variety (1992: 46).

For Deleuze, the problem with analogy is that it cannot account for what constitutes the individuality (see also 1994: 38). Analogy reduces the constitution of individuality to a matter of anthropomorphism. Post-modern thinking has been seen as death of man or antihumanism (see e.g. Ferry and Renaut, 1990) but I will claim following Claire Colebrook that we instead are witnessing a new form of humanism that rather than placing the human nature in the human being itself as an essence situates the human nature beyond being. Theories of discourse make, for example, a distinction between the sense of discourse and the sense that the human subject has of this discourse. They often replace 'sense' with subjectivity, but this does not change the fundamental model of their thinking. Sense or subjectivity is something possessed by the human subject that is affected by the discourse or power.



An example of this way of thinking can be found in Knight and Morgan (1991). They write that strategy as a discourse “is a mechanism of power that transforms individuals into particular subjects” (251). I will say that this understanding is problematic from a univocal perspective as it not only makes it necessary to invoke a distinction between the given natural individual and the constituted produced subject that is affected by the power structure or discourse, but also because they cannot account for the constitution of the individuality. It is accepted from the beginning that the individual actor is given independently and outside of the power structure. As a consequence the subjectivity and individuality is only partly constituted by power. They only partly address what constitutes this individuality. The theoretical reason for this is that they need the individual actor when arguing for what constitutes a new discourse. Knight and Morgan write,

Discourses change as actors adapt and change the conditions of reproduction. If this were not the case, we could not talk about the emergence of new discourses, by which we mean the emergence of qualitatively new ways of ‘accomplishing’ social relations. On the other hand, discourses are at one level ‘internal’ to the subject, providing the basis on which subjectivity itself is constructed. (1991: 254)

The consequence of this is that subjectivity is constructed and based on something we do not know what is (and we are claiming to describe). The process of subjectification works by transforming the understanding that human subjects have of themselves, which are caused by certain discourses or power structures (Morgan and Knight, 1991: 254). This way of thinking always has to take the specific individuality into consideration to explain why and how power affects, produces and constitutes subjectivity. The methodological problem of discourse theory is that they want to account for how subjects are constructed by discourses *and* how this affects the experience and understanding that individuals have of themselves. To secure this they

simply have to invoke some kind of anthropomorphism so the individuals can be constituted in experience.

In contrast to *equivocal* thinking I will follow Deleuze and suggest a *univocal* thinking in which the subject and the logic are expressed on the same level of thought. Univocal thinking differs from equivocal thinking in three ways. First, there is only one level of expression, i.e., being speaks in one single language. In Deleuze's final article 'Immanence: A Life' he explains it like this:

Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, to something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject. In Spinoza, immanence is not immanence *to* substance; rather, substance and modes are in immanence. When the subject or the object falling outside the plane of immanence is taken as a universal subject or as any object to *which* immanence is attributed, the transcendental is entirely denatured, for it the simply redoubles the empirical (as with Kant). (2001: 27)

Therefore it is important to notice the distinction between univocal and logic. That being is univocal means that its principle of production can only be found within what it is producing. The consequence of this can be recognized throughout Deleuze's philosophy, because it means that being gets its name by how it is expressed, which implies that being bears several names throughout Deleuze's philosophy: absolute immanence (2001), life (1999; 2001), will to power (2005), thought (1999), Being (1999), *Élan vital* (1991b), the plane of immanence (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003).

Second, logic is expressed by human subjects and not vice versa. Hence, what is expressed and expressing is always embedded in the expression. This form of philosophy have also been called expressionism (see e.g. Colebrook, 2004; Joughin, 1992) because it implies that the human subject that expresses is not distinct from the being that is expressed as such but rather distinct from other ways of expressing the being.

Third, what univocal thinking aims to determine is not “individuals constituted in experience, but that which acts in them as a transcendental principle” (Deleuze, 1994: 38). In contrast to discourse theory, univocal thinking does not strive to account for the constitution of and changes in the given subject’s experience and understanding of itself. Instead, univocal thinking wants to account for the constitution of a transcendental principle, which implies that the object of univocal thinking is different than that of equivocal thinking. The issue concerns not a given individuality (and how power structures can change and affect this) but individuation (and which transcendental principle that can be found in this process of individuation).

These three aspects are important to understand as we might otherwise interpret Deleuze’s univocal thinking as a form of determinism, which would be a mistake. It is not the being that determines human being; on the contrary, being is determined in the expressions of human beings. Furthermore, human beings are distinct from each other because they express being in various ways.

Human beings perform in various ways that make them distinct; however, this is a different perspective than arguing for this individual difference by referring to given categories such as time, space and identity to explain the difference in performance. So even though we cannot separate being from human beings and hence talk about them as two distinction levels of thought, e.g. performing subject and categories of performance, we then do not end up with a determinism, e.g. the judgment of performance does not take the individual into consideration. To summarize, what makes the individual distinct (e.g. the individual performance) should not be thought of an individual variant of a general ability (e.g. the ability to perform). Or put differently, the ability to perform is not to be based on particular characteristics of the human being, but on a capacity to be expressed as performing, i.e. a capacity to be affected. Of course this is not a capacity that is possessed by the human subject, but an effect of being that makes the human subject distinct.

Some people might say that this is to overcomplicate matters. However, I will argue that it is necessary to make this move from *equivocal thinking* to *univocal thinking* if we want to foster a different understanding of the relation between work and life. This understanding can of course be criticized for being complicated, but thinking is complicated and thinking differently might even be more complicated. That said, we have to be aware of the dangers of this kind of univocal thinking.

First of all, there is the danger of speculative construction, as Bryant has pointed out:

Nonetheless, as internally coherent as Deleuze's transcendental field might be, we are still subjects, individuals, or persons in such a way that we do not stand in an immediate relation to this transcendental field. It is this status of selfhood as individuated being characterizing our subjectivity that leads one to wonder whether Deleuze's description of the transcendental field is not a speculative construction. (2003: 8)

There will always be a speculative element to this kind of thinking because what is constructed cannot be reduced to the empirical experience of something. However, it is important that the element is not only speculative in the abstract and theoretical sense of the word but that this speculative element also has practical implications and effects. In other words, that it affirms something that does yet exist but can be brought into existence by being set forward as a speculative thought. The important criterion for univocal thinking is therefore whether it is able to produce new possibilities of thinking, understanding and speaking and not whether what is said in fact can be found in the empirical realm.

Second, we have to be careful not to invent a new form humanism or even mysticism. This is a possible danger that has to be avoided by being careful not to refer to the relation of work and life as transcendent, but by continuously showing how the transcendental determination of work and life is expressed inside the expressions of human beings and in which problematic forms this expression takes place. This means

that the task before us is “to follow and disentangle lines rather than work back to points” (Deleuze, 1995a: 86). The task is to study and show the lines of how we think the relation of work and life and not to refer to human nature as condition for the human subject’s experience of balance.

## **The Move Beyond the Human State**

Traditionally, we understand work-life balance as the individual human subject’s experience of the relation between work and life. However, I will suggest that we should broaden the experience of the relation of work and life by not turning it into something that belong to or is possessed by the human subject. What I am critical of is that the theories of work-life balance reduce the transcendental form of the relation of work and life to a matter of balance within or between human states. The relation of work and life does not necessarily have a human form. My work is therefore a critique of the anthropomorphism of work-life balance that constantly reduces the relation of work and life to the human subject’s perception of work and home. This way of thinking is problematic and has to be criticized for two reasons. The first is political. The conditions and constitution of balance will always be based upon the individual human subject’s experience. Consequently, the relation will always be an individual problem of the human subject. The second is scientific. If the relation is constituted in the human subject’s psyche that they will never be able to account for how the relation is constituted, because what they constitute is rather the perception of the relation and not the relation in itself.

Hence, the theories of work-life balance have reduced the relationship between work and life to the perceived experience of balance. But balance in itself is something that can never be obtained or fully experienced. Sandholtz et al. (2002: xi) put it like this: “the perfect moment for rebalancing one’s life never arrives because it never departs. It is always here, right now, in the present...” It is something that you constantly must strive for to find, but you will never fully achieve the state of being in balance. It is like a dream never to come true. Or better, something that we never fully can experience. Hence, ‘balance’ is beyond our experience and yet it is something that affects our experience. In this sense it can be seen as something that works as a transcendental ideal

that can be found in its empirical employment to make it something that can be intelligible for the human mind. The relationship of work and life, then, does exist. It exists in an ideal form as ‘balance’ and in an empirical form as “the human condition”; but what will happen if we think beyond the human state as a condition for balance between work and life?

This change would force us not to base the constitution of the relationship of work and life on the human condition. In other words, balance should not be found in or between human states. However, it is important to notice that the move beyond the human state does not mean that we should invoke another state in which the relationship of work and life can be constituted. Instead, I will argue for a metaphysical and an ontological perspective on these matters, inspired by Bergson’s call for philosophy “to go beyond the human state” (2002: 277). This will make it possible to think of this condition and constitution as a problem of individuation. Hence, the relationship of work and life is broadening from being seen as an individual experience or consciousness to be an experience that does not belong to the human subject. We simply have to take the concept of work-life beyond the individual experience “to allow the very possibility of philosophy as a critical way of thinking” (Goodchild, 2000: 157).

For Deleuze, this move is more radical because it implies that we should not base the constituting principle outside of itself. We are not looking for a “logic immanent in things” (Bergson, 2002: 280) or “immanence to a subject” (Bryant, 2003: 5), but a univocal logic of immanence immanent in itself. What is studied in this thesis is not the empirical representation of balance in or between human subjects. We could say that these representations belong to an empirical field. Instead, the focus of this thesis will be the transcendental field, which differs from the empirical field in the sense that what is studied is not immanent to something but is immanent in itself. This means that it is not the given empirical phenomenon that is studied in this thesis but the transcendental conditions (“that by which the given is given”) of the constitution of the relation of work and life. This relation neither belongs to nor is given to a human subject – the relation only belongs to itself, or put differently, is immanent to itself. Immanence,

unlike empirical individuals, is immanent to modes of existence or types. In the next chapter I will go into detail about what is meant by types.

Metaphysical thinking takes concepts as objects and not the people interviewed for this thesis. This implies that the empirical object of the thesis is something altogether different. It is not the given empirical object that is of interest but the transcendental object: that by which the given is given. As we will show in the next chapter, then, the given not given by how people perceive the relation between work and home but by the concepts and problems in which it is constituted. One of the consequences of this is that the object of work and life is not determined as the individual state of balance but rather by the individuation in which it can be located as a guiding principle. This is also why this thesis is concerned with the metaphysics of work and life and not the empirical reality as such.

Hence, the metaphysics presented here is not logic that can be found ‘pre-formed’ and analyzed outside of its practical effects. It is by showing and making use of these practical effects and by drawing consequences of the move beyond the human state that we can learn how the metaphysics of work and life functions. In this sense the task is to draw a plane of immanence of the relationship of work and life, i.e. “[a] plane that would not hand immanence over to something =  $x$  and that would no longer mimic anything transcendent” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 59). Now, the task is not to find a new ‘something =  $x$ ’ that can take the place of the human or leave the place empty. Instead, it is to show how the relationship of work and life is established if it is not based on this transcendent and unconditioned instance of the human nature. Deleuze and Guattari write that

We will say that *THE* plane of immanence is, at the same time, that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought. It is the nonthought within thought. It is the base of all planes, immanent to every thinkable plane that does not succeed in thinking it. It is the most intimate within thought and yet the absolute outside—an outside more distant than any external world because it is an inside deeper

than any internal world: it is immanence [...]. Perhaps this is the supreme act of philosophy: not so much to think *THE* plane of immanence as to show it is there, unthought in every plane, and to think it in this way as the outside and inside of thought, as the not-external and the not-internal—that which cannot be thought and yet must be thought... (2003: 59)

It is important to notice that ‘the nonthought’ is *within* thought. It is not an unconditioned whole or one that has an unconditioned existence as the absolute beyond or outside of experience (see Goodchild, 2000: 158). The plane of immanence is not conditioned by something unconditioned (e.g. God or Nature), but is conditioned in itself. This is why Deleuze and Guattari speak about the nonthought rather than the unconditioned (see also Deleuze, 1988: 18-19; Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 27). The nonthought is an immanent cause that cannot be thought outside of thought, but must be shown in its employment (i.e. thinking) within the transcendental field.

What we can think is therefore problematic because it is, on the one hand, only possible to know by how it is represented in something other than itself, and, on the other hand, what we know does not exist outside of this representation. Knowledge therefore exists only in problematic forms in which it consequently has to be thought. Knowledge is not something we know by means of experience, but something that we have to show by means of thinking. This is also why knowledge is never a matter of certainty but rather a question of creation and hence to take knowledge beyond the limit of possible experience. This does not mean that we should abstract thought (Goodchild, 2000: 164), but on the contrary that we should “rediscover the real determinations of experience as themselves transcendental conditions of possible experience” (2000: 164). The object of knowledge exists in experience – and is not something that is experienced – which means that it is within this problematic objectification of experience that we should locate transcendental conditions.

Instead of accepting this signification and sense-making of the world, the task is to interrogate the productive principle behind the emergence of this sign and sense



production (Colebrook, 2004: 291). This is also to say that we cannot be satisfied by understanding the relation between the signified and signifier, we furthermore need to address what the genesis of the difference between the signified and signifier is? (Colebrook, 2004: 291). The problem with most postmodernistic thinking, when approached from a univocal perspective, is that it places this productive principle outside of the represented and the real world. When we think that ‘the subject is subjected to a subjectification’ we think of subjectification as a law, command, order or norm that the subject must submit to (Colebrook, 2004: 292).

In the following chapter I discuss the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance. It is not a traditional review of the literature but an attempt to show how these perspectives constitute the problem of work-life balance. I do not see the theories of work-life balance as resources that can explain the relationship between work and life. Instead, I see these theories as topics in themselves that have to be explained and discussed. These constitutions of work-life balance will be problematized in chapter 4.

## **Part II: Social Analytics**

## **Chapter III. The Contemporary Perspectives on Work-Life Balance**

Work-life balance is high on the agenda in many companies. So far it has been seen as a sociological or a psychological problem of the individual employee. In this chapter I explain a general assumption behind the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance. I will discuss these perspectives in a philosophical manner, because I would like to show the basic assumption behind their way of thinking about work-life balance. This means that I do not deploy the contemporary theories of work-life balance to explain what it is all about. Instead, I shall suggest that these theories themselves need to be explained.

I recognize the knowledge that these contemporary perspectives have developed about work-life balance but I am critical of the foundations on which this knowledge is created. In this chapter I show the ontology on which their knowledge creation is founded. The way in which these perspectives have founded the knowledge of work-life balance on the human subject results in a particular way of understanding the problem of work-life balance. For these perspectives it is primarily a matter of the human state in balance. The aim of the thesis is thus to develop a philosophical perspective that does not restrict work-life balance to a question of the human state of balance. In doing so, I will show that these perspectives are limited. They approach work-life balance as an individual problem of the human subject. I am critical towards this understanding because it reduces all questions of work-life balance to the level of the individual human subject. The consequence of this is that problems regarding work-life balance can only be dealt with as an individual problem by the individual employee.

The chapter is structured in the following way. The first section discusses how work-life balance is constituted in the subjective experience of the relation between work and life. Hence, work-life balance is discussed both as the object (what is perceived) and the subject (who perceives). In the second section I analyze two of the most common

perspectives on work-life balance: the role and the self-identity perspectives. The main difference between these perspectives is that one is informed by sociology and the other psychology. The third section discusses how work-life balance becomes an individual problem because we think of it as something perceived by the individual human subject. In other words, the contemporary perspectives tend to limit work-life balance to a problem that belongs to the individual.

## **Work Experience of a Problem**

Traditionally, work-life balance is seen both as an object that is experienced and the experiencing subject (Wise, 2002). This is reflected in our everyday use of the term, which is used as a noun, verb and adjective (Greenhaus et al., 2003: 511). We talk about work-life balance as a *noun* when we refer to it as an object. It is something that we can accomplish, we can, for example, achieve the state of balance. When we talk about it as a *verb* it is an object given to our experience. For example, we say that we experience conflicting demands of work and home. Finally, work-life balance can also be used as an *adjective* when we use it to describe some characteristics about the quality of our life. For example, we say we are satisfied with our work or life.

These ways of speaking about work-life balance can also be found within the research. David E. Guest (2002: 265) provides us with a good example when he makes a distinction between the nature, causes and consequences of work-life balance. Guest argues that the nature of work-life balance on the individual level is the subjective and objective indicators such as spill-over between work and home, and family roles; the causes are the organizational and individual factors like demands of work and personal control and coping, and the consequences are satisfaction, well-being, health, behaviour, performance and impact on others. See table 1 below.

*Table 1. Nature, causes and consequences of work-life balance*

<b>Determinants</b>	<b>Nature of the balance</b>	<b>Consequences/ Impact</b>
Organizational factors	Subjective indicators	Work satisfaction
Demands of work	Balance – emphasis	Life satisfaction
Culture of work	equally on home and work	Mental health/well-being
	Balance – home central	Stress/illness
Demands of home	Balance – work central	
Culture of home		
	Spillover and/or	
	interference of work to home	Behaviour/performance at work
	Spillover and/or	Behaviour/performance at home
	interference of home to work	
Individual factors	Objective indicators	
Work orientation	Hours of work	Impact on others at work
Personality	‘Free time’	Impact on others at home
Energy	Family roles	
Personal control and coping		
Age		
Life and career stage		

Source: Guest, 2002: 265

Our experience of work and life is framed by the work-life balance. Guest speaks about work-life balance as the physical and psychical constitution of a human subject (2002: 265). The nature of work-life balance is constituted in our experience of the individual and organizational factors that we face. In this sense work-life balance is defined as the individual human subjects’ debilities to balance the various demands of work and home (Hill et al., 2001). This means that we do not experience work and life in themselves, but we experience their relation through the work-life balance. However, the relation between work and life does not exist in itself either, it only exists in so far as it is given to the human subject’s experience. This is why Guest speaks about the nature of work-life balance as something experienced. There is no nature of work-life balance outside of the human experience. It is experienced in the form of subjective or objective

indicators that describe our experience of the work-life balance. For example, if we experience that we “emphasise equally on home and work” (Guest, 2002: 265). When we speak about work-life balance through subjective indicators work-life balance becomes something that exists inside the human subject’s experience of individual and organizational factors, for example, do we think or experience an equally balance between home and work? We can say that indicators are what constitute work-life balance as a relationship between work and non-work in or between human states. So there might be a positive spill-over between how our work and home or our family role affects our work role in a negative way (Poelmans et al., 2008).

In other words, work-life balance is always represented in the human mind as an individual experience of how work-life is given to this particular human subject. It is either something we find in the experience of ourselves such as when we say that we are *in* balance, or in our experience of the various roles such as when we say that we *have* balance between our multiple roles in life. This means that work-life balance is given to us either *between* various human states or *in* the human state. In the first sense, it is when we speak about work-life balance from a sociological role perspective. In this perspective balance is a question of how the human state is able to mediate between multiple roles. In the later sense, work-life balance is a question of being in balance with oneself. This is a psychological perspective that focuses on human subjects’ abilities to mediate themselves.

Research on work-life balance has focused on how work and life is given to human subjects and what the impact and consequences are on human subjectivity. To explain the relation of work and life they make a distinction between dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is often the perceived or experienced work-life balance of the human subject, for example, ‘the satisfaction with work-life balance,’ whereas the independent variable is the conditions of work and life (Guest, 2002; Reiter, 2007; Tausig and Fenwick, 2001). The independent variable is what is given to the human subjects’ experience of work-life balance and the dependent variable is the experienced work-life balance. These are given to human subjects’ experience in the form of determinants (Guest, 2002). Determinants are independent

variables that are given to us as possible categories for the human subjects' experience of the conditions of work and life. They can experience the demands of work and family. Determinants are independent of how they are constituted inside the work-life balance of the human subject, which means that they determine the human subjects' experience of work-life balance. Conditions are determined in the experience itself. Guest makes a distinction between individual and organizational factors. The former is the individual conditions for a work-life balance such as our orientation towards work. Whereas organizational conditions include factors such as the demands of taking care of children. This is the way that the relation between work and life become objectified for the human subject. In themselves these determinates are merely possibilities. The work-life balance of the human subject is not given by the determinants but they demarcate the possible nature of the work-life balance of the human subject, that is, how it can be represented in or between the human states. In this sense determinants are not determining the work-life balance of the human subject, they are rather demarcating a determinable becoming of the human subject. Determinants are, in themselves, undetermined. For example, the demands of work are undetermined before it is located in how they affect the work-life balance of the human subject. In other words, the determinants become determining in the way they affect the nature of the human subjects' work-life balance. This implies that the conditions of work-life balance only can be located in the way that they are given in the human subjects' experience.

## **Role and Self-Identity**

The perspective on role sees work-life balance as an external relation between various states of being. The role perspective focuses on the fact that people have to manage multiple roles. Work-life balance is something that occurs between various human states such as the roles of being a father and being an employee. Hence work-life balance is a question of *managing multiple role-conflicts and role ambiguities* (Kahn et al., 1964; Rothbard et al., 2005). Problems arise when work and home are present at the same time and place. The co-presence of home and work roles makes it difficult for individuals to separate the roles from each other or more specifically they cannot separate the role demands of home and work. The reason for this is that the roles of work and family do not belong to a particular time (e.g. working time and family time)

or place (work and home), but these are related to the individuals' experience of their roles. Thus the fuzzy boundaries of work and home make competing roles inseparable. It becomes a part of the individuals' self-management to separate these domains. This implies that the question of work-life balance is basically an *inter-role conflict*. For example, 'what is my family role?', 'what does the work role demand of me?', 'how does my work role relate to my role in family?'

The self-identity perspective on work-life balance focuses on the human subject. Rather than asking questions about roles the self-identity perspective enacts work-life balance through such questions as 'Is the subject itself in balance?', 'Who am I as a person? Family man or organizational man?', 'What kind of lifestyle do I want? Career or family?' and 'What are my main interest?' Where the role perspective emphasises that there should be balance between the various roles of the individual human subject, the self-identity perspective stresses that it is the individual human subject that should be in balance.

What these perspectives have in common is that work-life balance is something that is represented in the human state. In the role perspective balance is construed as occurring *between* subjects in a given social field. While the self-identity perspective construes balance as a state *within* the given subject. Thus according to the self-identity perspective work-life balance is something that can be found in the human state either in the self-identity of the human state or the various roles of the human state. This perspective sees work-life balance as "the balance of the mind". It is the mind that is in balance. The perspective on self-identity sees work-life balance as an internal relation in a human state. The self-identity perspective frames the conflict between work and home as an *identity conflict or role involvement conflict* – a conflict between the individual's identity of work and family. Examples of this perspective include Bailyn and Harrington (2004: 203) who ask whether employees really do devote themselves to the interest of the company if they do not work fulltime and O'Reilly and Chatman (1986: 493) who ask if individuals do internalize or adopt characteristics of the organization.



The understanding of work-life balance from a self-identity perspective is not a relationship between work and home, as is the case in the role perspective but a relationship of life to work and home. This is why it is often emphasised that work-life balance is not a matter of balancing a work life to a home life, but, rather, to balance one and the same life. For the self-identity perspective balance is a mental state of harmony between internal interests. This understanding of work-life balance is different than the role perspective's focus on the incompatible demands of work or family roles. Instead, the self-identity perspective emphasises the request that people put on themselves in the form of conflict of interests or involvements. The pressures on work-life balance are not coming from the outside but rather from the inside. It is pressures that employees put on themselves because they simply are involved or interested in too much at the same time. For the self-identity perspective work-life balance is a determinable form in which we can experience ourselves. We can ask "Am I in balance?" Work-life balance is thus given to the experience of oneself.

From the perspective of self-identity work-life balance is characterized by terms of the internal interests and motives of human subjects. It is important to question whether there is a fit between the personal involvements in work and non-work activities, and how the human subject experiences this identity conflict. Identity conflict could, for example, be between the involvement in the identities of being a father and being an employee. It is a balance between internal forces. Here the pathological problem of work-life balance may be present psychologically, if the employees involvement is really somewhere else (Kahn, 1990). The basic assumption is that human subjects can use themselves to varying degrees, or, put differently, that they can invest themselves to varying degrees in work and the rest of life.

In the self-identity perspective balance is within the human being. It is the human being that is in balance. It is you who should get in balance, which is not the same as demanding that there should be balance between your different roles in life. Rather, it is the personal individual who should be in balance. If you do not have a balance then you should strive for it. In this sense work-life balance is something you can achieve with yourself. Be in balance with yourself. The relationship between the interests and

involvement in work and non-work activities should not necessarily be equal but it should make sense. Hence the psychological question of work-life balance is “why do you want to live this kind of life?” Is it important to have a big house if the result is overload of work and stress? These kinds of questions are typically answered by individual measures such as higher overall satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In the role and self-identity perspective work-life balance is given to experience. When we ask how one’s work-life balance is we tend to understand work-life balance as something that belongs to the individual human being. It is something that expresses who we are. For the role perspective work-life balance is a state of individual harmony with the external milieu. In this perspective work-life balance is between various roles. The individual faces various role demands that need to be mediated (see e.g. Hill et al., 2003; Voydanoff, 2005). For the self-identity perspective work-life balance is an internal state of harmony. The human subjects are in balance with themselves.

In the following section I will use that analysis of the role and self-identity perspective to discuss how work-life balance becomes an individual problem.

## **Work-Life Balance and the Individual**

We experience work-life balance in the form of problems. For example, if we have a late deadline at work and have to pick up the children from school. In this sense work-life balance is given to the human subject through conflicting demands or interests of work and home. This is also why we tend to believe that the problem belongs to the human subject. We are faced with personal problems that constitute the nature of our work-life balance. The subject of work-life balance is the human subject, who experiences their work-life balance. The human subject can, for example, experience work-life balance as positive spill-over between work and home (Greenhaus et al., 2003: 511), negative spill-over (White et al., 2003), a conflict between work and home (Raghuram and Wiesenfeld, 2004) and life enrichment (Carlson et al., 2006). This implies that the problem of work-life balance is reduced “to the interiority of a self-constituting subject” (Hayden, 1998: 5). Work-life balance is represented in the

interiority of the human subjects as, for example, the subjective feeling of conflict between work and home.

Of course it can be argued that work-life balance is exactly a managerial or organizational conceptualization of the relationship of work and life. I do not want to question that it is a managerial or organizational concept. My critique of the perspectives is that they have created a concept of work-life balance, which always will turn the management and organization of work and life into an individual problem of the employees. The reason for this is that it is always something that is experienced by human subjects. It simply does not exist in other forms but is only represented in or between human states. This is also the reason why we have only been able to raise the question of work-life balance as an individual or personal problem of the human subject. The consequence of this is that the problem on the one hand is included in the management of the employees while it, on the other hand, is excluded by being turned into a private problem of the individual employees.

We have only been able to think of work-life balance as something that is given to individual experience – and hence work-life balance as something that is constituent in us. It is *my* work-life balance. Work-life balance is something that can be controlled, improved, addressed and explained by the human subject. The human subjects can work on, be happy about and be satisfied with their work-life balance. Some of them can see their work-life balance while others have messed it up. This implies that we have been restricted to think of work-life balance as an individual problem and thus reduce the problem of how life becomes productive in work to a question of how individual employees manage themselves (Kossek et al., 1999).

## **How Work-life Balance Affects Well-being**

What are we faced with as human subjects when we talk about work-life balance? On the downside, we are presented with various expectations, demands, commitments, obligations, and responsibilities from work and home. While on the upside, we face opportunities, possibilities, and dreams of work and home. These positive and negative sides that we meet can originate from outside or inside of ourselves (see e.g. Kinnunen

et al., 2006 for review). The positive perspective is role enhancement theory (see e.g. Marks 1977; Rothbard, 2001; Voydanoff, 2002) and the negative perspective is role stress theory that stressed role strain and scarcity of resources (see e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). It can be something that is self-imposed; it is something that we demand or expect of ourselves (Quick et al., 2004). Hereby human subjects contribute to their own experience of conflict between work and life. The reason for self-imposed conflict can be, for example, workaholism (Lewis, 2003a), over achievement drive towards work (Quick et al., 2004), and family or work involvement (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

The traditional understanding of demands is what a role demands of the individual (e.g. Randall, 1987: 467). The individuals experience is divided between multiple roles that put incompatible demands on them, which they need to balance. Basically, the problem of work-life balance is that the human subject is divided by these incompatible demands. The human subjects are torn by the demands that pull them in opposite directions in life. What they need to balance is the experience of incompatible demands that multiple roles put on the human subject, e.g. the roles of being an organizational man and family man. There are a number of these forms of experience. For example, there can be talk of a constructed *inter-role conflict*, which can take many forms: the conflict between dual-career and traditional career, for example (Higgs and Duxbury, 1992); or time, strain and behaviour as a source of conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985); or time demands as a source of conflict (O'Driscoll and Humphries, 1994); or the conflict between employees' desire for integration or segmentation of work and non-work roles (Rothbard et al., 2005); or the impact of role conflict on personal and job-related outcomes (Wiley, 1987). We experience conflicts arising when what is demanded of us in one sphere necessarily is taken away from the other domains of life. These demands are expressed as how the organization and society become the environmental conditions for the constitution of the employees' role, i.e. what degree of conflict and ambiguity characterize the role of the employees (Kahn et al., 1964: 8).

Role conflict is determined in an objective and subjective way. Objectively, role conflict is based on the objective conditions of conflict that define the role, while role

conflict subjectively takes the form of the employees' psychological experience of or individual response to the degree of conflict and ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964: 8, 12).

These demands are recognized by being restricted by other demands and by our subjective resources. From the perspective of role the source of conflict is that there is a scarcity or lack of resources, i.e. only a certain amount of energy, and we can focus on several things at the same time. The source of conflict is based on the limited resources of the human subject. For example, the human subject is faced with the restriction of 24 hours in a day, and the ability to only be in one place at a time. The problem of work-life balance is hereby reduced to the limitation of the human subjects' individual resources. In this sense work-life balance is no longer only a problem of balancing work and life, but also a strict problem of the limitation of the scarce resources of individual employees.

When work-life balance is discussed a variety of factors is discovered on which the human subjects' experience of work and life depend. The human subjects' experience of work-life balance depends on factors. Guest makes a distinction between the individual and the organizational factors that the experienced work-life balances of human subjects depend on (2002: 261). Organizational factors include demands of work and home and of culture at work, whereas individual factors are, for example, work orientation, personality, gender, and age (see e.g. Guest, 2002). The organizational factors are often divided into two subcategories, namely work factors and non-work factors (see e.g. Raghuram and Wiesenfeld, 2004). The factors are conditions for the constitution of the human experience of work-life balance. These conditional factors are either external or internal to the constitution of the human subjects' experience of work-life balance. The organizational factors are independent of how they are constituted within the experience of work-life balance. In this sense they are external because they are not affected by the individual experience of them. The opposite is the case for the individual factors that are dependent on the individual experience of work-life balance. The individual and organizational factors that are discovered are given internally to the experience of the relation between work and non-work. In both cases, work-life balance is continuously reconstituted or changeable because of changes in the internal or external milieu.

Individual factors are internal to the human subject, because they are what conditioned the individual balance of the human subject. The individual balance depends on differences between various human subjects (see e.g. Guest, 2002: 260). These factors are given to the individual human being in the form of experience of themselves and what kind of personality type they are, for example, am I a workaholic? Or a perfectionist? Or simply just too involved in work? The reason for imbalance belongs to the individual subject, because it is caused by the individual subject's type of personality. Work-life imbalance can be caused by individual characteristics of the human subject. This implies that these indicators are always given to the subject in the form of experience such as feelings, aspirations and motives. It is an experience of one's emotions. How do you feel about your work-life balance? Work-life balance is in this sense something that is caused by how you relate to yourself. You can think yourself healthy, but you can also think yourself unhealthy. To improve your work-life balance you should then think differently about your balance. In other words, subjective indicators describe how subjects react to the experience of themselves. The subjective indicators are given. The sources of work-life conflict do in this sense belong to the human subject. The conditions of work-life balance are given or constituted by these external forces. These forces are either social, for example, when we demand something of another person, or psychological, for example, when we demand something of ourselves or are interested in something.

It is the individual human subject who experiences the conflict between different role demands. Conflict is experienced in the form of demands. Human subjects do not experience conflict in itself; instead they are affected by the multiple and conflicting demands in which they experience work-life conflict. These role demands are external forces that the individual human being experiences in forms of, for example, incompatible demands of role set, pressures (external events), forces (internal events), ambiguity (inadequate role sending, lack of agreement or coordination), expectation and fulfilment of responsibilities (see e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006).

Work-life balance is not just simply given to our experience as individual and organizational factors such as various expectations, demands, responsibilities and interests. These factors are mediated in and by how they become objects that can be experienced by the human subject. For example, if the human subject is said to experience an inter-role conflict between work and non-work what is causing this is the incompatible demands of the human subject's multiple roles. Hereby demands are not simply experienced by the human subject, but they are experienced in relation to other demands. We cannot simply experience a demand if it is not at the same time met with another demand in the mind of the human subject. Therefore we do not meet demands in themselves; we meet demands that are already intermingled in various problematic forms that make them determinable. In short, demands force us to do something, if these forces are not mediated by being in relation to other forces they cannot be experienced as a demand. In other words, the demands of work are only demands in so far as they are faced with the incompatible demands of home, i.e. that demands are given in a problematic form, which in this case is conflict. Hereby, the way in which work-life balance is given to us can be said to be in the form a problem, e.g. negative spill-over, caregiver strain, and support to elders. These forms of problems are indicators of our experience of the relation of work and life, and are forms that make the human subject's experience of incompatible demands possible.

Hence, we are moving beyond the traditional understanding of work-life balance where demand is something that is experienced by the human subject (see e.g. Randall, 1987: 467). Instead of demands being given directly to the human subject's experience, I will suggest that they are forces that are constituted by being expressed and hence coming into relation with other forces inside the problematic forms that make them determinable and expressible as demands. In this way, demands are only given inside the human subjects' expression of the relation of work and life. Hence, demands are always plural; they always come at least in pairs, and it is only possible to define and determine them by how they are constituted and given inside the expressions of the human subjects.

This invention of work and life as a philosophical problem will make it possible to think about the relation in a different way than that of the role perspective and the self-identity perspective that was the theme of this chapter. This reversal of thinking about the relation of work and life is the theme for the next chapter.



## **Chapter IV: On Four Problems that Might Summarize the Theories of Work-Life Balance**

This chapter presents a metaphysic for how to understand and think about the relation of work and life in a different way than the current perspectives on work-life balance that was presented in chapter 3. However, it is not presented as a pure metaphysic; rather, it is a metaphysic that transcends the current forms and ways of understanding the relation of work and life. This means that the metaphysic is created with certain problems that have been concerning the theoretical discipline of work-life balance for a long time, matters that have been discussed over and over, and have not yet been resolved. This is an important aspect, because the re-thinking of the relation of work and life is exactly established on the transcendental level of problems, which considers how the given is given. In other words, how is the object of work-life balance constituted and which kinds of problems take this constitution place? The aim is not to resolve these problems but instead to pose them in a new and different way – and hereby deploy a new kind of metaphysic that is new to the discipline of work-life balance. This metaphysic is transcendental rather than transcendent because it is created from within the problematic forms which understand the relation of work and life and is not imposed from the outside.

It is an investigation of the nature of the categories that we invoke when talking, discussing and arguing about the relation of work and life. In this sense it is also a social analytic that will be deployed in the empirical analysis. The chapter describes in detail the transformation of various concepts that traditionally are used to explain the nature of the relation of work and life.

Traditionally, we understand work-life balance as the individual human subject's experience of work-life balance. However, I will suggest that we should not understand the relation of work and life as a balance that belongs to the human subject in the form of a given experience, if we want to address how the relation between work and life really is constituted. In contrast, I will argue for a metaphysical and ontological

perspective on these matters in which we think of the relation in itself. However, it is important that this system is understood as an open and changeable system, and that this system does not have the solution to work-life balance. It is a new way of raising the problem of work and life – not as a problem of human subjects, but as a problem of the relation of work and life in itself. In this sense, it is an experiment in metaphysics to go beyond the human subject as the essence of work-life balance in an effort to push the limit for the possible experience of work-life balance.

The aim of the chapter is to expand the way that we can think and experience the relationship of work and life by going beyond the human state to think about the relation of work and life in itself. In this sense it can be read as an expansion of chapter 3 that described the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance. The purpose is neither to study the relation of work and life from a theoretical perspective, empirical perspective nor a perspective between these. Instead, it is to create a different ontology and metaphysics for how to think about the relation of work and life. A consequence of this is that the current theoretical perspectives on work-life balance are insufficient in so far as constituting the relation of work and life in itself. However, this is not to say that these theories are wrong or false, but they will never be able to create a concept of the relationship between work and life that will not be based on human nature and not recognized as basically an individual problem. The reason for critique is therefore political rather than epistemological, because the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance are simply not able to produce a way of thinking about the relation of work and life that is not based upon the individual human subjects' experience. This implies that I have to be critical of thinking about work-life balance as a matter of experience and relation as balance and not as a matter of thinking about the relation in itself.

## **Introduction**

It has been difficult for the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance to account for what constitutes the relation between work and life (Guest, 2002: 259). This is the case even though there have been numerous suggestions to what should link work and home together and hence constitutes the relationship between them. In the following I will show how the theories of work-life balance are faced with four problems that they

have been struggling to solve for the last thirty years or more. I will not be as bold to say that I have the solutions to these problems; rather, I will displace these problems in order to raise new problems that I believe are more important if we want to understand how the relationship between work and life is constituted.

First, the relationship between work and home is constituted by what Edwards and Rothbard call ‘work-family linking mechanism’ (2000: 193) or what Lewis and Cooper (1995) call ‘work-home interface’, as, for example, balance (Saltzstein et al., 2001; Voydanoff, 2005), spill-over (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Grzywacz et al., 2002; Poelmanns et al., 2008; White et al., 2003), segmentation (Rothbard et al., 2005), compensation (Guest, 2002; Hill et al., 2001), work-family fit (Voydanoff, 2005; see Runté and Mills for a critique), resource drain (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2008), and conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) that constitutes the relation of work and home. All of these mechanisms are recognized by being ways in which the human subjects experience the relation between work and home. Do I see my relation of work and home as a matter of conflict or segmentation? In this sense they are forms that mediate the way that we perceive the relation of work and home. The problem with these mechanisms is that they do not constitute *the relation* between work and life; they constitute *the human subject’s perception* of the relation of work and life. This means that they never will be able to account for what constitutes the relation of work and life, but have restricted themselves to study what constitutes the ‘work-family linking mechanism’ in the perception of the human subject.

Second, they have restricted themselves to think of ‘work’ and ‘home’ as constructs that are “conceptually distinct” (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 180) or as Clark (2000: 748) remarks “work and family systems, though different, are interconnected”. Accordingly, work and home are defined as being numerically distinct constructs even before they study the relationship between them. This is necessary to establish the ‘work-family linking mechanism’ (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 180) so they can account for *the conditions of the boundary* between work and home. However, there is a price to be paid, because this means that they cannot account for *the conditions of the difference* between work and life. The problem is therefore not that they do not think about the

relation of work and life, but that before they even start doing so transform this relation into something general and possible (mechanism of conflict, segmentation, spillover or balance) that makes it thinkable and perceptible for the particular human subject. They “constitute a set of theoretical conditions that may be examined empirically” (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 193). Hereby, they may take into consideration that relation of work and home is given as a construct, but they will forever have restricted themselves to think within the possible conditions that they to begin with set up to make work and home distinct.

Furthermore, it is increasingly difficult within certain forms of jobs today to make a distinction between work and home. This has been discussed as the blurring of the boundaries of work and home (see e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Hall and Richter, 1989; Hardill et al., 1997; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Sullivan and Lewis, 2001). Hereby, it becomes difficult for these theories to establish a distinction between work and home in an effort to create a relationship between them as a consequence of the traditional conditions on which it has been possible to establish the boundary of work and home and a loose definition power, for example, by establishing boundary conditions that separate various places, times, roles, identities of work and home. So I would claim that these current changes in the working conditions commonly addressed as ‘working to live or living to work’ (Sturges and Guest, 2004) or ‘when work becomes home and home becomes work’ (Hochschild, 2000) make it necessary to find other ways of thinking about the constitution of work and life.

Third, theories of work-life balance seem trapped within a dichotomy of the human subject and the environments of work and home. In her influential article ‘Work/family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Family Balance’ Sue Campbell Clark (2000: 748) writes that

Though people shape their environments, they are, in turn, shaped by them. It is this very contradiction of determining and being determined by our work and home environments that makes

work/family balance one of the most challenging concepts in the study of work and the study of families.

She points out one of the biggest problems of contemporary theories of work-life balance (and properly also contemporary social theories in general): how can we separate cause and effects in relation to the production of the social? In other words, the problem that she wants to address is who is creating or constituting the boundary between work and home? Clark argues that where most theories of work-life balance have emphasised human subjects as reactive being determined by working and home environments, she believes that human subjects are proactive in creating and shaping the boundary between work and home (2000: 751). It is therefore human subjects that create the boundary of work and home. However, in my opinion she does not succeed in developing a theoretical answer to the challenge she is raising, because she still takes her point of departure in a given distinction between work and home (2000: 750-751). Hence, the problem is still if the environments of work and home influence the human subject or vice versa. Is the subject – the creator, the speaker, the determinator of the relationship between work and home – structure or agent? I will argue that this is not the real problem with the theories of work-life balance. It is rather that neither the perspectives that Clark criticizes nor the perspective that Clark presents herself see *the relation* between work and life as the creator and the subject of work and life. The relation is always created by something else, for example, organizational or individual factors (Guest, 2002: 265) or if people identify themselves with work or home (Clark, 2000: 759). I will suggest that we focus on what in fact is created in order to locate who is created inside this creation as a subject of expression – and not vice versa. This means that instead of focusing on *who is creating* work-life balance, I will pay attention to *who is expressed* in the creation of the relationship between work and life.

Fourth, the theories of work-life balance have discussed whatever the outcome of work and home represented as a null sum relationship (see e.g. Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 194) or plus sum relationship (see e.g. Hill et al., 2001). Is it possible that the demands of work and home can be experienced as being fulfilled at the same time or will one part of the human subject's demands be left unfulfilled? What is important is that the

relationship is always thought of by how it affects the human subjects. It can be a matter of, for example, feelings (e.g. Clark, 2000), involvement (e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), and work and life satisfaction (e.g. Guest, 2002), stress/illness (e.g. Wise and Bond, 2002), depressive mood (e.g. Duxbury and Higgins, 2001), performance (e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), attention (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 2003), rewards (e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), or meaning (Taylor, 2000). These are examples of the consequences or impact that the constitution of the relationship of work and home has on the human subject's well-being (or the well-being of others that the human subject knows, e.g. children and spouse). They are important because they are what in fact are said to be studied by theories of work-life balance. They are the dependent variables that are observed. However, the problem is that these variables say more about the human subject's perception of work and home than they do about the relation. They do not even say something about how the relationship between work and home affects the well-being of the human subject, because the independent variable of the relationship is seen as, for example, work-family spillover conflict (Matsui et al., 1995) or work-life balance (Saltzstein et al., 2001). This means that they develop a scale to measure the level and impact of, for example, conflict and balance, but what they are studying is nevertheless not the relation of work and life: it is a perception of home and work. Instead of studying the dependent variables (work-family interface) and independent variables (consequences) as a relationship between a cause and effect, I will suggest that we should study both of these as effects in themselves. It is not work and home that influence each other, it is the relationship between life and work that produces effects that can be said to belong to the human subject in the sense that they can be founded as constituting principles within these. This means that I will study the outcome of the relation between work and life as a *real expression* and not as a *possible experience*.

In this following part of this chapter I will discuss in detail how we should think and understand these displacements of the four-fold problem of this constitution of the relationship between work and life. The first part regards the object of the relationship between work and life as problematic forms in which the object is expressed. The subject of the relationship between work and life is discussed in the second part. Here it is shown that the relationship between work and life is not expressed by human subjects

but by certain types. In the third part the conditions of the relationship between work and life is taken into consideration as modes of individuation that can be located as constitutions within types' expression of work and life. Finally, it is argued that the effects of the relationship between work and life have to be located within the expression of the relation itself and not by how it affects the nature of a given human subject.

## **Problem I: The Objects of Work and Life**

The constitution of the balance between work and life has so far been based upon the personal perception of how the relation of work and life was given to the individual human subject. This means that the object of work-life balance is the experience that is formed by the perception of work and life. Consequently, work and life is experienced and perceived as a personal and individual object of the individual human subject.

The discipline of work-life balance describes the object of work-life balance, i.e. what the human subjects perceive as 'work-family linking mechanism' (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 193) and 'work-home interface' (Lewis and Cooper, 1995). These function as problems that are given to the perception of the human subject and hence these serve as forms in which human subjects can speak about their experience of the relation of home and work, for example, they might speak about experiences of balance, conflict, spillover and harmony (see Edwards and Rothbard; 2000; Guest, 2002, for review). The problems form the human subjects' experience of the relation of work and home. In general, we can say that there are two forms of perceiving work and life. It is either perceived as the balance *within* human states (e.g. conflict of interests) or the balance *between* human states (e.g. role conflict). In this sense the work-life interface is both perceived as an individual problem and as a quasi-social problem. It is so because it is still mediated as an individual experience that is formed by the human subjects' perception, which means that it is rather an individual experience of problems of work and life that is given in relation to social relations.

It is a problem that the theories of work-life balance have focused on the constitution of the forms in which we experience work and life, and not the relation of work and life in

itself. Consequently they have not thought about the relation between work and life but about the perception of this. To make it possible to think about the relation in itself, I will suggest a different understanding of the constitution of the relation of work and life where the object of the relation of work and life is not simply given to the human subject's perception, but is constituted inside the human subject's expressions of the relation of work and life. The object is therefore the expressed relation of work and life that is to be found within the human subjects' expressions of work and life.

Instead of arguing that problems are given to our perception, I will say that problems are constituted inside the expressions of human subjects, which implies that the problematic constitutions of the relation of work and life transcend human subjects' expressions. They transcend because they are expressed in the expressions of work and life. However, they are not forms that transcend the expressions but principles of constituents that can be located within the expressions. This is the case since they are not already constituted forms in which we can experience the relationship of work and life, but have to be invented, constituted or constructed within the given expressions of the human subjects. This means that we cannot put forward already constituted forms like balance or spillover, but instead have to create new problems in which the relation of work and life can be expressed. Accordingly, the problems are seen as passive, because they make the relation determinable and not an active determination of what the relation is. Instead, they establish a relation that can be expressed in various ways by human subjects and hence become determined. Later in empirical analysis I will show how flexibility, performance and commitment are problems in which the relation between work and life is expressed.

These problems are the constitutive elements of work and life. Conventionally, theories of work-life balance would say that the constitutive elements are the individual or organizational factors, but as these constitute the human subjects' experience of work and home they are of no use here. Instead, we have to focus on the constitution of the relation of work and life. The constitution is expressed in the expressions of the human subject, which means that we have to show how these problems work as constitutive elements within the expressions, i.e. what is the determinable principle of constitution in



the expressed? As these problems are not given before their empirical deployment, it is not possible to define what they are, but is possible to describe how they work and function. Their empirical deployment will be shown in the analysis that follows this chapter.

How should we understand that these problems transcend the human subject's expressions of work and life? It might be easier to understand this if we think of these problems as performative utterances in Austin's sense, which connote that "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action" (Austin, 1975: 5). The employees are seen as flexible, committed and performing by the uttering of flexibility, commitment and performance. The latter, the forms of problems, are something that only have existence within the expressions, i.e. in their transcendental problematic form, and the former, what herewith are expressed are modes of individuation. We will discuss modes of individuation in more detail in the section on the conditions of work and life.

Hence, we have to make sense of these problems in new ways since they are deployed in different ways than we so far have done. This means, for example, that flexibility is neither mediating between different human states, e.g. the state of being at home and the state of being at work, nor within the human states of being a mother and being an employee (see e.g. Sennett, 1999). Flexibility is in this sense not something between or within human states that expresses something about a human subject or the human conditions. Thereby it is not about which side of the employees' life will benefit from flexibility (work or home?). Flexibility does neither express a human subject as being flexible nor that the human subject experiences the border between work and non-work as being flexible. Consequently, flexibility is not possessed by the human subject as a specific characteristic of this individual. It is not a property of the individual that expresses a particular essence of the individual human being. Thus, flexibility is not personal since it does neither belong to nor express anything about the human subject's personality.

Alternatively I will advocate that flexibility is a problematic form in which the human subject's expressions of work and life can be constituted. It characterizes a relationship between work and life, but these characteristic traits should not be located in the personhood of the individual human subjects or in the border between work and home. Instead, the characteristics of flexibility should be found in the way it as an operative function constitutes human subjects as flexible. Flexibility is not something the human subjects have, but rather something that can be located in what they do. This operative function is a mode of individuation that constitutes the relation between work and life in the human subjects' expressions of work and life. What is said about work and life should not be referred to the human subject but to the mode of individuation. From this follows another transformation as the mode of individuation is not given in an actual form outside of its constitution inside the expressions of work and life. Hence, the mode of individuation is the condition of the conditioned expression of work and life. We could therefore say that flexibility expresses the possible relations between *what is expressed* (condition) and *who is expressing* (conditioned) it. It is important that the characteristics of flexibility always have to be founded in what human subjects do, because it only exists virtually outside of these singular constitutions of work and life, which actualize it.

Flexibility can therefore be said to belong to the human subjects in a different sense than as a personal property or characteristic. It belongs to them when it characterizes the essences that are constituted inside the expressions of the human subjects when they talk about their work and life. To provide an example, when interviewees talked about cutting down on sleep to be more productive, how some of them refused to hand in time registration and at the same kept their own account on these hours of work in Excel, or how they thought and argued for their personal competency development to be part of working productivity or not, it appeared to me that they talked about work and life in intensive terms, i.e. how the relation of work and life is expressed as a matter of performance. These discussions and argumentations about flexibility suddenly appeared to me as a problem of managing performance when there are no extensive definitions of what work is in terms of place and time. When talking about flexibility the employees expressed the relationship between work and life as how life became productive in

relation to work. However, this was not the case when the interviewees talked about work and life in the problematic form of commitment. Here the interviewees spoke about the social relation that they have to colleagues and how they demanded that they should be as committed as themselves to work. This means that they spoke about commitment as a social obligation, but it was not at all clear what was considered to be 'work'. Work was not only the job functions carried out at the work place and in the work time; it was rather a particular form of life that the employees gave expression to that would or would not be regarded as an expression of commitment by management and colleagues. These examples are discussed in more detail in the analysis, but are mentioned here as example of how the relation is expressed in various ways and how the determination of these expressions depends on the problematic form in which they can be spoken about and how they are given expression to in the singular individual (e.g. the individual who is regarded as committed in opposing the individual who is not).

This means that the objects of work and life are not given extensively between work and home but rather intensively in-between work and life since they are transcending human subjects' argumentations for, discussions of and talk about work and life. This way of thinking breaks with the traditional perspective on the relation of work and home that is studied extensively, i.e. the relation is given in spatial and temporal terms. To see the relation as intensive means first of all that it is not a relation between work and home that is studied but the relation between work and life. Furthermore, it infers that the difference between work and life is not given *physically* by separating work from other areas of the human subjects' lives. It is rather *metaphysically* because it is a matter of how the relation of work and life in itself transcends actual expressions of work and life, i.e. how the relation of work and life becomes performable, flexible and committable. The metaphysical difference between work and life is therefore not the same as the physical boundary between work and home. It is not perceptible, but is imperceptible in itself. We should think about how the imperceptible is constituted inside the given, which does not mean that it can be located by how it becomes perceptible, that is the metaphysical manifests itself in the physical. Instead, the imperceptible transcends human beings by becoming the sensible *of* the being. Consequently, the metaphysical is not becoming perceptible but is rather hiding by being imperceptible inside what is

constituted. The metaphysical does not concern *what is constituted*, but *how it is constituted*. We should not think of the metaphysical as something *between* work and home. The metaphysical is rather *in-between* work and life, but in another way than we are used to thinking, because the relation is not already constituted as forms of harmony, equilibrium or balance between work and home, but is constituted by how the metaphysical relation in itself is transcending the expressions of work and life.

Consequently, the problematic forms in which work and life are expressed are not ready-made; they have to be invented. Of course there are other problems than the aforementioned, but the focus in the thesis will be on these three problematic forms as it was those that could be located in the expressions of the interviewed employees and managers. This does not exclude the possibility that there might be other problematic forms in which the relation of work and life are expressed, but these were simply not found in the empirical material.

This way of thinking about the relation of work and life in itself is rather complex, because it is not experienced by the human subject, as we normally would think. Instead, we have to think about the continuous modulations and expressions of the relation between work and life and understand how it is given expression to itself. The relation is both expressible (the objects of work and life as problems), expressing (the subject of work and life as types), expressed (the conditions of work and life as modes of individuations), and the relation between expressing and expressed (the consequences of work and life as effects).

## **Problem II: The Conditions of Work and Life**

So far theories of work-life balance have been most concerned with the discussion of which conditions can be said to constitute the work-home interface (see e.g. Bacharach et al., 1991; Sverko et al., 2002). The answer to this problem is typical determinants like organizational factors and individual factors (see e.g. Crooker et al., 2002; Guest, 2002; Lambert and Haley-Lock, 2004). However, these factors rather constitute the perception of work-life balance, as it was discussed in the previous section, so what should we do

if we want to discuss the conditions of the relation of work and life? In other words: what is it that constitutes *the relation* between work and life?

Reversing it I will recommend that we do not determine the relation of work and home by referring to given and already constituted individual and organizational factors that determine the state of perceiving work-home interface, but suggest that we should move toward the conditions of work and life. Conditions are not that *by* which the given relation of work and life is actually given, but that *under which* the given relation is actually given. This means that conditions do not determine anything; they are themselves determined by being constituted as conditions. They do not explain anything, but have to be explained themselves. In other words, conditions are not determinants that determine the work-home interface; they are transcendental conditions that are constituted within production of how the given is given. The conclusion of this is that conditions are not *active determinants* but rather *passive determinations*. From this follows that conditions are not pre-establish but only have existence in so far as they are found to be conditioning something. They are therefore *real conditions of actual expressions* and not merely *possible conditions for realized experiences*. Consequently, conditions “are no broader than the conditioned: they are the conditions of real experience” (Deleuze, 1991b: 27). These conditions are therefore not possible conditions like, for example, conditions of work, home or human nature, but real conditions that can be found at work within the constitution of the relation of work and life. Conditions are therefore not given as general or abstract but are always local, unique and singularly determined. Subsequently we cannot speak about conditions in terms of determinants like work demands and personality as is traditionally the case within the literature on work-life balance (see e.g. Guest, 2002; Kossek et al., 1999), because conditions are not given outside of their constitution. It is not a simple conditioning that takes place with the problems of work and life.

The contemporary theories start by separating work and home in order to make it possible to account for the conditions of the boundary between them (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000: 180). However, the starting point will be something different altogether here, as it is the relation of work and life and what make them inseparable or

indiscernible from each other. The question is therefore: what are the conditions that can be determined in the problematic expressions of work and life. In other words, the difference between work and life (and not the opposition between work and home) is exactly where we have to begin, as it is in these problematic forms that the conditions can be determined.

Instead of focusing on the conditions of possibility like time and space that constitute the boundary between work and home, we will focus upon the virtual transcendental conditions for the actual (Williams, 2005b: 222). This means that conditions are determinations of the determinable object of work and life that can be founded in the actual determined object of work and life. In the pure problematic form the object of work and life is virtual transcendental conditions. This move from possible to virtual conditions can be thought of as a move from extensive to intensive conditions of work and life. Extensive conditions like time and place might still be invoked in the constitution of the relation of work and life, but these forms of time and space are not given outside of their intensive constitution. Time and place are no longer given measure or determinants that can settle the metaphysical question of what work is; instead, these are intensive coordinates that are determined in the expressions of work and life. We will return to this idea later in the analysis in relation to how employees define the productive relation between work and life. Here it is shown how time and place are not given measures but highly flexible measures that the employees invoke in determining what work is, for example, when they decide to call the activity of sending email in the evening work if it is an activity that they do for more than 30 minutes. Time is therefore not a given measure or condition for the productivity but is a measure that is constituted to determine what work is. In other words, the conditions of work and life are not given by pre-establish categories, but are instead to be found within the singular constitution in the employees' expressions of work and life.

Later in the analysis I will talk about these conditions as 'productive rules'. These rules do not only govern our intuition or mind but are also what constitute 'our' mode of individuation (see also Bryant, 2008: 12). These rules differ from individual and organizational factors by not being conditions of the human experience or conditioned

by human nature; they are, rather, constituted inside the human expression of the relation of work and life. However, it is important that we do not interpret ‘productive rules’ as the sociological codes, rules, expectations or values. These would constitute a role (e.g. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1972) or an identity (Luhmann, 2000: 367-370). These sociological perspectives are founded on a basic distinction between persona and role, which also can be traced within contemporary themes and discussions like authenticity and cynicism in organizations studies (see e.g. Contu, 2008; Costas and Fleming, 2009). Furthermore, this perspective can be found in some theories of work-life balance that make a distinction between work role, home role and person (e.g. ‘me time’) (see e.g. Brown, 2004).

Productive rules do not constitute roles or identities; they constitute modes of individuation. This implies that what is important is not the constitution of the individual or personal boundary between various roles or identities (see e.g. Brannen, 2005; Clark, 2000; 2001; Desrochers and Sergeant, 2004), but instead the constitution of the limits of work and life. Limits of work and life are not the same as the actual given boundaries of work and life. Limits do not concern these actual forms, but are about the limit between the condition and the conditioned, which means that the limit is rather given inside the constitution of the human subjects’ expression of work and life.

Thus, limits are not a matter of finding the conditions for the boundary between work and home (see e.g. Clark, 2000; 2001). Instead, it is a question of the limit of the relation of work and life as individuation, or how the relation of work and life is expressed. *The relation of work and life is therefore not an individual problem but a problem of individuation.* Individuation has nothing to do with how people become certain individuals, however. That is a matter of individualization. Individuation is not what determines particular human subjects, because work and life do not belong to them, on the contrary the relation between life and work is individuated when the relation is expressed in various modes of individuation and by types of individuation (we will discuss the concept in detail in the next section).

The problem of individuation is raised in the problematic objects of work and life, flexibility, commitment and performance, that was discussed above not only raises the relation of work and life in ways in which the relation of work and life can be expressed; these problems make the relation between work and life expressible. These expressible relations of work and life are determined and conditioned by being expressed by types. Conditions are modes of individuation or productive rules that can be established as governing and constituting the expressions of work and life in types. The constitutive elements have only existence in so far as they are constituted inside the expression of the relation between work and life. Hereby, the constitutive elements are no longer independent and dependent variables but problems in which the variables becomes determinable.

Conditions are therefore always expressing the limits of the individuation of work and life (we do not know what a body can do). Whereas the active human subject is setting an individual and personal boundary between work and home an individuating limit of work and life that can be found passively expressed in types, i.e. what are the conditions in the constitution of the relation of work and life that I give expression to? Individuation is not a matter of personal problems but impersonal problems, because they are not constituted on the human nature or by the human subjects' perception of work and life.

In this sense work and life are pre-individual. They do not belong to human subjects and are undetermined before they are expressed in and by modes of individuation. This means that they are not determinants of the relation of work and life, which means that it is not a role or work-home interface that determines any individual point of balance. The conditions of the human subject's work-life balance are not individual but pre-individual, wherefore human activities do not refer to their predetermined or general factors but to their individuation. In this sense the relation of work and life is neither characterized by the individual properties nor the behaviour of given human subjects, but rather by an expression of work and life. It is not the subjective and objective characteristics of the human subjects' work-life balance that are interesting, but rather how various modes of individuation are expressed in them.



However, this does not mean that they express something personal about their own work-life balance; or that they talk about their individual and organizational factors and in this sense define the nature of their particular work-life balance; instead something impersonal about work and life is expressed in them. The consequence of this is that we cannot talk about work-life balance as a general trait or characteristic of the individual human subject, but we can say something about the impersonal expressions of the relation of work and life.

We therefore have to speak about the common and the social in impersonal terms rather than the general in personal terms. This means that I am not interested in making a conclusion about work-life balance in the form of statements about the common nature or essence of human subjects, i.e. how general subjective and objective characteristics are. The nature of the relationship between work and life does not depend on the characteristics of the human subject, but on

The internal characteristics of the problem as such, the imperative internal element which decides in the first place its truth or falsity and measures its intrinsic genetic power: that is, the very object of the dialectic or combinatory, the ‘differential’”. (Deleuze, 1994: 161-162)

This relates to the discussion earlier in the chapter about flexibility. Flexibility does not characterize the individual essence of the human subject, but characterizes the individuation of the relation of work and life as it is constituted inside the expressions of types.

The type is constituted as an internal effect of the relation of work and life itself. It is this praxis of impersonal constitution that is important if we want to understand how the relation between work and life is constituted. Modes of individuation are the constituting principles that can be located within the types that are expressing the relationship between work and life as a capacity to be affected. “The individuating is not simply individual,” as Deleuze writes (1994: 38). But it rather should be answered

by locating principles of individuation in the expressions of the interviewed employees and managers. The factors that make the employees distinct are expressed, but not by the employees and managers themselves; instead, it is rather “that which acts in them as a transcendental principle” (Deleuze, 1994: 38). It is “an intrinsic mode of being” which is expressed in the expression of the relation of work and life: the expressed degrees of flexibility, performance and commitment. However, these degrees or intensities should not be thought of as individual extensities (e.g. personal interests in work and home); rather, they are intensities of the relation of work and life (e.g. what desire desires in me). It is therefore not the individual who is flexible or the boundary that is flexible; it is the relation of work and life that is expressed as degrees of intensity. This expression can be expressed in different degrees by various types of individuation.

These principles do not have form but are undetermined in themselves. This means that the conditions have to be traced in their *real* expression and not in their *potential* form of how the human subject perceived a balance between work and life (e.g. harmony and equilibrium). The condition of the relation of work and life is “what one is made of” (Buchanan, 1999: 6). Conditions are not potential experiences but rather virtual expression that is constituted inside the expressions of work and life. We would normally think that conditions have an independent existence as ideal categories outside of their constitution inside the human subjects’ expression (e.g. individual and organizational factors). The given is not given as such, but is only given inside the human subjects’ expression, which implies that conditions are not given outside of their constitution inside the human subjects’ expressions. Conditions depend on how they are constituted and expressed inside the given. In fact, they can only be localized by an analysis of the various relations and functions of dependency, because they are not simply *regulative elements* for how the given is given, but are elements that determine how the relation of work and life is constituted inside the given. This means that *constitutive elements* are determined inside the constitution, and are not given as such outside of this constitution.

From this follows some important changes of focus. First, the focus is on how the problematic forms are produced (flexibility, performance and commitment) and not on

legitimizing these forms (e.g. balance, harmony and equilibrium). The question is not how it is possible to find a balance between work and life, but how the problematic form in which work and life are constituted is in fact produced. Second, whereas the forms of balance are potential forms, the problematic forms are virtual forms. This means that work-life balance is something that should be achieved as a possibility to be realized. Instead, we would say that problematic forms are actualized when located in the expressions of types. Third, from the perspective of work-life balance it is the individual human subject that transcends work and home, but from the perspective presented here the transcendental relation between work and life is impersonal or pre-individual. There might be an actual given human subject moving back and forth between work and home, but this is not of interest here; it is rather the intensive relation of work and life that is constituted and actualized in the expressions of types.

In the following section I analyze the subject of work and life that expresses the relation. I show how it is not experienced by human subjects but is expressed by what I, following Deleuze, call types.

### **Problem III: The Subject of Work and Life**

The subject of work-life balance is normally seen as the already constituted human subject with certain individual properties, for example, characteristics and organizational features of work and home. In this sense it is the human subjects that perceive work/non-work conflict (see e.g. Sturges and Guest, 2004: 7), spillover (see e.g. Gzrywacz et al., 2002), and work-life interference (see e.g. Sverko et al., 2002). It is the human subjects that achieve work-life balance (see e.g. Greenblat, 2002), which implies that the relation of work and home is carried out or actively constituted by human subjects.

In general, the discipline of work-life balance makes a distinction between the passive and the active perception of work-life interface (see e.g. Sturges and Guest, 2004: 15). The former regards what affect the human subjects' perception of work and life whereas in the later case it is perception in itself that can affect the way that something is experienced. It guides our perception of something. If perception can affect something it

means that there can be a potential conflict between what is given and the human subjects' experience of this, for example, an 'expectation gap' (Porter and Steers, 1973). Hence the human subject has so far been perceived as either affecting or being affected by the work-home interface (see e.g. Kinnunen et al., 2006).

Clark (2000) argues that there has been too much emphasis on the perspective in which the human subject is affected by the work-home interference. It is not this problem that I find interesting. Instead of discussing whether work-family interface is constituted by environmental and organizational factors or by the individual factors of the human subject and how this subject actively perceives the interface, I will say that the real subject of the relation of work and life is the one who expresses the relation. If the question of the subject of work and life is who constitutes the relation and not who constitutes the work-family interface then we can neither locate the subject as the affecting determinants or as the affect on the well-being. In place of these we must rather ask: who is expressing the relation of work and life?

In the following I will argue that the relation between work and life is expressed by what I, after Deleuze's (2005) reading of Nietzsche, will call *types*. In Nietzsche, Deleuze finds a 'typology' that is a metaphysical system that replaces the old metaphysics and is the "foundation to the science of man" (Deleuze, 2005: 138; see also 2005: 135-138). Nietzsche's writings are full of types: Christ, the Judaic and Christian priest, the slave man and the superman. These types are not defined by psychological traits, but "by determining what the will wants in the exemplars of this type" (Deleuze, 2005: 73; see also Deleuze: 2005: 60). Nietzsche as a 'physician of culture' does not designate a culture but rather specific types that express a particular way of living and thinking (Deleuze, 2005: 154; see also Ahern, 1995; Tongeren, 2000). For Deleuze a profound example of this is Nietzsche's analysis of resentment and bad consciousness as symptoms of nihilism in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (2007) (Deleuze, 2005). The symptoms of bad resentment and consciousness are expressed by the types of the Judaic and Christian priest. A type is therefore not the same as a person, but rather that which is needed in order for the person to be able to say something (Deleuze, 2005: 124).

When the discipline of work-life balance talks about ‘types’ they normally do so with regard to various ‘types of work-family interface’ (see e.g. Frone et al., 1997; Kinnunen et al., 2006). However, these types of work-family interface differ from what I will call the types of work and life, because they do not express the relation of work and life in themselves, but are rather forms in which the relation of work and home can be perceived. They are ideal types that can be experienced and realized in the human subject’s perception. Types do hereby not refer to the various species that exist of the general genus of the nature of balance as a result of different perceptions (e.g. spillover, work-family fit or inter-role conflict). In contrast, I will say that types are real variations of the relation of work and life in themselves. But how should we make sense of this?

What is a type? It is a difficult concept to grasp because, on the one hand, the relation between work and life is expressed by types and on the other hand, types are derived from the relation of work and life itself (see also Deleuze, 1999: 55). This means that we should define types by how they are giving expressions to something expressed in them. They are in this sense different from ‘human subjects’ because they do not actively constitute the relation of work and life. Instead, this constitution takes place passively in them. It is not the individual subjects that individuate themselves (individualization); rather, it is a passive relation or synthesis of work and life that is expressed in them and which make them individual in a singular sense (individuation). These individuating forces are not properties of the human subject, but forces of the relation of work and life as discussed earlier. In other words, it is not a personal essence of the human subjects that they express but the impersonal essence of the relation of work and life. We discussed this in the section before in relation to how modes of individuations were constituted. However, even though types in this sense are passive by expressing something else (the relation between work and life), they are also active because they give determination to modes of individuation that in themselves are undetermined. It is in this determination that types become distinct from each other. It is not types that actively determine the modes of individuation, but in these passive determinations they become distinct. We therefore have to be careful not to think that passivity is the same as inactivity. This is not the case, because there is a lot of activity going on in this passivity. It is just not an activity that belongs to the human subject.

The relation between work and home has an *identity of balance* like harmony, equilibrium or integration that expresses the human subjects' state of balance (see e.g. Voydanoff, 2005: 825). The human state is seen as being either in equilibrium or disequilibrium, in balance or out-of-balance. In this sense the contemporary theories of work-life balance presume that the human subjects possess something identical, a human state, in which the relation of work and life is mediated. On the contrary, I will propose that those who express the relation of work and life possess an *individuating difference*, that is something that makes types distinct from each other, not by the diversity between their individual characteristics or qualitative essences but by the variation in which the relationship between work and life is expressed in them. So instead of saying that work-life balance is conditioned by individual and organizational characteristics, I will say that the relation of work and life is conditioning individual differences and that these can only be located within how this relation is expressed in various modes of individuation by singular types.

The individual differences arise when the relation of work and life is expressed in modes of individuation as these expressions of the relation of work and life vary in degree and intensity. There is a difference in kind between the relation of work and life that is expressed within the problematic expressions of work and life, but there is a difference in degree between the various expressions of the relation of work and life. For example, one employee is described as being committed. However, this does not necessarily mean that the person *is* more committed. It only means that the relation of work and life is expressed in a different degree in the expression of the different types. The reason for this is that the expression of commitment belongs to the relation of work and life and not the human subject. This is also why later in the analytical chapters of the thesis I will discuss commitment as a social and individuating concept and not as an individual concept.

The relation between work and life is therefore not a subjective determination that takes the form of balance. Thus it is not possible to speak about a *personal experience* of the relation of work and life. From a univocal standpoint we should rather understand this

as an *impersonal expression*, which implies that it is the constitution of the expression of work and life that transcends the human subject (and not vice versa). The type is determined in and by the way that this impersonal expression is constituted. It is this determination of the problematic elements that “constitute the conditions of real experience” (Smith, 1998: xxiv; see also Deleuze, 1990: 260).

The relation of work and life is the difference of work and life in itself from which the differences expressed internally to modes of individuations can be derived. The relation is derived by how it is expressed in the modes of the relation of work and life. Hence, the relation is studied as a difference between work and life, but it is important that this difference is not individual, because we will then end up reducing it to the identity of balance. It is only given as an articulation of individuation expressed by a type.

This is how individuals are distinct. They may all be talking about flexibility in a certain problematic form, but the relation of work and life is expressed in distinct ways in each case. The reason for this is that it is not the relation between work and life that expresses itself; it is expressed in these problematic forms. The human subject does not become distinct by determining its own balance; on the contrary a passive relation of work and life speaks in these neuter forms by being expressed. So long as the human subject is still determining, we will continue to be talking about anthropology (see Deleuze, 1997: 192).

The relation of work and life is expressed in the problematic forms when types are expressing the relation. It is in this sense that the relation of work and life transcends types that become impersonal expressions of the relation of work and life. Types are therefore important because they are our only access to and hence possible understanding of the relation of work and life. Besides types are problematic forms and modes of individuation which are important as these are the transcendental forms that make it possible to talk about how these types are expressed. In other words, what are these constituting principles within these singular expressions? The distinction between problematic forms and modes of individuation is that the former is a determinable form in which the relation can come into existence and the later is the determined form as it

can be located within the expression of types. These are the transcendental forms that we see as forms of knowledge in this thesis, as we have discussed earlier in chapter 1.

From this change of focus follows that types are not simple individuals, but composite individual that are not individualized by simple motives but by an individuation, composition or infinity of extensive parts. This means that the relation of work and life is a mode of individuation in which the relation of work and life is determined as a singular expression. The relation of work and life is expressed in different modes of individuations. Thus these modes of individuation are central for the analysis of the relation of work and life because they can transcend the given impersonal expression. This implies that I will not begin the empirical analysis of the relation of work and life with the human subject but with the modes of individuation that are expressed by types expressing the relation of work and life.

This focus on types rather than human subjects implies some important analytical changes that we need to be aware of, because this means that the relation between work and life is neither defined by what human subjects are nor what they could be, but by how types give expressions to work and life. In the following section I will shortly summarize the changes.

First, types express the relation of work and life, and not a nature or a personal essence of balance. Second, they do not actively constitute the relation of work and life, but only passively give expression to the relation of work and life that is constituted inside these expressions. Third, types are singular expressions of the relation of work and life whereas human subjects have a particular experience of a general nature of work-life balance. Fourth, types are not given outside of the expressions of work and life as is the case with human subjects that are already constituted by human nature. Types are not constituted or given as individuals outside of the expressions of work and life. Fifth, modes of individuation cannot be located outside of these expressions of work and life in types. This means that the conditions of work and life are not generally determined but have to be determined in every singular type. Sixth, whereas human subjects speak *of* their balance between work and life, I would say that types express the relation *of*



work and life. The difference is that types are on the same level as work and life, because it is in 'what they express' that 'what is expressed' has existence and vice versa. Seventh, work-life balance constantly focuses on the individual subject's perception and experience of the nature of balance. But from a typological perspective there is no individual subject of enunciation (see also Deleuze and Guattari, 1999: 79). There is not an individual human subject that expresses or experiences the relation between work and life. Instead, we will say that what is expressed is always social, because it is not the individual psychological traits of the perceiving human subject that constitute or express the relation of work and life. This is also why I believe that it is a social problem rather than an individual problem of work and life. This is not to say that work-life balance is a personal experience that has to be discussed socially, as a public campaign against stress currently states (Videnscenter for Arbejdsmiljø, 2009). The relation between work and life as it is expressed in the expressions of types is profoundly social since it is pre-individual and does not belong to the personal essence of human subjects. If we continue to accept the perspective set forward in the public campaign, we will never be able to discuss the relation of work and life as a social problem, because it will constantly be reduced to the individual experience and hence the individual personal trait of the human subject.

In the following two subsections I will address some of the practical and methodological implications that this suggested idea of types has for conducting interviews and making use of examples.

## **Interviews**

These thoughts have radical consequences for the conduct of interviews and how we should think about the interviewees as human subjects. It is radical because it moves the focus from the personal experience of balance towards the impersonal expression of the relation of work and life. It was simply no longer relevant to understand how they perceived the relation between work and home. Instead, it was important to see how they expressed the relation of work and life and in which problematic forms these expressions took form.

What is said by the interviewee does not refer to the individual in the sense of a “primordial ‘I’” (Deleuze, 1999: 7), but to the relation of work and life that is expressed in modes of individuation. It is on purpose that we do not write that it is expressed by the individual human subject, as the expression simply does not belong to the individual. This is also why Deleuze in *Foucault* refers to this expression of the relation as ‘non-person’ (1999: 7). The ‘non-person’ not only echoes Maurice Blanchot, as Deleuze writes, but furthermore Deleuze’s own writing on Nietzsche. It is not an ‘I’ who speaks, but an impersonal ‘he’, ‘one’, ‘who’, ‘which one’, who expresses the being qua being (see Deleuze, 2005: 76-77).

The types are neither ‘subjects’ in the sense that they speak *of* the relation nor that they speak on behalf of themselves as human subjects. On the contrary types are ‘subjects’ in the sense that the relation is expressed in them. The relation in itself is expressed in the impersonal expressions of types. This implies that what is expressed about the relation is not derived from the human subject but from the relation in itself. In this sense relations have an anonymous function: they speak in types, which is also why Deleuze talks about types as a derived function of the relation in itself (1999: 9, 15). Hence, types are not derived from perception of work and home. Instead, they express the relation in itself by offering it something qualitatively different in which it can become expressible and expressed. That is by being expressed by types (Deleuze, 1999: 11). The relation is pure expression in itself, but the expression is in itself pure nonsense, which has to be expressed for itself to make sense.

The objects per se of the relation of work and life are the problematic forms and the intrinsic modes of individuation in which the relation of work and life is expressed. What is interesting to study is the way that the employees and managers as types are expressing the relation of work and life and hereby giving expression to something that is unthought or unthinkable in itself, but that becomes thinkable in these expressions. The relation of work and life is expressed as something that is unthought or unthinkable in itself, but is made expressible by being expressed by types.

However, again, it is not the personal individuation in form of the personal thought and expressions of the employees that are interesting; what is interesting is the impersonal expressions that are expressed in them: something impersonal in their expressions. The relation of work and life speaks in them. This is not to say that they are stupid, that they are not thinking – of course they are – but to say that these thoughts simply do not belong to them. In this sense it is not possible to study the relation of work and life outside of ‘its’ constitution in the modes of individuation in which it is expressed and the types who express it. In this sense we should think of types as forms of individuation. The relation between work and life is expressed in modes of individuation and by types of individuation.

The interviews carried out in this thesis differed from most qualitative studies of work-life balance because they did not study the individual and personal work-life balance of the interviewee. Instead the interviews focused on the impersonal expressions of work-life balance, i.e. the expressions on work-life balance that cannot be said to belong to or be referred to as individuals. In fact these forms of personal expression of work-life balance were excluded from the analysis of the empirical interviews. Their personal explanations were not just uninteresting with regard to studying the constitution of the relation of work and life but moreover were a source of possible explanations that have to be destructed to make room for their impersonal expressions of the relation of work and life. In other words, what are the impersonal individuation and not the generable experience that can be traced in the utterance of the interviewed employees and managers? What are the abstract genetic principles of the relation of work and life that can be traced in the human subjects’ expressions of certain types and modes of individuations? And what are the modes of individuations of work and life expressed that can be located in these types? This means that the employees do not constitute themselves as particular individuals, that is, the characteristic do not represent the individual essences of human subjects. On the contrary, the employees constitute the relationship of work and life in their expressions of certain problems, e.g. flexibility, performance and commitment.

When the relation of work and life is expressed in the employees expression of problems it is “not merely *in concreto*, but *in individuo*, that is, as an individual thing, determinable or even determined by the idea alone” (Kant, 1990: A568-B596; quoted in McMahon, 2004: 84). It is the idea or the relation of work and life that is determined and not the human nature of the human subject. The relation of work and life is determined in the employees’ expression of problems. Even though these problems are determinable; they are not determined by the individual characteristics of human subjects, but in the types of work and life that can be found in their expressions. For example, when an employee, who is working from home, is faced with the problem of wanting to watch the bicycle race *Tour de France* on the television while he is working, I could refer his decision of not watching the television to his own individual characteristics such as strong discipline and commitment to work. However, it is also possible to see and explain this as an impersonal expression of the relation of work and life. Instead of seeing this as a personal experience of the employee that belongs to him as a person, this explanation focuses on the encounter of work and life, which is expressed in the problematic form of work and life. In the way that the individual gives expression to this impersonal expression it is possible to locate a singular type of the relation of work and life. In his expression of separation of free time and working time in terms of personal and working interests there is also an expression of how life engages in a productive relation to work.

It is therefore not a matter of separating work and life from each other; on the contrary, it is a question of managing how life becomes productive (and non-productive) in work. The problem is therefore not only the blurring of the boundaries of work and home and the fact that he can do work and non-activities at the same time. This would involve the solution of separating work and home. The problem is rather more profound. It is that, even though work and life are external, how can they be compatible to each other? It is therefore a problem of the relationship between work and life rather than one of separating work and home. However, it is not work or life that has to be changed to make them compatible; it is the relation between them. The question is: how is this relation that defines the essence of my productivity constituted, and what I can do?

That is to say that the categories, concepts, conditions and constitutive elements normally deployed to understand work-life balance are not deployed in interviewing and analyzing but are exactly what have to be questioned when interviewing and analyzing. This means that questions like: “How is the relation of work and life constituted?” and “on which conditions are these constitutions based?” should not be answered by invoking already given categories and concepts that are based on certain beliefs about human nature. These types of the relation of work and life are located in the employees’ argumentations, discussions, and ways of talking about problems. By doing so it was possible to locate various problematic encounters of work and life in the expressions of the employees such as illness and working overtime. These encounters were grouped under the heading of flexibility, for example, as they had the common trait of regarding how a relationship between work and life was constituted in each individual employee. In this sense, flexibility forms a problematic encounter in which the relation of work and life is expressed. In this expression the relation between work and life becomes determinable.

The aim with the interviews was, therefore, to locate the problems in which the relation between work and life was constituted and expressed. This means that the interviewees are not seen as active individuals who constitute their own work-life balance but rather as giving expression to particular individuating forms of the relation of work and life. That is, how the relation of work and life is expressed in a singular way. The interviewees were seen as ‘nonpersons’ that cannot speak on their own behalf. There is something mumbling, speaking, thinking in them that they as ‘nonpersons’ are merely giving expression to. It is a principle of individuation, which is something impersonal that speaks in them. It is not something that belongs to them as persons, it is not a personal trait; it is something that is expressed in them, and makes them distinct and singular individuals.

It is important to notice that this does not mean that one should not listen to the interviewees. On the contrary it implies that one has to listen very carefully, because in their expressions there is in fact something said that is important. In their words something else is speaking, which means that it is necessary to listen, but not listen to

the explanation where they refer to themselves as persons and deploy the common theories about work-life balance. For example, the interviewees did use the same categories, models and explanations that are mentioned in the scientific articles and popular media coverage about work-life balance. They spoke about how difficult it was to define the boundary between work and life, as being good or bad in managing the boundary, as missing personal coping competencies, and as being flexible employees that had to juggle the demands of work and home.

All the time they spoke about the relation of work and life as a personal problem that they as individuals had to face. The role of the company and management could merely be indirect as they noted, because it was themselves who perceived the balance between work and life. If it is possible to locate something else speaking in them, then the problem is not personal but impersonal. It simply no longer belongs to them as persons, but is expressed in problematic forms in which the relation is given. When it is possible to locate these impersonal problems then something else is expressed about work and life.

In this sense, modes of individuation of work and life neither belong to the individual human subject nor the organization. We can say that modes of individuation are not individual but that they rather are impersonal, i.e. it does not belong to a human subject or organization but to a pre-individual field of forces (see Colwell, 1997: 18-19). Deleuze speaks in the same manner when he says that problems do not belong to the individual; they belong to ideas (1994: 187). Hence, the conditions of work and life that are constituent for the relation of work and life are not external to the human subject's expression, but are "constituent components of the subject itself" (see Colwell, 1997: 19). This implies that the human subject is constituted *inside* the expression of work and life. The expressions of work and life are not constituted *by* the human subject as an inner experience that represents something outside of experience. In other words, the conditions of work and life are not given to experience; they are constituted inside human subjects' expressions.

The suggestions set forward in this thesis have some implications for research into the relationship between work and life, namely that the nature of this relation is not expressed in the inner subjective experience of work-life balance. The active experience of the human subject is not constitutive of the relation between work and life. Hence, we should not look for the relationship in personal examples, but rather try to make sense of how the modes of individuation are constituted inside the expressions of singular types.

## Examples

Traditionally, we invoke examples to analyze and describe the abstract essence of a thing, or put differently, when we want to determine work-life balance in a particular case. They can provide the reader with concrete descriptions of abstract ideas. This is what happens when we answer the abstract question of ‘what is work-life balance?’ by stating particular examples of work-life balance. What does your balance look like? This abstraction of balance is represented and found in particular human subjects. Thus research examples are ways of representing knowledge of unitary being, which means that knowledge is founded by recognizing the abstract idea in the particular examples. This implies that the variation between different subjective examples is a variation of the representation of underlying substantial identity (McMahon, 2004: 53).

Deleuze speaks against this idea of representation of knowledge in the human subject. He writes “we are demanding that the question be answered not by examples but by the determinations of a type” (2005: 79). Types differ from examples by being “places assigned by a transcendental apparatus” (McMahon, 2004: 52). In this sense, we should rather think of types as being expressions of work and life that belong to a *transcendental empirical field* rather than an *empirical representation* of a given human subject. Hence, we cannot talk about characteristic types as something that can be ascribed to this in particular, but we can say something about how, where, in what sense, and about whom the relation of work and life is expressed by these types. But what is a type? A type is a determination or expression of a problematic determinable relation of work and life. Hence, it is not a representation that takes place in a subject (Deleuze, 1991a: 23), the determination of the relation takes place within a problematic

determinable relation of work and life and not within an already given or constituted human subject (see also McMahon, 2004: 53). The determination of the type of work and life is thus an immanent cause to the relation of work and life. Type is not an external consequence or impact of a relation between work and life, which would be the more traditional way of understanding this, i.e. the human subject is affected by the conditions of work and home.

Knowledge is not regulated by an abstract idea of balance that can be found as experience within or between the human states, but rather the immanent principle that constitutes the singular relation of work and life. Put differently it is not the proposition of the human subject that is represented but the relation of work and life as it is expressed, expressing and expressible. Knowledge is not a representation of something given, but the principle of how the given is given. It is that by which the given is given. In other words, it is an organizing principle for the transcendental determination of work and life. Knowledge is derived from the expressions of the relation of work and life that can be located in various types.

The problem with 'example' is that it is not real, because it represents an abstract state of balance. Instead, we should focus on the various types that can be abstracted from the expressions of work and life. The problem of work and life is not something *within* the human state or *between* various human states, but a determinable relation between work and life that is determined by a type of work and life. This implies that the terms 'work' and 'life' do not exist as such outside of the constitution and expression of the type, which means that there is no transcendent reality outside of expression and thought wherefore the representation of the object of the relation of work and life necessarily must be an illusion or false.

If we want to be very technical it is more precise to say that the elements of work and life contract a function. The Hjelmslevian concept of function is central to my understanding of the philosophy of Deleuze (and Guattari) on this point (they often talk about functions as machines). Hjelmslev defines function as the interdependence of two relative elements that connect "as functives of one and the same function" (Hjelmslev,



1969: 60 quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, 1999: 45). In this way a function always has function in relation to other functions. That is functions contract a function (Hjelmslev, 1993: 31). Types are given expression to the relation of work and life by expressing it, and the relation is expressed in these expressions of types. It is therefore too simple to state that types are products of the relation of work and life, because they at the same time inhabit the expression of what is producing them as a constituting principle of work and life (see also Carter and Jackson (2004: 118)). This is another way of saying that the relation is produced by something immanent to the relation. The concept of function is therefore defined by being a relation between elements.

In the next section we will discuss the effects of work and life. The question is how we can explain the relation between work and life and not merely be satisfied with explaining the link between work-home interface and the well-being of human subjects (see e.g. Kinnunen et al., 2006: 152).

## **Problem IV: The Effects of Work and Life**

Traditionally, the discipline of work-life balance has described the impact and consequences of work-home interface on the human subjects in terms of well-being, satisfaction and stress (see e.g. Kinnunen et al., 2006; Sverko et al. 2002). The question has been: how do factors of home and work affect a human being? This implies that the relation between work and life is mediated by the interface of work and home. It is what the human subject perceives and what it is affected by. Accordingly the link between the experience and the affect of this experience is explained and mediated by the work-home interface (see e.g. Kinnunen et al., 2006: 152). In this sense the relation between work and life has been subsumed under the identity of the work-home interface. There is an inseparable link between the experience of work-life balance and the effect of home and work on the human subject. This link is called work-home interface (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), work-home interface (Lewis and Cooper, 1995) or work-life balance (Saltzstein et al., 2001).

In other words, the work-home interface functions as a middle term to measure how work and home affect each other. Demands make it possible to relate work to home

because these are results that “affect the employee in all aspects of life and are not isolated to the work domain” (Quick et al., 2004: 427). What are the demands of work and what are the demands of home, and how do the demands of work affect the demands of home? We cannot say how these spheres affect each other if they have not been mediated by the work-home interface. For example, demands of work and life are only comparable by how they are given within work-home interface, that is, by being given in terms of, for example, spillover, conflict or balance.

Demands of work and home are measured in terms of how they affect the well-being of the employees, but they are not intelligible if they do not belong to the same identical work-home interface. For example, the different demands of being committed to home and work that are determined by the degree to which they affect the human subjects’ well-being. The human subject could, for example, say that family life demands more commitment than work life. In this sense, the difference between work and home is always measured and mediated by the work-home interface and is depended upon and conditioned by individual competencies, characteristics, traits and organizational factors. The relation between home and work is always given internally to the work-home interface. When we, for example, say that ‘home is better than work’ we measure our lives in terms that are intrinsic to the relation between work and home, i.e. the measures of the relation are given internally to what they measure. The relation of work and home is, therefore, given as questions of time, space and energy by which the work-life balance of human subjects becomes measurable and determinable. These terms as measures are internal to the relation between work and home because they are given in the way they affect the human subject’s well-being and satisfaction with home and work.

Work-life balance is hereby measured as an outcome. We live the life that we do at the cost of work-life balance that we achieve. But what are the criteria or values upon which we base this judgment? We often do this by saying that ‘I’m this kind of person’, that is, we argue by referring to our intrinsic personalities and characteristics. This implies that the relation between work and home life is internal or intrinsic to the terms upon which we judge. Work and home not only belong to the human subject, but they describe some personal characteristics about the human subject. We recognize this

when work-life balance is measured in the form of the individual human being's interest or sense of belonging to work and home (Randall, 1987: 460); meaningful interrelationships between work and life (Bielby, 1992); and a lack of fit between person and environment (Voydanoff, 2005). The opposition between work and home is a specific difference that is given according to the individual difference of the human subject (personal traits, behaviour, characteristics). The difference between work and life is seen from the perspective of the human subject, which implies that work and life resemble each other because they are seen from the same identical perspective. Hence the difference between work and life is reduced to an individual difference. This understanding of work-life balance surfaces when people say that they only have one life and they cannot separate their work life from other parts of life.

We have tried to determine the nature of work-life balance by describing the given individual and organizational factors and how they affect a given human subject. How much can the human subject stand? Traditionally, we would say that the nature of balance in the human subject is hereby expressed. For example, when we talk about the individual limit of performance in terms like laziness, fatigue, stress and not the least work-life balance we express something about the nature of balance for the individual human subject. In doing so, the human subject has become the standard and instrument for measuring work-life balance (e.g. well-being and satisfaction). Furthermore, this has implied that the limit of work-life balance has so far been the human subject.

I will argue that it is not the human subject that is affected but the relation of work and life that is affecting itself. Hence, I am not interested in explaining the link between the human subjects' experience of something and the impact that this has on the human subject. It is not interesting to explain the relation of work and life by referring to the perception of something or human nature. It is the relation itself that needs to be explained. To do so, we will focus on the effects of the relation of work and life. These are interesting if we are right to say that the relation of work and life is not given as such, but is only given in the form of its effects (i.e. expressions of types and what is expressed as conditions in these expressions) because then we can only scrutinize what the relation of work and life is, by locating how it is expressed in these effects. Modes

of individuation are constitutive elements that are constituted by being expressed by types. Constituted modes of individuation become constitutive principles that can be found as productive rules within the expressions of work and life. This idea of thinking about the effects as constituting principles can to some extent be found in recent research that emphasises development rather than well-being (see e.g. Garofalo and Marra, 2007). By discussing the effects from the perspective of development they emphasise possibilities of changing rather than merely measuring the current situation in the form of how it affects the well-being of human subjects. In relation to this it is interesting that some companies begin to talk about work-life balance as a potential capacity of innovative power rather than a matter of lowering the impact of organizational demands on the individual employees' well-being.

By doing so we cannot say *what* work-life balance is in itself, but we can trace *how* the relation of work and life is expressed. Types are on the one hand the effects of the relation of work and life, i.e. they are expressed, and on the other hand, where the relation of work and life is expressed. Therefore we cannot base the measurement of the relation of work and life on given conditions because these conditions are only established in the expressed. Measures therefore have to be construed or invented as individuating principles that can constitute the effects that take place within the expressions of work and life. This means what is interesting about work-life balance is not how they (whatever these measures are) affect the well-being of human subjects, but how these can be said to be 'constituting effects' that can be located within expressions of work and life. This is also to say that the relation of work and life does not affect human subjects (how could it?) but only produces affects. In itself the relation of work and life is a capacity to be affected that is expressed in various types.

Traditionally, we will think of these individual and organizational factors as constitutive elements of balance that are dependent on how they are constituted inside the human subject's expression of work and life (independently variable), which means that they become dependent factors when they are determined as constitutive elements that in fact determine the balance of a particular given human subject. In this sense the factors are possible conditions, but this says nothing about how they in fact really are constituted

inside the given object of the relation of work and life. They are simply given to the human subject's perception and if they are said to constitute this perception then they are said to be dependent variables and factors. But what they constitute is a perception of the relation as balance, and not the relation in itself as an expression of the relation. The contemporary theories of work-life balance are therefore able to account for the conditioning of balance but they fail to address the generic principle that constitutes the relation between work and life in itself. They can describe how the object of work-life balance is constituted and on which conditions this takes place, but they do not question that basic principle that they base the whole theoretical construction on, the human subject's perception and the form of humanism that is conditioning this perception. This means that they do not take the relation of work and life in itself into consideration, but let the constitution of the relation be based on a human nature that is never questioned.

We will therefore not speak about the independent variable as the experienced or perceived work-life balance of the human subject, which is typically the case within work-life balance. Instead, we have to locate how the undetermined relation between work and life becomes determined in the human subject's expression of it. There are so to speak not independent variables that can constitute the relation of work and life, because there is no privileged position outside of the relation (i.e. the human subject) that can cause and be caused by the relation (there is no beyond). Instead, we have to think about this from a relational view (as opposed to a positional view), which means that we should think about the relation from within itself.

There are an unlimited number of variations of work and life. Variations are in themselves chaotic and undetermined relations of work and life. The aim of this thesis is not to found the relation of work and life on the independent variable of the perceived balance of the human subject; rather, it is to show and create conceptual dependencies between variations of work and life. In this sense it is to replace the scientific observer with conceptual persona or conceptual types that "undergo the variations themselves" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 132; see also 227n14). Therefore variations take place on a single plane of immanence, which in itself is pure variation (Deleuze and Guattari,

2003: 39). What are traced are therefore variations of the relation of work and life rather than the dependent variables of the independent variable.

So what is mediating the relation cannot be separated from what is mediated, or what is measuring cannot be separated from what is measured, because what is caused and what causing it is not separated. The consequence of this is that we cannot make a distinction between the 'independent variable' and 'dependent variable' of work-life balance. The reason for this is that they are both cause and caused that have to be located as effects. This implies that the relation between work and life and where this relation has its effect is the same expression.

Thus, the effects of the relation of work and life are impersonal effects, which are not grounded in the nature of or perceived by the human subject, but grounded in the relation of work and life in itself. The impersonal expression of the relation of work and life is caused by the relation of work and life in itself, but whereas the actual effects pre-exist the cause in the potential experience of work-life balance, the cause only exists in its effects in the real expression of the relation of work and life. If relation in itself is said to be real, then it is the real expression that is expressed in and by the impersonal expressions of work and life.

## **The Univocity of Work and Life**

My aim with this chapter has not been to say *what* the human nature that constitutes the relation of work and life is, but to show *how* the relation of work and life is constituted in various ways and which conditions can be found in these various constitutions if we do not base the relations upon human nature.

The focus on (the univocal) relation that is set forward in this thesis implies a radical shift of focus from human subjects that perceive balance towards the relation of work and life in itself. This implies a reversal of the whole way of thinking about the relation of work and life. It is important how the relation between work and life is constituted and on which conditions, i.e. how the relation is constituted inside the given. The reason for this is that the relation is not given to the human experience; expressions of the

relation of work and life are given inside the relation of work and life. We therefore have to locate how the given is given and under which conditions this takes place.

The given is given as problems. These problems are not given to human subjects but are given inside the expressions of work and life. What are traced in the empirical interviews are therefore not the personal perceptions of work-life balance but how certain problematic forms transcend the expressions of work and life and are conditioned inside these as modes of individuation that are expressed. This means that *problems* are not determining the relation between work and life but are making the relation determinable, and *conditions* are not determining the relation but are determined inside the problematic relation of work and life. Problems are constitutive for the relation of work and life but do not constitute this relation in itself; they are constitutive forms that can be determined in relation to the constitutive elements that can be found in the various modes of individuation expressed by types. Constitutive elements are not something given to experience but something expressed in our expressions of work and life. It can be summarized in a table like this.

*Table 2: Difference between work-life balance and work-life management*

	<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	<b>Work-life Management</b>
<b>The object of the relation of work and life</b>	<p>The perceived balance</p> <p>Objective indicators: How the object is given to human subject</p> <p>Subjective indicators: How the object is perceived as balance within or between human states</p> <p>The problem is given</p>	<p>Problematic form</p> <p>Object is expressed by how the given is given inside the given</p> <p>Problematic constitution</p>
<b>The subject of the relation of work and life</b>	<p>The human subjects experience of work-life balance</p> <p>Personal experience</p> <p>Personal effects</p>	<p>Types express by being expressed by the relation of work and life</p> <p>Impersonal expression</p> <p>Impersonal effects</p>
<b>Conditions of the relation of work and life</b>	<p>Determinants</p> <p>Organizational factors</p> <p>Individual factors</p>	<p>Modes of individuation</p> <p>Constitutive elements</p>
<b>Effects of the relation of work and life</b>	<p>Consequences/impact work satisfaction and well-being</p> <p>Personal consequences</p>	<p>Internal effect, i.e. the effect is internal to what is causing it</p> <p>Constitutive effects</p>

This is a radical change in the perspective on the relation of work and life, because it is a shift from a matter of epistemology (i.e. work-life balance is perceived) to a question of ontology (the relation of work and life is expressed in human subjects' expressions of work and life). In the contemporary theories of work-life balance the difference between work and life is individual, because it belongs to the human subject and is derived from the individual and organizational factors. Balance makes a distinction between the human perception of work and life. In contrast, I will argue that the relation of work and life is an ontological and pure difference between work and life, because it belongs to the relation of work and life in itself, which means that the relation is derived from itself. The relation is not constituted by something other than itself. It is not constituted by the human subject. Instead, the constituting principle has to be found or created within the



relation of work and life. In itself the relationship of work and life cannot be perceived, but it can be perceived by how it constitutes a relation between work and life.

It is a concept that is not based on *the analogical identity* of the balance of work and home, but instead is based on *the univocal difference* between work and life. In this sense this thesis is not only critical towards the balance metaphor in theories of work-life balance and the mental image of the problematic that these metaphors produce (see e.g. Hacker and Doolen, 2003; Halpern and Murphy, 2005; Lewis et al., 2007; Thompson and Bunderson, 2001). But I do not just want to replace the metaphor with another one, because it seems to miss the more fundamental critique of work-life balance that needs to be addressed: How can we think of work-life balance as a real relation between work and life, which is not reduced to a concept of personal reflection, or a mere metaphor? How can we think about the relation of work and life in itself and not as a balance in and between given human states?

The human subjects are not subjects, creators or managers of work-life balance; instead they are where the effects of the relation of work and life can be located. Human subjects do not have a work-life balance, which means that they do not experience their personal work-life balance. Rather, they give expression to the relation of work and life. It speaks in them. This could sound a bit mysterious. Is there a voice of the relation of work and life speaking in us, when we talk about flexibility, performance and commitment? Yes, but there is nothing mystical about it. We should understand this in the same way as Nietzsche's concept of will to power. The will to power is not a personal and individual power. It is "not what the will wants, but on the contrary, the one that wants in the will" (Deleuze, 2005: xi). Hereby, the profound question of work and life is not to determine what the nature of work-life balance is in or between particular states of the human subject, but to ask how the relation of work and life is expressed.

The knowledge of the relation of work and life developed in this thesis is therefore something different all together than the contemporary forms of knowledge about work-life balance. In the contemporary theories on work-life balance knowledge is found by

how the human conditions are represented in the human state of balance (see e.g. Guest, 2002). In this traditional perspective knowledge is grounded in the nature of the human subject (see also Colebrook, 2002: xx) and how the balance is derived from the human subjects' experiences and perceptions of the relation of work and life. The human subjects are the knowers about their work-life balance in which an account of the knowledge of the relation merely can be carved out. Rather than understanding work-life balance in its actual states in and between human subjects, the aim is to understand how these human states are becoming subjects of the relation of work and life. In other words, how is the relation of work and life expressed inside the human subjects' expressions of work and life?

It is in the expressions of the human subjects that the relationship of work and life can be found, but this does not mean that it is 'their' work-life balance; rather, the relation of work and life belongs to the relation of work and life that is expressed in the human subjects' expressions. In these subjective expressions something 'impersonal' is constituted that conditions the expressions. There is something else speaking in them. This is what I later will call the impersonal expression of the relation between work and life. In this sense the limit of the relation of work and life is not the possible personal experience or state of balance, but the real impersonal expression of the relation of work and life. What makes this expression real and not possible?

The thesis can be said to reformulate the problem of the relation of work and life not as a question of identity of work and home, i.e. the terms of work and life are given internally to the human subject as balance, but rather as an external relation between work and life. The relation of work and life is given inside the given: it is not something that affects the subjectivity of the human subjects, but an immanent principle of constitution that only can be found in the way in which it is expressed. It is expressed by types. The given is not given to the human subjects as sensory data, but is given inside the constitution of the given. The object of work and life is not given to our perception as human subjects, it is expressed inside the given. This is also why it is not perceptible, but is located by how it is expressed. In itself the relation of work and life is indeterminate. It becomes determinable by being expressed in problematic forms of

work and life. Problems are determinable expressions of the relation of work and life. On the one hand, these problems are expressed in various modes of individuation and, on the other hand, types of individuation express problems of the relation of work and life.

This is the univocal relation of work and life, which means that the relation of work and life is expressed in the same and single voice. The relation of work and life is not expressed as a balance between work and life that will always separate them in order to be the mediating point between them. The relation of work and life speaks in us, or we express the relation of work and life in our constitution of the relation. It is only one relation between work and life, but it is expressed in various distinct ways.

Hereby, we can speak of the relation of work and life as an immanent cause that only has existence in its effect, i.e. how the relation is expressed in the constitution of the human subject. Hence, the relation is both cause and effect, expressed and expressing, produced and producing. It is not produced or caused by anything but itself. This is important because the expression of difference between work and life as it is expressed is not derived from the human subjects' experience of work and life, but from the problematic expression of the indeterminate relation of work and life in which the relation becomes determined, determinable and determining. It is therefore not an experience that the employees have of balance, but a problematic expression in which the relation of work and life becomes determinable. Thus the relation of work and life is not to be found within the human subjects' experience of work-life balance, but in the problematic forms of work and life. Whereas balance is something we experience as given to us, the relation of work and life is something expressed in us that can be located as constitutive elements.

This is also why it is not a tautology to say that the relation between work and life causes a relation between work and life, because there is a qualitative difference between them; the relation is indeterminate in the first case and becomes determined in the latter. It is only possible to trace the relation of work and life in the way it is a constituent force that conditions and constitutes the human subject's expressions of

work and life. Deleuze puts it more generally “the essence of a thing is discovered in the force which possesses it and which is expressed in it” (2005: 77). In this sense the essence of the relation of work and life is discovered by investigating how, in which sense and who is expressing these problems that were expressed in the interviews.

It is a science of metaphysics that is based upon how the relation of work and life is expressed in various types. It is a science of transcendental forms that can be derived from these expressions. Thus, knowledge is neither obtained from the constitution of the individual human subject (i.e. individualization) nor from the relation of work and life in itself (i.e. idealization); it is derived from the expression of the relation in itself as a relation in something else (i.e. transcendental empiricism). This expression can be traced as problematic forms and modes of individuation. It is important to notice that the problematic forms and the modes of individuation do not explain anything in themselves as they are not self-grounding or grounded in an absolute existence, but dependant upon how the relation of work and life in itself is expressed. Furthermore, the relation of work and life in itself cannot explain anything, as it is pure expression or variation. This means that knowledge is traced by how the relation of work and life is becoming expressed in the expressions of various types. The objects of knowledge are established within the distinct expressions of work and life.

Knowledge is created by showing how work and life are expressed in distinct ways *and* in these distinct expressions of work and life there can be located various problematic forms and modes of individuation, which can be said to constitute the relation between work and life as determinable and expressible problems. The forms and modes are only located within the singular expression of work and life, which means that we should think of them as internal constitutive principles of work and life. Hence, they are not merely regulating how the relation of work and life in itself is derived from an experience given to the human subject, but are internal principles of the difference between work and life that can be located in the constitution and expression of the relation. These constitutive principles are internal to the expression of the relation of work and life, which is why knowledge always is unique and not generalizable, always has to be thought from the inside and is never primary, but always derived from the

primitive and undetermined relation of work and life. Knowledge is therefore not a regulating principle; it is a constituting principle.

Hereby, the task is not to think of ‘balance’ as an unconditioned cause that has certain effects on the lives of human subjects, but on the contrary to show how the relationship between work and life has certain effects but that these cannot be reduced to the unconditioned cause of human nature. Instead, the cause can only be shown as an immanent cause that exists unthought in the thinking of work and life. Put differently, we cannot separate cause (what is expressed) and effect (what it expressed) outside of thought (expression) (see also Deleuze, 1992: 19). With regard to work and life this implies that we cannot think of ‘balance’ as cause, but must show how the ‘relation’ of work and life is expressed (cause as condition) and expressing (effects as constitution) in its expression (way of thinking). That is also to say that expressed and expressing are univocal to expression.

It is therefore not possible to define the concept of work-life management, but it is possible to show how the nontought can be thought and expressed within certain problematic and transcendental fields. In this thesis these fields are flexibility, performance and commitment. It is within these fields that the nontought, i.e. the relation of work and life in itself, which cannot be thought, can be shown in ‘its’ effects. So far these scientific fields of knowledge have only to a limited extent been thought of in terms of work and life but, as the analysis later will show, it is possible to give expression to the relation of work and life and show how it is an immanent organizing principle within these fields.

However, this is not to say that everything said about flexibility, performance and commitment shows how the organizing principle of work and life is expressed in its effects. It is not the case that there are an unlimited number of possibilities of expressing other relations within these fields, because these fields are determinable expressions of the relationship of work and life. This means that they are not established independently or outside of the expression of the relationship of work and life, i.e. what I have chosen to call ‘work-life management’. It is missing the point to claim that other

expressions are possible, because if this is the case then the organizing principle or the relationship of work and life in its abstract form of nonthought would be different. This is a major difference between Deleuzian inspired cultural studies and other (postmodern) perspectives.

The reason for this is that what is abstracted from the employment of thought is not something external to thought but exactly the nonthought in itself (see also Scotus, 1987: 5). The nonthought in thought is neither an abstraction nor an abstraction from everyday life, but something that is abstracted from the abstractions of everyday life (see also Spoelstra, 2007a: 24). From this follows that we have to abstract the nonthought in what it is causing (see Scotus, 1987: 6). This is also why Deleuze insists on transcendental empiricism (see e.g. 1994).

I will argue that ‘the nonthought’ in the contemporary perspectives is the relation of work and life. Everything is caused by this relation. However, we have so far restricted the thinking of this relation and hence the possible experience of it to its representation within and between human states. I will suggest that we should think of the relation between work and life in itself – and not in or between human states. Work and life are not entities given independently of this relation but are intrinsic modes of that relation. Work and life do not exist as such outside of the articulation or expression of the relation. Work is therefore not synonymous with work place, work time, or work identity, and life is not the same as home, which is what is normally talked about with theories of work-life balance. This means that we should be careful not to think of work (or life for that matter) as a human construct. Neither work nor life is based on human conditions and hence are not human constructs. On the contrary, humans as conditions and limits are articulate in the expression of the relationship between work and life. The relation is immanent to the relation itself. It is in this immanent relation to itself that it produces the expressions of work and life. Thus, work and life are constructions or better attributes of the relation, but it is important to be aware of the fact that they are expressed independently of each other. Life is always expressed in relation to work and vice versa.

If we accept that ‘the nonthought’ is the relation then we must also accept that this relation cannot be determined by anything other than itself. This is also why Deleuze and Guattari write that it cannot be thought (2003: 59). It is not a matter of reflection, which is also why the relation between work and life is *determined in* and not *reflected in* the mind of the employees. In itself the relation is undetermined. The relation in itself is only determinable in relation to something other than itself, i.e. the transcendental or problematic fields (flexibility, performance and commitment). These are the problematic forms of work and life, and it is in these problematic forms that the relation can become determined (constitution of the relation) and determining (condition of the relation). The problematic fields are internal to the relation of work and life, i.e. they are modes of expressions. This way of thinking about the relation therefore breaks with the idea that the nature of the balance is an undetermined human state that is determined by various factors, the individual perception and individual cognitive competencies of the human subject. Instead, the relationship between work and life has a triple genesis (see also Deleuze, 1994: 173; Goodchild, 2000: 163-164): the undetermined concept of the relationship between work and life, the determinable relation (problematic forms), and relations between determined and determining. These three forms of determination are inseparable or even better univocal (“determinable is univocal to determinant” (Scotus, 1987: 7)), which means that what is expressed is done so in a single sense (see Goodchild, 2000: 159). The three functions (or synthesis or machines) express the relationship of work and life. From this it follows that the relation in itself is also a relation in something other than itself. “Being is also being,” as Goodchild (2000: 160) expresses in relation to Scotus, which means that Being and being are univocal, i.e. expressed “in a single and same sense” (Deleuze, 1994: 35). For Scotus, Being is what is common for and virtually in all beings (1987: 6-8).

Rather than talking about Being in this thesis I prefer to talk about the relation between work and life and how this relation is expressed in beings. In the following part of the thesis I analyze how the relation between work and life is expressed in certain problematic fields of flexibility (chapter 5), performance (chapter 6) and commitment (chapter 7).

In chapter 5, I suggest that we should reconsider the concept of flexibility by not focusing on the boundary between work and life, but rather how the employees change their way of managing themselves. The empirical case for this study was a Danish inbound call centre in Blue that had recently introduced a distance working arrangement for its employees. Management wanted to provide the employees with the flexibility to work from home two or three days a week and expected a higher return from the employees as a result. The employees were to change not only their ways of working but also the way they managed themselves. They were to become more committed and put more of themselves into their work.

Chapter 6 is a study of how changes in the measurement of productivity in terms of performance affect the way that employees and managers expressed the relation between work and life. The chapter expands on the theoretical developments of boundary management and the productive form of blurred boundaries by suggesting that the employees not only have to draw the spatial and temporal line between work and non-work, they also have to determine recreation as that which makes them able to be productive. Managing the boundary between work and non-work becomes a part of self-management in the sense that the employees themselves have to determine whether something is work or not work. Furthermore, it becomes a part of the employees' self-management to manage the relationship between their production and reproduction, e.g. the employees have to manage their contemporary level of production in relation to how it affects their general wellbeing and future ability to be productive.

In chapter 7 I analyze the social formation of commitment. Today the productive labour power of the employees should not be detached from the employees' ways of living; on the contrary, these ways of living should be included in work. The committed employees of today therefore offer not only a body capable of working but also a mind capable of living for work. Commitment is therefore more than a matter of the employees identifying themselves with work (see e.g. McElroy et al., 2001) as they also are committed to ways of living that are regarded as being productive for the company. Thus, we should not understand commitment as an individual investment of desire in



work, but rather as individual expressions of a social desire, i.e. what is regarded as productive by the company.

## **Part III: Experiments in the Metaphysics of Work and Life**

## Chapter V: Reconsidering Individual Flexibility

### Introduction

When a Danish inbound call centre recently introduced a distance working arrangement for its employees, it appealed to the widely invoked concept of flexibility as a justification. Management wanted to provide the employees with the flexibility to work from home two or three days a week and expected a higher return from the employees as a result. The employees were to change not only their ways of working but also the way they managed themselves. They were to become more committed and put more of themselves into their work. Finally, flexibility was regarded as a solution to the employees' challenge to achieve work-life balance. This call centre is by no means unique in this respect: flexibility is widely regarded as the golden road to more productive, committed and balanced employees.

The concept of flexibility is used within many different areas of social science, approached from *institutional*, *psychological*, and *critical* perspectives. *Institutionally*, flexibility has been seen as the blurring of the division between work and family, where it is this institutional division itself that has become flexible. The institutional perspective often focuses on the positive and negative aspects of flexibility on the employees and on the company (see e.g. Clark, 2000; Guest, 2002; Hill et al., 2001; Kreiner et al., 2006; Pärnänen et al., 2005). The basic assumption is that it is possible to draw a clear distinction between the two domains of home and work, and that there is a basic conflict between the demands and responsibilities of work life and home life (see e.g. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus and Powell 2006; Papalexandris and Kramar 1997). Flexibility becomes a mediator between the spheres of home life and work life and makes it possible for people to adjust the demands of work to the demands of family. In this sense, flexibility should make it easier for the employees to achieve a good work-life balance because the demands of work fit better into the family demands. If the demands fit, we say that the demands of work and home are integrated, while if they do not, we say that they are segmented.

*Psychologically*, flexibility is something that belongs to the human mind, i.e. the psyche has become flexible. The psychological perspective on flexibility sees it as an attribute of individuals, e.g. individual and social coping competencies or strategies that make the individual able to adapt to changes in the environment (Hyman et al. 2005; Lazarus 1999). This perspective does not focus on the institutional demands on or responsibility of individuals, rather it focuses on the individual strategies the employees develop in coping with these demands. Julia Brannen analyzes, for example, that individuals use different coping strategies such as connecting and separating work and home (2005: 121). The demands of work and home are not given in advance but depend on how these different coping strategies are deployed by the individual. In other words, the demands of work and home are negotiable and are not given prior to the individual coping strategy of the employee (Brannen, 2005). Demands and the relationship between different kinds of demands are determined by the psychological capacity of the employee.

*Critically*, flexibility is a mode of production that installs a certain form of control in the subject, i.e. the system is flexible and produces flexible human subjects. In this sense self-management not only becomes how the employees relate their personal objectives to the objectives of the company (see e.g. Peter Drucker's concept of 'self-control' (2006)) but moreover how the employees manage their subjectivity, i.e. their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, desires (Whittle, 2005: 1301-1302). The relationship between self-management and subjectivity is well established within critical management studies (Fleming and Spicer, 2004; Knight and Willmott, 1989; Kunda, 1992) and governmentality (Burchell et al., 1991; Rose, 1999; Townley, 1995). Despite the differences between these theories, they share a common inspiration from Michel Foucault's work on self-discipline in their rejection of an essentialist view on human nature (Roberts, 2005: 620). The critical perspective is also critical of the other perspectives on flexibility, arguing that flexibility amounts to 'the corrosion of character' (Sennett, 1999; 2006), changes the role of family (Hochschild, 2000), and creates a new form of entrepreneurial self (Rose, 1999).

In this chapter, I will complement and expand on the critical perspective on subjectivity and self-management by introducing the poststructuralist work of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Contrary to the received version of Foucault that tends to focus on how ‘disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies’ produce subjectivity (Knight and Willmott, 1989: 554), Deleuze forces us to begin with subjectivity. Deleuze argues in his reading of Foucault that subjectivity has an independent status (1999: 100). Thus subjectivity is not simply something that is produced by power; rather, one can only localize or trace the production of power within the production of subjectivity. Deleuze writes that

The relation to oneself that is self-mastery, “is a power that one brought to bear on oneself *in* the power that one exercised over others” (how could one claim to govern others if one could not govern oneself?) to the point where the regulation to oneself becomes “a principle of internal regulation” in relation to the constituent power of politics, the family, eloquence, games and even virtue”. (1999: 100; Deleuze quotes Foucault, 1985: 77)

In other words, power does not simply *produce* and *regulate* subjectivity but power is a *constituent* element in subjectivity. This is an important distinction because it implies that the conditions of power do not exist outside of its constitution of subjectivity. It is therefore different from discourse which has products that can be found reflected between various studies, for example, when a ‘discourse of masculinism’ can be found in various studies (see e.g. Kerfoot and Knight, 1993). The conditions of power are, as it were, expressed in the subjectivity of the employees. Thus this chapter focuses on the question of subjectivity to show how the forms of power are becoming constituent of subjectivity. The analytical movement passes from subjectivity to power, not from power to subjectivity. Put differently, it is always a movement from the conditioned to the condition and not from the condition to the conditioned. This reversal is the most important theoretical difference between the approach taken in this chapter and the established tradition of critical management studies.

The chapter develops a different perspective on flexibility by describing how implementation of a distance working arrangement in a call centre changes the way in which employees constitute themselves as employees, and how it changes their attitudes towards working overtime and working while ill. By interviewing employees before and after the implementation it has been possible to gain insights into how distance work has changed the employees' relationship to the company and the employees' experience of the relationship between home life and work life. It is shown that the behaviour of the employees changes; they change the way they experience themselves; and they change the way they manage and handle different situations.

The first part of the chapter will unpack the notion of flexibility. How this form of flexibility can be studied empirically is discussed in the next section. The chapter then describes the call centre's organization and management and goes on to analyze how call centre employees tend to become more willing to work overtime and work while ill. These results are discussed in relation to other empirical studies of subjectivity and self-management. Finally, the results of the analysis are summarized in the conclusion.

## **Who is Flexible? And in What Sense are They Flexible?**

When interviewed, one of the employees in the call centre explained that before he began to work from home he would never work extra hours, and that it was the management's problem and not his if there was too much work. Three months later, he said that if he could work from home, then it would not be a problem for him to take some extra hours. It was not the company but the employee himself who changed his desire towards working overtime. Put differently, the subjectivity of the employee was constituted differently after beginning to work from home. In this sense, the employee changed his individual working conditions by changing his desire towards overtime. This implies that when the employees become more willing to work extra hours it is not because their working conditions were *directly* changed after the implementation of a distance working arrangement, but rather because these changes in working conditions *indirectly* affected the employees' subjectivity. The subjectivity of the employees is not produced or caused by these changes, or stated otherwise, it is only possible to trace the

working condition within the constitution of subjectivity, e.g. how the employee changed his desire towards working overtime. This implies that the chapter should not try to “understand the impact of organization on individual” as Kahn et al. suggest in *Organizational Stress* (1964: vii) if we want to understand what flexibility is all about. Flexibility cannot be recognized by how the working conditions affect the employees, i.e. the employees’ opportunities, barriers or possibilities from working in an organization.

Thus flexibility is not about integration of the different spheres of life to reduce barriers or to increase the opportunities to balance paid work with other parts of life (see e.g. Gambles et al., 2006). The sense in which flexibility is used here, then, implies no attempt to resolve the “contradiction of determining and being determined by our work and home environments” (Clark, 2000: 748). Hereby, flexibility is not about drawing boundaries between work life and home life; rather, it is about how the employees constitute the relationship between work and life. That is, instead of seeing flexibility from the psychological perspective as an attribute of individuals or as a spatio-temporal principle from the perspective of institution that divides individualized life into the institutions of family and work, the analysis understands flexibility in terms of how individuals constitute the relation between work and life. Flexibility, in this sense, does not posit pre-existing human beings’ attitudes or behaviours but examines how the relationship of work and life is expressed and constituted in the employees’ expressions, argumentations and discussions about work and life. The relationship between work and life is virtually given *before* the actual division into domains of home and work take hold. This division between work and home is so to speak secondary to the division of work and life. When the employees speak about work and life, it is possible to trace flexibility as a constituting principle that invokes a certain way of expressing the relation of work and life.

In that regard, flexibility is rather the very process of individuation, i.e. how the conditions of life are expressed by the employees in the different ways when the employees constitute themselves in relation to home life and work life. In the words of Alberto Toscano, we must approach “the individual through individuation rather than

individuation through the individual” (2006: 136; see also Deleuze, 2004: 86-89; 2005; Hallward, 2000; Toscano, 2001; Fuglsang and Sørensen, 2006). Individuals are individuated through the different ways of managing themselves as humans between work life and home life, and how they constitute synthesis of life and work as distinct parts of one and the same life. There are neither stable ‘working subjects’ nor stable ‘domestic subjects’; rather, there are different types of pre-individual and metastable subjects that are products of the continuous intermingling of work life and life outside of work (Hallward, 2000; see also Deleuze, 2004; Simondon, 1992). In this sense, the chapter reconsiders flexibility by investigating how a distance working arrangement changes the ways in which employees constitute themselves as employees and the ‘rules of conduct’ or constituting principles that can be located in the way they have constituted themselves. It might be similar to when Foucault writes that “he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (1991: 202-3, quoted in Roberts, 2005: 620).

What flexibility is cannot be determined independently of how individuals express the relationship between their different life conditions. Herewith, flexibility not only depends on the employees’ individual conditions (e.g. sex and age), family conditions (e.g. children and partner’s working conditions) or working conditions in the company (e.g. work time, work load and organization of work). Flexibility also depends on the way that these conditions are connected. That is, how are they individuated in the life of the employees? Therefore, we can neither understand flexibility solely from the perspective of the employees (as particular psychological traits) or from how the conditions in the company influence the employees (as particular organizational traits). Flexibility as a principle of individuation concerns how the conditions of life are fundamentally constituted and expressed in the employees’ mode of existing between home life and work life. In that sense, the constitutive ontological difference of flexibility, i.e. work and life, determines the boundaries of *individuation* and not the boundaries of *institutions*. The principle of flexibility is how the conditions of life are constituted or expressed in the life of the employees. Employees constitute a certain modality or type of flexibility. These types are not in themselves principles of flexibility; they have to be traced within these types of flexibility. This is a concrete typology



rather than an abstract logic or categorization of flexibility (Deleuze, 2005: 11, 34; Tomlinson, 2005: x).

Working conditions are not only affected by the employees' life outside of work; it is simply impossible to speak of how the working conditions affect the employees' home life before the employees have constituted a relationship between them. The relationship between work life and home life does not have actual existents outside of the employees' constitution of the relation of work and life. Thus the aim of the chapter is not to understand the principle of this constitution as an abstract transcendent principle, but rather as an immanent principle that can be abstracted from how the employees describe, argue and make sense of the relation between work life and home life. Flexibility is not a general transcendent principle that determines the particular but rather a principle of life that has to be abstracted from how the individual employees constitute the relation between work and life.

The chapter does not directly investigate what it implies for the work life balance of the employees that they have the opportunity to work from home. The concern is not to map the behaviour of the employees (e.g. how the employees cope with distance working arrangements) or the social structure (e.g. how flexibility changes the social structure of the family), but to conceptualize a number of experiences and tendencies that can be recognized in the different ways that the call centre's employees create balance between work life and home life. Therefore it is not interesting *what* the working condition, family conditions and personal conditions are, but *how* the employees organize, manage and hereby express the relationship between these conditions of work and life in their expressions of these. We are not looking for something that exists behind the phenomena ('what is flexibility?'); rather, we must understand how flexibility functions and finds concrete expression in the description of life conditions. 'Who is flexible' we can ask, 'and how are they flexible?' In other words, in what *sense* are the employees flexible?

## Working in the Call Centre

The customer centre of the Danish telecommunications company Blue is full of colourful posters and banner advertising for new products and campaigns. All employees have a workstation with a telephone and a computer, which is connected to the company's intranet site with information on products and services. The customer centre is an internal call centre that receives inbound telephone calls and mail from customers (Møller et al., 2006: 9). The office is open between 0800 and 1800. Outside of these hours, its function is outsourced to an external call centre. The employees support customers with technical counselling, advice and sales of new services and products. Every employee receives between 60-70 calls a day.

The employees are organized in working groups that consist of 15 people. Every group has its own group manager. Part of the group manager's assignment is to create a working environment where each employee can contribute positively to the personal and professional development of the others, and increase productivity by sharing information and knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The management focuses on the development of the employees. New employees begin with an introductory course where they are taught about the job task and receive basic information and knowledge of different forms of sales techniques. After the introductory course, the employees will continuously be coached by the group manager, who listens to the employee's conversation with the customer. Hereafter, they can discuss what was good and bad, and what the employee can do to improve performance. Both personal and professional competencies are necessary to be employed in a call centre, i.e. it is important that the employees are kind and polite and able to understand the situations and problems of the customers<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The focus on the development of competencies is supported organizationally by shared sales and performance targets. The targets are written on whiteboards so employees are constantly reminded of them. The group managers make competitions where employees compete in smaller groups against each other. For example, the goal of the competition can be to improve sales of a certain campaign product.

<sup>3</sup> The call centre has several initiatives that should support the employees in becoming better at selling and providing services to the customers over the phone, i.e. the employees write what they are good at on the whiteboards, along with what they can improve, and what and how they can help their colleagues.

In addition to the focus on the development of the employees, the work in the call centre is characterized by widespread control and monitoring systems that register the performance of the employees according to a number of key figures, i.e. numbers of received calls, length of calls, number of unanswered calls, number of blocked calls and personal sales figures. All the employees have targets for these key figures and are evaluated according to them. The employees do not have the opportunity to plan their own duty roster. The employees have fixed working hours and the work has so far only been carried out from the physical location of the call centre. Jobs in call centres are therefore often characterized as being very inflexible (see e.g. Houlihan, 2000; Møller et al., 2006). Thus, it has been interesting to follow the call centre employees before and after the implementation of distance work to locate how they change their way of constituting themselves as employees.

## **Research Site and Methods**

Blue had established a pilot project on distance working arrangements to create more flexibility in the call centre. The project ran from July to November 2005. Thirteen out of two hundred employees in Blue's customer centre were provided a work station with a computer, telephone and internet connection in their home. The pilot group consists of nine women and four men, between 28 and 52 years of age. All of the female employees had children; none of the men did. Most of the employees worked full-time (37 hours a week), but three of the female workers worked 30 hours a week.

The company did not change the time structure or organization of work. From the perspective of the company, they were hoping that the project could help the employees to achieve a better balance between work life and home life and at the same time lead to more flexible employees who were more effective and had higher productivity. The employees alternate between working from home two or three days a week. The employees in the project were selected by Blue. The criteria for selection was first and foremost an evaluation by the management of whether the employees were able to work independently from home, be happy with distance work and had themselves shown interest in working from home.

The company had decided on the project before I was attached to it. This meant that the pilot project was defined and the participating employees selected before the author of this chapter was attached to the project. Semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2000: 129) with all employees and managers who were participating in the project were conducted. Before the first round of interviews, separate questionnaires for managers and employees were developed. In the second round of interviews with managers and employees, a questionnaire was used and supplied with individual questions based on the first interview. These were intended to provide an occasion to elaborate on specific problems and challenges of the employees. The second interview could follow up on particular challenges that the employee had spoken about in the first interview, for example, or probe areas where the employee had expressed doubts about certain situations. All interviews were transcribed. The data material consists of 140 pages. The name of the company and the names of employees are pseudonyms.

The general result of the study was presented to the company in the form of a 15 page report. The report is written in Danish and is confidential. This led to a general discussion of the analysis with the call centre managers and people from human resource department. On the basis of these discussions it was possible to verify and to further develop the results of the analysis.

## **Analysis of Flexibility Among Call Centre Employees**

I have been told that I have become happier. That I do not fall asleep on the sofa anymore. That, I think, is positive. To be able to feel that I am pretty much like before: cheerful again.

Generally, the employees are more satisfied with their jobs after the beginning of the pilot project on the distance working arrangement. Before the project started most of the employees did not have high expectations of the significance of the project. Many employees did not think that the distance working arrangement would change their lives very much because the working conditions would basically be the same. The only thing that was different was that they were able to work from home. After the implementation

of the project, however, the employees were more satisfied with their work and all the employees would like to be able to continue with the opportunity to work from home after the project period.

The employees have often used their breaks at home in a different way than they would have if they were in call centre. Maria, for example, lives on a small farm. She loves her horses and is very happy with the distance working arrangement because it allows her to take care of the horses during the day. She can now feed her horses during breaks and not just before she goes to work. Her personal interest in horses therefore becomes closely related to the working conditions that her job is offering her. Likewise, Joan's children feel safer when they come home from school, because their mother is at home; and Martin's girlfriend can now take the car to work, because he is not using it. In general, distance work has provided the employees with the opportunity to carry out housework, i.e. dishes, laundry, preparing dinner, tidying up and cleaning. Lisa explains that she has been able to do the laundry in her breaks and that it was nice to have the opportunity to do some homework during work hours. Other employees have balanced the family budget, tidied up the living room, eaten breakfast, or cleaned while they were on the phone talking to customers. In breaks the employees have talked over the phone with the tax office and the local authorities, been to the post office, been visited by relatives or picked up the car from the garage.

The distance working arrangement has changed the way in which the employees combine home life and work life. They try to organize and manage their use of time and resources more effectively to the advantage of both themselves and the company. Several of the employees have changed the way they organize and manage their everyday routines after the implementation of the distance working arrangement. Some of them, for example, report that they do not shower in the morning but wait until later in the day, and that they are able to sleep longer because they do not need the time to commute. On the other hand, they also change their habits to the advantage of the company. For example, they begin to read work related mails outside of working hours. This also happened to Helle who has worked for Blue for 16 years. Helle is married and has a teenaged son. In the interview she admits that she did read work related mail the

day before the interview although she was ill. She explains that she wanted to know what was going on and what was happening in the company. She says that she would not have read emails if she did not have opportunity to do so by having the computer at home. The internet connection makes it possible for the employees to read emails in their spare time or when they were not working because they were ill. Several of the employees were reading emails outside of working hours. Hannah always reads emails on the weekend. If she leaves work early on a Friday she reads emails on Sundays just to see what has happened.

Arlie has done something more radical than reading mails during weekends. She has brought her work into her home by putting Blue campaign material up in her home office and has brought a white board from IKEA on which she writes messages to herself about what she should focus on in the future. In other words, she has changed her home office so it looks like the call centre because, as Arlie explains, she needed the feeling that she was at work. It was not possible for her to work in a room with four bare walls; she needed to be reminded about campaigns to be able to work. Her group manager, Mary, agrees that it is a good idea to put up campaign material in the home office to make one 'feel that you are at work'. It is not Mary who has suggested that Arlie should hang up the material, however; Arlie herself came up with the idea. Mary thinks that all employees should hang up posters and other work materials so the employees create a working environment that can affect them unconsciously so they remember to sell and provide the customers with the required services. For Mary it does not matter if the working environment is at the call centre or in the employees' private home, she thinks that they should create an environment so the employees are as productive as possible. The other employees did not support the idea, mainly because they found that it would invade their privacy if they were to hang up campaign materials in their own home.

In the following section, I will focus on how illness and overtime become questions of self-management for the individual employees after the implementation of the distance working arrangement.

## **Management of Resources While Being Ill**

Self-management is not only about determining the boundaries between work and non-work; it is also about how employees manage and optimize their use of resources. Arlie, for example, has a headache. She cannot simply call her manager this morning and tell him she will be doing so today. She has to decide between going to work with a headache and calling in sick. To avoid this, Arlie would like to manage not only her working hours but also her motivation to work. Here distance work might expand the variety of possible actions for her. After all, it might be harder for her to go to work in the call centre with a headache because of transportation time and the noisier environment in the centre. This implies that she does not have to decide between going to work with a headache and reporting sick. Distance work now makes it possible for her to adjust the place of work to her state of health, and therefore maintain her motivation in order to optimize her productivity. She can adjust the effort to the degree of illness. This was not possible to the same degree before the implementation of distance work.

Illness becomes a part of the employees' self-management. By this means, distance work changes the way that the employees behave, condition themselves and how they relate to their own illness, because their self-management not only involves a decision between 'go to work' or 'not go to work' while they are ill. Illness is not only evaluated by the employees in terms of getting well, but is also related to how much the employees are capable of working when being ill. In other words, it is not only a distinction between either being ill or well, but rather a comparison of one's health. To have a cold does not mean that the employees cannot work; rather it implies that the resources of the employees are reduced and the employees cannot expect to perform to the same degree as when they are feeling well. This is a part of the employees' self-management and is something that the employees have to be able to manage and organize.

The employees will therefore have a higher tendency to work while ill, because not only is illness seen from the perspective of the employees interest in getting well but it is also seen from the company's perspective of having productive employees. It is too simple

to state that the employees have hereby just moved their limit for how ill they have to be before reporting ill. Rather, distance work changes the constitution of the relation between work and life that the employees gave expression to. It is not only that the opposition between work and home becomes more blurred, but furthermore that the employees give new forms of expression to how life and work are related. For example, life as a resource is limited when being ill or affected by the possibility of working from home. Where the relation between work and home is exclusive, the relation between work and life is inclusive. Illness is not only a matter of the employees being at the work place when being ill, but also concerns how the relation between work and life is expressed in the employees' expressions about illness. This involves, for example, the degree of flexibility that is expressed in the employees' expressions when being ill. The question might not only be if you do work with a headache, but furthermore how the headache is related to work. This question is one of productivity.

The employees not only have to consider illness in relation to getting well but also about how much they can produce and what their resources are to do so while they are ill. Every employee makes their own 'productive rules' for how much they can work when they are ill. This implies that the employees have to be able to know themselves and their individual limits for how ill they have to be before not working. Richard talks about a day when he was working from home. He was not feeling well and he became aware that if he had been at work in the call centre he would have had to go home, but because he was working from home he realized that he could work because as he said "if I sat at home I could take it easy and relax, after all". Richard is here making up a rule that he can work from home even if he is not feeling well. Consider Jill, who had decided from the beginning of the project that distance work should not motivate her to start working when she was ill. In other words, she was quite aware that she might change her way of thinking and her 'rules' about working while ill. She soon realized that she had changed anyway. It was easier for her to work from home even though she was not feeling well because the call centre made it easier to stay home. It is of course always the employees that have to decide whether they are too ill to work. The difference is only that the choice is not just between 'going to work' or 'not going to work', but is better understood as a fluid or graduated series of opportunities to work



while ill (and hence still be productive in the eyes of the company). It is never only a question of 'going to work' or 'not going to work'. It becomes a question of self-management of productivity. To be an employee is not only a question of getting well, but also a question of how much the employees are able to produce *while* they are getting well. This implies that the self-managing employees are hereby conducting themselves, and their illness in this particular case, not only from the perspective of their interest in getting well but also from the company's perspective of having productive employees.

The distance working arrangement has an influence on how the employees conduct themselves. In the case of illness, the employees have to decide what their productive resources are, and don't just have to draw a spatial or temporal distinction between work life and home life. In that sense, illness has become a question of self-management and a part of how the employees constitute themselves as human beings.

### **More Willing to Work Overtime**

The previous part of the chapter showed that employees become more open to the idea of working while ill. They also happen to become more open to accepting overtime. Richard was against working overtime before distance work. He found that it was not the employees' problem but a problem of the management if there was a peak load of work and it was not covered by the employees. Hereby, Richard expresses a wage earner's attitude towards overtime, which he changes after beginning to work from home. After the pilot project he reports that it could be nice to work extra hours if it was needed. Where Richard saw himself in opposition to the management and company before he started working from home, he now no longer makes any distinction between his own and the company's interests. By this means, he expresses a desire to take responsibility for the interest of his home life and his work life, whereby he does not try to disclaim responsibility but instead argues that there is a common interest between him and the company. He would like to perform and the company are happy to provide him with the opportunity to do so.

This community of interest between the employees and company should be comprehended in two ways. In the example above, it is in the interest of both employees and company that the employees work from home. It is still possible to distinguish between the interest of the employees and the company, i.e. it is in the interest of the employees to earn more and still have the opportunity to be at home, while it is in the interest of the company that the employees become more open to working overtime. There is another form of community of interest where the employees adopt the company's perspective, as in the case of Tom, who wants to be able to plan which days he is to work from home. "It does not matter which days I work from home as long as I answer the phone," he argues. "You have to be here when the customers need it." He is obviously here arguing for more flexibility from the perspective of the company.

It thus becomes more difficult to separate the different interests of company and employees because they share the same perspective. This implies that the community of interest can only be shared by their common expression, as is the case with Peter, who explains that he cares both for his job and customers, and he cannot distinguish those two things from each other. Peter expresses not only a community of interest with the company; he also shares the company's perspective on customers. The employees do not necessarily share *the interest* of the company; rather, they share *the perspective* of the company. This means, for example, that when the employees might share the company's interest in achieving a certain goal, they can still separate their own interest in achieving this particular goal. On the other hand, it is not possible for the employees to distinguish their own interest from the interest of the company, if they share the same perspective. It becomes impossible for the employees to distinguish between home life and work life. This does not necessarily imply that the employees cannot make a distinction between the interests of family and company, but only that the employees use flexibility in a way that does not distinguish between home life and work life.

### **Flexibility is the Constitution of the Relation of Life and Work**

When employees work from home it increasingly becomes difficult to have a clear distinction between work and non-work. They can neither rely on pre-determine spatial or temporal boundaries, or different forms of working and non-working identity for that

matter. When the division is no longer determined in advance, the employees themselves not only have to constitute this boundary by making rules for when something is work or not, they furthermore have to invent rules in order to manage their productivity. In doing so the constitution of the relation between work and life becomes indiscernible from their constitution of themselves as individual human beings: When to work when being ill? Should I work overtime?

Maria draws a clear line between her work and her home life. She does not want to read emails during her weekend because she is off on the weekend. Hereby, Maria expresses a more traditional wage earner perspective towards her work life and distinguishes sharply between work and non-work activities. She would not accept that she should be responsible for reading emails in her spare time because this is her time off. However, it is interesting that she, like many other employees today, has to defend her decision to not read work mails in her spare time. Roughly speaking, one could say that by expressing this opinion she is not necessarily *being* a wage earner but, rather, *taking on* a wage earner perspective and arguing from this perspective that the weekend is not work time, which means that it is spare time. There is not necessarily a given boundary between work and family for Maria, but it is a boundary that she needs to argue for. In other situations she might not argue from this perspective, but decide to argue from a different perspective, which would be the expression of another type of flexibility.

Another example of this is Tom. He is very interested in bicycle racing. One hot summer day, he follows the Tour de France on a live update on the computer, but he says that he was very tempted to go and get the television in the next room to watch the final climb of the mountain stage. He finally decided not to watch the race on his television, but he found it difficult to be so disciplined when the television was just in the next room and nobody would have noticed. Tom decided to maintain the boundary between his personal interest in cycling and his job. Should he instead have taken the opportunity to drag the television into the office and watch the final part of the stage? In this sense the employees continuously have to decide and define what belongs to their work life and home life. But there is more to this. He is still watching the final climb on the live update on the computer. He simply decides that it would affect his productivity

too much if he watches it on the television, because he then would not be able to focus enough on the customers calling in. In this sense it is not a matter of separating between work and leisure activities since these are already intermingled. It is rather a question of how Tom is managing to relate these to each other.

## **Discussion**

The employees have experience that it becomes difficult to define or determine the boundary between home life and work life by the institutional, spatial or temporal division of home and work after the implementation of the distance working arrangement. This has often been conceptualized as ‘blurring of boundaries’ (see e.g. Brannen, 2005; Desrochers and Sergeant, 2004; Felstead et al., 2003; Nolan and Wood, 2003). I agree that in the categories of space, time and identity the boundary between work and life has become blurred in modern work life. But I would also like to stress that if we continue to do research on flexibility and work-life balance in these categories we will miss some important aspects in modern work life. Boundary management is of course a question of the individual employees’ self-management because it is the employees themselves who have to define the boundary between work and home.

However, I will argue that it also becomes a different kind of self-management, which is concerned with how the employees define what work is. What is important to understand is that they not only constitute an external relationship (boundary) between the institutions of work and home in their management of themselves, they furthermore constitute an internal relationship (condition) between work and life when defining what work is. This internal relationship between work and life can be found when they talk about working while being ill and working overtime as a matter of productivity.

The limiting of the expansion of work is therefore not only a matter of the boundary between work and home. It is moreover a matter of the condition of work and life. The discussion of the blurring of boundaries of work and home has argued that work as a site of production is not restricted by the given workplace or working hours and as a consequence this boundary has to be defined by the individual employees. Instead, I will say what is important is that there is not a set limit to productivity, because what

work is cannot only be defined by referring to given conditions like working hours and place. From this change of focus follows that the site of production is no longer the work place but the individual human subject. Consequently, we must say if there is anything to the idea of 'boundaryless work'<sup>4</sup>, is it not that the employees themselves have become limitless and themselves have to set the limit for their productivity? In this sense, employees are not just resources; they are resources that should prevent themselves from being exhausted, i.e. from burning out, becoming stressed or being thrown out of balance. Hereby, the employees are at the same time an expression of the limitlessness of productivity and an expression of the limits of productivity. This double form of productivity is exactly what flexibility is all about and what the employees have to manage as self-managing employees.

Flexibility constitutes the conditions where the self-managing employees can manage and regulate this double form of productivity. For example, when the employees leave work early to pick up children from kindergarten and work from home later in the evening, they are not only organizing their working lives but managing their lives in general. In this sense, the outcome is by no means restricted to the working lives of the employees but also pertains to their home life. Hereby, control of labour becomes a question of self-control or self-discipline. For example, when Tom draws a distinction between work life and home life, he is not just drawing a line in the sand between the institutions of home and work, but also setting a limit to his own productivity by defining the boundary between his private interest in cycling and interest in being a productive employee and how much of himself he would put into work.

However, it is not enough to say that the company herewith expands their control of labour from only focusing on the inside of the organization, it also takes the outside of the organization into consideration. Moreover, the whole concept of control becomes something different. Control of labour no longer only involves techniques of spatial and temporal confinement. It also involves managerial techniques that can control human subjectivity, which means that the boundary between work life and home life becomes

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<sup>4</sup> The discussion about 'boundaryless work' ('gräslöst arbete' in Swedish and 'grænseløst arbejdsliv' in Danish) mostly takes place in the Scandinavian countries (see e.g. Allvin et al., 2006; Csonka, 2000; Kring, 2005; Kristensen, 2003).

an issue of the employees' self-management. Hereby, the boundary should neither be regarded in a physical sense nor in a mental sense (Fleming and Spicer, 2004: 77; see also Casey, 1995), but rather in a pre-individual sense. Subjectivity should therefore not be interpreted as formed by or belonging to a self-identical subject (see e.g. Whittle, 2005: 1301-1302). The desires, thoughts, beliefs and feelings that form the subject, we might say, are yet to come.

## **Conclusion**

The employees in the call centre say that their work has become limitless. But work has not only become limitless because the employees can work from home. That is, their home has been invaded by the activity of work and home no longer provides a respite from work. The project has changed the way employees experience themselves as human beings and how they constitute themselves between work life and home life. Specifically, they have become open to working overtime and working while being ill.

Distance work has changed the conditions of life that both allow employees to manage and regulate the limitless work life and demand that they see themselves as limitless resources. The employees should not only optimize the use of resources, but also have to be able to evaluate and manage their work-life balance.

It is interesting that the employees in the call centre are to a large extent experiencing the same types of problems as knowledge workers, though perhaps not to the same degree as them. The limitless work life has become a part of the call centre employees' daily routine. Distance working has implied that the employees have difficulties in separating their home life and work life. The different parts of the employees' life have become subject to their self-management, which necessarily was not the case before they began the distance working arrangement. Flexibility is not limited to particular branches and forms of work but is a common problem that all employees experience.

It is therefore necessary to develop a new concept of flexibility that is not to be based on opposition and conflict between work life and home life but on how employees manage themselves. Flexibility is not about integration of the different spheres of life to reduce

conflict or to harmonize paid work with other parts of life; rather, flexibility is about how self-managing employees constitute synthesis of work life and family life as distinct parts of one and the same life. We should therefore not try to separate different spheres of work and life; instead, we should make distinctions between different types of individualistic modes of production or types of flexibility that the employees invoke in their self-management. When life is not in opposition to work, flexibility becomes a question of how life comes into existence in relation to work. This is the question of flexibility.

## Chapter VI: Performance. Measures of Life

### Introduction

Fig. 2: *The question on the wall.*



The question ‘what is work?’ is written on the wall. “When I’m off /I think about my work/ When I work / I think about when I’m off / I wish I could work /in my spare time.” This issue has been raised within the literature on work-life balance as the blurring of the boundaries between work and non-work (e.g. Kanter, 1977; Lewis, 2003a; 2003b; Lopata and Norr, 1980). The blurring of boundaries has been discussed in different ways. The *structural form* argues that work is not determined by a specific place and time because the employees can work from home and work outside office hours (Hill et al., 2003). This form is closely related to the *technological form* of blurred boundaries that says that technological development such as PDAs, cell phones and the internet enables the employees to work everywhere and anytime (Golden and Geisler, 2007; Hill et al., 1998). In the *psychological form* of blurred boundaries the employees



have to separate personal matters and emotions from the management of work. Work demands that the employees are emotionally involved which, on the one hand, means that distinguishing between being a private person and an employee, and on the other that the employees having to be aware of and make a distinction between their private and professional emotions (Herlihy, 2000; Hochschild, 2003). Finally, there is the *productivity form* of blurred boundaries. In this form the boundaries between production and social reproduction are what become blurred. Hochschild (2000) has famously argued that there is a reversal of the spheres of production and reproduction, so entertainment, leisure and education have become a part of work while “home has become the place where people carry out necessary tasks efficiently in the limited amount of time allotted” (49). The distinction between productive and reproductive is thought of as the institutional difference between work and family (e.g. McDowell, 2004). Hence it has been dealt with in terms of conflicting identity (parent vs. career), time (work time vs. family time), and place (work vs. home). As the division between work and non-work is no longer determined by a given place and time it has to be constituted by the individual employees themselves. This is also known as boundary management that emphasizes that the employees draw the boundary between work and non-work by deciding upon where and when to work (Clark, 2000; Kossek et al., 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Perlow, 1998).

The chapter expands on the theoretical developments of boundary management and the productive form of blurred boundaries by suggesting that the employees not only have to draw the spatial and temporal line between work and non-work, they also have to determine reproduction as what makes them able to be productive. Managing the boundary between work and non-work becomes a part of self-management in the sense that the employees themselves have to determine whether something is work or not work. Furthermore, it becomes a part of the employees’ self-management to manage the relationship between their production and reproduction, e.g. the employees have to manage their contemporary level of production in relation to how it affects their general wellbeing and future ability to be productive.

Hence, the chapter develops a new perspective on the management of work-life balance by examining how conditions for balance between work and domestic life are affected by changes in the measurement of employee productivity. It is argued that performance as a measure of individual productivity makes the conditions of employment negotiable; they change and cannot be determined independently of the self-management of the employee. This is because measures of work in performance management are dependent on how the individual employees manage the relationship between productivity and well-being.

The chapter is based on an empirical study of the multinational company Red that employees 2000 people in Denmark. Seven focus group interviews involving twenty-five employees and ten managers from the finance and R&D departments were conducted over a period of two months. Red is one of the frontrunners in Denmark within the area of implementing new forms of work-life benefits for employees. In fact they recently won a national work-life balance prize. Red has put a lot of organizational resources in the development of a variety of work-life initiatives to support the work-life balance of its employees. These initiatives include among others flexible working schedules, part-time work, teleworking, up to twelve months paid maternity leave and six months paid paternity leave, and the development of a company health care centre. On a strategic level, Red has developed a strategic life-cycle approach to work-life balance, which had to be practically implemented as an intranet-based online 'tool box'. Here managers and employees can find useful information regarding work-life balance issues and company policies in different stages of life. Furthermore, work-life balance is also on the agenda in the appraisal interviews that managers and employees have every six months. In the interview, general problems and issues relating to work-family conflict can be discussed.

In the first section of the chapter it is argued that performance management on a general analytical level changes the measurement of employee productivity, which implies that the employees have to be able to manage between being productive and being socially reproductive. Moreover, it is discussed how performance management works by controlling and creating the subjective processes of the employees and why appraisal

interviews provide the organizational setting for discussion of work-life balance between manager and employee. The following section describes the research site and research methods. Then the chapter analyses empirically how the employees in Red find it difficult to define what work is in terms of working time and working place and instead invoke a variety of individual rules to determine whether something should be regarded as work or not work. They can no longer define or measure work in terms of pre-established working hours and working place. Instead, they themselves have to decide and define what work is. In the following section, these results are discussed in relation to how they can be dealt with in the performance appraisal interview. The chapter returns to the idea that life is the measure of work in the conclusion. Work-life balance is about how life becomes productive in work and this is the question that employees and managers should address in the performance appraisal interview.

## **Measurement of Work**

The introduction of new ways of measuring work, like management by objectives (Drucker, 2006) and later performance management (e.g. Armstrong, 2000; Armstrong and Baron, 1998) has not only changed the nature of work, it has also affected the control and management of human subjectivity which, as a productive asset, is no longer measured in terms of input (time and energy) but rather in terms of output (performance).

This change in the measurement work affects the measure from given categories of time and energy put into work towards variable or open categories of performance that can be discussed. It is not only the employees input in work that can be negotiated in performance management, but also the objectives that the employees should obtain. How something is determined as work changes radically because performance management is a different technique for measuring work and forms another way of knowing and seeing productivity than, say, scientific management.

This change in the nature of work affects work-life balance because there is no longer a clear cut distinction between the production of work and, for example, in the family reproduction working time and working place. The employees' work-life balance

depends not only on their ability to do boundary management but also on the ability to manage and balance the relationship between production and reproduction, e.g. the employees have to manage the relationship between the production and reproduction of their subjectivity in relation to how it affects their general wellbeing and future ability to be productive. Performance management is a technology to measure the performance of employees; however, it can also be described more generally as a paradigm of measuring work (see also McKenzie, 2001). It is the latter case that is of interest here. Performance management is a different paradigm of measuring work than scientific management.

Work is valorised in a different way as performance management replaces the time clocks of scientific management. Time and energy have been the traditional measures of work. For example, in scientific management work is measured in terms of how much energy the employees put into work, e.g. how much energy the employees put into shovelling, and by measuring the time they spend on a certain work task (Taylor, 1967: 55). Time is the source of wealth, which leads to a division of time into company time and private time (Clegg and Dunkerly, 1980; see also Fleming and Spicer, 2004: 78). In performance management time is not a measure of work. Michael Armstrong defines performance appraisal as “a process of systematically evaluating performance and providing feedback on which performance adjustments can be made” (2000: 71). Thus it is necessary that the employees participate in the evaluation process by negotiating and setting objectives as the standard of measures for performance in collaboration with the management (e.g. Baiman and Evans, 1983: 371). It is a two-way process. The employees take part in settling the measures for their own performance and this in turn implies that the setting of standards of measures is not external to the employees. The employees are involved in defining their own job criteria. By this means, job criteria are individualized and can be negotiated and adjusted according to how hard or easy it is for the employees to obtain the objectives.

In this sense, performance management works by controlling and creating the subjective processes of the employees

As it is no longer possible to confine subjectivity merely to tasks of execution, it becomes necessary for the subject's competence in the areas of management, communication and creativity to be made compatible with the conditions of 'production for production's sake'. (Lazzarato, 1996: 135)

In performance management the measure can only be determined in relation to the subjectivity of the employees. Improvement of productivity does not relate to the employees in the workplace but relates directly to the employees themselves (Harney, 2005: 585). They have to take part in settling the objectives that their performance is measured against. Performance management addresses the employees' conditions of employment in an ongoing negotiation of standards of measures. Hereby, the performance appraisal interview can be said to focus on the employees' subjectivity and relation to themselves in the way in which it evaluates and manages work.

The evaluation in the appraisal interview is always a self-evaluation. Barbara Townley's analysis of the performance appraisal interview as examination and confession techniques can be read alongside this argument (1993: 206; see also Andersen, 2007: 333) following Michel Foucault's analysis of technologies of the self (e.g. 1988). This feature of performance appraisal interviews will not be emphasized here, however; the focus will not only be on how performance management works by controlling the subjective processes of the employees, but also how these processes affect the relation of work and life. For example, it is employee subjectivity that is controlled when the appraisal interviews address the kind of objectives the employees might commit themselves to in the future, when the employees talk about their competencies gap, when they speak about their personal dreams, aspirations and thoughts, and not least when they talk about their personal life in forms of stress, work/family conflict and work-life balance.

How do the changes of performance management affect the employees' conditions to achieve work-life balance? When measures such as time and energy are replaced by performance there is no longer a given or institutional division between the spheres of

work and family. From this perspective it is not possible for the employee to leave work at the office because the employees' creation of value depends more on how the employees live and who they are than the specific place and time of work. In other words, it becomes difficult for the employees to distinguish work and family in terms of different identities, times and places. This implies that the form of measurement in performance management imposes a certain form of self-management on the employees, because they have to be able to oscillate between work and non-work, i.e. achieve work-life balance. Traditionally, this has been interpreted as boundary management (e.g. "work is something between 9 and 5", "work is something I do at the office", "I'm aware of being a father when I'm together with my children"), but I will argue that boundary management is based on the individual rules for productivity that are settled by the individual employees (e.g. "should I consider this activity work?", "does this activity contribute to my performance?"). Hence we have to understand boundary management from the perspective of individual rules for productivity. This latter perspective demands that the employees have to be critical of their own performance. The critical aspect is twofold; first, they have to express what is good and bad in their performance and second, they have to express the productivity condition on which they constitute and regulate themselves. That is, what are their individual criteria for productivity ("what makes me productive?")? Hence, this implies that these kinds of rules of productivity are not only self-judgemental but furthermore reflective judgement, because they are without a pre-given rule (Smith, 2003a). The employees have to establish their own rules of productivity, which is the sense in which employees can be said to be autonomous today. In this sense, judgements have to be created in the absence of rules (Smith, 2003a: 316; Deleuze, 2005: 1). Put differently, it is not possible to define whether employees have done a great job in the performance management system by referring to already established rules of judgement, which can valorise the performance of the employees in advance of the employees' action or by referring to the energy and time that they have put into work.

This is the sense in which performance management controls subjectivity; it demands that the employees develop principles (e.g. individual job criteria) on which the evaluation of their individual performance can be evaluated. This means that we cannot

understand these rules as abstract or outside of the way in which the employees regulate themselves as self-managing. In this sense, we should rather speak of evaluations that “are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge” (Deleuze, 2005: 1). Evaluation, that is, is not based on pre-established values; rather, these values are established in the evaluation. For example, the objectives can be continuously adjusted according to how hard or easy they are to achieve for the employees, and adjusted to general changes in the job situation (e.g. organizational changes, project members or managers leave the company, changes in market).

The evaluation is first and foremost a self-evaluation of the employees (e.g. Armstrong, 2000: 73-4). They have to create these principles on which they can relate to themselves as individuals with certain values that can govern and regulate their actions and subjectivity. The employees create a form of *entrepreneurial self* because they have to create their own principles on which their performances as human subjects are judged (see also du Gay, 2000; Jones and Spicer, 2005; Rose, 1999). These principles as individual rules of productivity function beside and to some extent replace the general working conditions or conditions of employment. To provide an example, several of the employees said that they worked overtime or extra hours, but they were not told by any managers or colleagues to do so. It was not a rule established by the management which they found they should oblige; rather, they established these different rules to express their individual way of being productive. In relation to work-life balance this is exactly crucial because it implies that the rules of production and work cannot be separated from the constitution of their subjectivity. In other words, the measurement of work is exactly a performative judgement because it is not possible to separate the action of constitution of a certain subjectivity from the enunciation of it (Deleuze and Guattari, 1999: 77). For example, the pronouncement of the words ‘I do’ at a wedding change the whole subjectivity of a person from being a bachelor to being married.

Hereby, it is not possible to describe the individual rules of productivity in general and collective terms as it is possible with the employees’ conditions of employment. The reason for this is that it is the employees themselves that invent these rules. They are

therefore highly individual and not collective, for example, the differences between how employees felt about emailing in the evening. Hereby it also becomes clear that these rules of productivity are not restricted to the place or the time of the company, but spread into other parts of the employees' lives. These rules constitute the productivity of the human subject and not various roles that can be distinct from each other as, for example, the roles of being a family man and an organizational man. In this sense the rules constitute rather a way of life. Deleuze makes a distinction in the short article 'Postscripts on Control Society' between mold and modulation (1995b: 177-182). We could explain the rules of productivity by saying that they constitute a modulation of the employees, where mold rather constitutes roles. As a consequence of this will even questions of family life and personal life become a question of productivity, for example, when individual flexibility is suggested by the company in order for the employees to be most productive and take care of family responsibilities. The important question in relation to work-life balance issues is still 'know yourself' but this does not mean that the employees should be aware of their individuality; rather, they should be aware of their individuation. What makes them individuals? What are the constitutive principles for this employee?

In the empirical analysis of how performance management affects the work-life balance of the employees in Red, I will focus on three important changes in the management of human subjectivity. First, the employees have to manage themselves. There is not always a manager who tells them what to do. The way they become managerial subjects is by setting objectives, so they regulate and manage themselves according to the set objectives of performance. For example, the appraisal interview would not make any sense if the employees were not willing to change or develop their competencies. The employees have to accept that they are always subject to change and these changes should be made compatible with the conditions of performance.

In the empirical analysis I will study how the employees have to constitute themselves as managerial subjects and hereby constitute themselves as managerial subjects. This is, for example, how the employees in Red manage working while being ill. Second, the conditions of performance cannot be laid down in general terms of job responsibilities;



on the contrary these conditions are individual because they have to include the social context of the individual employees. I will in the empirical analysis show how the employees set their own rules of performance and hereby constitute themselves as performing subjects. This is, for example, how the employees address time and space as conditions of performance. Some of the employees say that they perform better when working from home, while other employees think the opposite. Third, the conditions of performance are socially conditioned, because the individual ability of the employees to perform depends on the social context and relations in which they take part. Performance management changes the social context of work because work is not distributed and divided by managers outside of the social context, as was the case in scientific management. This can be seen, for example, when the employees begin to expect that their co-workers are as committed in work and non-work as they are. In the empirical analysis, I will show how commitment is a principle of division and distribution of work that hereby constitutes the subjects as social subjects. Commitment is then a social regulation of work, which means that the management of performance besides the self-management of the employees and the management of managers also includes the management and control of co-workers. However, I will only discuss this third subjective process briefly in this chapter, as it is main theme of the next chapter.

## **Research Site and Methods**

The empirical study ran from February to May 2006. Seven focus group interviews involving twenty-five employees and ten managers from the finance and R&D departments were conducted over a period of two months. The two departments were selected to focus on knowledge workers but also to widen the study to more than one type of academic background. The researchers in R&D typically have five years of academic education and several of them hold a PhD. In the finance department the employees typically have an academic degree from business school.

Focus group research was used to examine, on the one hand, how the employees experience work-life conflict and how they thought this conflict was dealt with in the performance appraisal interview. On the other hand, focus group interviews with managers were conducted to study how they dealt with these issues in the appraisal

interview. Two focus group interviews were conducted in R&D with employees and one with the management group. In the finance department two focus group interviews were conducted with employees and one interview was conducted with managers. Besides these interviews, one focus group interview was carried out with a group of office assistants. This was done at the request of the human resource management department.

The reason for conducting individual interviews for managers and employees was to discuss how the employees experienced their work-life balance and how this area was dealt with in the appraisal interview. The focus group interviews with managers were to cover how the managers experienced the interviews. Before the interviews, individual forms of questionnaire were developed for each group of management and employees. The research question was developed through literature review on the subject and discussions with the human resource managers.

The participating departments were selected by the company after consulting the researcher. The participants in the focus groups were volunteers, who replied to an invitation mail from the management of each department. Most of the employees worked full time, which is formally defined as 37 hours a week. Many of the employees said that around 45 hours a week was a more realistic estimate. One group was different from the others. This was the group of office assistants. Here three out of eight groups worked 30 hours a week. This group consisted of eight women aged between 21 and 58. The participants in the focus groups with academic staff were six men and seven women aged between 28 and 64, and the group of managers consisted of four women and six men aged 32 to 56. The name of the company and the names of the employees are pseudonyms.

Each focus group interview lasted for approximately two hours. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The data material consists of around 200 pages. The focus group interviews began with a short introduction to the research project's objectives, anonymization of participants, research design and when and how I would report the results of the research. After this the participants were asked to present

themselves (e.g. name, age, position, family status, children and seniority). In the focus group interviews pictures were shown on a projector to make the interviewee reflect on certain issues e.g. the picture on page [insert page number] was used to make the interviewees reflect on the blurred boundaries of work. The focus group interviews were divided into two sections. The first part of the interview was a broad discussion on their experience of work-life balance. In the second part of the interview the focus was more explicitly on performance management and how the measurements in terms of performance affected their balance between work life and home life.

The general results of the study were presented to the company in the form of a 28-page report that described the primary findings of the research and made some suggestions about how discussions about work-life balance could be dealt with more directly in appraisal interviews. This report is written in Danish and is confidential. Furthermore these results were presented for the employees and managers in the two departments, for the human resource management department and finally all employees in the company were invited to a presentation and discussion of work-life balance. On the basis of these discussions it was possible to verify and to further develop the results of the analysis.

Performance management in Red measures the productivity of the employees in terms of the employees' obtainment of predefined performance targets or objectives. These objectives are individual measures of the employee. In Red employees have three types of targets: business targets, competency targets and individual development plans. Each of these targets is evaluated in the performance appraisal interview. The evaluation process in Red for each area is divided into three parts. The first part of the interview addresses which challenges the employees will face in current and future jobs. In the second part, the employees' strengths and development areas are discussed and in the third part the employees' development strategies and action plans are determined (see also Costea et al., 2007: 6-7).

## Analysis of Work-Life Balance in Red

Henry Ford (2005: unpag.) describes the philosophy of work in the Ford factories in this way:

When we are at work, we ought to be at work. When we are at play, we ought to be at play. There is no use of trying to mix the two. When the work is done, then the play can come, but not before. (see also Beynon, 1984: 40; Collinson, 2002: 276; Fleming and Spicer 2004: 78)

The productivity of the factory depended upon the distinction between work and play. All non-productive gestures such as smiling, laughing, talking with colleagues should be excluded from work (Collinson, 2002: 276) as is famously shown in Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

However, the division between work and non-work is no longer clear cut in contemporary companies. "When I'm off / I think about my work / When I work / I think about when I'm off / I wish I could work /in my spare time." These words can be read on a wall at Red. Work has become boundaryless. When the employees and managers were asked to reflect on this image in the focus group interviews, all of them recognized the boundaryless work. Joan interprets it to say that it is necessary to be aware of work-life balance and that the head of the company is concerned about this issue, not only for the sake of the employees' health but also to keep them as a productive resource in the future. Jeff says he often gets a good idea for a project when he mows the lawn or in his dreams, to which a colleague replies that it is important in such cases to write it down because otherwise you will not remember it. Samuel explains that he is very conscious about boundaryless work and that he can control it by, for example, deciding not to take the laptop home with him.

These are examples of boundary management but they are also a way in which employees manage their own productivity. They can decide when and where they want to be productive. But is this possible with regard to how their performance is measured? First of all, it is difficult to be conscious about when and where to be productive.

Furthermore, boundary management is in itself a way of managing productivity and controlling labour (Fleming and Spicer, 2004). In this sense Samuel becomes a better performer because he is aware of the potential danger of boundaryless work, which he deals with by establishing rules that create a boundary between home and work e.g. not taking the laptop to the home. His performance depends on his ability to manage his own productivity, which is his ability to manage the boundary between being productive and being reproductive. This is a form of self-management. Hence we should not understand the distinction between being productive and reproductive in already given spatial, temporal or identity terms but rather as a process of subjectivity. Work and home is then not two separated spheres of life, but a relation that is constituted by the human subject when they manage themselves. For example, how do they relate to work and life when they are ill? Later, it is shown how they turn their office into a bed by working with closed doors when they have a cold, and how they turn their bed into an office when they are ill with the flu by working from home. Performance and non-performance is hereby not divided by the boundaries of the work place but by the subjective processes of the employees. Time and space then emerge as conditions of performance, but in a completely different manner than what was the case in companies organized by the principle of scientific management. The distinction between performance and non-performance has therefore to be found on the level of subjective processes and not as distinctions in time and space.

In general the employees find it difficult to define what work is in terms of working time and working place and instead invoke a variety of individual rules to determine whether something should be regarded as work or not work. They can no longer define or measure work in terms of pre-established working hours and places. They themselves have to decide and define what work is, which is not to say that they do not talk about time and space, but that they do so on a level of conditions for their own ability to perform. This means that time is not only a form in which they experience the problem of work and life but also more profoundly a problematic condition in their way of managing the relation of work and life. Time and space are therefore given in terms of the problem of performance. Where and when do the employees think they are most productive? How many hours do the employees think they have to work to have

performed enough? Where do the employees feel most creative? In the previous chapter on flexibility, Arlie's arranging of her office to resemble the call centre, so she felt she could focus on working, is an example of space becoming a condition of productivity. She needed to turn her private room into a work place to become productive in the way that she felt was needed.

This might also be the reason why most of the employees in Red complained that time registration was pure surveillance and that it implied that they were unable to manage their own affairs. This suggests that they wanted to establish their own rules of productivity. In a different way, this was also the general image that the managers gave in the focus group interviews. In general, they said that they did not care how many hours the employees worked as long as they performed.

In the following section it will be shown how this form of self-management of production and reproduction can be analyzed in relation to the employees' illness. They tend not only to think of illness in terms of getting well but also see their illness as a lowering of their productive resources. This means that they change the way in which they plan and carry out work when they are ill, for example by working from home while they are ill or by changing plans for in order to execute projects which involve other people. In this sense they invoke different rules about working while ill.

### **'We Go to Work When We are Ill'**

The rate of absenteeism due to illness in Red is low, which could be explained by the fact that it does not make a lot of sense to call in sick if there are not other employees who will carry out your work tasks when you are ill. As Jennifer explains "If you do not feel well then you think 'I cannot work today, but if I do not do it, then I have to work until eight on Wednesday when I am back at work'". This suggests that it has become difficult for employees to make a clear cut determination between being ill and not going to work.

When the employees start to think of their illness in relation to the work and organizational performance it becomes difficult to decide between *either* going to work

or staying at home. Rather, this distinction has become graduated, blurred and individualized. It is the employees themselves that have to decide whether they are *too* ill to work. This decision depends not only on the individual employee but also on the general situation at work. Is there a lot of work to do? Is it close to an important deadline? And, most importantly, do the employees feel that they will let their colleagues down by calling in sick? Betty explains that there are times when you simply *cannot* be ill. In this way work becomes a part of how the employees see and think of themselves.

In general, the employees experience difficulty in saying no to work when they are ill, not because the management demands it but because of the employees themselves. As Marilyn explains, “Well, I am not so ill that I can’t answer this mail on the computer. And if you begin thinking like this then you start to accept that there is no such thing as illness”. Work is not absent even if the employees are ill, it is ever present. Illness no longer involves a clear-cut distinction like “I am ill, so I do not go to work”; it is rather a question of “how much can I work while being ill?” Thus illness is not evaluated by the employees in terms of getting well, but is also related to how much the employees are capable of working when being ill. To have a cold does not mean that the employees cannot work; rather it implies that the resources of the employees are reduced and the employees cannot expect to perform to the same degree as when they are feeling well.

The employees not only thought of illness in terms of getting well, they also took into consideration how much they could work and if they should do that from home instead of going to the office. In that sense, they planned and managed their work in relation to their resources. If they were ill they might decide to stay home and work instead. In fact they optimized their way of working to be most productive. Andrew explained that if he had a cold, he might go to the office and work behind a closed door and do some of the easier work tasks, while he might stay at home if he got the flu and had a fever. Then he would call his manager and say that he was ill and that he would try to work from home, but that he did not know how much he could accomplish. Some employees literally worked on their laptop in bed and then dozed off, woke up and got back to work. Gerry said that

At 12 o'clock I could not do anymore work but I had to get up and look at my mail because I think it is terrible when you start the working day by answering 50 mails before getting to work.

This is not just to say that the employees in Red are hardworking and very committed to their work and colleagues, but also to point out that they optimize their productivity in relation to their available resources.

### **What is 'Work'?**

It can be difficult for the employees to establish general rules or criteria that can define their level of productivity. This leads it be a question of the employees' own judgement and determination. The employees develop individual rules for when to interpret something as work. Thus the employees often carry out activities that the management and company regard as work activities but which the employees themselves do not count as work. To provide an example, Halle explained that she never sees mail-correspondences after normal working hours as work. One of her colleagues, Samuel, by contrast regards the same task (in the evenings) as work only if it is something he has agreed upon with his manager, while Betty did not want to work from home so she never took the computer home, Jeff could not wait to read and answer the mail until the next day. In other words, the employees in Red determine to a great extent their own working conditions, which makes it difficult to point to external factors that can cause imbalance. This form of self-management plays an important role in their work-life balance, because it is here that they decide whether something should be regarded as work or not work, or better to what degree something should be regarded as work. Another example is Marian in R&D. She reads scientific journals in the evening. Is this activity work or not work? Is this activity in the employee's own personal interest or the interest of company? Or both? It is an important aspect of self-management for work-life balance to decide on these issues.

The employees establish certain individual rules or criteria when they decide whether something is work. For example, Marian would say that she thinks it is work if her



manager gave her the article to read but not if she found the article by herself. This could to some extent resemble what is discussed within the literature on work-life balance as border control and boundary management (Clark, 2000; Kossek et al., 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Perlow, 1998). The difference between border control and what is suggested here is that within the theoretical perspective of border control work and not work is not distinguished in terms of time, space and identity. Furthermore within this tradition it seems like work is given and that employees know and are conscious about what work is.

It is not only interesting how the employees define something as work. It is also interesting what the employees regard as work, e.g. whether they find that competence development is work. Or to what extent this activity should be regarded as work. In this perspective, work-life balance not only depends on how much time the employees spend on work or where they work, but also about how they work and how they deal with a working life where there seems to be no pre-given border between work and home. Put differently, how do the employees manage and establish the conditions they have to live and work under? Here performance management and appraisal interviews play an important role for both the employees and managers, because it is here that the psychological contract between them is established. A great deal of this contract is about the criteria for the collaboration and relationship between employees and company (managers). On one side it involves questions of salary, career and personal development, while on the other side it also involves how these areas relate to the life outside of work that the employees want to live.

It is often the case that the employees have chosen some work tasks themselves. The employees might have chosen to participate in some interesting projects that they thought could benefit their career. In the focus group interviews the employees often expressed that what causes non-balance are some working conditions that they have chosen themselves because they themselves have decided these working conditions. It is not some working conditions that the management or company have decided. Thus the workload is not something that is put on the employees; rather it is something the employees have put on themselves. When the employees have taken it on themselves,

they find it more difficult to give it away again. There is really no one besides themselves that they can give the job to. Put differently, there is no external cause that they can blame.

It follows from this that the employees often find it difficult to put problems aside because they themselves have chosen the situation and working conditions. Therefore they often say that they have put themselves in this situation and it is their own fault and not the fault of the manager, colleagues or family. They only seem to blame themselves. When the employees only tend to blame themselves it also becomes more difficult for them to give away work tasks. Hannah, who is a manager, says that “no one had told me to work until two at night. It is something that I have chosen myself – and then it is also my problem”. The employees,’ and for that matter the managers’, solution is to make it a question of having a strong will. They argue that they have chosen it and they have to face the consequences. In a similar vein the employees say that when they have chosen to have both a family and a career they sometimes have to accept a stressful life. It might be bad solution to deal with the problems in this manner because the employees tend not to involve other people in their difficulties.

It is not only the personal ambitions of the employees that might result in these kinds of problems; the culture in the company also plays an important role. Jack, a manager, explains that

We are a culture of highly skilled people. That means that to be a part of the interesting forums and get exiting tasks you have to answer correctly. That means that there are things you have to read and to understand and to focus on to be a relevant player in different relations. This leads to enormous work tasks that you might not be able to survey in the moment you say: I would like to be responsible for this project.

Work-life balance is not a question of defining limits of work in terms of place and time, rather it is about how the employees' manage their own productivity (e.g. What improves my productivity: working from home or working at the office?)

## **Concluding Remarks: Life is the Measure of Work**

The conditions for balancing between work and domestic life are affected by changes in the measurement of employee productivity. When *external* measures such as working time and working place are replaced by measurement of the employees' organizational performance, the measures become *internal* to the employees' constitution of themselves as employees. In this sense establishment of measures or criteria for performance becomes an important aspect of how the employees regulate their own self-management. These measures are individual in the sense that they cannot be located outside of the employees' constitution and regulation of themselves. Hereby, it can be recognized that the changes in measurement of value have lead to a blurring of the boundaries between the employees' production and reproduction, e.g. when the employees work when being ill. In this sense, the self-management of the employees is not a question of constituting and regulating rules for boundary control (i.e. Where should I draw the line between work and home?) but rather rules for the productivity of the individual employees (i.e. Should I consider this activity work? How much can I work when ill?).

Life is the measure of work. There is actually nothing new here, as life has always been a productive resource. However, the changes in the measurement of work from measures of life like time and energy, that is, the life that employees put into work, towards performance, the life that employees gain from work, affects the life that is measured in a new way. For example, work-life balance is no longer about dividing a life into distinct spheres of production and reproduction; rather, work-life balance is the measure of how life is affected by work. How are the employees' conditions of life affected by their conditions of work? What kind of life is possible for the employees under these working conditions that they partly have settled themselves?

Work-life balance has nothing to do with boundaries; instead it is about how life becomes productive in work. This is why work-life balance is always expressed in certain modes of individuation of the employees, i.e. how the life of single employees becomes productive in work. Work-life balance is not only about evaluating how work affects the life of the employees; it is about fostering the value of values, that is, the principle that establishes the value according to which the employees would like to be evaluated. What is the human being yet to become? What kind of life would the employees like to express when working in this particular job? This is the question of balancing performance between work and life.

In the previous analytical chapters I have focused on the subjective processes of the individual employees. These chapters have shown how the relation of work and life is expressed in the human subject's relation to oneself in terms of individual flexibility and performance. The following chapter on commitment focuses on the human subject's social relation to other people. It shows how work-life balance not only has an individual expression but also a social expression when the human subjects express relations to other people. In this sense it is argued that commitment (as flexibility and performance) forms a particular problem of work-life balance in which the relationship of work and life becomes determinable. The difference from the concepts analyzed in former chapters is that commitment is a socially determinable relation of work and life, and not an individual relation.

Traditionally, commitment has been deployed with organizational research on organizational commitment to describe the individual desire of a human subject. The behaviour, attitude and psychological state of human subjects are described in terms of interests, intentions, and needs. These kinds of desires are seen as belonging to the individual in the sense that the human subjects express their individual characteristics of desire in the form of personal needs, interests, and intentions. The desire then tells us who someone is, i.e. their essence. This means that commitment if used to describe the social relation between people then is focused on the desires behind the human involvement in the social. Hereby, commitment expresses a desire for a social belonging of the individual human subject. However, I intend to deploy the concept of

commitment in a different manner. I will argue that commitment is social desire, but that this social desire only exists in the individual expression of interests. By this I mean that commitment is determined in the individual expression of interests in work and home.

There are several consequences of this perspective on commitment. First, I do not think that commitment exists outside of its practical deployment, which means that we cannot locate commitment in itself, but must find it in its practical use. Second, commitment is always arranged in the social formation. The individual commitment always depends on the social formation of commitment. Hence, the aim is to describe and construct the social organization of commitment. This perspective on commitment offers us an opportunity to describe what constitutes the social relations among human subjects as something other than the individual desires of human subjects and the relation between those, e.g. conflict, harmony and love. Furthermore it offers the opportunity to address the social problem of work-life balance, which has not been dealt with to a great extent.

## Chapter VII: The Social Formation of Commitment

### Introduction

We are often told that contemporary work is becoming increasingly individualized (see e.g. Beck, 2000; 2002; Lash and Urry, 1994; Sennett, 1999; 2006). The consequences of this individualization are, for example, the loss of social communities and the transformation of freedom into “the fundamental incompleteness of the self” (Beck, 2002: xxii). The individualization is therefore negatively determined in terms of what is missing or lacking from the individual, e.g. the individual has lost its sense of belonging to social communities. This is also an analysis we know from research on work-life balance. The role of the nuclear family has not only been eroded but has been replaced by the workplace (Hochschild, 2000). The employees seem to be more committed to their work than their families, which leads the employees to put more time into work because, as Arlie Hochschild writes, “time is a symbol of commitment” (2000: 69).

As much as I agree with Hochschild on this point, I believe that she misses something very important about the relation of work and life when she turns the question of commitment into a matter of time. When the committed employees invest themselves in work they not only give their time (and hence take time away from activities outside of work); in some sense we could say that they also invest themselves and their subjectivity in work. Kenneth Surin put it nicely,

Human consciousness, leisure, play, and so on, are no longer left to ‘private’ domains but are instead directly encompassed by the latest regimes of accumulation. The boundary between home and workplace becomes increasingly blurred, as does the demarcation between ‘regular’ work and ‘causal’ labour. (2005: 55)

The blurring of the boundaries of work and home happens because what traditionally has been regarded as the employees' investment of desire outside of work is seen as a means of productivity for work. Individual desires such as playing soccer, having a hobby, or working for a political party in one's spare time are seen as being potentially productive for the company, increasing the personal competency of the employees. It is the whole life of the employees that can become productive in work.

The social control of work hereby no longer functions by the exclusion of any means of life from the workplace, as was the basic assumption for accumulation of value in, for example, Frederick Taylor's scientific management (1998). Today the productive labour power of the employees should not be detached from the employees' ways of living; on the contrary, these ways of living should be included in work (see e.g. Lazzarato, 2004). The committed employees of today therefore offer not only a body capable of working but also a mind capable of living for work. Commitment is therefore more than a matter of the employees identifying themselves with work (see e.g. McElroy et al., 2001), as they also are committed to ways of living that are regarded as being productive for the company. The employees are as productive assets not only human resources but also seen as human capacities. Thus, we should not understand commitment as individual investment of desire in work, but rather as individual expressions of a social desire, i.e. what is regarded as productive by the company.

Deleuze offers a radically different understanding of desire and hence commitment than the one described by organizational commitment. For Deleuze, desire has neither a subject nor an object. Desire is not a subjective state of the human subject that is expressed in a longing for a missing object (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 108; see also Smith, 2007b: 73-74). For example, the human subject may have a desire to establish work-life balance, but the object of desire is not to be defined negatively as something missing (e.g. the missing balance in work and life) or as an object at all. Instead, the would-be 'object of desire' is the social formation, as Daniel W. Smith writes: "What we desire, what we invest our desire in, is a social formation, and in this sense desire is always positive" (2007b: 74). Desire is positive because it is determined by the

productive object of the social formation and not on the object that it is missing. Desire is therefore not something that belongs to the human subject. As Deleuze puts it,

Desire is not then internal to a subject, any more than it tends towards an object: it is strictly immanent to a plan which it does not pre-exist, a plan which must be constructed. (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 89, quoted in Burchell, 1984: 47)

The social formation is in this sense neither something internal to the human subject nor is it a law or norm that the human subject must obey. It is an object that does not pre-exist our expressions of desire, but is constructed within these expressions.

This is not to say that human subjects do not have interests or needs. They do. However, these interests and needs are not expressions of individual will, as the individual will is always formed within the social formation. We have earlier referred to Nietzsche's idea of the will to power in relation this discussion (see page 130). We can therefore only speak of individual interests within the context of a social formation (Smith, 2007b: 74), for example, the social formation of the company forms the human subjects' interests in a particular way. This is an important revelation if we want to understand commitments as the formation of individual desire, as desire is then not something that can be derived from or explained by individual behaviours, needs and interests of the human subjects.

On the contrary we have to study how the needs and interests expressed by the human subjects are derived from the social formation. Human subjects do not give expression to an individual or private desire that belongs to them, but express a sense of belonging to a social formation. The social formation is therefore not represented *by* the individual interests and needs of the human subject; it is represented *in* the individual interests and needs. This is the positive definition of the social formation, not defined in terms of "desiring what we do not have" (Colebrook, 2005: 91) but by connections in the individual expressions of desire. I call these connections *ways of living*. What needs to be studied is then how the social formation is expressed in the individual ways of living. The social formation is in itself an undetermined social desire that does not desire



anything but itself. It is determined when human subjects desire it by giving a certain expression to the social formation. In this sense the ways of living become the subjects of the social formation in so far as this object of desire is expressed in them. This means that the object of desire only exists in the expression of ways of living.

From a Deleuzian perspective commitment is then expressed when the employees invest desire in a social formation. The individual interests of the employees in, for example, work and home only exist and make sense within this social formation. Hence, what I will study in this chapter is not the interests of the employees in work and home but how their investments in the social formation affect their ways of expressing their interests in work and home. I deploy this understanding of commitment in an attempt to understand what constitutes the relation between the interest in work and the interest in home, so it is not just a matter of the employees balancing their interests in work and in home.

In the empirical analyses it is argued that commitment always expresses an individual relationship of work and life, because neither workaholics i.e., employees that do not have a life outside of work, nor employees with an instrumental relation to work, i.e. employees who insist that life is separated from work, are recognized as being committed. Commitment is in this sense always an expression of difference in degree of work and life, e.g. how much interest in work is expressed in relation to the interest in life outside work. The workaholic is too committed to work, and the employee with an instrumental view on work is not committed enough. However, we should not understand this as an expression of the individual desire in various opposing interests, because these interests belong to the same person. Rather, we should understand this individual expression of commitment as an expression of the social formation, i.e. as an investment in the social formation. For example, when employees plan their holidays they take peak periods of work into consideration and plan holidays outside of these periods; by this means they invest in the social formation.

I will analyze this as the expressions of 'we' in Red. This social formation is undetermined in the sense that it is a collective desire that neither has a subject

(individual will) or an object (norm). It is not at all clear who belongs to this 'we' that the managers and employees of Red refer to, and which is mentioned several times in the company's mission statement The Red Touch. This 'we' not only includes the traditional members of the company, but also the families, customers, partners, and society when these express and share the desire expressed as this undetermined abstract 'we'. I will argue that this organization of 'we' is a principle for the division of work and life that works by distribution of commitment. In the analysis I show how the employees are expected to be interested in and committed to the goals, values and missions of the company, the private lives and individual development of colleagues, share the goals and beliefs of the working group, and are expected to have commitments outside of work. I will not try to explain this complex net of commitment by referring to an exchange of interests between employees and employer; instead, I will show how these expressions of commitment are investments in a social formation of desire.

The empirical point of departure for this study of the social formation of commitment is seven focus group interviews with employees and managers in Red. The empirical case and methods are described in the previous chapter.

The chapter is structured in the following way. The next section is a critique of organizational commitment for containing desire in the individual human subject. Then I discuss commitment in work and home as a social organization. These matters are analyzed empirically. In this analysis I show how commitment is a social organization of interests and expectations in work and life that are expressed in the employees' arguing for their ways of living and what they regard as a fair day's work. In the final part of the analysis I discuss the Red vision statement The Red Touch.

## **A Short Critique of Organizational Commitment**

Why do employees desire to be a part of an organization? This important question within organizational commitment on the constitution of the relation between employee and organization has been discussed as behaviour (Becker, 1960; Ritzer and Trice, 1970; Stebbins, 1970; Salancik, 1977), attitude (Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Porter et al., 1974), and psychological states (Allen and Grisaffe, 2001; Allen and

Meyer, 1990; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Whatever the difference between these perspectives on organizational commitment they have one thing in common, which is that they believe that the commitment to be a part of the social organization is to be found in the individual will of the human subject.

Within the research on organizational commitment Natalie J. Allen and John P. Meyer have a prominent role. They have developed a typology of commitment, which is widely used and referred to within research on organizational commitment (see e.g. Gautam et al., 2004; Jaros et al., 1993; McDonald and Makin, 1999). Allen and Meyer (1996: 253; see also Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen 1984; 1991) divide the psychological linkage between employees and organization into three types of commitment.

*Affective commitment* is when the employees want to identify themselves with, be involved with, and are emotionally attached to the organization. Rosabeth Moss Kanter has defined it as “the attachment of an individual’s fund of affectivity and emotion to the group” (1968: 507; quoted in Meyer and Allen, 1991: 64). The employees form an emotional bond to the organization.

*Continuance commitment* is when employees have to remain members of the organization because the additional cost of leaving is too high. It is therefore a calculation of costs and benefits of staying in the organization. Howard Becker calls it side-bets (1960). Kanter defines it as “[the individual] profit associated with continued participation and a ‘cost’ associated with leaving” (1968: 504; quoted in Meyer and Allen, 1991: 65).

*Normative commitment* is when employees ought to stay in the organization because they feel a sense of obligation. The employees have internalized the norms of the organization and identify themselves with the goal, values, and missions of the organization (Jaros et al., 1993: 954-955). All three forms of commitment explain the relationship of employees and organization. However, they all do so by referring to the internal feelings of the employees who continue to be related to the organization

because they have to, want to or ought to (Allen and Meyer, 1996). In other words, the employees feel a sense of being locked in, a sense of belonging, or a sense of duty to the organization (Jaros et al., 1993: 953-954). Robert Marsh and Hiroshi Manneri define it as an individual moral or subjective norm when the employee “considers it morally right to stay in the company regardless of how much status enhancement or satisfaction the firm gives him over the years” (1977: 59; quoted in Meyer and Allen, 1991: 66). Organizational commitment then describes and explains the individual desire of the employees. In doing so they have raised the question of the social from the perspective of an individual will, as to why they are interested in become or continue to be a member of the organization. The social relation is therefore a matter of the match between the needs and interests of the employees and employer.

The problem is that the perspective on organizational commitment hereby understands the social desire from the perspective of the individual human subject. For example, why does the human subject desire to be a part of the organization? This means that the determination of the social is based on what the human subjects are lacking, for example, choosing to stay in the company because they need the money or can realize their interests in accounting by working in the company. From this perspective the question of work-life balance is therefore reduced to being a matter of how the private desire of the human subject has been invested in various social organizations such as work and home. In the following section I will suggest a reversal of this relation so desire is social and interest is expressed by the individual human subject.

## **Commitment in Work and Home**

The research on work-life balance has discussed the conflict between the employees' commitment in work and home (see e.g. Bielby and Bielby, 1989; Sturges and Guest, 2004). In this perspective the employees have experienced work-life balance as a conflict of interests (Bailyn et al., 2004), involvement (Greenhaus et al., 2003) and identity (Bielby and Bielby, 1989). The discussion of commitment within research on work-life balance has emphasized the change in the employees' relations and feelings towards work. The employees are no longer only working to live, they are living to work (see Sturges and Guest, 2004). The employees' commitment in work has resulted

in a blurring of the distinction between work and non-work, because work for the committed employees is not distinct from non-work by being uninteresting. It is rather another interest in the life of the employees. This means that the employees have to balance between different interests, personal involvements and identities in life. The employees are at the same time interested and committed in work and non-work.

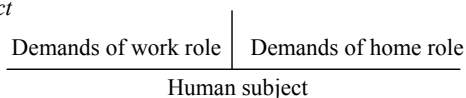
From the perspective of work-life balance these thoughts about desire and interests make it possible to discuss the social aspect of work-life balance. For example, work-life balance is discussed as what is more interesting – work or family? This question of work-life balance is then determined by whether the employees want to invest their private desire in the social realm of work or home. Hence, work-life balance is not only about the distinction between the social spheres of work and home, but also about the distinction between private desire and social interests. However, if we want to apply the abovementioned reversal of social desire and private interest to the discussion of work-life balance, then there is no opposition between the spheres of work and home on the individual level.

The reason for this is that there is only a singular expression of the social commitment. It is not an expression of the human subject's desire to be a part of work life or home life, but an expression of the individual desire as an investment in the social formation. This is not a division or opposition of work and home but an expression of different degrees of investment of desire in the social formation. It is an expression of more or less commitment, for example, if the employees say that they are more interested in home than work. However, this does not imply that they hereby express a distinction between different interests of theirs since these refer to the personhood of the employees and not the social formation. Instead, this is an expression of investment in the social formation. The difference in kind is not between work and home, which only can be distinct in terms of interests, but a difference within life itself. Hence, we could say that the difference of work and life on the level of desire is indiscernible exactly because it cannot be comprehended in terms of distinct interests.

The concept of commitment is important if we want to understand not only the relation between employee and organization, but also the relationship between work and life. The reason for this is that commitment invokes a different relationship of employee and organization, which affects how the employee is able to relate to work and life. The commitment as performance of self-identity can be seen in opposition to the responsibilities of work and family roles, which is determined by the work and family role that they perform (e.g. Katz and Kahn, 1978). Responsibility is something that the employees fulfil, e.g. the employees fulfil their work and family responsibilities (see e.g. Hill et al., 2001). The concept of commitment differs from responsibility in the sense that it is something that cannot be fully realized as it is the personal resource of the employee (see e.g. Greenhaus et al., 2003). We say that we express commitment, but we cannot say that we express responsibilities. In this sense, responsibility and commitment are both something that belong to the human subject, but they do this in various ways. Responsibility is something that describes the general obligations and conditions that belonging to work and family roles that the human subject is to be responsible for, while commitment describes the individual characteristics and resources of the human subject. Hereby, it is obvious that it is relevant to discuss responsibility and commitment in relation to work-life balance; both concepts describe the relation of work and life. For example, the employees find that their responsibilities towards their work roles are more important than their family roles. It could also be the case that the employees find that they are more committed to work, because their work interests are more compatible with their personal interests than their family interests.

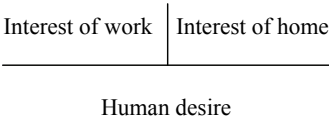
In chapter 3 I discussed the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance. It is now time for a short return to these perspectives. At this point, work-life balance can be divided into two perspectives. The first perspective is the perspective of role conflict and boundary management, which focuses on the individual self-management of the employees, who should be able to set boundaries between work and home. See figure 3.

*Fig. 3: Role conflict*



The second category is the perspective of self-identity, which focuses on how individual human subjects invest their desire in the various interests of home and work. See figure 4.

*Fig. 4: Self-identity conflict*



I will suggest a different perspective on work-life balance. This perspective is a development of the self-identity perspective on work-life balance, but instead of saying that desire is what belongs to the individual it claims that desire is social and interest is private. Hence, it is a revelation of the perspective of self-identity. First of all, desire does not belong to the human subject, so work-life balance is not a matter of how the individual desire of the human subject is divided between work and home. Second, it is the human subject who expresses interests in work and home; however, work and home are never separated in these expressions as they always are part of the same expression. The expressions of interests in work and home are therefore only distinct in degree. There is no distinction between work and life in reality; there is only a distinction in the expression of the human subject of a relation between work and home.

This implies that the human subject does not express work-life balance as a distinction between work and home but instead expresses it as an internal relation of work and life. It is an expression of a difference in degree between work and life. What makes the work-life balance of human subjects distinct from other human subjects' relations of work and life is therefore how the interests of work are intermingled with interests of home, and how this relation is a different expression of work and life. So what makes the individual work-life balance distinct is not a set of individual characteristics but the way the relation of work and life is expressed by the singular human subject. The

human subject then expresses different interests of work and home rather than the identity of work and life. Interests are thus individual but this is not the case because they are representations of a desire that belong to a human subject; on the contrary, it is so because it is what makes the individual distinct from other human subjects. For example, the human subject is unique not because of a unique form of desire but because of a unique expression of a social desire. This is the way of living that is expressed by the human subject in various intensities of life. The relation of work and life individuates, and does so in the sense that it is constituted and expressed by types. See figure 5.

*Fig. 5: Work-life management*

Expressions of interests in work and home  


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 Relation of work and life

The difference in kind between work and home is only perceptible and determinable in the individuating expression. The difference between work and home can be perceived in the expressions of various interests. This singular expression of work and home is not an expression of the individual human subject's different interests in work and home; it is an expression of the relation of work and life. Hence, there are three differences:

- Relation of work and life in itself (undetermined differences of work and life)
- The process of expression of work and life (determinable difference of work and life)
- The different in degree between work and life (determined difference of work and life)

The relation of work and home in itself is pre-individual in the sense that it does not belong to a subject – neither an individual nor a collective subject. This pre-individual expression of work and life is individuated in the type's expression and determination of the relation in various interests in work and home. It is this individuation of the virtual relation of work and life that constitutes the actual relation of work and non-work. Hence, it is also this constituting difference which is important if we want to be able to



manage the relation of work and life. The difference of work and life is then imperceptible as it is a difference of work and life in itself – what is important for management is how this difference is individuated in the singular life of the human subject. In other words, how the virtual relation becomes actualized.

## **Analysis of Commitment in Red**

The organization of commitment points to a new division of work and life. The desire of the employees is not a scarce resource like, for example, time or energy, which belong to the employees. This is not because when one is committed to one part of life it is not taken away from another part of life (see e.g. Bielby and Bielby, 1989: 777) but because commitment is not a desire that belongs to the individual human subject.

To provide an example, Lynda finds it difficult to make a clear distinction between work and personal interest as she finds that some of her work activities are part of her personal interests. This not only makes it difficult for her to say no to work because it is interesting, but also makes her divide her interests into the interests of the company and her personal interests in reading scientific articles. She thinks of the interests of the company as work; however, her personal interest in articles is of course also an interest of the company. Not only is it difficult for her to divide her life into her personal interest and working interest; more importantly, she expresses a commitment to the company by letting her personal interests in reading articles be a part of her life outside of work. This articulation of commitment has nothing to do with a division of Lynda's personal desire into the interest in home and work. Her interests in reading scientific articles do not take the place of other interests.

Commitment belongs to Lynda in a certain sense. It belongs to her by being expressed in her and not by belonging to her. By this I mean that the relationship of work and life is expressed in the articulation of commitment. Commitment is then expressed as a relationship between interests; rather than the difference between interests. The employees that are not recognized as committed either had an instrumental view on work (i.e. they are only in it for the money) or simply worked too much (i.e. they were workaholics because they did not have other commitments in life apart from work).

Sam mentions a former colleague who did not want to participate in social arrangements with colleagues outside of working hours. He told them that he was working a lot and had to prioritize other parts of life such as family, friends, and personal interests. In other words, this employee tried to set a limit to the expansion of his working life that would provide him with some time with his family. His colleagues could not accept this behaviour, saying among other things that “we could not motivate him... he was only here for the money... then you have a group problem”. Sam was particularly frustrated about this, because he thought that “it is important to go out with your colleagues and discuss matters other than your work”. The colleagues should share something else beside the work that they have in common.

Arlene agrees with Sam. She says that “I think you send some bad signals to your work group if you say that you don’t want to spend an evening on bowling or pizza. It is like saying: I’m not interested”. It can have some serious consequences if an employee does not show interest in his colleagues’ life outside of work. Alfred explains that you do not want to stand by people that say something like this and do not express interests in the group and its members.

Hereby, the employee that is not regarded as committed by his colleagues would not be a part of the social formation of commitment. Carissa explains it this way: “When we divide tasks by motivation then people report it ourselves”. The social organization of commitment works as a principle for work according to which the employees divide and distribute the various work tasks. It results in a smooth organization of work where colleagues help and use each others’ resources. However, the social organization of commitment does not apply only to employees but also to families and friends outside of work. Commitment, then, is not only a social organization of the employees within the work place, but also a form of organization that spreads into the homes of the employees.

## **What is a Fair Day's Work?**

The discussion about what counts as a fair day's work is not new. Historically, it has played an important role in the discussion of employees and employers about a fair exchange of work for wages – 'a fair day's wage' for 'a fair day's work'. However, this labour exchange has changed radically since the industrial age.

In Red this exchange of work and wages has been replaced by another form of transaction which does not measure what a fair day's work is in terms of the length and intensity of the working day. Hence, the modern norm of a fair day's work is not necessarily the amount of work that ought to be performed by the employees. In Red, a top level manager told Sam that "he didn't care how many hours people worked, as long as they did what was expected of them". This is also Kelvin's impression of Red. He says "It doesn't matter how many hours you spend, as long you deliver the expected". Astrid says something similar:

You can more or less do whatever you want, as you long as you deliver. I think that it is very liberating, you can come and go almost as you please, but there are some expectations of you and those you manage yourself.

Time is not an important measure of performance for the company; instead, employees have to manage this vague expression of expectation.

It is vague in two senses. First, the employees generally did not know what was expected of them. They could of course have an overall idea of what was expected, but it was not something that they were certain of. This meant that they did not know when they had fulfilled the expectations of them or, put differently, when they had carried out a fair day's work. Sam explained further that the manager had told him "that it was difficult to meet the expectations by working 37 hours a week". The expectations expressed by management to the employees might be higher than it is possible to achieve within a standard working week of 37 hours. What is even more interesting is

that the employees say that the expectation could be anything between 45 and 50 hours of work if you want to be regarded as a high performing and flexible employee.

Second, the expectation did not always seem to have been articulated by someone. Rather, it was an impersonal expectation that the employees thought they had to live up to. Alfred, for example, says that “no one expects me to work that particular evening”. A work group explained that they had worked very late one evening even though they were neither close to a sharp deadline nor ordered by their manager to do so. No one had told them to work late that day but all of them were nonetheless working overtime. They explain this by indirect expectations, which were expressed neither by the manager nor the company. It could be explained as an individual working norm. This is not only a norm that they impose on themselves but a norm that the employees “mould themselves in accordance with,” as Curt puts it. So the norm of work is not only formed by personal expectation, as something they are expecting of themselves and that is produced by their personal ambitions, hopes for making a career, or guilty conscience over never meeting the expectations, but also by something impersonal that forms the employees understanding of what is a fair day’s work. To summarize, the employees on the one hand do not know what is expected of them, and on the other cannot ask anyone about these expectations because they are not formulated by somebody they can ask.

This ‘system’ of expectations and norms works alongside the system of formal rules and policies of the company. They often affect these official policies, for example, when the employees think that the work norms, which are expressed in these informal individual rules, are the formal policies of the company. This caused some confusion in the focus group interviews when employees realized that what they thought were official rules and policies of the company were in fact informal rules produced by various and local expectations in their department. The norm varied from work group to work group. This meant that there was often a huge difference in the interpretation of various rules in the company, which was something of a surprise for the human resource department, especially since these interpretations often departed quite radically from the formal rules.

An example of this could be when it was 'fair' to go on holiday. It might be 'fair' to do so according to the formal rules of the company but it certainly could be the case that it was not according to the expectations that the employees were facing. The employees explain that one should not take a holiday during peak periods with many deadlines. Rather, they should plan their holidays in relation to the level of work. The employees show interest in each other's work and life by not going on holiday in peak periods of work. Alfred says "I think one has to take one's colleagues into account and plan the holiday so it annoys as few people as possible". They explain how some colleagues went away on holiday in peak periods where the rest of them had to work day and night. These colleagues were regarded as being disrespectful towards colleagues and irresponsible people because they did not contribute to the work group and did not express commitment to it. Sam agrees with Alfred's view on this and says that

As employees we do not think it is fair if the company demands that you don't go on holiday. You can't do that either, but it is something you choose yourself because of your responsibility towards your colleagues.

In this sense, there is an unspoken expectation that the employees show flexibility when planning holidays. This flexibility is not so much expected by the management or company, as it is expressed by the colleagues.

This is interesting in relation to discussions of exploitation and resistance as it is difficult to say that these findings are examples of exploitation and control by the company. Instead, social commitment, as a form of control that the employees feel that they have to oblige, is enforced by co-workers. Control is therefore not only hierarchical or vertical as we normally would think. Control is rather transversal and pre-individual as it cannot be located to positions of particular managers, employees or groups. Hereby, it is also difficult for the employees to find ways of resistance to this kind of control. First, there is no one they can point their resistance towards. Second, control has taken or established itself exactly in the same place as the collective resistance.

Another result of these vague expressions of expectations is that the employees invent their own norms of output. There is a general and official norm of 37 hours a week, but most employees work more to meet the expectations. An example of this is how some of the employees did not report their hours of work as they were supposed to, but at the same time kept their own informal time sheet. The most extreme case of this was Shannon, who had not handed in the formal time registration in four years, but at the same time had kept her own record of working hours. She had not showed it to anyone, but said it was important for her to know how many hours she worked. Her and many of her colleagues thought of the formal time registration as patronizing, a sign of mistrust.

This might also be the reason why this was allowed by the management even though they knew that it was against the formal rules of the company. But often the managers consciously broke the rules to provide the employees with the personal freedom and flexibility that they thought was needed to make them the most productive. The employees not only speak of the expectations in terms of expected work time; they also speak about it in more personal terms. Sara explains that she finds it difficult to carry out the expected work tasks within the normal work week. This means that she sometimes works in the evenings and on the weekends to keep up. Shelly replies that “I do not feel this obligation to Red. They get me relatively cheap and then I have quality time with my family, which I can take care of besides this”. Sara continues that even though she could do most of this work at home, she has decided to go to the office. She does not think she can report all the hours she works from home because she will not be able to work as disciplined as she does in her regular place of work. These discussions are relevant and important for their work-life balance. It is almost like a principle according to which they manage their relation of work and home.

The employees not only have to meet expectations in the company but also in their home life. Sam talks about his commitment to home. He says that “If I have to pick up the children from kindergarten one day then I do not get a bad conscience because I know I have been working some evenings”. It is as if Sam saves up his clear conscience by working evenings which he can then return to the company when needed. He explains how he takes more responsibilities at home in the weeks leading up to a

business trip. Hereby, he wants to build good will at home so he can leave his responsibilities at home to his wife with a clear conscience. Sam had postponed a business trip because his children or his wife had a birthday. His manager thought that was a legitimate reason.

However, Curt says something that could emphasize that this might not always be the case:

Of course you do not have to mention that the reason is your son's birthday if you think it is a lousy reason, but this reason can become more and more legitimate so to speak.

The reasoning behind an apparent lack of commitment is therefore important because the judgment of someone's commitment depends on it. It might be okay to postpone the travel when your child has a birthday but not when your wife has a birthday. Or it might differ in each individual case. For example, is it okay if we know that the employee has had some marital troubles in the past year which were caused by his frequent business trips? It is not possible to compare the commitment of various employees directly as they have various conditions of work and home. So it is not fair to compare commitment directly. Instead, the articulation of the commitment is important, i.e. what is regarded or accepted as expressions of commitment.

The norm of work has to be defined and invented, which means that there is no clear cut distinction between the involvement in work and non-work. Lynda finds it difficult to set a limit on what is a fair day's work. The reason for this is, as she explains, that "things get more fun the more you are involved – but then it might be difficult to say stop, even though some kindergartens close at 5pm". She continues: "It is not free of charge, if you can say so. You are tired in the evenings, and there is less time for all the other stuff ...". There is no pre-given norm for her commitment in work, as this norm is expressed by the way she is involved in work. There is no given determination of a fair day's work. It has to be invented, defined, and argued for by the individual employees,

which means that it is difficult if not impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between the expectations from work and home.

The result of this is that the employees must constantly manage the relation of home and work in the form of expectations. It is almost like an individual economy of expectations with personal exchanges of expectations. However, there is no exchange of expectations between work and home, as these expectations are always articulated by the individual employee. In this sense it is a very personal exchange that has nothing directly to do with the company or the management, but is a relation that the employees have to themselves. The employees did not know what was expected of them. They did not rely on the formal numbers of working hours to determine the norm. So even though they have worked overtime they did not want to leave a little earlier in the days that followed. They wanted to be on the safe side rather than run the chance of being judged as non-committed by the management and colleagues.

There is no given work norm that the employees should live up to, e.g. number of working hours; rather, the employees should constitute their own individual norms for how they relate work and life. There is not necessarily an internal relationship between the commitment of being a father and the commitment of being an employee that can provide a general norm of the right conduct. Instead there is a relative norm between the various commitments in life. A fair day's work is therefore not a norm according to which the behaviour and attitude of the employees can be judged. Instead, they are judged according to the way of life they give expression to and whether these ways of life contribute to the social formation. What is important is therefore not only what they do but also how they argue for the expressed attitude and behaviour.

## **Living with Red**

Why do the employees want to be committed to Red? Sabrina, married and mother of two, explains her interest in working for Red.

It was a very conscious choice for me to work for Red, exactly because you knew what the company stood for and it contained all the



necessary criteria to create commitment and excitement every day for me. Because it is a big and dynamic company, and it has a good reputation. And there are some things you are willing to fight for in this company – and make a difference – and it is really... It is what creates commitment. But I will also say when the day arrives where I don't feel it is there anymore, then Red may no longer be for me. So I won't stay just because of the Red name. Then I'll go somewhere else. So I will say that there is a sense of belonging as long as it works. But it is not necessarily Red for me forever. As long as you have commitment then it is there, but if it ends someday then it is no longer for me.

She expresses a sense of belonging to Red. She will continue to work for Red as long as they offer the best suitable conditions for her to do so. For Sabrina, Red does not seem to be a given and stable entity with a determined desire to obtain something specific. Rather, it is described as something that provides her with the opportunity to express her individual will of making a difference and working on things she will fight for. This means that Sabrina's individual will is not described as something given; rather, she describes her desire as something she wants to do but it is not clear what she wants to do. In this sense Sabrina does not simply express commitment to Red; rather, Red provides her with the organizational setting within which she wants to express desire.

This means that Sabrina expresses a relationship between herself and Red but this is not between two given entities with specific desires. Instead, Red provides her with the necessary conditions so she can express the commitment she wants in work. These conditions that Red provides are not determined in themselves, they appear to be rather abstract even though they create the social environment or the social formation in which Sabrina is willing to express her commitment. It is not that these criteria are so abstract that they do not make any sense; rather, they make a lot of sense for Sabrina because it is her that gives meaning to the abstract criteria, for example, what it means to be able to make a difference, and what the things are that she is willing to fight for. She gives

expression to these things in an individual way; she makes the difference in her own way. She expresses her commitment to work as a particular way of living with Red.

In this sense, desire is individuated in the relationship that is established between her and Red when she gives expression to a particular way of life. This implies that the necessary criteria that Red provides to express commitment differ between each individual employee. As Lynda explains, how much you work depends on “who you are as a person, what kind of lifestyle you have, and what your interests are”. The employees express who they are and what they want to become when they express commitment. This means that what they think Red is and the criteria Red provides them with are in themselves abstract and undetermined, but become concrete and determined in the various individual expressions of commitment.

The expressions of commitment are individuating. The employees are hereby distinct from each other by the way that they express what kind of employees and human subjects they want to become. They not only express commitment to the company, but furthermore to colleagues, friends, family, home and themselves. However, this does not imply that there are several social formations in which the employees express commitment, for example, expressions of commitment in work *and* home. On the contrary, these expressions of commitment are part of the same social formation. For example, Lynda argues that she is not interested in money but in working less, because she has the main family responsibilities and a husband who works many hours. This is not a personal expression of commitment to home or to work but an expression of the lifestyle and the relationship between work and life that Lynda wants. She is interested in work but she is more interested in home.

For Lynda as an individual person, there is potentially a conflict of interest between home and work. This is something almost all employees experience. I will argue that it is a part of being a committed employee. Ahmad puts it like this: “We are interested in what we are doing – this is also why we might want to bring our work home”. On the one hand, employees have to express their interests in work, as they would otherwise be excluded from the social network. Arlene says, “You have to be interested in your

colleagues to work with them.” In general, the employees find it demotivating to work with colleagues who do not express interests in them as people and the objectives of the work group. On the other hand, the employees should not only be interested in work. As Sam says: “If you cannot talk about anything other than work then it is pretty boring to have lunch together.” The balance is then not between interests in work and home; it is, instead, an interest that is internal to the employees. They are interested in work but not so interested that they do not have any other interests.

The sense of belonging that the employees felt to Red has to be continuously reinforced. Otherwise, it will be gone. One work group had this experience every time they got a new manager. Susan says: “It was like starting all over again.” Their previous commitments and their investments in work and the work group were gone. The manager had moved on and their relationship to him did not mean anything to the new manager. They had to start all over and build a personal relationship by showing that they cared for the company and that they were willing to invest themselves in work. They compared it to starting at a new job. Roxanne is an experienced employee with over 30 years of employment. She explained it like this: “I’ve been here for a long time but it is of no use when you get a new boss”. The experience that Roxanne has gained by working in the company for more than 30 years would be of almost no value for the new manager. “Then you have to sell yourself again,” as she explained it.

Ruby, one of Roxanne’s experienced colleagues, is very aware of this. However, she cannot often make use of this experience because it is seen as resistance to change work processes and she does not want to be regarded as “an old sulky one, who is not willing to try something new”. She does not want to be respected and recognized for the time she has spent working in the company or who she is, but for who she is willing to become. This means that she has to start all over, not only when she gets a new boss or every morning when she begins at work, but continuously. She must always be willing to be something she is yet to become.

In this sense, commitment is something that belongs to the employees, for example, when their commitment to the organization is recognized or not recognized by the

manager. Commitment is ascribed to them and soon can be taken away. However, this commitment is ascribed to them in a particular way. It is not just ascribed to them as their personal property, as something that describes their individual characters, attitudes and behaviors. It is ascribed to their expressions of what they are willing to become. When we say that an employee is committed in this sense, we do not describe the individual characteristics nor prescribe an internalized individual norm of the employees. Rather, we ascribe commitment to the will the employees express when they speak about what they want, ought and need to become. In this sense, commitment is something that is attributed not to an individual employee who expresses desire but to the desire that is expressed in the individual employee.

This desire is the social formation that is shared by all the employees in so far as they are giving expression to it. This means that articulations of commitment express a sense of belonging to a social formation in the employees. In short, it is the social desire that speaks in the employees and not vice versa. It is therefore important to notice that the employees do not express commitment to the social formation; they express commitment and are expressed as committed by the social formation. For example, Ruby gives expression to this social formation when she explains that she is “willing to try something new”, she is then regarded as a committed employee. The social formation cannot be described as a norm that the employees should live up to. There are no given rules that the employees should follow to be regarded as committed. Rather, these rules depend on the way that they are expressed by the employees. For example, when Sabrina says that she wants to work for Red, this is because Red makes it possible for her to express commitment. What ‘Red’ is as social formation is therefore not determined outside of Sabrina’s expression of her sense of wanting to belong to Red. Rather, we should think of ‘Red’ as an undetermined social formation that becomes determined in the employees’ articulations of commitment. Hence, we might need to talk about Red in plural, because there is as much ‘Red’ as there are employees. It is always ‘My Red’. What is Red for me?

## The Red Touch

Red has developed a vision statement called *The Red Touch*. On the company webpage it is described in the following way:

A vision alone is not enough for Red to make its mark on the world and get closer to our vision of balance between better business, cleaner environment and better lives. So we have brought the fundamental guidelines for our day-to-day work together in what we call The Red Touch. The Red Touch explains where we are going and how we will get there. It contains the vision, the personality, the values, the commitments and the fundamentals of Red.

The way of working in Red should be characterized and guided by the special touch of Red. The employees are asked to reflect on questions like: Where are we heading? Who are we? What do we stand for? How do we do business? What do we expect from each other? Hereby, The Red Touch describes the characteristics of a common 'we'. This 'we' then, might be thought of as the organization of Red or what is meant by 'Red'.

But it would be a rather abstract description of the organization. First of all, it is a description of an organization yet to come, as a description of what the organization would like to become. Second, it is not completely clear who belongs to this common 'we' that is expressed in The Red Touch. Likewise it is not clear who is expressing these thoughts and beliefs about the character of the company. It is not just the management of the company, as it not only seems to include the employees of the company, but furthermore also addresses "customers and partners throughout the world [that] will seek our collaboration because of what we do and how we do it", and society because it "will be inspired by our work to choose biological solutions as a key part of the future". The 'we' which is mentioned, could then also include society, customers and partners. But how is that possible? Is the company not exactly defined in opposition to these other groups, as the producer of commodities which they can consume or use? No, and the reason for this is that The Red Touch describes 'we' in terms of a common

desire that can be shared by customers, partners and society. They are exactly consumers because they share the same desire as the company. They want to consume a product that is produced in this way, and by employees who express this particular form of commitment in work.

The Red Touch describes an image of the common ('we') in which the employees of Red should see an image of themselves as employees. Traditionally, we would say that they should identify themselves with the company, i.e. they should create their self-image or self-presentation according to the image that is expected of them by the company. They should mark their self-image in a particular way that makes them distinct as Red employees. They should share the same future, as when the company writes "we image a future..."

We could follow Selznick and argue that the aim of this strategic work on the employees' image of themselves is to "mould the minds of individuals according to a definitive pattern creating a homogeneous organization..." (1984: 18). Hereby, The Red Touch works by the employees giving expression to a common 'we' of the organization. The employees identify themselves with characteristics of the 'we' described in the strategic slogan. They share the vision of the company, the personal way of working, the ethical values, expectations towards attitude and behaviour, and the social, environmental and financial responsibilities.

In general, The Red Touch provides more than a description of the guidelines for the day-to-day work; it also describes the characteristics of the life of the employees that should be invested in to make it possible to achieve the described goals and vision. First of all, the employees should have a particular attitude towards work; they have to be committed. This is not only commitment to the goals of the company or commitment to their own goals and careers, but furthermore an involvement in the commitment of their colleagues. By this I mean to say that commitment is not only an individual investment of the employees to the goals of the company, which the individual can be said to share. It is an investment of desire in the desire of the common. The Red Touch describes this social desire, which is why it is abstract because it does not belong to any individual. It

is neither the object nor the subject of individual desire. It is the subject and object of social desire.

The Red Touch does not express a general interest. We cannot begin with general interest of the social wholes if we want to understand the social (Colebrook, 2005: 92). Instead, we have to begin the pre-individual social formation that organizes the individual interests of the employees. To do so, we have to understand how interests are produced from desire (see also Colebrook, 2005: 92). We have to be careful here, however, as this is not a question of representation – we are beyond the fixed norms of representation, because “what makes it a ‘we’ is not the stability of an identity. It is the participation in the formation of the connections” (May, 2005: 133). It is rather that the social formation expressed in Red Touch changes all the time. This means that the expressions regarded as expression of commitment change accordingly. The result of this is that the employees can never be sure of what is regarded as investment in this social formation; do they express the desire of Red or not? For example, the work group thinks it is like starting at a new job when they get a new boss. The new boss defines new problems of the work group, which not only turns established work processes around, but also redefines how the employees’ expression of the social formation is judged.

The individuation of the company creates further difficulties for the employees because the common ‘we’ of the company is undetermined, which means that the employees should be different from something unknown or undetermined. The reason the company remains undetermined is that this ‘we’ of the company only exists in the expression of the individual employees. From this it follows that the relationship between company and employees exists only in the expression of the employees (Lazzarato, 2004). The employees are to be distinct from something undetermined that exists only in their own expression. This is hard to pull off. No wonder so many employees experience problems with stress, burnout and imbalance.

The employee is not ‘an individual’. Since this value is itself variable, the employee is a ‘dividual’, to use Deleuze’s term (1995a). In other words, we will not understand this as

if the employees are to both represent and not represent the company by their actions and utterances. Rather, the employees are to manage their own becoming-employees, or to manage “the variation and mutations that are possible but not yet actualised” (Colebrook, 2005: 127). The employees have to cope with being a single modulation, which is not a stable or an unstable state, but rather is a meta-stable state that is always on the cutting edge or on the verge of becoming something else.

It is not adequate to determine the relationship between individual and company in terms of the position, number, signature or legal competency of the individual in the company. Thus, we cannot discuss the employees’ different moulds such as home, friends, sports and work place, as these different moulds of places and times co-exist in the employees’ meta-stable states of a single modulation. There is no given ‘in-dividual’ for all these institutions but a ‘dividual’ modulated across the entire field, as the individual is not individuated by institutions, but continuously is divided by various logics. Work, then, occupies several co-existing series or worlds *in* the employee, and employees must be able to manage these different forms of co-existence. For example, the employee might be father to a son *and* a manager of four people *and* an aficionado of the arts. These predicates about the employee are different points of singularity; they are not representational forms of identity since they do not converge in an *a priori* subject that can contain something, i.e. ‘I am a father’ as the form of the subject that contains ‘a child’.

The individuation of the employee and company works on two distinct levels. On the one hand, it is necessary that the employees share a set of beliefs or values if the system is to function. On the other, the system is based on the individual employees’ feelings, judgement and experiences of certain situations. This can be traced in Red. One level is the general expression of a common will, e.g. “we people in Red...” and the other is the individual expression of terms of employment by the individual employees. We should not interpret these levels of expression as a general and particular level of expression. This is not how it works. The expression of the individual employee is regulated through continuously expressing a common “we” of the company, i.e. ‘The Red Touch’



(2008). The employees should work at fulfilling the company's mission statement by continuously expressing the spirit of the statement in the work they are doing.

The mission statement of Red provides a great example of the organization of desire since the statement only exists in the expression of the employees. This way of organizing simply works in a common relationship of the company's and employees' expression of the mission statement. The mission statement does not exist outside of this relationship between employees and company. The 'solution' to specific situations or problems that the employees experience can therefore be constituted neither on terms nor on rules given prior to the relationship between the employee and the company but is continuously determined within it. It is not sufficient to say that there has been a shift from a general norm to an individual norm. There is talk neither of the judgment of the particular in the light of the universal, nor of the universal in light of the particular, as Raffnsøe and Olsen have also noted in the context of organization theory (2005). From the perspective of the employees it is increasingly difficult to determine and provide general rights and conditions of work such as working hours, vacation, and wages. The organization is not a system of distributed rights and legal competencies as was the case in Weber's bureaucratic system (Weber, 2003). Instead, it must be based on the individual conditions of the employees and not on the pre-established individual rights of the employees with regard to the employees' age, sex, children, etc.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The problem of commitment indicates a particular challenge for contemporary management. Management has become a management of life and not only of work, because the life of the employees is not given outside of work. Work and life have become blended, which is why we need to learn how the employees as whole people are constituted within their lives.

This is also why commitment is much more than an individual problem related to how the employees cope with work or family related issues, and is a social problem. It is because the employees do not work outside their life; they are continuously constituted as employees within their ways of living since their lives are seen as productive forces

in work. For example, a performance management system not only measures the employees' contributions in work but also their personal development and development of competencies. In this sense performance management regards not only the work of the employees but furthermore the life of the employees, and how this life becomes a productive force in work. The performance of employees is therefore also judged by the way they live their life.

It is in this sense that commitment plays an important role, as it measures to what degree the employees make their life a condition of work, and hence of possible productivity. For example, the employees who are willing to sacrifice a Sunday at the beach for a working day are judged to be more productive employees than ones who do not exhibit this flexibility towards the company. The measurement of commitment cannot be limited to the work of the employees; it also involves the measure of life of employees outside of work. The commitment of the workers is not only judged on their contribution to the organization in terms of productivity, efficiency, or sales figures; it is to a high extent based on their attitude towards colleagues, holidays and social arrangements after working hours. We should therefore not determine commitment from the individual viewpoint of the employees, but more closely examine how the individuals are constituted within their social lives, i.e. the social relations that are or will be a part of them, becoming a particular employee and human subject. So we should not discuss the norm of commitment as the capacity to produce; rather, we should address this as the individuation of the employees, i.e. what are the conditions for individuation that the employees as whole people constitute themselves on.

## **Part IV: Interventions in Practice**

## Chapter VIII: The Management of Work and Life

### Introduction

Since the 1980s, employers have increasingly devoted organizational resources to work-life initiatives. In this chapter it is shown how companies can integrate work-life balance issues in appraisal interviews and develop work-life balance strategies. The development of these work-life balance tools has taken place in collaboration with Red and the Danish consultancy company Green.

Initiatives such as flexible work schedules, teleworking, work-life balance policies, stress management and life coaching have become common in many companies and have been invoked as a way of reducing *the negative costs* associated with frustrations, turnover, absenteeism, lateness and stress (Hammer et al., 2003; Rodgers, 1992; Shellenbarger, 1992) and raising the *positive effects* in the form of employee loyalty and organizational commitment, improved recruitment and retention, greater individual productivity, process efficiency, attitude and behaviour associated with high performance, and enhanced career opportunities (Appelbaum et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Kossek and Ozeki, 1999; Rodgers, 1992). In this sense work-life initiatives work by trying to reduce the negative cost by locating the sources of work-family conflict and by trying to remove the sources of conflict or reducing the effect of these sources (e.g. Appelbaum et al., 2003; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Konrad and Mangel, 2000; Lobel, 1992). These sources are often identified as conflicting values (Lobel, 1992), inter-role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Higgins and Duxbury, 1992; Kahn et al., 1964; O'Driscoll and Humphries, 1994; Rothbard et al., 2005), or identity conflict between work life and family life (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004; Kahn, 1990; Kreiner et al., 2006; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Randall, 1987). The negative costs are measured in the way in which they affect the life of the individual employee (e.g. Goneya and Googins, 1992). The general idea is to optimize the organizational performance of the employees by reducing the degree to which the personal and family life of the employees is in the way of work life. This reduction of barriers is either

measured negatively in terms of reduced cost or more positively as what it means for the employees if the barriers are removed in terms of increased commitment.

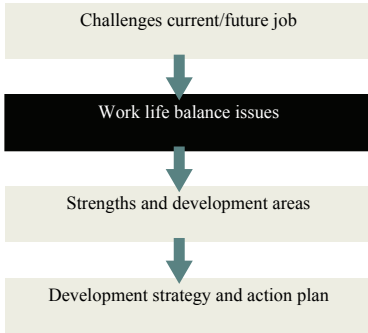
Perhaps it is time to suggest a different form of work-life initiatives that do not focus on work-life balance in the form of removing or reducing the barriers. Earlier in the thesis it was argued that the introduction of performance management invokes a different way of measuring work. The work that employees carry out is no longer measured in terms of how much energy and time they put into work; rather, work is measured in terms of how much the employees invest themselves in the work. In this sense work-life balance is about how employees manage their individual productivity, i.e. that they should be able to manage how life becomes productive in work.

How can management help the employees in managing these types of problems that have been described in the analysis? In the following section it is discussed how the relation between work and life can become manageable. Concretely, it is discussed how the employees' self-management of flexibility and performance can be addressed in the appraisal interview. This section is based on suggestions to Red on how they could incorporate and integrate work-life balance issues more in the appraisal interview. It is argued that it becomes important that the managers are aware of which kind of behaviour they indirectly valorise when they make judgements about the 'good employees'. Is it the employee who is online on Saturday evening? The flexible employees who do not have family responsibilities and can work all night to make a deadline? On the other hand, the employees should create principles on which they can constitute and regulate their own self-management. They should not find the principle of what they are, but the principle of what they are yet to become.

## **Integration of Work-life Balance Issues in Appraisal Interviews**

In the current version of Red's performance management system the issues relating to work-life balance are dealt with in the performance appraisal interview as part of the discussion of the employees' individual development plans (see figure 6).

*Fig. 6: The employees' individual development plans*



In the manager's interview questionnaire work-life balance issues are raised as general discussion points on how the life of the employees are affected by the contemporary working conditions and what the company/manager can do to help the employees obtain a better work-life balance. Thus work-life balance is often discussed as the employees' personal matter in the appraisal interviews. What are the personal and family factors of the employees and do these factors affect the employees (e.g. Do they feel stressed? Out of balance?). It is seldom the case that managers discuss work-life balance in relation to the individual working conditions of the employees. In managing employees it is important for the manager to be aware of the individual working conditions that the employees establish. Furthermore, it is necessary that the manager is able to discuss and perhaps change these conditions together with the employees. The working conditions are not constituted by work time and workplace but are established in the way in which the employees manage themselves.

Issues of work-life balance could be discussed more directly and in relation to the employees' contemporary and future conditions of work (see figure 7).

Fig. 7: Work-life balance issues

Business targets	Competency targets	Individual Development Plan
<p><b>Work life balance issues</b></p> <p>What do the current working conditions imply for the work-life balance of the employee?</p> <p>What will changes in business targets mean for the future conditions of work? (e.g. more work, different working hours or more travelling)</p>	<p><b>Work life balance issues</b></p> <p>Does the employee have the necessary competencies and skills?</p> <p>What will the increased development of competencies mean for the future work-life balance of the employee?</p>	<p><b>Work life balance issues</b></p> <p>What do the current conditions of development mean for the work-life balance of the employee?</p> <p>What will changes in the Individual Development Plan mean for the future work-life?</p> <p>Is there areas or periods when and where the employee is not supposed to develop?</p>

The appraisal interview should provide the setting for a work-life balance check of the employees' conditions of employment. What are the current and future conditions of work and how do they affect the life of the employees and how do they influence the work-life balance of the employees? How will future objectives affect the work-life balance? Thus it might be easier for the manager to discuss work-life balance issues because the issues are dealt with from a non-personal angle rather than in a personal way. The manager together with the employee can draw upon relevant personnel policies such as health, competencies and economics to determine the conditions of employment for the future period of time. For example, it could be to study the opportunities that different elements of the personal policies offer (see figure 8).

*Fig. 8: Work-life balance issues and personnel policies*

	Work life balances issues	Personnel policies	How can the company help?
Business target	Work life balance issues	What are the policies in areas like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is relevant in the case of each employee?</li> </ul>
Competencies targets	Work life balance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competencies</li> <li>• Social activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What fits in the situation of the employee?</li> </ul>
Individual Development Plan	Work life balance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economics</li> </ul>	

To provide a concrete example, an employee needs to develop his skills because he will be working in the French market in the coming year. In the interview the employee and manager agree on the objectives that the employee should learn to speak French within the next year. Furthermore, they agree on an action plan, which involves the employee learning the language by formal training and weekly conversation with a colleague, who speaks French. In this example, it could be relevant to discuss work-life balance issues such as how much time the employee should spend on learning the language and to what degree this competency development should take place within normal working hours. It could be that the employee could spend three hours every Tuesday morning doing his homework. What is the company policy about this? It is necessary for the company to develop relevant policies that deal with these kinds of issue, so it is not the managers' own responsibility to decide on these matters.

It is possible within the frame of the appraisal interview to discuss and address the conditions of problems with regard to work-life balance. This can be done by discussing how the current business and competency objectives have affected the employees' balance and further discussing how these changes in objectives, and the action plan that is set to carry it out in the future, will affect the work-life balance of the employee. Put simply, it is a work-life balance check of the current and future job situation and objectives. Hereby, it is possible to organize and manage the conditions that the employees have to express their relationship to the company. In that regard, the role of the manager is to discuss and include relevant personal policies in relation to the real



problematics of the individual employee. The personal policies of the company are not abstract categories, but should be included in dealing with the real empirical problems of the employees. The following could provide a model for how to address work-life balance issues in appraisal interviews.

Figure 9 shows how work-life balance issues could be discussed in relation to the individual development strategy and personal action plan of the employees. This discussion can be divided into different timeframes such as ‘coming year’, ‘next 2-3 years’ and ‘long run’.

*Fig. 9: Development strategy, action plans and work-life balance issues*

Development strategy	Action plan	Work life balance issues
<b>Focus areas the coming year:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn conversational French</li> </ul>	<b>The coming year:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the job-training in French (one hour session every other week)</li> </ul>	<b>Work-life balance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many hours should the employee spend?</li> <li>Is preparation in working hours or spare time?</li> </ul>
<b>Focus areas 2-3 years:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing and expanding my personal network within the organization</li> </ul>	<b>Courses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete a CE workshop to build a network</li> </ul>	<b>Work-life balance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many traveling days are there in a year?</li> <li>How does that fit with the family?</li> </ul>
<b>Focus areas in the long run:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue studying the trends that will impact France and Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop competencies outside my specific area and get involved in new projects and business areas</li> </ul>	<b>Work-life balance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does it demand of the employee?</li> <li>In what way will it affect the work-life balance?</li> </ul>

This is only a short and a rather schematic introduction to how to address work-life balance issues in the performance appraisal interview. The basic idea can also be useful for managers in other less formal settings than the appraisal interview. It is a perspective that the mangers can use on a daily basis when managing self-managing employees. What are their conditions of work? How do they affect the life of the employees? And is it possible to change these individual work conditions so the work-life balance of the employees is improved?

In the following section, it is discussed how the relation between work and life can be addressed on a strategic level. An increasing number of Danish companies have developed work-life balance policies in recent years to be able to address the problems of balancing work and life that their employees were experiencing. It is suggested that companies should address work-life balance on a strategic level, as it basically concerns how the lives of the employees become productive in work. Danish companies have developed an increasing number of personnel policies in an effort to provide guide lines for managing not only work but also the life of employees. Examples on such policies are learning policies, health policies, and career policies. These policies all seem to address the problem of how to manage, when it is no longer enough for the company to organize work, but they furthermore have to be able to help the employees in managing their life.

## **Work-Life Strategy**

There is one important question that seems to haunt modern companies more than ever: How can companies organize and manage the production of their employees when the company no longer appears to organize work but the life of the employees. Hence, companies do not to provide only one possible world for their employees, i.e. the world of making money, but offer several incompatible and co-existing worlds in which the employees can invest, create, invent and produce themselves.

The development of work-life balance policies can be recognized as belonging to a series of other policies such as career, health, competency and stress policies. However, I am critical of this development. The problem with these perspectives is that they turn work-life balance into a self-management problem. For example, it is the employees that have to choose between what various policies say is the right thing to do. The competency policy says that the employees continuously have to develop their skills and competencies to be an asset for the company. The career policy says that if the employees want to have a career then they should put the company's interests before their own, and the stress policy of the company might say that the employees should take care of themselves and not work too much. How should the employees manage between these various inconsistent and de-contextual expressions of the company's

policies? The solution is not to remove this inconsistency as this might not be possible but rather to pose the question of work-life balance strategy in a different way, so it is able to help the employees in managing problems of work-life balance. Work-life balance should not be thought of as yet another policy but as a strategic perspective.

The problem with work-life balance policies is that they tend to be rather abstract, as the following example from University of Copenhagen shows,

[University of Copenhagen] aims to organize work so as to achieve a *reasonable* balance between tasks and working hours and between work and leisure time. The University offers flexible working conditions with *due consideration for the requirements of [University of Copenhagen]* and with *due respect for the individual employee* (University of Copenhagen, 2008; my emphasis).

It is then up to the employees and management to determine what is meant by 'reasonable', 'due consideration for the requirements of [University of Copenhagen]' and 'due respect for the individual employee'. These rather vague formulations about the relationship between not just the employees and the employer cannot only be criticized for being abstract, but moreover for leaving it to the self-management of the employees to determine how their lives should become productive at work. In general, the managerial solution to this problem has been to turn it into a matter of self-management and hence a question that cannot be dealt with by the management. In the example mentioned above the problem is that University of Copenhagen has not realized that they should not only manage the employees' conditions of work, e.g. work task, work time, and flexible working conditions, but furthermore the employees' conditions of life. From the perspective of managing the relation between work and life it is important not only to manage and adjust the conditions of work to the individual condition of life that the employees have, but be able to address how the individual employees make their life productive in work. If we are not able to do so then management of work and life will continue to be a matter of the employees' self-management of balancing the relation of work and life.

Today employees do not live their life outside their work; life has become a condition for production in the modern company. It is simply necessary for the system of production that the employees continuously develop their competencies, skills and personality, or what we could call their subjectivity and capabilities to perform affective and knowledge labour. This implies that the areas that the company should be able to organize have increased enormously in number and variety. Individual crises such as divorce or sexual problems with (multiple) partners, which had been regarded as private and personal problems, have today become a problem that the company has got involved in to secure the productivity of the employees. The rise of life as a condition for production has resulted in an explosion of personal policies within the modern company.

*Fig. 10: Personal policies*

Health policy	Learning policy	Salary and career policy	Social life	Leadership
Alcohol policy	Competencies development	Promotions policy	Family policy	Value based management
Harassment policy	Lifelong learning	Salary policy	Social arrangements	Leadership
Fatness policy	Senior policy	Leave policy	Communication policy	Excellent models

Following this expansion of personal policies, the relationship between the employee and the company has obviously become more complex, but what is more to the point is that the policies of the company do not necessarily converge in the singular point of the employee and company. The individual employee can or will experience that the lines of the personal policies do not converge, but in fact draw divergent lines of possible subjectivity of the employee. This occurs, for example, when the family policies of the company stipulate that employees should spend more time with their family and the career policy states that only the employees who are committed and make sacrifices in

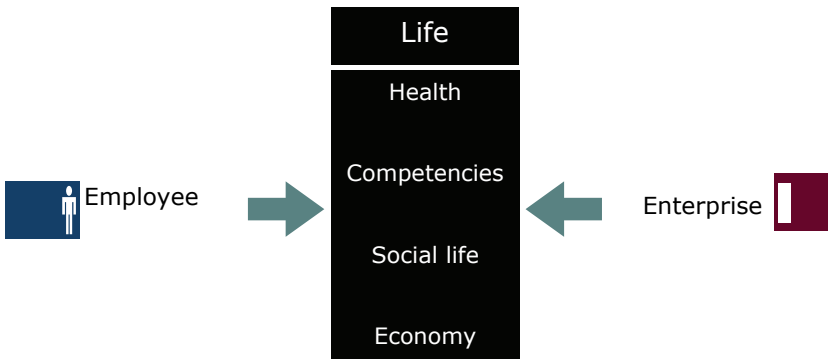
their life will earn bonuses, higher salaries and promotions. It is not possible for the company or the managers to provide straightforward guidelines for these complex situations, as they are different for each employee and change over time. One employee is better off spending more time with his or her family and another by setting the pace for colleagues, but this cannot be made into a personal rule of living for these individual employees as the conditions of their lives will naturally change over a period of time. In other words, the employee has to be able not only to manage his or her own situation, but also their different conditions of life. This is the main question of the employees' self-management. The question is how the employees are to manage this situation. And what kind of role should the company play?

Issues concerning work-life balance have so far been addressed in the companies from a policy viewpoint (Nadeem and Hendry, 2003; Wise and Bond, 2003). In the following I would like to show how work-life balance can be deployed as a strategic perspective on the relationship between employees and company.

The concept of 'strategy' is not unknown in relation to work-life balance. Within the literature on work-life balance, strategy has so far been applied on an individual level. In *Beyond Juggling – Rebalancing Your Busy Life*, Sandholz et al. (2002) deploy five individual strategies – alternating, outsourcing, bundling, techflexing and simplifying – that should help the individual employees improve their work-life balance. Each strategy works by setting an objective for the individual, e.g. the objective of alternating: "having it all, but not all at the same time" or the objective of the simplifying strategy: "all things in moderation" (2002: 39, 126). It is obvious that the strategic goals do not converge in a singular point. You cannot both 'have it all' and take 'all things in moderation'. This is not a question of it being possible or not, but how the different lines of human lives such as 'being a father' and 'being an employee' are modulated into a singular line. In other words, how is 'being a father' compossible with 'being employee'. This problem is not a question of constraint, i.e. "I have to leave early to pick up my child, which limits my career opportunities", or opportunity, i.e. "being a father provides me with useful skills as an employee" (see e.g. Stendevad and Kjær, 2005). The question is, can the world of being a father co-exists with the world of being

an employee, or do they diverge too much? How can the worlds be compossible? This is not a problem that can be discussed or addressed from the viewpoint of its solution, as Todd May writes to Deleuze’s philosophy: “Being is not a puzzle to be solved but a problem to be engaged” (2005: 116). Employees and managers should therefore not first discuss possible solutions to the problem, but should instead discuss the constitution of the problem of work-life balance – and hereafter talk about how the world of being a father and being an employee can co-exist, i.e. finding the right solution. In other words, the management should regard work-life balance in terms of how the employee is and can be constituted within the company.

*Fig. 11: The strategy of work-life balance*



Here strategy implies that the different personal policies of the company should be harmonized, not to the extent that the abstract and written formulations of personal policies should be incorporated in an even more abstract formulation of what work life balance is in the company, but quite the opposite; that the articulation of work-life balance should be “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract” (Deleuze, 2004: 179).

This issue can only be briefly discussed here, but one way of dealing with work-life balance as a real strategy is to incorporate it within the company’s performance management system. One of the functions that a performance management system has

in a company is to implement and incorporate the overall strategy of the company on the levels of business units and employees. This happens for example when the business targets of the individual employee are set at the appraisal interview. In a Danish context, work-life balance issues are already to some extent integrated in performance management systems and appraisal interviews but today are often carried out in a rather abstract way because it is often discussed from the point of view of the individual employees and not the real conditions that constitute their possibilities to achieve work-life balance. Hereby, the issues of work-life balance and stress are often raised as private and personal problems of the employees, making it a very difficult subject for the manager (and employees) to handle and organize. The result of this is that employees who experience problems often are excluded from the company either because they themselves get another job or because they are terminated or sent to an external psychologist. I have discussed this at length in a previous chapter. However, it is important to stress how the strategy can be implemented in the appraisal interviews, and following this implementation how work-life balance can be dealt with in a practical sense.

*Fig. 12: Model over how to implement work-life balance issues in appraisal interview*

	Work life balances issues	Personal Policies	How can the enterprise help the employees?
Business objectives	Work life balance issues	What are the policies with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Competencies</li> <li>• Social life</li> <li>• Economic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is relevant for the employees?</li> <li>• How will it fit and affect the given situation of the employees?</li> </ul>
Competencies objectives	Work life balance issues		
Individual Development Plan	Work life balance issues		

The general idea is to make it possible for the manager and employee to address and discuss the pre-individual conditions of the relationship between the company and employees. This is work-life balance from an organizational perspective.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown two practical interventions. The first intervention considers the integration of work-life balance issues in appraisal interviews. I suggest that work-life balance issues can be more directly integrated in the interview than is currently the case. An increasing number of Danish companies have within the last couple of years included personal issues in the appraisal interview. This shows that the personal life of the employees outside of the company is regarded as important for their performance by management. However, managers often find it difficult to discuss these issues with the employees, precisely because these issues are regarded as personal matters. My solution is to approach discussions about personal matters as discussions about the employee's performance, i.e. how will the performance of the employees be affected by their general conditions of life? The managers should therefore address the performance of the employees rather than the personal life of the employees. In this sense it is possible for the managers to have an indirect discussion about the personal life of the employees. Thus it might be easier for the manager to discuss work-life balance issues because the issues are dealt with from a non-personal angle and in a relational way.

The second practical intervention is the development of work-life strategies. Traditionally, companies have developed family-friendly policies and work-life balance policies. However, the increasing number of personnel policies creates new forms of difficulties for the employees. They are faced with conflicting statements from various policies. My suggestion to solve this problem is to develop a strategic perspective on work and life. So instead of developing new forms of policies for all areas of the employees' life that can be thought of as relevant for the performance of the employees, I suggest that we should develop a strategy for work and life in which the various policies can be organized. This work-life strategy should provide the employees with a compossible existence between the various worlds and statements of the personnel



policies. It should be possible for the employees to 'live' in the different worlds that are expressed in the various policies.

## **Conclusion: A Matter of Life and Work**

This thesis offers a critical contribution to the theories of work-life balance. Within the contemporary theoretical perspectives on work and life the individuals are constructed as being responsible for work-life balance by turning it into a problem of the personal behaviour, decisions, psychological traits and family conditions of the human subject.

In this sense the everyday problem of balancing between work and home is reduced to be primarily an individual problem and decision. When the problem of work-life balance is raised in this way, it is difficult for companies to offer managerial and organizational solutions that do not automatically exclude this as an individual problem. It might be possible for managers and organizations to help the employees in achieving work-life balance, but it is fundamentally a challenge that the individual employees must solve.

The thesis offers a different perspective on the relationship between work and life. This perspective is not based upon the individual employees' perception and hence constitution of work-life balance. Instead, it is argued that the constitution of the relation of work and life is to be found in its effects. These effects are not established in the constitution of the boundary between work and home, but are rather recognized by how the employees determine and define activities and tasks as work. For example, is it work to send email in the evening? Is it work to read an article at the weekend? Is it work to update a profile on Facebook? The question is therefore 'what is work?' and not 'what is the boundary between work and home?'

This is a metaphysical question. Metaphysics is therefore not only something that concerns philosophers but in fact something that is relevant for everyday and managerial problems like work-life balance. The reason we have to turn to metaphysics is that work is not simply physically given to us anymore. The work of an increasing number of employees is today recognized by being flexible and immaterial. The consequence of this is not only that the boundary of work and home is blurred, but moreover that work as such is becoming imperceptible. It is not something we can see.

It is not something that is given to our experience. It can neither be defined by pointing to its materiality, results or pre-established criteria like working time and working place.

To define what work is we have to ask something else. This is the fundamental question of this thesis. We should not ask the question of 'what work is', because we cannot simply answer this anymore, but what we can do is to raise the question of 'that by which work is given as work.' This is to ask what the criteria that go beyond our definitions and constitution of work are, for example, when asking oneself if it is work to send email in the evening and deciding that it is work if *we do it for more than 30 minutes*. We establish a rule by which work is given as work in our constitution and definition of what work is for us.

This simple shift of focus will be named work-life management. Work-life management is concerned with the real constitution of the relationship between work and life by how it can be found in its constituting effects (e.g. that sending email is work if it is done for more than 30 minutes). In this sense the perspective of work-life management turns the theories of work-life balance on their head because it begins with the constituting effects and not the constituting cause of the human subject. In work-life management the focus is not so much on *what* constitutes the relation between work and life, as it is on *how* it is constituted in the expressions of human subjects. Hence, the focus has been to show how the relation was constituted by the development of a 'practical ontology' (Hayden, 1998: 7) of the relation between work and life.

In the thesis this transformation is shown and analyzed in two case studies. It is revealed in the empirical analysis that the employees (unknowingly) are metaphysicists who, when they talk and discuss the balance between work and home, constantly return to arguments of what work is and by which rules they can determine something as work.

It is demonstrated how the employees relate the discussion of what work is to matters of flexibility, performance and commitment. For the employees these are three central problems of contemporary work that cannot be simply solved. For example, when one is committed to one part of life it is not taken away from another part of life. This means

that the employees have to be commitment to several aspects of life at the same time, e.g. to show commitment to work and children simultaneously. In relation to flexibility this is discussed as the blurring of the boundaries between work and non-work, which means that the productivity of the employees is not restricted to the site of work. They can be productive both at work and outside of work. The discussion of performance is raised in relation to the blurring of production and reproduction, which means that reproduction as an initial condition for production is inseparable from production, for example, when matters of employee performance are constantly raised as employee satisfaction. The question of 'what work is' is in this sense discussed and raised in three different ways.

From a metaphysical perspective these three discussions of 'what work is' are interesting because they break with the principle of contradiction, which says that "the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect" (Aristotle, 1994: 1005b). The contemporary work is increasingly difficult to define on this principle. Instead, it is argued in the thesis that this principle should be replaced by the principle of univocity. Univocity means that being "is said in one and the same 'sense' of everything about which it is said" (Deleuze, 1990: 179). If we relate this to our discussion of the being of work ('what work is') then the consequence is that the essence of work should not be found in a remote and abstract principle (as is the case with the unattainable balance), but rather be found as a principle by which it has been constituted. In this sense it is a principle we can only talk about *as that by which it is given as work*, which is to say that we can only locate and find it as a principle transcending our empirical constitution of what work is.

These metaphysical perspectives (the ontological principle of univocity and the methodological invention of a transcendental empiricism) are inspired by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (see e.g. 1990; 1994). Philosophy in general and the philosophy of Deleuze in particular are important for the development of the perspective of work-life management. Rather than imposing the philosophy of Deleuze I attempt to draw on its consequences, for example, what are the consequences of thinking the relation about between work and life univocally? By focusing on the

impacted, it is possible to raise a critique of work-life balance that is neither imposed from an empirical nor a theoretical standpoint, but rather from a transcendental standpoint. It is a transcendental critique which not only criticizes the contemporary perspectives for the effects that they produce but moreover attempts to create new ways of constituting and conditioning the relationship between work and life.

The first part of the thesis, *Ontology and Methodology*, discussed the kind of knowledge produced in the thesis. When working within a Deleuzian framework, we cannot talk about epistemology in a traditional sense, as how our intelligence can achieve knowledge of the external world, because this duality of internal and external worlds collapses in the transcendental critical philosophy of Deleuze. As it was shown, the reason for this is that immanence is not immanent to a substance; immanence is immanent to itself. This means knowledge has to be created in the form of concepts and problems in which the undetermined thought can become determinable, because it cannot be founded in something given outside of thought itself. It has to create concepts and problems in which it can become thought. The empirical is therefore not something that can be found in an external or internal world but is something that belongs to thought itself. The empirical is the principle for thought's creation of itself. This is why Deleuze understands empiricism as a transcendental method. What is the principle for the production of thought in us as thinking human subjects?

It is therefore not especially important to discuss the possibility of representing the empirical, rather it becomes necessary to discuss the immanent conditions of thought, i.e. what is the principle producing this thought and how is this thought produced? However, this means that we cannot refer to accuracy and precision in arguing for the reasons to apply Deleuze to the study of the relation between work and life. Instead, we have to invoke a consistency of thought. There is something that can be produced by the conditions of immanence, or what Deleuze and Guattari elsewhere also call the place of immanence (2003: 35), but there is definitely also something that cannot be produced by these conditions.

This is also why I put a great deal of work into criticizing the contemporary perspectives of work-life balance. This is not only a critique of the alternatives for not being able to account for what constitutes work-life balance but also to show the conditions upon which these forms of knowledge are produced, and how they differ from the conditions of work-life management. Consistency is important for the production of knowledge in this thesis because it works as a set of criteria for when something is produced by immanent conditions and when it is not. It is a guiding principle for carrying out metaphysical experiments and reflections on the transcendental empirical principle that can produce a consistent plane of thought.

In this sense it is possible to claim that every thought is knowledge, but not all knowledge is interesting, remarkable or important (see May, 2005: 22). But how can we distinguish between interesting and uninteresting thoughts, concepts and problems? For Deleuze, it is a matter of whether these thoughts create possibilities for life or not. This means that the foundation of knowledge is an ethical principle. This principle guides the production of knowledge.

Part two of the thesis – *Social Analytics* – presents and problematizes the contemporary perspectives on work-life balance. Chapter 3 is a philosophical review of the theories of work-life balance that shows two types of thinking and discusses the relation of work and life – either the state of balance is in or between the human subjects. Chapter 4 continues the discussion and analysis of the contemporary perspectives of work-life balance. By relating to the discussion of theoretical problems within theories of work-life balance of the object, the condition, the subject and the effects of work-life balance, it is an attempt to replace the contemporary ways of constituting the problem of work-life balance in relation to the human subject with the ontological principle of univocity. In doing so the perspective of work-life management is developed.

The third part of the thesis – *Experiments in the Metaphysics of Work and Life* – consists of the empirical analysis of flexibility, performance and commitment. In chapter 5, I suggest that we should reconsider flexibility by not focusing on the boundary between work and life, but rather how the employees change their way of

managing themselves. The empirical case for this study was a Danish inbound call centre in Blue that had recently introduced a distance working arrangement for its employees. Management wanted to provide the employees with the flexibility to work from home two or three days a week and expected a higher return from the employees as a result. The employees were to change not only their ways of working but also the way they managed themselves. They were to become more committed and put more of themselves into their work.

Chapter 6 is a study of how changes in the measurement of productivity in terms of performance affect the way that employees and managers expressed the relation between work and life. The chapter expands on the theoretical developments of boundary management and the productive form of blurred boundaries by suggesting that the employees not only have to draw the spatial and temporal line between work and non-work, they also have to determine recreation as that which makes them able to be productive. Managing the boundary between work and non-work becomes a part of self-management in the sense that the employees themselves have to determine whether something is work or not work. Furthermore, it becomes a part of the employees' self-management to manage the relationship between their production and reproduction, e.g. the employees have to manage their contemporary level of production in relation to how it affects their general wellbeing and future ability to be productive.

In chapter 7 I analyzed the social formation of commitment. Today the productive labour power of the employees should not be detached from the employees' ways of living; on the contrary, these ways of living should be included in work. The committed employees of today therefore offer not only a body capable of working but also a mind capable of living for work. Commitment is therefore more than a matter of the employees identifying themselves with work (see e.g. McElroy et al., 2001) as they also are committed to ways of living that are regarded as being productive for the company. Thus, we should not understand commitment as an individual investment of desire in work, but rather as individual expressions of a social desire, i.e. what is regarded as productive by the company.

The fourth part of the thesis – *Interventions in Practice* – deals with practical implications for managing work and life. Two forms of intervention in the management of work and life are suggested. In Red it was suggested that work-life balance issues should be more directly integrated in the appraisal interview; and in Green a strategic rather than policy-oriented approach to management of the relation between work and life was suggested.

To summarize, the aim of this thesis was not simply to have the essential discussion of what work-life balance is, or the normative discussion of what it should be. These questions are fine for roundtable discussions (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003: 28). Instead, the aim was to raise the problematic relation of work and life in terms of management and not as a question of personal balance. Hence, I was not interested in *what work-life balance is*, but rather, *how the relation of work and life can be thought and created in manageable relations between work and life*. I wanted to invent a new way of thinking about the relation between work and life, bringing a new thought into the world of work-life balance, rather than describing and determining what work-life balance is or ought to be.

I hope this study is only the beginning to similar studies. In the following I will briefly describe some of the perspectives for this kind of metaphysical labor.

The idea of metaphysical labour might offer an interesting perspective to organization studies in general. In 1961 Burns and Stalker introduced the distinction between mechanic and organic types of organization (1966). The mechanic type of organization is recognized by being stable whereas the organic type is adaptable to a changing environment and conditions (1966: 121). This basic principle of organization results in a number of organizational differences between the two ideal types. They describe one of the differences between the types in this way: “The commitment to the concern’s tasks and to the ‘technological ethos’ of managerial progress and expansion is more highly valued than loyalty and obedience” (1966: 121). The idea of metaphysical labor as a way of organizing work and life breaks with these perspectives since it neither focus upon the boundary between the organization (work) and what is outside of the



organization nor upon the distinction between the individual and the organization (at least not in a traditional sense). It is in this sense that we can understand the discussions of flexibility, performance and commitment as organizational ideas in which organization of work and life takes place. These ideas might be similar, what has been discussed as machinic types of organization within critical organization studies (see e.g. Brigham, 2005; Fuglsang, 2007; Kaulingfreks and ten Bos, 2005; Lohmann and Steyaert, 2006; Pedersen, 2009; Rhodes and Kornberger, 2009; Thanem, 2001; 2004; 2006). What is common for these discussions of machinic organizations and a point of criticism that is shared by this thesis is that they are against hylomorphism as an organizing principle, because this principle contains differences in forms of matter. Instead, they suggest that matter is a difference in itself.

Another possible contribution of the thesis could be to suggest that the title of metaphysical labor is a principle of organization that can be found in the phenomena by which we recognize post-modern capitalism. In this sense it contributes to the discussions of the nature of capitalism (Drucker, 1993; Dyer-Witheford, 2004; Hardt and Negri, 2001; Lash, 2007a; Lazzarato, 1996; 2004; Vercellone, 2005; 2007; 2008; Virno, 2007). However, one could argue that it does so in a more materialistic sense than an ideological sense, or at least that is the hope.

In relation to the study of the nature of capitalism it could of course have been interesting to investigate the variation in the historical constitution of the relation of work and life but that has been beyond the scope of the thesis. Instead, I have decided to focus upon the empirical and present conditions of work and life. But it would be interesting to read the classic organizational texts for a discussion and analysis of how the relation between work and life is constituted.

A more practical and further development of these thoughts could be in relation to how we should think of problems regarding the well-being and satisfaction of the employees. Do we need to invoke a new concept of psychological working environment and working health? Working conditions and performance are not simply external to the effects that they have on the employees like mental stress or work-life balance; rather,

these effects are internal to performance. In many ways it becomes difficult to talk about well-being in general terms of how working conditions affect human beings and not in the specific terms of how well-being is an effect of performance. The consequence of this is that well-being is transformed from a matter of humanism to a question of performance. Well-being is seen as a condition for the individual performance. With regard to this it would be interesting to develop this new concept of well-being.

This development could be related to the further improvement of transcendental empiricism as an empirical methodology. The philosophical focus of this thesis has to a high extent been on Deleuze, but there are a number of other philosophers who would be relevant for the methodological development of transcendental empiricism, like William James, Henri Bergson and Frederich Nietzsche. In relation to this study it would be relevant to read and discuss univocal thinkers like Martin Heidegger and Benito Spinoza.

Finally, I must say that I have not myself realized what this kind of work can achieve. However, I feel some comfort when remembering the dictum: “We never know in advance what a body can do” (1980: 3; see also 1988: 17-18; Spinoza, 2003[Ethics, III, 2, scholium]). In my opinion the practical effects of thinking about the relation of work and life metaphysically have only been showed to a limited extent.

We must end with a surprising conclusion; the relation is not between work and life; it is outside!

## Danish Summary

Afhandlingen *Metaphysical Labour* undersøger balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv i en ledelsesmæssig og organisatorisk kontekst. Den tilbyder et nyt kritisk bidrag til de nuværende teorier om balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv og de praktiske udfordringer, som medarbejdere, ledere og virksomheder står overfor i dag.

Afsætte for afhandlingen er en kritik af den tendens til individualisering af balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv, der findes indenfor den nuværende forskning og praksis vedrørende balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv. I dag bliver balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv ofte reduceret til et individuelt anliggende. Dette sker på den ene side ved, at det enkelte menneske bliver gjort personlig ansvarligt for at trække grænsen mellem familien og arbejdet, og på den anden side ved at balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv bliver anset som et problem vedrørende personlige adfærd, psykologiske træk og familieforhold. I denne forstand bliver det at balancere mellem arbejde og hjem reduceret til primært at være et individuelt anliggende, problem og valg.

Når problemet med balancen mellem arbejds- og familieliv rejses på denne individuelle måde, er det vanskeligt for virksomhederne at tilbyde ledelsesmæssige og organisatoriske løsninger, der ikke automatisk ender ud med igen at reducere dette til et individuelt selvledelsesproblem. Dette kommer eksempelvis til udtryk, når lederen fortæller medarbejderen, at det er medarbejderen selv, som må sige fra eller trække grænsen mellem familien og arbejdet, da det er individuelt, hvor denne grænse går. Det bliver derved anset som et problem, som ledere og organisationer kun kan hjælpe medarbejderne med at håndtere, men grundlæggende er det en udfordring, som de enkelte selv skal kunne løse og forvalte. Hvis medarbejderen ikke er i stand til dette, skyldes det enten manglende social og personlige kompetencer, som betyder, at medarbejderen ikke kan finde ud af at afstemme forventninger eller sige fra overfor arbejde.

Afhandlingen tilbyder et andet perspektiv på relationen mellem arbejde og liv. Dette perspektiv er ikke baseret på, hvordan menneskers ser og opfatter relationen mellem

arbejde og familie, hvilket betyder, at udgangspunktet ikke er den individuelle balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv. I stedet viser afhandlingen gennem empiriske studier, at konstitueringen af relationen mellem arbejde og liv skal findes i dens individuierende effekter. Disse individuierende effekter bliver modsat balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv ikke fastlagt i fastsættelsen af grænsen mellem arbejde og familie, men derimod ved de måder, som mennesker bestemmer og definerer aktiviteter og opgaver som arbejde. For eksempel, hvornår er det arbejde at sende e-mail om aftenen? Er det kompetenceudvikling eller personlig interesse, hvis man læser en artikel i weekenden? Hvornår er jeg for syg til at arbejde? Dette er en central forskydning af perspektivet, som vi kender det fra litteraturen om balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv, der spørger om, hvor går grænsen mellem familie- og arbejdsliv. I stedet stiller afhandlingen spørgsmålet, hvad er arbejde?

Dette er et metafysisk spørgsmål. Metafysik er derfor ikke kun noget, der vedrører filosoffer, men er i virkeligheden noget, der er relevante for vores dagligdag. Grunden til at vi er nødt til at rejse dette som et metafysisk spørgsmål er, at arbejde er ikke længere er fysisk givet til os. Arbejdet er for et stigende antal medarbejdere i dag fleksibelt og immaterielt. Konsekvensen af dette er ikke kun, at grænsen mellem arbejde og hjem bliver udvisket, men ydermere at arbejde som sådan bliver umærkeligt. Det er ikke noget, vi kan se eller opfatte. Det er ikke noget, der er umiddelbart er givet til vores erfaring. Det kan ikke defineres ved at pege på dets materialitet, resultater eller på forhånd fastsatte kriterier som arbejdstid og arbejdssted.

For at definere, hvad arbejde er, er vi nødt til at spørge om noget andet. Dette er det grundlæggende spørgsmål i denne afhandling. Vi kan ikke stille det abstrakte spørgsmål om "hvad arbejde er", da dette ikke kan besvares generelt og en gang for alle. I stedet er vi konstant nødsaget til at spørge os selv om, hvad det, hvormed arbejdet er givet som arbejde, er? Det er at spørge, hvilke kriterier der går ud over vores definitioner og forståelse af, hvad arbejdet er. Hvis vi, for eksempel, spørger os selv om, det er arbejde at sende e-mail om aftenen, og vi beslutter, at det er arbejde, hvis vi gør det i mere end 30 minutter. Så indfører vi en transcendentel regel ("det, hvormed arbejdet er givet som arbejde") i vores definition og konstituering af, hvad arbejde er for mig.

Dette enkle skift i fokus på relationen mellem familie- og arbejdsliv, kalder jeg i afhandlingen for ledelse mellem arbejde og liv ('work-life management'). Ledelse mellem arbejde og liv handler om den egentlige konstituering af relationen mellem arbejde og liv, da den fokuserer på, hvordan relationen kan findes grundlagt i det, som den udvirker, dvs. som en transcendent regel (fx at sende e-mail kan bestemmes som et arbejde, hvis det er gjort i mere end 30 minutter). I den forstand vendes den traditionelle måde at se relation mellem arbejds- og familieliv på hovedet, fordi det begynder med at undersøge virkninger og effekterne og ikke undersøge årsagen til disse i det menneskelige subjekt.

I afhandlingen er denne transformation vist og analyseret i to casestudier. Igennem en empirisk analyse vise det, hvordan de ansatte (ubevidst) er metafysikere, når de taler og diskutere relationen mellem arbejde og liv, og hele tiden vender tilbage til argumenter om, hvad arbejde er, og ved hvilke transcendentale regler, som de kan bestemme noget som arbejde.

Det bliver vist, hvordan medarbejderne relaterer diskussionen om, hvad arbejde er til spørgsmål vedrørende fleksibilitet, performance og engagement. For de ansatte er disse tre centrale problemer i det moderne arbejdsliv, som de ikke blot kan løse. For eksempel, når en medarbejder er engageret i arbejdslivet, betyder det ikke er medarbejderen derved er tilsvarende mindre engageret i familielivet. Det har derimod den konsekvens, at medarbejderen er nødt til at være engageret i flere aspekter af livet på samme tid. I forhold til fleksibilitet kan dette diskuteres som en udviskning af grænserne mellem arbejde og hjem, hvilket betyder, at produktiviteten blandt de ansatte ikke kan afgrænses arbejdsstedet og -tiden, men flyder ind i den sfære af livet, som tidligere har været forbeholdt reproduktionen og opladning af energi og motivation. Medarbejderne kan derved være produktiv både på arbejdspladsen og uden for arbejdspladsen. Denne diskussion er rejst i forhold til en udviskning af produktion og reproduktion, hvilket betyder, at reproduktion som forudsætning for produktion bliver uløseligt forbundet med produktion. Det er eksempelvis, når spørgsmålet om medarbejdernes præstationer bliver diskuteret som medarbejdertilfredshed. Det centrale spørgsmål om hvordan

arbejde bliver defineret og bestemt som arbejde, drøftes og diskuteres gennem analysen af disse tre problemfelter, hvori relationen mellem arbejde og liv bliver konstitueret på forskellige måder.

Fra et metafysisk perspektiv er disse tre problemfelters bestemmelse af arbejdet er interessante, fordi de bryder med princippet om kontradiktion. Aristoteles klassiske definition lyder: "the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect" (Aristotle, 1994: 1005b). Det moderne arbejdets karakter er stadig sværere at definere gennem dette princip. I stedet for dette princip argumenterer og viser afhandlingen, hvordan dette princip bør erstattes af princippet om univokalitet. Univokalitet betyder, at det er "said in one and the same 'sense' of everything about which it is said" (Deleuze, 1990: 179). Hvis vi relaterer dette til vores diskussion af det at være i arbejde ("hvad arbejde er"), så er konsekvensen er, at arbejdets essens ikke bør findes i et fjernt og abstrakt princip (som det er tilfældet med den uopnåelige balance), men snarere skal findes som et princip for, hvordan arbejdet er konstitueret som arbejde. I den forstand er det et transcendentalt princip, som vi kun kan tale om, som det, hvormed arbejdet er givet som arbejde. Det vil sige, at vi kun kan lokalisere og finde det som et princip, der overskrider vores empiriske konstituering af, hvad arbejde er.

Disse metafysiske perspektiver (det ontologiske princip om univokal væren og metodologiske opfindelse af en transcendental empiri) er inspireret af den franske filosof Gilles Deleuze (1990; 1994). Filosofi i almindelighed og Deleuzes filosofi i særdeleshed er væsentlig for udviklingen af perspektivet ledelse af arbejde og liv. Afhandlingen trækker på konsekvenserne af at bruge Deleuzes filosofi. Det er for eksempel, hvad er konsekvenserne af at tænke relationen mellem arbejde og liv som univokalt, hvilket betyder at arbejde og liv kommer til udtrykke på samme måde og med den samme stemme? Ved at fokusere på konsekvenserne er det muligt at fremføre en kritik af den nuværende forståelse af balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv, som hverken er rejst fra et empirisk eller teoretisk perspektiv, men snarere fra et transcendentalt synspunkt. Det er en transcendental kritik, der ikke blot kritiserer de nuværende perspektiver for de virkninger, som de producerer (som eksempelvis

individualisering af problemet), men som i øvrigt også forsøg på at skabe nye måder, at vi kan lede og organisere forholdet mellem arbejde og liv på. Dette gælder både teoretisk og praktisk.

Afhandlingen er opdelt i fire dele.

Den første del af afhandling fokuserer på de metodologiske og ontologiske implikationer af at gøre brug Deleuzes filosofi til empirisk forskning. I denne forstand beskæftiger dette afsnit sig med filosofi og metafysik som en transcendental empirisk videnskab.

I den anden del af handlingen bliver de nuværende perspektiver på arbejde og privatliv præsenteret og problematiseret. Igennem en analyse af fire teoretiske problemstillinger indenfor forskningen i balance mellem familie- og arbejdsliv (objektet, betingelsen, subjektet og effekterne), forskydes måden, som man forstår relationen mellem familie- og arbejdsliv fra et balanceperspektiv til et ledelsesperspektiv.

Den tredje del af afhandlingen består af tre empiriske analyser. I tre kapitler vise og analyseres de tre problematiske former, hvorigennem relationen mellem arbejde og liv er konstitueret: fleksibilitet, performance og engagement. Kapitlerne studerer, hvordan, hvornår og i hvilken forstand medarbejderne definerer og fastlægger forskellige aktiviteter som arbejde.

Den fjerde del peger på andre måder at lede og organisere relationen mellem arbejde og liv. Denne del fokuserer på medarbejdersamtaler, arbejds- og familielivsstrategi, og hvordan ledere kan spørge og diskutere forholdet mellem arbejde og liv som et spørgsmål vedrørende de individuerende effekter og transcendentale regler, som medarbejderne opstiller for ledelse af dem selv.

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Frequency Identification (RFID)*