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Work and Life Patterns of Freelancers in the (New) Media

A Comparative Analysis in the Context of Welfare State and Labour Market Regulations in Denmark and Germany

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Barbara Fersch

Acknowledgements

Aalborg, October 2009   Barbara Fersch

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1. Introduction

On June 15th 2009, the front-page story of the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* was a portrait of Germany's young generation. The article featured several personal stories: There is the young architecture graduate who was working 70 hours a week in the office of a world-famous architect on continuous half-year contracts and for little money, only to be laid-off after the financial crisis. Another example is the young unskilled worker from Eastern Germany, who has been moving constantly throughout the whole of Germany, depending on where his jobs as a subcontracted labourer took him. Insecurity, according to the article's conclusion, is the great common denominator of young people of today. The article cites several German sociologists, who seem to agree that reasons for this can be found in the transformation of work. The sociologist Ulrich Beck is cited with the statement that it is the transition to insecure work and employment which constitutes this new, young generation. The instability of work and employment, the article is telling us, is unifying young people across class, educational backgrounds and regional differences. Insecurity, instability, crisis – the article tells us a story of continuous instability. (Oehmke *et al* 2009)

An article on contemporary working life in the Danish Newspaper *Politiken* (Pedersen 2008) tells us yet another story: 'A career is nothing without a life' - this was the headline of the recruiting campaign of a large Danish company. In their ads, the company was stressing their interest in the whole person and the importance of "private life" for the work results of their employees. The author of the *Politiken* article interprets this campaign as a sign of an increased "blurring" of the boundaries between work and life. He discusses it in the context of the Danish debate of "boundary-less work" (*grænseløst arbejde)* (see ibid). The development towards "boundary-less work" has also been attributed to the current transformation of work and work organisation.

I argue that it is not a coincidence that these two different stories are presented to us here. A German magazine is narrating a scenario of insecurity and precariousness with its causes to be found in the current transformation of work, while the article in the Danish

newspaper is focussing on questions of the relation between work and private life in the context of changing work organisation. The former is a specifically German story of the consequences of the current transformation of work and of work organisation. In a country where full inclusion with regard to social rights is strongly dependent on life-long standard employment, it does not seem to be surprising at all that the current dynamics of flexibilisation and de-regulation of work lead to the individual consequences which are reported in the article. The situation is different in Denmark, where the principle of universalism is still rooted in welfare state programmes. Thus social security does not so much depend on the standard employment model, which is eroding in times of flexibilisation and de-regulation of work. However, the emphasis on questions of new challenges for the combination of work and life, like in the discussion of "boundary-less work", might probably also seem natural in a country like Denmark, with a high labour force participation rate of women and a strong institutionalisation of the dual-earner model.

Although the described contrast might be an oversimplification (I will discuss these matters in depth later on (especially in chapter 4)), it illustrates very well one of the central assumptions this research project is grounded in: The current transformation of work and its consequences for individuals are shaped by national frameworks, such as welfare state and labour market regulations.

Within sociology the transformation of work has been on the agenda all over the world in recent decades. Several dimensions of the proclaimed change of work have been discussed in general, e.g. dynamics of de-regulation and flexibilisation, a blurring of boundaries between work and life and a change of norms and practices concerning work. Scholars have identified several causes for these on-going transformations as well, from the emergence and domination of neoliberal thinking, be it within politics, management and organisations, or generally within society, to the on-going societal individualisation processes and technological innovations and developments (like most prominently the internet, which for instance enabled the expansion of teleworking). (e.g. Beck 2000, Sennett 1998, Boltanski & Chiapello 2005)

Within this context freelancers in the (new) media branch have often been discussed as extreme cases of "new" work organisation. In their work form the new conditions and challenges can be found in a distinct way. Freelancers or solo-self-employed, who pursue a profession without any long-term commitment to any particular employer, constitute one of the most flexible parts of the workforce. They can for instance be hired for temporary projects or used in the case of outsourcing of specific tasks. As they have to sell their services on the market without being buffered by any employer they are very directly exposed to market risks. Amongst other things, this can lead to "bulimic career patterns", i.e. a very unsteady work load and income: In some periods, they literally have to work around the clock in order to meet their customers' deadlines, at other times they are "forced" to have free time and accordingly have to cope with a loss of income. (e.g. Betzelt 2008, Manske 2003a, Gill 2002)

On the other hand they have quite a lot of autonomy concerning everyday work organisation, as they can and must organise their working day mostly by themselves. Therefore they enjoy quite broad scopes of action, which together with the often creative character of their work, can strengthen forms of identification and demands for self-realisation via their job (see ibid).

This tension makes the analysis of freelancers' handling of work and life very interesting. Do they embrace their work, fuelled by ideas of self-realisation and self-actualisation, in happy self-exploitation? Or are they trying to draw boundaries, to limit "work unbound" and its demands? How do they reconcile the demands with their private and / or family life? And how do they cope with the unsteadiness, the insecurity inherent to their work form?

Above I have stated that the changes in work organisation are shaped by national regulatory contexts. Here I am referring to an aspect that is often neglected in the sociological debate on the current transformations of work, namely that work and employment are shaped by national frameworks, such as welfare state and labour market regulations. Taking this into account I argue that the "new" forms of work, their specific shapes, and their consequences for the individuals, are also varying in different countries.

However, many approaches within sociology that try to analytically grasp the development and transformation of work (like e.g. the German discourse on de-limitation of work / *Entgrenzung von Arbeit* (e.g. Voß & Pongratz 1998, Minnsen 1999) or the French discourse on precarious work (see e.g. Castel 2002) do ground their theorising in specific national frames. Frequently, then, generalisations are made on this basis. The latter is problematic, because it overlooks that some of the stated dynamics might only reflect the development within certain, specific national contexts.

In his keynote address at the 34th Congress of the German Society of Sociology (*DGS*) in 2008, Ulrich Beck accused wide parts of German sociology of "methodological nationalism" (Beck 2008). In his article discussing the concept in a European context, Martin Heidenreich defines "methodological nationalism" as follows:

> It is the notion that the social world is divided into nation states, and that those are constituting either the central unit or the central context of investigation within sociological studies" (Heidenreich 2006, p. 21, footnote, author's translation)

Ulrich Beck states in the above-named key-note address: 'Social researchers understand and analyse their object of investigation from the perspective of a national "we-sociology".'(Beck 2008, p. 18, author's translation). It is exactly the influence of "methodological nationalism", I am arguing, that causes the shortcomings of certain theorising within the sociology of work described above. This problem is especially evident in fields like the sociology of work, as work and employment are strongly regulated, and thus shaped by national frameworks. In order not to overlook national regulations, but to overcome a national "we-sociology", cross-national comparison constitutes a fruitful means.

In the context of the investigation of "new" work, Henninger and Bleses (2005) mention as well that specific national settings have been underestimated until now. On these grounds, they demand comparative analyses of "new" work forms and their individual consequences. This research project aims to contribute to a closure of this research gap and a more differentiated, contextualised perspective within the sociology of work and the debate on the current transformation of work in particular. In the next

chapter I am going to describe how and in what ways the project aims to do that. I am going to describe the project's research problem, research design and research question(s)

1.1. Research problem, research design and research question(s)

Within this research project I am analysing work and life arrangements of freelancers involved in the "cultural end" of the (new) media branch. The freelancers interviewed in the course of this research project are mainly concerned with graphical work of all kinds (they are e.g. working within graphics design, web design, 3-d visualisation and the like). These freelancers are especially confronted with flexibilised work organisation: As the research literature states, their working life is characterised by a radical market dependency, an open and non-codified market access, an informal regulation through networks, high demands for flexibility concerning time, place and content, and high insecurity risks. The research literature shows this is very often accompanied by blurring boundaries between work and non-work/life. Therefore within this project freelancing is seen as an extreme case of "new" flexibilised work organisation. The project aims to shed light on how the freelancers handle and organise their work and life under these conditions. (see e.g. Gill 2002, Gottschall & Betzelt 2003, Manske 2007)

There is a growing body of research literature about the solo-self-employed and freelancers in the cultural sector in Germany. (see e.g. Gottschall & Betzelt 2003; Manske 2003a + b) Some comparative studies can also be found, (see e.g. Gottschall & Kroos 2003; Betzelt 2002; Gill 2002) as well as some research about freelancers in Denmark. (PLS Rambøll 2001 a+b; Stevn 2003). Various aspects of the unbound working life of freelancers are analysed, but the institutional settings have generally been of little interest.[1] It is here my research project comes in, as it is conceptualised to comparatively analyse "new" work patterns *within* the context of national institutional frameworks – it is thus the comparison that will allow a closer look at what these frameworks mean for "unbound" freelance work.

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[1] One exemption is the research project of Gottschall et al., carrying out an analysis of the solo-selfemployed and freelancers in the cultural sector in Germany by systematically connecting modes of regulation (including welfare state policies) and empirical outcomes (see e.g. Gottschall & Betzelt 2003).

The research problem is thus twofold: It consists of the challenge of how the individuals can handle unbound work, with freelancers as an extreme case (1). At the same time, I am asking the question how the national-specific frameworks shape the specific form of work unbound, and also the possibilities of the freelancers to handle its challenges (2). These two guiding research interests result in the following main research question: *What are the differences and similarities in the handling of "work unbound" by the freelancers in the (new) media branch in Denmark and Germany?*

Two main aspects of the handling of work-unbound are focused on, namely (1) the "management" of every-day life and (2) long-term strategies and plans. Several aspects or challenges of freelancers' work life are illuminated within this project, namely (1) insecurity (see chapter 6), (2) work organisation and the combination of work and life (see chapter 7) and (3) household / family arrangements (see chapter 8).

The empirical core of this project is qualitative interviews with freelancers in both countries. These guided, work-biographical interviews build the material to be analysed.

As the comparative perspective is central within the research design of this project, the individual freelancer narratives are subsequently contextualised in quite a broad context, namely the specific national institutional settings in Denmark and Germany. The following table illustrates the research design:

Level of Analysis		Relevant aspects for project	Role within my project
macro	Societal institutions, Societal division of labour, Regulation of work	Welfare state Norms / discourses about work, gender, family Employment law Employment regulation	Context, institutional setting
meso	Service Labour markets, Organisation / Networks *Regulation of work*	Freelancing (work form) Regulation of work through: Customer – Freel. Relations Networks –> Recruitment for Jobs	Context, institutional setting
micro	Work situations Life worlds	Freelancers' every-day life household + family arrangements	Research problem "How do the freelancers handle work unbound?" empirical core Comparison: Freelancer Cases in Denmark Germany

Table 1: Research Design[2]

The table illustrates how the relevant contexts for the freelancers' scope of action are to be found on different societal levels. Therefore the specific shape of a work form, like freelancing, is co-formed by regulations and institutions found not only on the societal micro-level, but also on the meso- and macro level. At the same time, these are often tightly related to the phenomenon of work unbound, which becomes apparent on the

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2   The structure of the table has been inspired by Mayer-Ahuja & Wolf 2005, p. 17

micro-level. The research design of this project aims to take these insights into account by contextualising the findings from the micro-level (i.e. from qualitative interview material). The framework located at the societal meso- and macro-level is an inbuilt feature of this research design. The cross-national comparison thus becomes sensitive for the national contexts.

1.2. Outline of Thesis

In the next chapter (chapter 2) I will further describe several aspects of the research design. I am going to discuss the chosen epistemological approach (hermeneutics) and therefore also take a stand regarding issues of validity, objectivity and generalisation. Subsequently I will describe the method(s) applied within this research project.

In chapter 3 I will take up the topic of the transformation of work: I am dealing with the sociological debate and theorising on that subject matter. There I will take up two topics which have been discussed widely within sociology, namely the transformation of work organisation and the change of norms concerning work (see e.g. Sennett 1998, Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). This helps to clarify the challenges and ambivalences of the on-going processes of change and also their consequences for the freelancers in general. Furthermore I am proposing the use of Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984) as an over-all theoretical perspective for this research project. This also provides us with a theoretical perspective for the contextualisations aimed at within this project. Structuration theory equips us with a comprehensive approach to the interrelations between societal levels (micro-meso-macro).

Chapter 4 contains a discussion of the transformation of work in the context of national frameworks. In order to locate the discussions I am at first looking at the field of comparative welfare state research and its insights on different welfare state regimes (see e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990). Later I am presenting two rather opposing approaches, that are thematising the transformation of work with reference to societal contexts, namely the discourse on "precarious work" (Castel 2002), and the debate on "flexicurity" (Madsen 2008). I argue that both approaches are only applicable in certain specific national

regulatory contexts. Finally, I am going to present the concrete framings in the two countries in a descriptive manner.

Chapter 5 takes up the question of the micro-macro relation again, however in a more concrete way than the previously mentioned structuration theory: The problem to be tackled theoretically in this chapter is the relation between the welfare state and labour market regulations (macro-level) and the individuals' own perception of their situation, their actions and strategies (micro-level). In the concrete context of the topic of insecurity I am proposing to apply the concept of trust (see e.g. Möllering 2006, Luhmann 1979, Giddens 1994).

The subsequent chapter (chapter 6) is then concerned with the empirical analysis of the freelancers' own perception of (in-)security in their lives, as well their strategies to deal with the insecurity that is inextricably entwined with their work form. With the help of the previously discussed concept of trust I will contextualise the findings and especially the differences found along country lines. I will argue that the societal frameworks are indeed playing a crucial role in this context.

In chapter 7 I will present the empirical findings regarding the topic of self-realisation on the one hand and the organisation of their unbound work patterns on the other. We will see very different ways of dealing with the ambivalence of self-realisation vs. self-exploitation as well as different modes of organising the working day. However, country-specific differences do not appear to play a role here.

In chapter 8 I will deal with the freelance family arrangements. Taking into account the vastly different institutional landscapes in the two countries concerning family and child care policy, one would also expect large differences in freelance parental practices. However, the findings of my study emphasise that differences are to be found particularly on the "rhetorical" level and not within the practices of parents. Also, the normatively as well as regulatory fragmented and ambivalent German framework seems to promote a "reversed gender role family arrangement" as a modernised family model in the case of freelance fathers (as well Henninger & Gottschall 2007). This is different in Denmark,

where welfare state policies as well as normative understandings coherently tend towards the dual-earner model.

Finally, in chapter 9, I will generally sum up the conclusions of this research project. I will resume the insights and and discuss links, new perspectives and new questions. One new perspective I want to emphasise already at this point is concerned with the changed economic conditions: This study could only capture a picture at a certain point in time (in 2007 and 2008), and the economic conditions changed rapidly since then, due to the financial crisis in 2008 and the successive economic recession. Given the strong market dependency of the work form freelancers, this may have changed the situation for freelancers considerably. I will reflect on and discuss this topic further in the chapters 6 and 9.

2. Methods and Methodology

In this chapter, I shall describe the methodology and method guiding the approach to empirical research employed in this project. Here, the term "methodology" is defined as the application of the philosophy of science to a specific subject area, in this case my research project (Lamnek 2005). The first part of the chapter is concerned with more abstract, epistemological questions; the second part deals with the concrete methods or "toolbox" used in order to analyse the empirical material. The relationship, between methodology and methods, how and in what way they correspond to each other, will also be discussed.

The following figure shows how questions of epistemological nature are generally connected to the philosophy of science and epistemology:
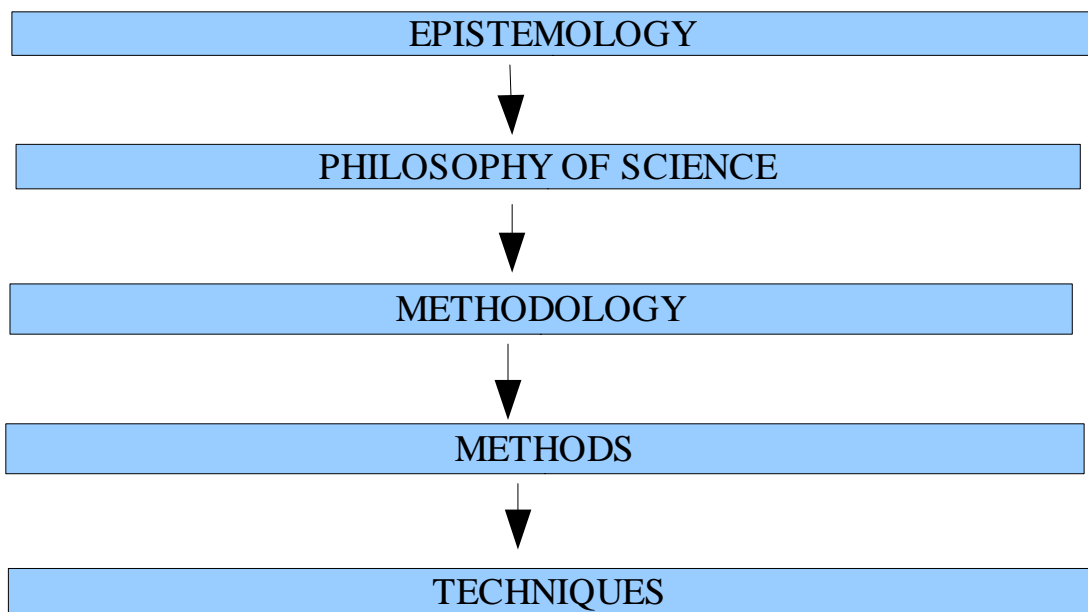
Figure 1: Relations of epistemology, philosophy of science, methodology , methods and techniques ; Source: Lamnek 2005, p. 48, author's translation

In this view, science and research have the aim of finding reasoned knowledge about the subject matter. Accordingly, the philosophy of science is concerned with the question of what kind of knowledge and findings, either "produced" or found, could be called "reasoned" or "justified," and under which conditions. In this context, epistemology is concerned with the question of how, and under which conditions, beliefs (i.e. propositions

about certain subject matters) can be called knowledge. In general, epistemologists aim to find the ways in which propositions can be justified as knowledge. Thus, with the help of ontological, logical, epistemological, and normative criteria, philosophy of science tries to figure out how scientific knowledge can emerge. (Lamnek 2005, Steup 2008)

In this chapter, I want to elaborate on epistemological questions as far as they concern the question of reasoned scientific knowledge in this research project. I will present an account of what kind of "reasoned" or "justified" knowledge I am aiming at. thereby shedding light on issues of validity, objectivity and generalisation in this project. As the project is rooted in hermeneutics, this will mainly concern issues of hermeneutical epistemological thinking. Consequently, I will discuss the methodological topics, methods and techniques used in the project as this relates to hermeneutical thought. As Figure 1 demonstrates, all these parts are interconnected, and so the linkages between them will be discussed throughout this chapter.

2. 1. Epistemological questions

This research project is epistemologically rooted in hermeneutics. In this chapter, the specificities of the hermeneutic programme will be pointed out by contrasting them with other common epistemological stances within the social sciences. In addition, their relevance for my project will be made clear.

2.1.1 An introduction to hermeneutics

The term hermeneutics is generally used in relation to the scholarship of understanding *(Verstehen)*; to the inquiry of gaining knowledge via understanding. One common denominator within this strand of thought is the importance of "meaning" - if we want to understand something, it has to be "meaningful". Thereby, hermeneutics considers every action, utterance, etc., as referring to meaning, as they take place within a scope of meaning generated by social rules. Here, an ontological foundation of hermeneutics becomes clear; namely, the understanding that human access to reality is always conveyed through symbols (e.g. language or text). (Jung 2001)

In his account on hermeneutics, Matthias Jung identifies three types of hermeneutic thinking connected to the historical development of hermeneutics. Originally stemming from the practice of biblical exegesis, hermeneutics began as a study of methods concerned with considerations on appropriate interpretations and with no further philosophical claims (1). Biblical exegesis aimed at the right interpretation of the "Word of God," and followed the thought that one and only "right" meaning existed. In the course of its historical development, hermeneutics turned away from this normative, religious belief, leading to a second type, which is called *philosophical hermeneutics* (2): In this second type of hermeneutics, the truth was no longer preordained by a higher authority such as God, but had to be found only within the interpretation itself. Consequently, instead of thinking about how texts are to be interpreted in the "right" way, the investigation of reality and its accessibility grounded on principles of "understanding" became central. The third type specified by Jung, namely *hermeneutical philosophy* (3), widens the approach of hermeneutics even further by focusing on philosophical questions of all kinds (e.g. ontological and ethical nature). Jung argues that this "radicalisation" of philosophical hermeneutics is mainly due to the emergence of the thought that not only is interpretation the interpretation of symbols (e.g. text), the production of these symbols is some kind of interpretation as well. Thus, interpretation constitutes another important term within hermeneutics. Understanding always goes hand in hand with interpreting. (Jung 2001)

After this short introduction of hermeneutical thinking, I want to position my methodological stance within this project in the realm of *hermeneutical philosophy,* thereby adopting four main points of its considerations about how to find reasoned knowledge through research. These, in a nutshell, are: (1) the hermeneutical conception of the relationship between understanding and interpretation; (2) the hermeneutical stance on fore-meanings, biases or prejudices; (3) the dialogical dimension of understanding; and (4) "practical reasoning" as the criterion for validity. In the following, I want to make clear what this means by contrasting some of the main arguments of hermeneutics with those of other epistemological schools.

2.1.2. Cornerstones of hermeneutical epistemology

As mentioned above, hermeneutics sees reality as humanly interpreted, referring to meaning and acquired through life experience. This understanding differs fundamentally from realism, since the latter does not search for knowledge through the human perception of reality, but it assumes that truth and knowledge about reality as it objectively is can and should be found. However, the mere insight that any reality, any knowledge, and any "truth" that can be found is human interpretation does not make a given approach hermeneutical. What characterises a hermeneutic approach is that it not only acknowledges that any reality is human interpretation, but that it also interprets this interpretation as (an) interpretation (itself). (Jung 2001) In Thomas A. Schwandt's account (Schwandt 2000) of hermeneutic philosophy (in his text it is labelled philosophical hermeneutics, which given the content is consistent with Jung's hermeneutic philosophy[3]), which he mainly roots in Gadamer's scholarship, he stresses the above named insight, and elaborates on it's everyday-life implications. According to Schwandt, in hermeneutic philosophy, understanding is seen as the

> very condition of being human. Understanding *is* interpretation. As Gadamer (1970) explains, understanding is not "an isolated activity of human beings but a basic structure of our experience of life. We are always taking something *as* something. That is the primordial givenness of our world orientation, and we cannot reduce it to anything simpler or more immediate" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 194, emphasis in original).

This citation from Gadamer once again points out the specific ontological standpoint of hermeneutical philosophy very clearly. However, as Schwandt also makes clear in his text, this understanding is different from phenomenological considerations. In addition to focussing on understanding and interpretation, phenomenology (which is, like hermeneutics, a prevalent epistemological approach within qualitative research) assumes the researcher to be an uninvolved observer; this is not an option within hermeneutical ontology. The specific understanding of the relationship between understanding and interpretation and it's ontological consequences noted above are reasons for that. Thus, this hermeneutical insight constitutes one cornerstone of the epistemological footing of

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3   In order to avoid confusion, I will continue using the term "hermeneutic philosophy".

this research project, especially as regards the treatment and analysis of the empirical core: the qualitative interview material.

Schwandt also elaborates on the second crucial insight of hermeneutics: the treatment of fore-meaning, bias or prejudice. First of all, let us briefly reflect on issues of terminology: The Anglophone literature on hermeneutics uses the terms fore-meaning, bias, and prejudice quite synonymously, although those words do bring in quite different connotations. Fore-meaning is merely a (probably bad) direct translation of the German word *Vorverständnis,* used by Gadamer and others. In fact, *Vorverständnis* in German mainly has a neutral connotation, possibly being translatable to preconception. The words bias and prejudice, however, imply a more negative connotation. Hermeneutics, on the other hand, does not evaluate either of them as necessarily negative for the research process. In contrast to phenomenological efforts to getting rid of bias and prejudice by being an uninvolved observer, hermeneutics argues that one's biases should be utilized in the quest for understanding. In hermeneutics, trying to get rid of these fore-meanings is an impossible undertaking, as they are something internal and quintessential for every individual, including researchers. As Gadamer puts it in his main work *Truth and Method:*

> In fact history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. [...] *This is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being* (Gadamer 1989, p. 278, emphasis in original).

This citation demonstrates the insuperableness of one's biases seen from a hermeneutic viewpoint; but, by the choice of words, it also points to the relevance of biases stemming from "tradition" in my own research project. Since I am comparing the narratives of individuals from two different countries, the question of understandings shaped by "society" and "state" becomes highly relevant. Following Gadamer and hermeneutic thinking, it is not only my interviewees, who necessarily understand themselves in the context of "the family, society and state, they live in", but also myself as a researcher who is biased by my own personal upbringing and biography. However, according to

hermeneutics, this does not pose a problem *per se*. As noted above, the hermeneutic treatment of this problem lies in the engagement of this bias:

> The point is not to free ourselves of all prejudice, but to examine our historically inherited and unreflectably held prejudices and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves (Garrison in Schwandt 2000, p. 195).

Gadamer states that this bias should be examined and analysed in the engagement process:

> [...] it is quite right for the interpreter not to approach the text, relying solely on the fore-meaning already available to him, but rather explicitly to examine the legitimacy – i.e., the origin and validity – of fore-meanings dwelling within him (Gadamer 1989, p. 270).

However, the fact that we cannot free ourselves and our quest for understanding from such bias and prejudice does not mean we would necessarily only reproduce them: on the contrary, hermeneutics seeks an understanding with the help of a critical reflection of such bias and prejudice. The hermeneutical research process entails that "the interpreter risks those prejudices in the encounter with what is to be interpreted" (Schwandt 2000, p. 195).

Schwandt stresses the dialogical dimension of understanding: prejudices and biases are risked in the confrontation with the alien or unknown, and this happens in a dialogical and interactive manner - this is the third relevant point in this chapter. This focus on interaction, which ascribes action to the interpreter as well[4], challenges the classical (i.e. phenomenological) view that interpretation aims towards the reproduction of meaning that is immanent to the given object of interpretation. In hermeneutics, on the other hand (at least amongst those who follow the scholarship of hermeneutical philosophy), interpretation is seen as the *production* of meaning; which means that this meaning is produced through the involvement of the interpreter in the aforementioned dialogue. This thought has historically been brought to hermeneutics by Wilhelm Dilthey and Martin Heidegger (see Schwandt 2000, Jung 2001).

Thus, meaning is produced in a mutual negotiation between the interpreter and the object to be interpreted, and thereby the notion of searching for the (right) meaning of the "thing itself", which phenomenology is engaged in, becomes irrelevant. This leads to the

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4   Which, in Jung's view, transforms "philosophical hermeneutics" into "hermeneutical philosophy".

conclusion that there is no such thing as an ultimately right interpretation. Indeed, hermeneutic interpretation is always an unfinished thing. In a sense, at this point, hermeneutics shares the ontological opinions of constructivists.

The Gadamerian hermeneutic circle (hermeneutical circle 1) illustrates the relationship between bias ("Vorverständnis") and understanding, but also that the business of understanding is never terminal; there is no finality to interpretation:
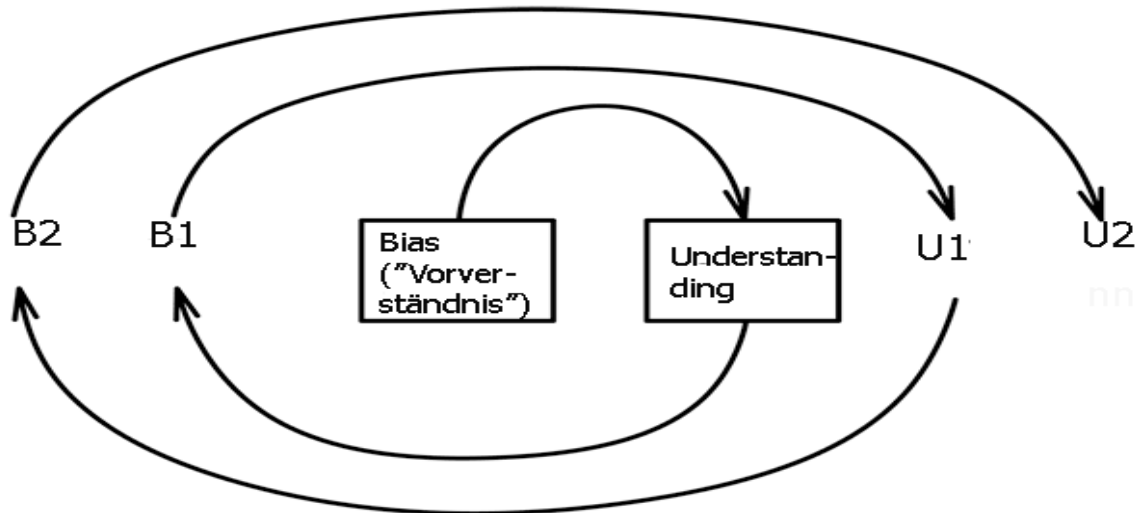
Figure 2: Hermeneutical circle 1

However, this non-objectivist stance raises questions concerning validity: If we take the assumption that there is no immanent meaning to the "things themselves" then how can we then judge which interpretation is adequate and valid in a given context? Does hermeneutics' non-objectivist understanding of meaning lead, in the end, to relativism? Bernstein's account of Gadamer's view invalidates (at least to a certain extent) a relativistic "anything goes" stance:

> We are always understanding and interpreting in light of anticipatory prejudgements and prejudices, which are themselves changing in the course of history. That is why Gadamer tells us to understand is always to understand differently. But this does not mean that our interpretations are arbitrary and distortive. We should always aim at a correct understanding of what the "things themselves" [the objects of our interpretation] say. But what the things themselves say will be different in the light of our changing horizons and the different questions we learn to ask (Bernstein in Schwandt 2000, p. 195).

This quote once again demonstrates the open, unfinished process of hermeneutical interpretation. It also reminds us to look for correct understandings and shows that

Gadamer was far from saying that every interpretation is as good as the other. And although Gadamer argues that any final correct interpretation is impossible, he sees a normative dimension in understanding as a "kind of practical-moral knowledge" (Schwandt 2000, p. 202). This insight constitutes the fourth epistemological cornerstone of this project.

Following this line of argumentation, Richard J. Bernstein offers us a possible way for finding out about the quality of an interpretation on the basis of a certain understanding of rationality. He suggests "practical reasoning" (Schwandt 2000, p. 202) as a means to find out which interpretations are appropriate.

> We can and do make comparative judgements and seek to support them with arguments and the appeal to good reasons (Bernstein in Schwandt 2000, p. 202).

The realms in which Bernstein finds legitimation for distinguishing between more and less appropriate interpretations are practices, discourse, and practical truth. In Bernstein's conceptualisation, justifications for knowledge are to be found in practical rationality within dialogical communities. Within the discourses of those communities, hermeneutical interpretation will become justified knowledge (or not) on the basis of argumentation. (Bernstein 1983, Schwandt 2000). In this project, I follow Bernstein's suggestion and aim for sound argumentation and good reasons in order to gain valid interpretations. Thus, practical reasoning and well-reasoned argumentation will serve as a criterion for the validity of the research results.

2.2 Methodological questions

After writing about hermeneutics' most important epistemological and ontological standpoints, I will now elaborate on a few methodological issues that are applicable to this research project. In contrast to the last chapter, which focuses primarily on the "big" epistemological questions and a discussion of those in contrast to other scholarships, this chapter is concerned with some pertinent features of the hermeneutical programme that are relevant to my own research project.

The first aspect I want to elaborate on is the other hermeneutical circle/spiral (hermeneutical circle 2) coined by the philosopher and theologist Friedrich Schleiermacher, which is an earlier version of the hermeneutical circle than Gadamer's. This hermeneutical circle is (in contrast to hermeneutic circle one) concerned with the process of understanding in a more practical, methodical way and can therefore be applied in the research process. It describes how understanding emerges through the interplay between the parts and the whole; how the interpretation of single aspect of the object to be analysed lead to an understanding in the context of the whole (Jung 2001).
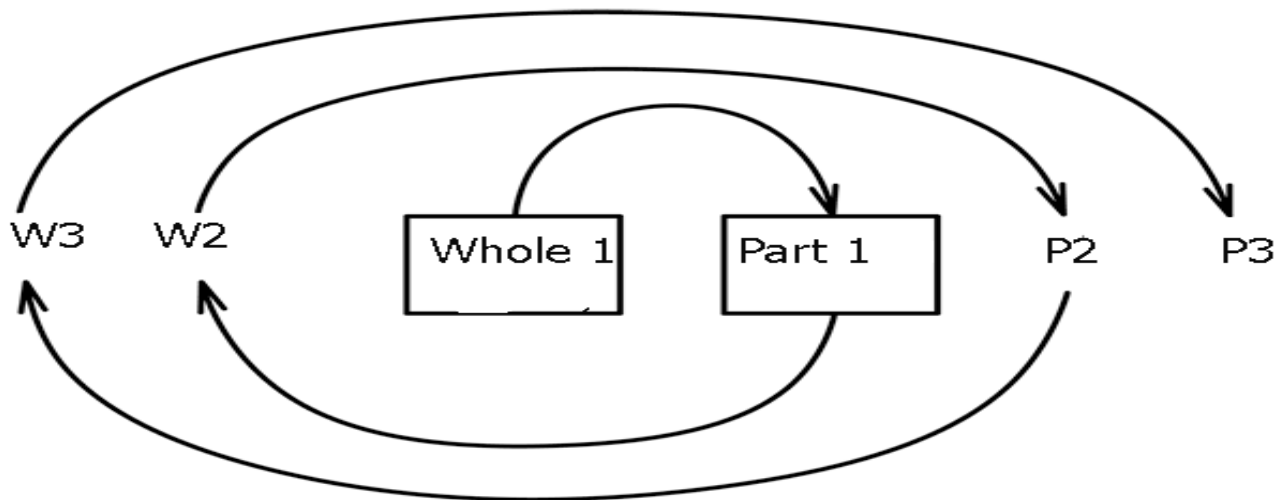
Figure 3: Hermeneutical circle 2

The second hermeneutical circle illustrates very well how the strategy of analysis (applied to empirical material, i.e. qualitative interviews) works in my project that is governed by holistic thinking: Every interview is treated as a case, and the utterances within the interviews are always taken and seen in the context of this interview. The respective, single statements in the interview can, following hermeneutical logic, only make sense and thus become understood when they are put into the context of the whole interview and thus the whole narrative of the individual interviewee. Consequently, one of the main principles of my research strategy is that each interview be treated as a single case prior to its comparison with other interviews. That is to say, I focus on the context of the respective narrative before comparing the resulting interpretations with those of the other interviews,

which are likewise treated as single cases. Therefore, the concept of interview analysis in this project strongly follows the premises of hermeneutical interpretation.

However, interview analysis is not the only "place" within the research design of this project where the underlying hermeneutical principles become relevant and visible, as the further processing of the interpretations gained through the analysis of interviews is strongly characterised by contextualisation. Through this, the single interview cases ("parts") and the results of their comparison are put into the specific societal context ("whole"). Hence, the hermeneutical circle (or spiral) is followed even further.

One feature distinguishing this research project from many other projects in the field of qualitative interview research is the fact that the interviews are collected in two different languages: namely German and Danish. The former being my own native language (i.e. the researcher's and interpreter's mother tongue); the latter the language spoken in the country in which I have lived throughout the research process. Taking into account that these interviews constitute the empirical core of the research project, a methodological reflection appears to be necessary. More precisely, the pivotal part of my reasoning is concerned with the fact that I as a none-native speaker (albeit one literate in Danish on a high level) seek to understand and interpret Danish interviews.

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer takes up on the issue of foreign languages and writes about the question of translation, which, for him, mainly serves as an especially challenging case of the whole problem of understanding:

> The fact that a foreign language is being translated means that this is simply an extreme case of hermeneutical difficulty – i.e., of alienness and its conquest. In fact all the "objects" with which traditional hermeneutics is concerned are alien in the same unequivocally defined sense. The translator's task of re-creation differs only in degree, not in kind, from the general hermeneutical task that any text presents (Gadamer 1989, p. 389).

Gadamer identifies understanding as such as the focal point of the hermeneutic problems in the search for knowledge. Of course, in the case of this project, the challenge is not one of translation as such, but of understanding and interpretation in a foreign language. However, the basic consideration remains the same – understanding and interpretation in

a language foreign to the researcher meets with the same kind of difficulties as in the mother tongue. Although focused on finding understanding, hermeneutics does not believe that meaning can only be discovered in one's own mother tongue.

As outlined above, hermeneutics postulates a critical examination of bias and fore-meanings. On the one hand, this examination possibly becomes easier since a foreign speaker often does not know the fore-meanings as well as the native speaker; on the other hand, rash interpretations on the grounds of the researcher's own native biases have to be avoided. (The latter equally being relevant in the case of indigenous texts or interviews)

As I will present later on in this chapter, the approach to analysis chosen in this research project combines a range of linguistic and narrative "tools". From a methodological perspective, those serve two main purposes: Firstly, they provide means to examine biases and fore-meanings that are entwined with language; secondly, all phenomena are put into their semantic and linguistic context, which is also their cultural context. In this way, they follow the movement of the second hermeneutic circle. The second aspect is especially important in the case of the foreign language interviews. In principle, all interviews undergo the same process of analysis; which is to say, the same kind of tools are going to be applied. However, in order to deal with the higher degree of "hermeneutical difficulty"[5] of the foreign language interviews, these tools will be supplemented with some additional elements.

2. 3. On Comparison

In this chapter, I want to reflect upon the comparative character of this research project in the context of the methodical questions related to it. As became clear in the description of research design (see chapter 1 above), this research project is strongly designed as a comparative study. In their book "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (1999), a classic in the field of qualitative research, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss describe in great detail the mechanisms and use of comparison within qualitative social research. They state that

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5   As the thesis is written in English, and the latter thus constitutes the langiuage in which I am presenting the findings,I am actually dealing with three languages. This results in an even higher degree of "hermeneutical difficulty".

comparisons play a crucial role in the generation of research findings in qualitative projects, and they devote a whole chapter of their book to the analysis of how comparison was used in several seminal studies of qualitative social research (Glaser & Strauss 1999).

Glaser and Strauss's initial point is that the choice of the means of comparison, and the groups of people from which the participants are chosen, should be grounded in theoretical assumptions: "Our criteria are those of *theoretical purpose and relevance* – not of structural circumstances" (ibid, p. 48). They argue that the choice of groups and comparisons should be made on the basis of analytical reflections concerning, for example, the specific research question being asked, and the type of knowledge that ought to be found by the respective research project. In order to clarify how these choices are connected with the forms of knowledge produced, they provide us with a useful systematics on the choice of groups. Here, they distinguish between minimizing and maximizing differences between the groups. According to Glaser's and Strauss' argumentation, this choice will have an impact on the kind of theory and knowledge to be found afterwards. The strategy of minimizing differences between the groups of people analysed and compared would lead to quite good knowledge regarding one specific area or subject this group belongs to or stands for. For instance, basic properties or conditions can be investigated by that. On the other hand, a maximizing-differences strategy would furnish us with the possibility of finding uniformities of greater scope.

With respect to difference in groups, the method employed in this project combines the strategies of both maximizing- and minimizing-differences. As there are two groups of interviewees from two different countries respectively, one would immediately assume a maximizing strategy. On the one hand, this is correct and it also seems to be adequate as the research question asks for similarities and differences. Glaser & Strauss state that what can be found through the application of a maximising–strategy are "uniformities", that is to say, both similarities and differences (in the case of non-uniformity). On the other hand, all interviewees have been chosen by means of the same criteria and in the same field of work in both countries (see chapter 2.5.2 below), and the differences are mainly connected

to the fact that they live in two different countries. Hence, a strategy of minimizing differences also comes into play. Considering the explorative nature of this research project – which seeks to find a deeper understanding of how freelance work takes place not only by looking at the conditions but also at the basic properties on freelancing – this choice of method seems both appropriate and legitimate. This is especially relevant regarding the cross-national comparative nature of the study.

2. 4. Methods

Thus far, I have dealt with questions both methodological and epistemological in nature; I would now like to turn to the question of method by reflecting upon the methods employed in this research project in analysing the data collected from interviews. In the analysis I combine a range of "tools" stemming from different methodical "schools:" the approach can be thus be called integrative. In this section, I want to outline some of the theoretical aspects of the methods used, and demonstrate how said methods are connected to the broader epistemological background.

My approach to analysis has been generally been inspired by the work of Kruse (2006), Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann (2004) and Coffey & Atkinson (1996). It embraces Kruse's (2006, 2009) proposal to combine the "principle of openness" (Kruse 2009, para 18, author's translation*) in qualitative research with a "methodical control of understanding the alien (*Fremdverstehen)*" (Kruse 2009, para 18, author's translation), implemented with the help of linguistic and narrative analysis "tools". In my opinion, this *modus operandi* is very consistent with the of hermeneutics. By "principle of openness", Kruse means remaining reticent concerning our own systems of relevance, biases, and fore meanings (but not completely restraining them, as this is neither possible nor desired from a hermeneutical perspective – see the discussion above), when approaching the empirical material. Kruse argues that this is only possible if we sensitise ourselves to our own semantic and linguistic system of relevance. For Kruse, this has two implications for the research practice: firstly, fore-meanings and knowledge stemming from the study of research literature should influence our empirical research in a heuristic and not a

deterministic manner; secondly, we need to reflect upon our concepts of relevance and their influence on the research process. In other words, we have to be thoroughly reflective concerning our ways of understanding and interpreting in order to understand the "alien". Kruse writes:

> Because otherwise we do not understand anything of the alien system of meaning, or rather only what fits us, and therefore only what we anyway already knew beforehand. (Kruse 2009, paragraph 18, own translation) And what does not fit, because we do not know about it, will – as the pragmatics of every-day life shows us – be made fit (Kruse 2009, footnote paragraph 18, author's translation).

This is the "real research life" version of how to deal with biases and fore-meanings in the hermeneutical search for understanding discussed previously in more abstracts terms (see chapter 2.1.2, above). Moreover, and staying consistent with the hermeneutic programme, Kruse strongly advices us to thoroughly examine and reflect upon these aforementioned biases.

 Kruse suggest "methodical control" as a solution for this problem. As we are dealing with a linguistic and narrative research "object", specifically in the context of qualitative interview research, he suggests an analysis of linguistic and narrative phenomena in order to be able to "control" and reflect upon the understanding/interpretation process (Kruse 2006). This is especially relevant for my research project, since I am dealing with two (different) languages[6], and therefore different (inter)connected concepts of meanings and contexts, of which one (Danish) is more "alien" to me as the researcher than the other (German).

 I have been confronted with this problem throughout the research process: a process in which the research in Denmark was conducted after I had completed my research in Germany. My experience with the interviews undertaken in Germany was that the subject of "insecurity" was frequently raised, often being mentioned early on in the interviews, and without the solicitation of the interviewer. This was not the case with the interviews conducted in Denmark, where the subject of "insecurity" was hardly ever raised

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6   As the thesis is written in English, a third language can be added for the stage of the presentation of results.

by the interviewees, thus leading me to pose this question directly, which, as noted, was something I rarely had to do in the German interviews. Retrospectively, this can be seen as an attempt to fit the interviewees' statements to my own fore-meanings concerning the matter of "insecurity", thus, constituting situations where reflection on these fore-meanings is crucially necessary. Not surprisingly (for hermeneutics), this irritation of my, the researcher's biases, led to one of the most interesting findings within this research project (see the discussion in chapter 6). Or, as Kruse puts this, 'the *irritation* of our own system of relevance is the pathfinder to new knowledge, or rather, the understanding of alien meaning' (Kruse 2009, Paragraph 18, author's translation).

Concerning the question of validity, there is another argument in favour of "methodically controlled" understanding: The use of methodical control enables me to acquire documentation and develop arguments for my interpretations. As I have argued in chapter 2.1.2. this supports the validity of my research findings.

The different tools I use in order to practice "methodically controlled" understanding are derived from from "conversation analysis," "positioning analysis," and "metaphor analysis" (Kruse 2006, Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004). In what follows, I want to briefly introduce these three "schools" of qualitative analysis and discuss their theoretical context.

Founded by Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff, conversation analysis is a method that focuses on language and communication, and that aims to reveal conversational rules. Consequently, it mainly asks "how" and "what for" rather than "what" and "why" questions in reference to the material. For example, it analyses speaker's turn-taking and how changes in this take place, or what the pragmatic intentions of speech are. However, my analysis does not follow a "pure" conversational analysis approach; neither with regard to the application of "tools", nor concerning the theoretical and epistemological background. The use of guided interviews as the empirical data of this project already makes this evident. What the analysis strategy applied in this project borrows from conversation analysis is the idea of taking a closer look at the organisation of speech and at the

pragmatic intentions of speech in order to reach interpretations (as mentioned above). For the most part, I am interested in one particular aspect of conversation analysis; specifically, their effort "to explicate the inherent theories-in-use of members' practices as *lived order*" (ten Have, 1999, p. 32). Following the hermeneutical logic, that parts can only be understood in the context of the whole (second hermeneutical circle, see the discussion in chapter 2.2.), such an undertaking appears to be very promising since it is enables the researcher to put the interviewees' single utterances in the context of their "theories-in-use". However, being rooted in hermeneutical epistemology, I do not follow conversation analysis in their strong rejection of putting utterances into broader contexts that transcend the actual empirical situation. Concerning this topic, my standpoint is more in line with positioning analysis (Kruse 2006, ten Have 1999)

Positioning analysis has been mainly developed by Michael Bamberg (2005) and Neil Korobov (2001). The focus of this approach lies in the analysis of how the speakers define the social room and negotiate, claim, assign, or reject the respective positions within it. (see, for example, Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2001, p. 196)

In his article 'Reconciling Theory with Method' (2001), Korobov refers to a debate between exponents of conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis and explains why positioning analysis holds a reconciliatory intermediate position between them. The "thorny tensions" (ibid, para. 2) between conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis mainly consist of the following accusations and antagonisms. On the one hand, exponents of critical discourse analysis have criticised the approach of conversation analysis as being to naively empirical and as an

> overly-focused analysis of detail at the expense of the broader and (perhaps more important) social and political issues that need attention (ibid, para. 12).

On the other hand, conversation analysts blame their opponents advocating critical discourse analysis as too often failing to perform a solid micro-analysis of the data and for imposing their theoretical framework upon it to soon. The concern is, 'that their critical analyses end up not "binding" the data, and risk ending up merely ideological' (ibid, para. 12).

Following Korobov, positioning analysis has the potential to reconcile these two opposed positions by placing emphasis on methodical questions or, more precisely, by bringing "when" and "how" issues like "social context" and "participant orientation" into the process of analysis. Of particular importance here is the positioning analysts' view of language, which can be called immanentist since it analyses and tries to understand language as "language-in-use;" that is, as situated within human practices.

> This notion does not suggest [...] that language is simply the medium for conveying cultural repertoires. Nor does it suggest that language is simply the site for ideological dilemma management. Rather, language is as language is used (i.e., language-in-use rather than language as a transcendent system or tool or site) (ibid para. 25)

Korobov claims that this view on language makes it possible to analyse positioning on the micro-level, "binding" data through the analysis of how linguistic forms are used to "do" (or not "do") certain things, while still being able to link these analyses to broader frameworks or discourses:

> This level of discursive analysis emphasizes people's linguistic activities, high lightening the remarkable subtleness and sophistication of ordinary people's talk and its designed features. In line with ethnomethodology, interactive talk does not arrive pre-packaged and pre-ordained according to the interpretive repertoires that constitute our social categories, but is actively constituted and re-constituted in interaction. The focus here is on the person actively interacting and making sense of the given social and historical conversations of which s/he is a part. Thus, in line with CDA *[critical discourse analysis, B.F.],* one does not deny the existence of interpretive repertoires or ideology, but instead views identity formation as resulting less from the imposition of interpretive repertoires or ideology, than in the active indexing of (or "wrestling with") the linguistic constructions that have conventionally been linked to certain cultural repertoires. (ibid para. 27 & 28)

Because of this two-sided character of its approach, its grounding in micro-linguistic phenomena and the linkage to broader societal discourses, positioning analysis seems especially suited for the use within this research project, since the latter – thematically – has a bilateral perspective (micro-macro) as well. For the same reason, the concept fits remarkably well into a hermeneutical methodological framework. Not least because the agency analysis "tool", derived from positioning analysis, proved to be extremely prolific as a heuristic within my analysis (see chapter 2.5.3 below).

The last jigsaw piece of my approach to analysis delves into another aspect of language; namely, semantic devices and figurative language. Metaphor analysis was developed by Georg Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003). They suggest that not only our language but alsoour thinking,our concepts, and our behaviour can be comprehended by way of the notion of "metaphor."

> Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. (ibid, p. 3)

If concepts and ways of thinking and acting are organised metaphorically, then analysing the form, intent, and function of metaphors can lead us to insights into these (greater) concepts, and – finally – to an understanding of them. We can ask questions about which metaphors/figurative language are/is used by the speaker (and which ones are not used), how and in which context they are used, and about their connection/placement in the interview as a whole and in the context of the other phenomena that are analysed (see, for example, Coffey & Atkinson 1996). Schmitt (2000) casts doubts on the usefulness of "pure" metaphor analysis, as this would mean not being able to grasp other, non-figurative information. He thus advises combining metaphor analysis with other qualitative research methods. As my analysis "tool box" contains instruments from various schools of methods, this premise is clearly fulfilled in my study.

2. 5 "The Tool Box"

In the following, I am going to describe the concrete "tools" and methods applied in various stages of my research project. It is a "hands-on" account on how the research was conducted and analysed. However, I will reflect the practices of research in light of the aforementioned epistemological and theoretical considerations.

2. 5. 1 Interviewing

As mentioned above, the empirical core of my research project consists of thirteen guided interviews with freelancer workers in the new media/multimedia field of work. Additionally, four expert interviews have been collected. These additional interviews served mainly as a device for gathering information about the field and thereby built an additional source (the other being research literature) for an initial overview. They were also used to support the designing of the interview guides for the freelancer interviews. The experts interviewed were consultants for freelancers from a trade union organisation (Germany) and a professional association (Denmark). The consultants have been interviewed mainly about their consultancy experiences in order to find out about typical challenges and problems that freelancers face. In Germany I also interviewed three customers of freelancers as experts – but this was not as fruitful as expected, which is why I decided not to do any interviews with customers in Denmark.

2.5.1 The interview guide

The interview guide has been constructed following a procedure proposed by Helfferich (2005): After an initial brainstorming session without conceptual restraints, I noted down all questions that came to my mind, before testing them for their usability in and their relevance for the interview guide, finally discarding the ones that did not pass the check. The next step involved sorting the remaining questions along two dimensions – thematically/content-wise and according to their question-category. Thereby, the questions have been classified into three types, which were then used to structure the interview guide: (1) open questions that serve as stimuli for narration, (2) questions aiming at maintenance of narration, and (3) further enquiring questions. Ordered thus, the questions have then been subsumed in the interview guide. The questions subsumed under the first type constituted the central questions, all of them opening up an important topic. The second and third type of questions were subsumed under the respective central question they relate to in terms of content. Additionally, the most important aspects or interests of

the central questions have been noted beneath the respective question, serving both as a mnemonic for the interviewer and as a stimulus for creating spontaneous, situational questions in the course of the interviews. (Helfferich 2005)

The interview guides for both countries consist of eight central questions and several other minor questions, and were thus basically the same in both countries, being only altered slightly because of language specificities (see the Interview Guides in Appendix 1, pp. 7-16). The interview guides functioned as a loose orientation scheme, that is to say, they did not have to be followed slavishly: their order and wording could be altered spontaneously during the interview. All questions (including the ones in category 2 and 3) have been constructed as open questions in order not to bias the answers and narratives of the interviewees. Thus, the "principle of openness" was maintained throughout the stage of the interview guide construction.

2. 5.2 Interview Collection

For the choice of the interviewees, the following criteria were selected: The interviewees should be working as freelancers in the chosen field of work (new media, multimedia, mainly graphics design or related work) for at least one year or longer. This time-related restriction has been chosen in order to ensure that the interviewees have some experience with working life as a freelancer, and to avoid narratives of transition to freelancing being the main topic. However, one of the Danish interviewees, Susanne, had only been a full-time freelancer for half a year. As it proved to be extremely difficult to recruit interviewees in Denmark (see below), I decided to interview her nevertheless, taking into account that she at least has a lot of experience (15 years) in freelancing as a second job. Another criterion of selection was that freelancing should be the main job of the interviewees. Some of the participants practise freelancing more like a part-time job, and one of the German interviewees has a small regular second job besides freelancing. However, freelancing is the principal occupation of all the interviewees. This has been made a criterion because of the interest in the interviewees' strategies of handling the highly variable income entwined with the work form ("bulimic career patterns"). Finally, the interviewees should have had

jobs/assignments from two or more customers. This criterion was chosen in order to ensure that none of the participants were (only) pseudonymously self-employed or a dependent contractor.

The German interviewees are from two geographical areas, namely from Berlin and the Ruhr area. Initially, the idea was to chose two distinctive areas in Denmark as well. However, as it was so difficult to find interviewees in Denmark, participants from all over the country have been interviewed. The interviews in Germany have been collected in July and September 2007, the Danish interviews took place in May and June 2008.

In order to recruit interviewees, several strategies have been applied: I searched for freelancers on the internet (web pages, online commercial directories), two of the German and five of the Danish interviewees were found and recruited in this way. Snowball sampling has been applied as well, either via my own circle of acquaintances or by way of some of the interviewees. This led to two interviews in Germany and one in Denmark. In Germany, the expert interview with the trade union person opened up the possibility of a search advertisement in an e-mail newsletter of the trade union's freelancer agency, which led to three further interviews. In sum, thirteen interviews have been collected, seven in Germany and six in Denmark.

In Germany, I applied the strategy of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss 1999) in the case of one interview: Among the first six interviewees were three women, none of which had children, while two of the German male interviewees had children. As the research design contains questions concerning work, daily life, and their reconciliation, including a gender dimension, I found it important to interview a freelance mother in order to get a richer picture. I thus tried snowballing amongst the other interviewees, explicitly asking for a female freelancer with a child. In the beginning, this proved to be very difficult, but finally I managed to find one (Elena). These difficulties were have been taken into account in the analysis. (see chapter 8)

As it has been very difficult to recruit interviewees in Denmark, I had to write many more e-mails to potential interviewees than in Germany. Most of the freelancers who were contacted and did not want to participate explained their rejection of an interview with

time shortages and extremely busy schedules in this period of time. These general problems in interviewee recruitment in Denmark have also been reflected upon in the analysis process. (see chapter 6)

The interviews took place at a location of the interviewee's choice – this could be the home of the interviewee (five interviews), which in those cases also served as the work place, a rented studios, offices where the interviewee worked (three interviews), or in a café/bar (four interviews). The interviews varied in length from between 40 minutes to two hours. The sessions were recorded and transcribed afterwards. For transcription, two students, with German and Danish as a mother tongue for the respective interviews, were hired. For practical reasons (time shortages), one of the German interviews did not become part of the analysis

2.5.3 Interview analysis

The approach to interview analysis allots a fixed procedure to the treatment of the interviews. The following figure visualises the over-all *modus operandi*:

1st Step:
Content-oriented coding

Thematically
(Themes from interview guide or interview itself)

Function:
Structuring

2nd Step:
Analysis

5 focal points:
- content
- metaphors
- use of words
- narrative figures
- agency

3rd Step:
Case excerpt

Summarisation and synopsis

● Comparison (other case excerpts)

● Contextualisation and further use
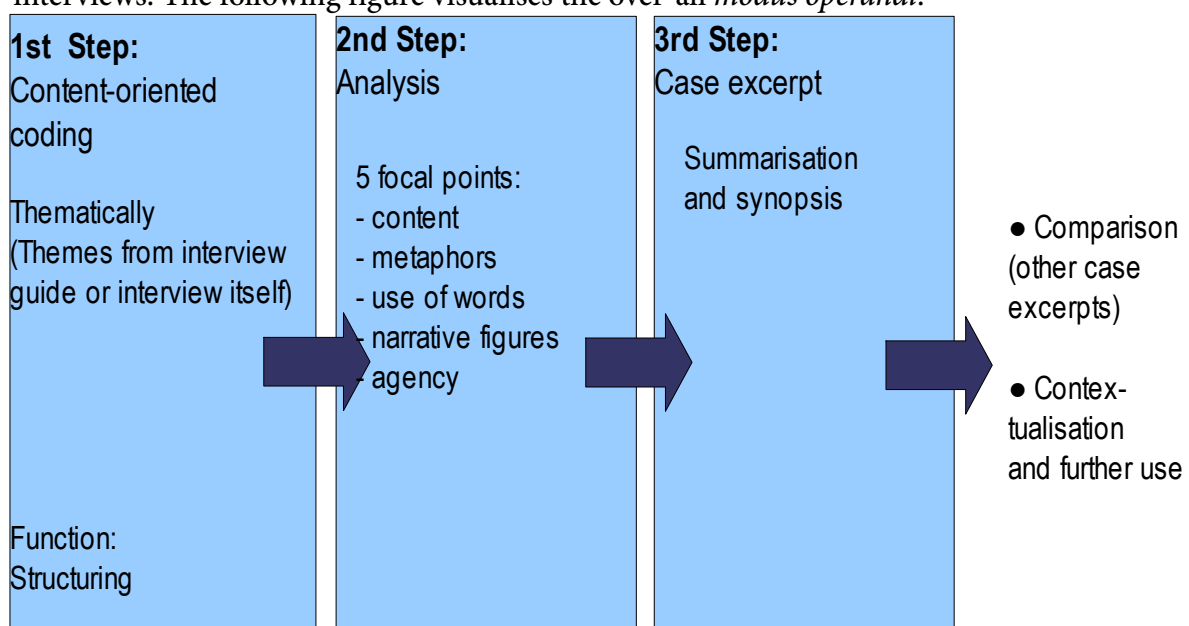
Figure 4: Interview analysis

As noted above, this analysis strategy has been developed with the help of Coffey & Atkinson (1996), Kruse (2006) and Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann (2002). In the following, I want to describe the particular steps shown in Figure 4 in more detail:

(1)   Content oriented coding

Coding constitutes the first step of analysis. The passages of the interview become segmented with the help of certain codes. The codes are developed both from the questions raised beforehand (see chapter 2.5.1) and from the text itself. The latter ensures that the analysis is open to subjects raised by the interviewees that possibly have not been considered before. Thus, the "principle of openness" is taken into account again.

A practical example, illustrating very well how coding is used in this analysis strategy, is a code/topic – the code "freelancing as a temporary situation" *(Freiberuflichkeit als temporärer Zustand)* from the case excerpt of Petra, one of the German freelancers. The description of freelancing as something temporary is prominent in Petra's narration. She already raises this topic in the very first passage of the interview. A look at the semantics in other parts of the interview confirms the importance of this topic – it thus becomes an independent topic in the case excerpt. This topic can even be described as crucial for the interpretation of the interview, as it relativises or at least challenges the predominant account of freelancing as very unproblematic in the interview. (see case excerpt 1, appendix 1, p. 16)

As this example also shows, it is clear that coding is not used to simplify or only shorten the data 'but to open them up in order to interrogate them further, to try to identify and speculate about further features' (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, p.30). In this case, the identification of "freelancing as a temporary situation" as a code led my attention to that topic in the other steps of the analysis, leading to an interesting and even crucial interpretation in the end. Hence, the three steps of the analysis strategy go hand-in-hand and indeed become complementary.

Another very important function of coding is the structuring of data, thus making it easier to analyse the data in the next step. The respective sequences of the interview are subsumed under a thematic code in order to be analysed together in the next step. As the practice of analysis shows, several codes are often assigned to one part/sequence. It is of great importance to keep in mind that several subjects and narratives are often dependent

upon each other (as the above example illustrates very), even if they are analysed separately. Therewith, the principles of the second hermeneutical circle concerning the interplay between part and whole (see chapter 2.2) can be implemented within the practice of analysis.

(2)   Analysis

This step constitutes the actual analysis in a narrower sense, which means that in this phase the by means of coding structured sequences of the text are examined by focussing on content, metaphors / figurative language, use of words, narrative figures and agency in order to come to interpretations.

The first aspect – *content* – is quite straightforward since the interviews have already been structured in regard to this category during the coding phase. Therewith, the context is always considered, and thus interpretation is always related to context.

The theoretical roots of the analysis of *metaphors* has been discussed in chapter 2.4. Function and meaning of metaphors and figurative language use are thereby particularly of analytical interest. A good example for the application of the analysis of metaphorical language is the case of Elena: One of her most important strategies to cope with some of the hardships of freelance work is "taking herself seriously". In order to illustrate her point, she uses medical terms as metaphors: She describes her strategey of "taking herself seriously" as "growing an own skin in order to become less prone to infections[7]" (see case excerpt 7, appendix 1, p. 98 / interview transcript 7, appendix 2) This particular use of metaphorical language reveals a lot about Elena's view on freelance work as containing something she needs to be protected from and eventually led to interpretations concerning her views on customers and work in general (see chapter 7.3 for a discussion on the "invasive" power of work).

The analysis of the *use of words* is approached eclectically: It is mainly concerned with the usage or omission of words. Sometimes, a closer look on how a specific word or

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7   The citation is translated from German to English by the author. In the German original the interviewee says: "Also, das ist so ein bißchen wie eine eigene Haut zu bekommen, so dass man nicht infektionsanfällig ist,ne?" (see case excerpt no 7, appendix 1, p. 98)

term is defined or used by the interviewee leads to crucial interpretations. An example of this is the use of the term "flexibility" by the interviewees. My analysis shows that a large number of the interviewed freelancers used the word but in different ways. This instance led to some very relevant insights into the different ways in which freelancers conceptualise and deal with work and life (see chapter 7.4 for a discussion on the "flexible" interpretations of "flexibility"). This analysis tool is inextricably entwined with the over-all holistic approach towards interview analysis applied in this study. By viewing every interviewee as a case, an analysis of concepts in the context of the whole becomes possible. Hence, the hermeneutical assumptions about how understanding is achieved are strongly accounted for. Another function of the analysis of the usage of words is closely connected to the analysis of narrative structure. The analysis of why certain words are used (or not used) in a certain context can help to identify narratives.

Concerning narration, the main focus is on the analysis of *narrative figures.* This has been inspired by Kruse (2006), who defines narrative figures as 'self-contained, recurrent figures of set-up and organisation of speech' (p.79). These are identified in order to gain an interpretation of how certain topics are conceptualised, set in context, and so forth. One examples of these narrative figures would be the modes of discoursivation like individualisation/normalisation or "contrasting". In fact, the latter has proved to be a very common narrative figure: The interviewees quite often defined certain "things," events, situations, and so on, in a negative way, that is, by describing what (or how) they are not, and they did this by contrasting these things, events, situations, etc., with something else. Therefore, an analysis of contrasting is a very useful and fruitful tool.

The last "tool" applied in the analysis, namely agency analysis, also belongs to the field of narrative figures. However, agency analysis has proved to be such a useful tool in analysing the first interviews that I have included it as a constant heuristic and used it systematically. Agency analysis is an approach derived from positioning analysis, as mentioned above (chapter 2.4). The concept draws on the interviewees subjective understandings of who or what contributes to or causes certain events, and thereby

identifies whom or what the interviewees ascribe agency to in certain specific situations. As this research project asks for similarities and differences in the freelancers' handling of work and life, an analysis tool that is able to identify who or what they think is in charge of the situation(s) they are in is extremely useful. Lucius-Hoene&Deppermann (2002) use the following examples to illustrate the concept:

(1) "... and then I was brought to the hospital and got operated on"
(2) "... and then they brought me to the hospital and operated on me"
(3) "... and then I went to the hospital and got myself operated on" (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2002, p. 59, author's translation)

In the first sentence, the subject attributes agency both to an anonymous power; in the second sentence, the subject assigns agency to others that are in charge of the situation (*they brought me* to the hospital and *operated on me*); whilst in the third sentence, the subject ascribes agency entirely to himself or herself (*I went to* the hospital and *got myself operated on*).

As noted, this analysis apparatus has been applied to all interviews. However, one additional feature has been employed in the case of the foreign language (Danish) interviews. Besides consulting a Danish dictionary (Becker-Christensen et al., 2005) and an online idiom dictionary (Bergenholtz 2009), I also discussed certain matters with native speakers so as to clarify any obscurities. If I was not sure about certain understandings and interpretations, for instance, I noted down the respective sentences and the context in which they appeared, and then discussed them with fellow Ph.D. students, who are native Danish speakers. This happened either in a group discussion or in exchange with only one other person. The strategy proved to be very useful in the case of the Danish interviews and helped to diminish misinterpretations.

(3)   Case excerpts

The third and last step of my analysis strategy is the creation of a case excerpt for every interview. These excerpts summarise the findings and interpretations of the respective interview analysis. They help to reflect the findings again in the context of the whole

interview (see the discussion on hermeneutical circle 2, chapter 2.2). In addition, the excerpts are devices for structuring the findings in a well-ordered manner, thus making them more easily accessible for further analysis. The case excerpts contain direct citations from the transcripts and references to the parts of the interviews that are relevant for the respective topics. Those case excerpts vary in length between 9 and 21 pages (see case excerpts, appendix, p. 15 - 177).

2.5.4 Overview of cases

In the following I want to provide a short overview over the cases[8], i.e. the interviewees. The findings of the interview analysis will be discussed in-depth in the chapters 6, 7 and 8. All complete case-excerpts can be found in the appendix (see appendix, pp. 15 - 177)

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8   All personal data that would enable to determine the identity of the interviewees, has been anonymised.

Overview of cases									
No	Name	Age	Gen-der	Educat. back-ground	Family status	Chil-dren	Yearly freelance income	Highest/ lowest monthly income in the last year	Location Country
IP1	Petra	40	female	Industrial design (University degree)	Single, living alone	0	Gross: between 13.000 – 19.999 €/ 97.500 – 150.000 Dkr Net: < 13.000 €/ 97.500 Dkr	Highest: 4500 € / 33750 Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	Ruhr area, Germany
IP2	Madhi	38	male	Architecture (University degree)	cohabiting	1	Gross and net: between 20.000 – 38.999 €/ 150.000- 285.000 Dkr	Highest: 10.000 € / 75.000 Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	Ruhr area, Germany
IP3	Marion	43	female	Fine Arts (University Degree) Screen design (vocational education)	Partner, living apart, flat share	0	Gross and net: between 13.000 – 19.999 €/ 97.500 – 150.000 Dkr	Highest: 3666 € / 27.495 Dkr Lowest: 298 € / 2235 Dkr	Berlin, Germany
IP4	Nina	34	female	Communications design (University Degree)	cohabiting	0	Gross: between 20.000 – 38.000 € / 150.000 - 285.000 Dkr Net: between 13.000 – 19.999 €/ 97.500 – 150.000 Dkr	Highest: 5000 € / 37.500 Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	Berlin, Germany
IP5	Jan	40	male	Fine Arts (University Degree) Design (University Degree)	Married, cohabiting	1	Gross and net: < 13.000 € / 97.500 Dkr	Highest: 3700 € / 27750 Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	Berlin, Germany
IP6	Not part of analysis								
IP7	Elena	40	female	Graphics Design	cohabiting	1	Gross: between 20.000 – 38.000 €	Highest: 3000 € / 22.500	Berlin, Germany

				(University Degree) Fine Arts (University Degree)			/ 150.000 - 285.000 Dkr Net: between 13.000 – 19.999 €/ 97.500 – 150.000 Dkr	Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	
IP8	Susanne	43	female	Illustrator (vocational education) Multimedia communication (University Degree)	divorced	2	Gross: between 100.000- 133.333 €/ 750.000 – 1.000.000 Dkr Net: 66.666 – 99.999 €/ 500-000 – 749.999 Dkr	Highest 26.666 € / 200.000 Dkr Lowest: 9333 € / 70 000 Dkr	Copenha gen, Denmark
IP9	Lise	35	female	Architectur e (University degree)	married, cohabiting	2	Gross and net: < 13.000 € / 97.500 Dkr	Highest: 3066 € / 23.000 Dkr Lowest: 0 € / 0 Dkr	Copenha gen, Denmark
IP10	Ole	49	male	Education in commerce (vocational education)	divorced	1	Gross: 66.666 – 99.999 €/ 500-000 – 749.999 Dkr Net: between 33.333 – 46.666 €/ 250.00 – 349.999 Dkr	Highest: 17.333 €/ 130.000 Dkr Lowest: 2666 € / 20.000 Dkr	Aalborg, Denmark
IP11	Signe	34	female	Illustrator (vocational education)	married, cohabiting	2	Gross: between 46.666 – 66.666 € / 350.000 – 499.999 Dkr. Net: between 13.333 – 33333 € / 100.000 – 249.999 Dkr	n/a	Western Jutland, Denmark
IP12	Morten	31	male	Computer science (University degree)	cohabiting	1	Gross: between 46.666 – 66.666 € / 350.000 –	Highest: 16.000 € / 120.000 Dkr Lowest: 1333 € / 10.000	Århus, Denmark

							499.999 Dkr. Net: between 13.333 – 33333 € / 100.000 – 249.999 Dkr	Dkr	
IP13	Christian	34	male	Graphic design (University degree)	Single, living alone	0	Gross: between 33.333 – 46.666 € / 250.000 – 349.999 Dkr Net: between 13.333 – 33333 € / 100.000 – 249.999 Dkr	n/a	Copenhagen, Denmark

Table 2: Presentation of interviewees

3. Work Unbound? On the transformation of work

Within this research project, freelancing in the new media is regarded as an extreme case of "new" or "transformed" work. The freelancers' work patterns are characterised by several specifics of new and flexibilised work in a distinct way. In the last decades, the flexibilisation, de-regulation, and transformation of work in post-industrial or post-fordist Western societies has been discussed from a variety of perspectives. Here, various developments and diverse aspects are thematized, such as the "de-regulation" of employment relations, the erosion of standard employment, the extension of flexible forms of business organisation, the spreading of flexible working hours, and the vanishing of boundaries between work and non-work, to name only a few (Beck 2000, Sennett 1998, Boltanski & Chiapello 2005).

Following the debate, work is becoming unbound concerning three main dimensions: aspects emphasised are, for example, (1) a certain retreat of the state concerning labour regulations, being coined as de-regulation of work and work regulations (Gottfried 2007); (2) work organisation and its changes within or without companies or other work places :

> The emphasis is on flexibility. Rigid forms of bureaucracy are under attack, as are the evils of blind routine. Workers are asked to behave nimbly, to be open to change on short notice, to take risks continually, to become ever less dependent on regulations and formal procedures (Sennett 1998, p. 9);

and (3) the rise of a culture of self-realisation through work and the job, leading the workers to strongly identify with their work and creating a tendency towards self-exploitation[9] (Boltanski & Chiapello 2007, Menger 2006).

In German sociology, several aspects of these general transformation processes of work organisation have been discussed under the label of the "de-limitation of work" (*Entgrenzung von Arbeit*). The debate on *Entgrenzung* basically assumes that in the current

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9   However, it has been discussed if this development only applies to the high educated part of the labour force (Heidenreich 1996)

reorganisation of work certain structural boundaries of work are weakened or even completely vanishing. The "de-limitation of work" is thereby conceptualised as the

> leading tendency of current changes of work relationships *overall*, which affects *all* social levels of the state of work: international structures and structures of work relating to the whole of society, company organization from the within and the outside, work place structures and the immediate working behaviour as well as, finally and in particular, the working subjects, that is their personality and characteristics (above all their qualifications) and their living conditions. (Voß in Gottschall & Wolf 2007, p. 13)

Thus, the debate on *Entgrenzung* especially emphasises the weakening of bureaucracy, regulations and formal procedures in work organisation.

Interestingly enough, the Danish debate on *grænseløst arbejde* (boundary-less work, see chapter 1) uses the same metaphor of boundaries and its eroding. In contrast to the German debate on *Entgrenzung* the focus is more exclusively on the organisation of work on the company level and its consequences for the individuals (although it includes elements like a normative chance as well). Lund and Hvid (2007), for example, analyse five dimensions of "boundary-less" working conditions, namely (1) time and space (which refers to the flexibilisation working time and place), (2) organisational aspects (which refers to the shift of responsibility from management to the individual workers), (3) political aspects (referring to the growing importance of individual wage negotiations), (4) cultural aspects (transformation of the organisational culture) and (5) subjective aspects (which relates to the individual's identity and the demand for self-realisation through work).

When studying the work practices of freelancers, which are especially characterised by an absence of those formal procedures (as the freelancers usually are only formally bound to certain project deadlines, but not to formal procedures on how these deadlines ought to be reached, which is to say, how they should accomplish their work), a focus on *grænseløst arbejde* or *Entgrenzung* appears to be rewarding.

In the context of *Entgrenzung,* a new ideal type of labour power is discussed as well, which has been coined "entreployee" by Pongratz and Voß (2003). Following Pongratz and Voß, this new type of labour is characterised by enhanced self-control, self-

commercialisation and self-rationalisation. These tendencies, they argue, are not only relevant in the "entreployees'" working lives, but also spill over into every-day life practices. Pongratz & Voß claim that an increasing self-commercialisation and self-rationalisation is also taking place in "private" every-day life. The reasons for this development are not only to be found in the current re-organisation and transformation ("de-limitation") of work, but also in a change of values and norms (see point 3 above). Thus, the individual consequences of *Entgrenzung* or de-limitation of work have been discussed as well (Pongratz & Voß 2003).

Gottschall and Wolf (2007), however, challenge the notion of de-limitation as a general and linear trend, and argue that those dynamics are, from both an empirical as well as a theoretical reason to be thought of as both heterogeneous and diverse. They state:

> The picture of seemingly boundary-less market and organizational phenomena has to be completed by the other side of an on-going reshaping of work structures and the alteration of institutional arrangements in which they are embedded. The idea of a "dis-embedding" of social relations by "commercialization" (or money), developed, [...] by Giddens (1990) as well as their simultaneously "re-embedding" in local social structures fits here: on the one hand, processes of *Entgrenzung* are to be interpreted as a (partial) shift from one embedding regime to another, from the (bureaucratic) expert systems to market systems. On the other hand, the re-embedding mechanisms – social norms, relationships and forms of co-operation, which limit the "de-limitation" - are to be made apparent. In this sense, the emerging new patterns of work simultaneously characterised by boundary loss and by new and old other institutional boundaries. (Gottschall & Wolf 2007, p. 13-14)

In the next chapter (chapter 4), I will shed light on the relevance of "old institutional boundaries" or structures for the freelancers concerning welfare state and labour market regulations, and their respective differences in the two countries concerned in this research project. In this chapter, I want to look at the theoretical considerations concerning the topic of work unbound, specifically in regards to its consequences and dynamics at the micro-level; that is to say, to approaches concerned with the question of what challenges and requirements flexible or unbound work are posing to the individuals, especially concerning the work form of freelancing. In chapter 1, I presented a table that locates the various dynamics of the transformation of work at the respective societal level.(see chapter 1, table 1). In order to be able to frame the complexities of these processes and dynamics,

and to account for their consequences, viewing the individual as free of societal bonds, I will firstly propose a more general theoretical framework by way of Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. In my view, this theory is a useful tool for understanding societal transformation processes in general, and to identify the particular phenomena on the micro-level without understanding them as independent from societal structures. Secondly, I will discuss approaches regarding the topic of work organisation in the context of "unbound" working conditions with a special emphasis on what they mean for individuals. As a third step, I will elaborate on the academic debate on the topic of changing work orientations, again with a focus on the consequences for the individuals.

3.1. A theoretical framework for the empirical analysis of work unbound

The discourse on re-drawn work or *Entgrenzung* assumes that structures and "boundaries" of older "industrial" work organisation are diminished. From a more general point of view, this topic has been addressed by Giddens (1990) in his considerations on the duality of structure: if structures are disestablished, new possibilities for individual agency are emerging on the one hand, but the requirements for the individuals are rising as well. In the context of work unbound, this means that the individuals struck by new work patterns are faced with the challenge to find new courses of action, they have to (co-)structure their scopes of action and thus limit the "de-limitation". Additionally, following Gottschall's and Wolf's conceptualisation the unbound workers, in this case the freelancers are by no means completely free-floating but are re-embedded through other social mechanisms. They are, for example, embedded in societal institutions and structures, which have an influence upon their agency and their practices. This is one of the principle guiding hypotheses of this research project, since I have been proposing that the different societal frameworks, like welfare state and labour market regulations, are having an impact on the freelancers work and life patterns. This also applies to other elements, such as social norms, relationships, and other forms of co-operation, which Gottschall & Wolf, inspired by Giddens, call "re-embedding mechanisms" (Gottschall & Wolf 2007). And regarding the concept of *Entgrenzung*, Stephan Manning and Harald Wolf state that:

> Such a transformation process *[like the one proposed by the de-limitation discourse, B.F.]* is always implying new demarcations. They are resulting from institutionalisation, from new social structures, from new forms of regulations and their authorities and procedures, the emergence of new key conceptions and norms as well as corresponding institutional forms of practical orientations and every-day life patterns. (Manning & Wolf 2005, p. 30, author's translation)

In order to grasp the potentially conflicting old and new "embedding mechanisms," and to put the concrete practices of the individuals into that context, Manning and Wolf employ Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. With structuration theory, Anthony Giddens proposes a theoretical approach to the constitution and reproduction of social practices as an interplay between structure and agency. Central to this approach is the duality of structure and agency. To put it briefly, this means that, for Giddens, structure and agency are mutually depended: agency can only take place within structural patterns, which, in a recursive process, reproduce those structure. However, this is not a deterministic relationship: agency is not simply structured, and can modify and transforms such structures. In the following, I want to present and discuss Giddens' approach in more detail.

Giddens distinguishes between what he calls "social system(s)" and "structure(s)." In his conceptualisation, social systems are patterns of social relations, which are either bound to certain social contexts or are comprehending those contexts. Theses social systems are structured through specific embodiments of social institutions in social practices and can be identified in different spatio-temporal dimensions, albeit, with blurred borderlines. Such systems can be welfare states, but they can also be organisations, and companies, or regional branch networks etc. They are characterised by structural properties, which can be described as sets of rules and resources and refer to comprehensive social institutions of systemic reproduction. These sets of rules Giddens classifies as "rules of signification" and "rules of legitimation:" rules of signification provide meaning and attribution; rules of legitimation furnish normative evaluation and sanctioning. Resources, on the other hand, are what enable domination, which is to say, they allow for the exercise of power. What Giddens refers to as structures are the

aforementioned structural properties of social systems. However, these structures only persist if they are applied to, and thus reproduced in, social interaction. This is one of the central ideas of structuration theory: namely the duality of structure (ibid).

The application of those structures takes place with the help social institutions. In Giddens' conceptualisation, social institutions, systems, and actors are interacting in creation and sustainment of social practices. For Giddens, social practices are institutionalised attitudes and patterns of action, which are anchored in practical consciousness, but are seldom consciously challenged (ibid).

Social institutions vary strongly as regards authority and assertiveness. Furthermore, these institutions are not (necessarily) consistent with each other; they can be ambivalent and conflicting. Actors are taking up social institutions productively and competently. The following graph visualises the interaction between structure and agency through different kinds of social institutions:

structure	legitimation	domination	signification
(modality)	interpretative scheme	facility	norm
Interaction	communication	power	sanction
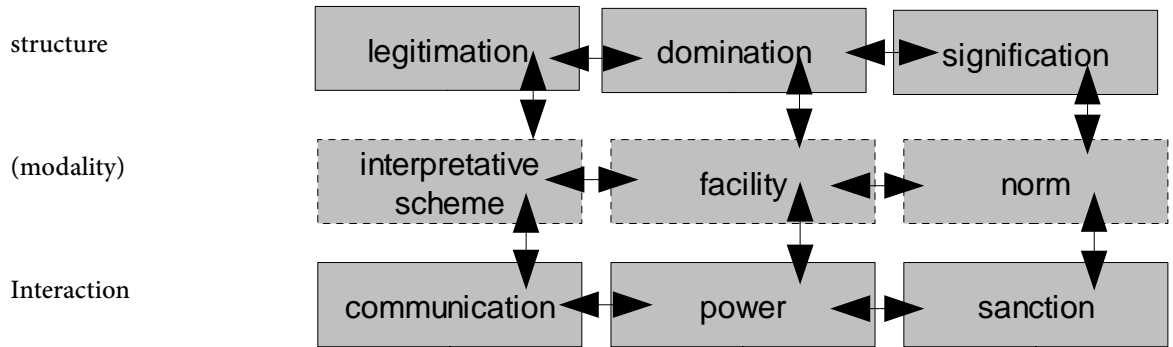
Figure 5: Structuration Theory, Source: ibid, p. 29

Giddens describes and names several societal institutional orders in which these institutional contexts can be placed: namely the "symbolic-discursive," the "political," the "economical," and the "judicial/sanctioning mode." Rules of signification are primarily developed via communicative, symbolic-discursive practices (e.g. in the sciences). Practices of authorisation, that is, the exercise of power over people, are carried out in interaction that Giddens calls the political;, whereas practices of allocation, for example, the exercise of power over objects is assigned to economical interaction. Rules of

legitimation are predominantly emerging in the practice of jurisdiction as well as through the sanctioning of certain behaviour (ibid).

Social interaction thus presupposes systemic integration of agency. Hence, in Giddens' theory, agency does not happen uncoupled from system structures. This integration does have various ranges. Agency is typed, interpreted, and coordinated in the concrete systemic contexts, which Giddens calls "social integration". At the same time, interpretive and evaluative patterns are reproduced, which are effective beyond the specific context. This reproduction, which takes place in diverse grades of abstraction, is what Giddens means by "systemic integration". For instance, employment in a company takes place within an internal company framework as well as in the context of broader societal institutions for the organisation of work (e.g. labour market and welfare state institutions) (ibid).

Actors achieve this integration through inter subjectively shared traces of memory. In those traces of memory, the structures are contained as interpretive patterns and norms, in Giddens words as "modalities." These modalities have to be put in context, that is, in the spatio-temporal settings by the actors. Thus, the structures are shaping the actors' agency as regards the specific interaction contexts. The latter are created by the practices and actions of the actors themselves. On the other hand those contexts and eventually social systems only exist if actors orientate their agency according to the structural properties of systems (ibid).

This leads to the last important aspect of Giddens' theorising and at the same time the one which is of main interest in this study, namely agency of social actors. With Giddens, the social actor is a potentially competent subject. In this context, competency is defined as the individual's ability to foresee conditions and consequences of agency in the context of individual interests insofar as they can master their practical requirements and explain their actions. Thereby, the actors reflexively monitor the action of others as well as their own, which is to say, they observe and rationalise the actions of others whilst ensuring their own identity. On the other hand, and at the same time, they are - mainly unconsciously - reproducing the structural conditions for agency on which they

themselves are drawing upon. However, Giddens conceptualises the individual actor as powerful insofar, as she/he by drawing upon resources can influence the events. This doubleness is called "dialectic control" by Giddens (ibid).

Within this theoretical framework the individual freelancer's actions and practices under the conditions of flexibilisation and re-drawing of boundaries of work is by no means seen as free-floating. Quite the contrary, new and old institutions can be conceptualised as existing side-by-side with each other, old rules or systemic features can be understood as losing influence (at least for some particular groups in society) whereas others might become more powerful and so on. Giddens himself (1996) proposes that traditional ties and institutions are losing relevance, whereas a plurality of orientation patterns are emerging.

As regards the micro level, that is, the level of the freelancers' agency that is relevant for this research project, Manning and Wolf (2005) differentiate between structural and relational dimensions of the systemic ties that bind or embed the individual's agency. Structural ties come into play insofar as individuals refer to systemic rules and resources in their own course of action. Here, single relations between persons can also have systemic qualities (like societal structures), since both "systems" rules and resources are emerging, which the actors are applying. These interpersonal relations, then, can be more or less societally integrated, as actors within those relations will apply practices referring to rules and resources of the relation as well as from broader societal or other systems. One example can be the division of reproductive work/care work within a family, where specific norms and orientation modes are emerging, but which always refer to broader societal norms and institutions on gender, family and work, even in the case of an explicit distancing from the latter (ibid).

Agency, on the other hand, can, following Giddens, also be embedded relationally. On this view, agency can be tied to interdependent interaction and relation contexts, which are systemically reproduced. Examples of this would include communities of all kinds, markets or networks. Here systemic ties come into play as the actors being integrated in these contexts are always positioning themselves in relation to others and take part in

interaction from this position. Giddens refers to these relations as ""position-practice" relations" (Giddens 1984, p. 83).

Hence, the duality of Giddens concept of agency becomes clear: I noted above that Giddens views the actor as potentially competent and powerful, however, and following Giddens, the actor's agency is always embedded structurally. Self-contained agency becomes possible on the grounds of the actors' relational position in systemic interaction contexts as well as through their multiple embedding in several systemic contexts, which emerged over time. Thus, the actor, being embedded in multiple context can refer to ambiguous systemic requirements as a resource in order to open up room for manoeuvre towards other actors. In this way, the transformation of work in the sense of the decline of hitherto effective regulations and bureaucracies can open up new scopes of action. The freelancers in focus in this study can then be seen as being particularly affected by these transformation dynamics. Following Giddens' approach, we expect them to be faced by various patterns, norms and institutions. One example for a conflict or a situation with ambiguous systemic requirements could be the claims for flexibility inherent in their work form and care duties in the context of family life. Thus, the empirical open question within this research project, namely how the freelancers are dealing with these and other challenges, can be framed theoretically without being already determined by theory. In addition, the transformation of work can be conceptualised within societal structures. Therefore, I am proposing to approach the current transformation of work in this research project from an over-all structuration-theoretical perspective.

Against the background of this theoretical framework, I propose that the transformation processes should be coined as a "re-drawn work" or a "re-drawing of work" instead of "de-limited" or "unbound" (see the above discussion on the sociological discourse on the delimitation of work *(Entgrenzung)*, since the former (in contrast to the latter) implies neither a complete vanishing of all boundaries, nor a new structuring from scratch, and is thus better suited to illustrate the complexities and ambivalences of the on-going changes from both a (structuration-) theoretical and empirical point of view. With

Giddens, we cannot view the transformation of work as an "unbinding" of hitherto existing structures and norms. On the contrary, what we see is a process of change that implies a complex web of several structural contexts that exist side-by-side in way that are not always being consistent, and, in point of fact, are often incompatible or contradictory. The new quality about "new" work organisation, then, is the fact that the individual freelancers are confronted with new and old structural and systemic ties. Still, work, work patterns, and working conditions are far from being completely "de-limited", "unbound," and thus free floating. In the next chapter, I am going to present a discussion of what these "new" qualities of new work organisation are, of what they consist of, and in what respects they can be called "re-drawn".

3.2. The challenge of organising flexibilised work: on the transformation of work organisation

Freelancers are often confronted with several dimensions of new work organisation: first of which is the temporal dimension. Usually (unless they are working "in-house" at the customer's work-place) the freelancers are in full self control of their work; they are themselves organising the timely production of their offered services. Thus, they are quite free to work whenever they want, as long as they provide the product at the time of the appointed deadline. In her article on time-aspects of the transformation of work, Kerstin Jürgens (2003) points out the consequences of this for individuals:

> [...] the every-day pressure to synchronise and organise is clearly increasing, if, despite their flexible working times, jobholders want to sustain social ties, are active in associations or are volunteering, live with children or have to care for family members. (Jürgens 2002, p. 43, author's translation)

Thus, with the diminishing of clear working time structures, the flexibilised workers are faced with a greater need for temporal organisation and synchronisation. These highly flexible working hours can possibly also contribute to the proclaimed vanishing boundaries between work and life. If working time is (more or less and with the restriction of customer deadlines) freely disposable, this will enhance the blurring of boundaries between work and life as, for example, Gottschall & Voß (2003) argue:

> Highly flexible working times [...] are leading to rhythms of life, which diffuse boundaries between work and the hitherto existing "rest" of the life – quickly doing something in between, sleeping longer on one day and instead working far into the night the other day [...] Where is the line? (Gottschall & Voß 2003, p. 20, author's translation)

However, there is an additional factor inherent in the conditions of freelance work, which is possibly relevant for the freelancer's organisation of their working time. In his analysis of the characteristics and the functionality of the artists' labour market (as being a role-model for other labour markets) Pierre-Michel Menger (2006) argues that the costs of the market's high flexibility are distributed very unequally. He writes:

> In order to reduce their production costs the employers want to be able to chose their personnel from a great reservoir. They are striving after a a maximised group of potential "staff", so as to fully use a multiplicity of of competencies and talents. For the expenses of protection for the workers and their risks of unemployment, however, they do not want to pay. (Menger 2006, p. 64, author's translation)

For the freelancers, who are working in at least artists-like labour markets, this means that they themselves have to cover those expenses or risks; that is to say, that these become individualised, at least in part. In the next chapter (chapter 4), I will discuss this topic as regards the question of social risks for freelancers in Denmark and Germany. However, the dynamics described by Menger also contribute to a problem that has been characterised elsewhere as "bulimic career patterns" (e.g. Gill 2002). The latter refers to the very unstable, market-dependent income of the freelancers, which practically means that the freelancers sometimes have to work around the clock nearly in order to meet certain deadlines, whereas in other periods they are having "forced" time off.[10] Thus, we can see very well how individuals have to bear the flexibility costs themselves.

Consequently, the aforementioned every-day pressure to synchronise becomes particularly relevant in the light of the freelancers' "bulimic career patterns". The intense stop and go work patterns, which require working long hours at some time and forced spare time at others, are certainly of relevance in the context of the organisation of working time. Gottschall & Kroos (2003) for instance highlight the importance of the household or

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10   I will discuss the problematics of the latter concerning financial dimensions in chapter 6.

the freelancer's partner as a cushion in the case of care duties. How do the freelancers handle these synchronisation and organisation pressures?

This brings about the question of the notion of flexibility or flexible working hours: who is it that is flexible or has to be flexible here? Diane Perrons (1999) states that the meaning on flexibility in the context of flexible work is actually flexible itself, that is to say, there are many different forms of flexible work and that it is not always clear what kind of flexibility is meant when talking about flexible work. Is it, for example, the work place, the working hours, or the flexible worker who has to be flexible? And Rosalind Gill notes on the bases of her research on project-based new media work in Europe that:

> [...] the notion of "flexible hours" suggests that the individual is able to exercise some control over when and long she works; in fact the needs of the project were always paramount and "flexibility" was determined by these, rather than by the needs of the worker (Gill 2002, p. 83).

Ann Westenholz (2006) explores the temporal flexibilisation of work from a different perspective. In her analysis of the time identities of IT-workers in Denmark, she generally distinguishes between the work practices of "clock-timers" and "task-timers". Clock-timers are following the model of industrial standard employment, including a working day defined by a certain amount of hours and a strong demarcation line between work and life. Whereas the working day of task-timers is defined by the work task and the accomplishment of the work project, and their attitude to time seems to be characterised by an irrelevance of the strict line between work and life. Furthermore, in her analysis Westenholz finds "invaded clock timers" (that is, workers who find the limitation between work and life meaningful, but who nevertheless do some work in their private life) and "blurred timers", who mix both of the above described logics. Interestingly enough, among those IT-workers in Westenholz's study, who were "temporarily company-affiliated workers" (self-employed or freelancing in some kind of way, for example), only 15% could be allotted to the pure "clock-timers", the vast majority of them, for instance, were blurring work and life in some way: 64 % of them were "task-timers" who did not assign relevance

to drawing a line between work and life. Thus, amongst IT-freelancers in Denmark, blurring work and life seems to be wide-spread (Westenholz 2006).

However, does "task-timing" mean that the projects' needs are always "paramount", as Gill's project indicates? And how are "task-timers" able to synchronise their working life with family or private life (even if they don't make a distinction)?

Another dynamic, which can be linked to the aforementioned blurring of boundaries between work and life, is the topic of the work place. Some of the freelancers in the study work at home – will they draw a clear line between work-related and other tasks? In addition, the freelancers are, at least in principle, flexible concerning their work place, due, amongst other things, to technological developments in the field of communication technology – will the sending of work-related e-mails in the café with wireless internet count as work, for example?

Some authors (see, for example, Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, Manske 2003) also assume a re-drawing of boundaries of work as regards social networks. Manske, for example, proposes that the boundaries between private friends and business contacts are becoming diffuse: friends are engaged for business networking and business partners become friends. Being no new development at all, however, it is supposed to be intensified in such a unregulated branch like the media, where networks are playing a tremendous role for a successful working life.

So far in this chapter I have outlined the working conditions of freelancers and discussed the extent to which we can argue that a re-drawing or blurring of boundaries of work (and life) is taking place. We could indeed see that some regulations that have been structuring working life at least in industrial societies are absent or weakened in the case of freelancers. The relevant question in the context of this study is thus how the freelancers are handling those conditions and how they are reacting in relation to those challenges. However, within the sociological discourse on current transformations of work not only changes in the organisation of work have been discussed but also a change in orientation mode, which is to say, the emergence and spreading of a cultural norm of self-realisation in, by, and through work. I will take up this discussion in the next chapter.

3. 3 Between self-realisation and self-exploitation: on the transformation of norms

In the foregoing discussion, I have been discussing the more organisational aspects of the on-going transformation of work. I would now like to turn my attention to changes in orientation modes and norms concerning work.

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), who in their study on management literature are proclaiming a "new spirit of capitalism," argue that one part of this new spirit is a changed attitude of workers and employees towards work. They base their analysis on Weber's (2000, 2002) insights on the formation of capitalism (which is already traceable in the title of their study). Following Weber, with the formation of capitalism in the transition from traditional to modern societies, not only did a strong division between the spheres of work and life, (i.e. the professional and the domestic) sphere emerged, but also an ethical and normative change took place. Weber argues that in the course of protestant reformation work was getting a religious appreciation that paved the way for a new ethics of work and profession, which in the end could lead to an understanding of work and the advancement of professional and economical ambitions as the principle aim in life (see especially Weber 2000).

Boltanski and Chiapello take up Weber's argument in analysing how, in the last few decades, the "new spirit of capitalism " as an enforced norm to seek (and find) self-fulfilment and self-realisation through work and the job has evolved. They argue that this was (at least partly) caused by the ability of capitalism to absorb some main points of one direction of critique of capitalism; namely, from the realm of an artistic critique that accused capitalism of the imprisonment of the individual's subjectivity and self-realisation. Boltanski and Chiapello call this critique the "denunciation of generic alienation" and write about its historical origins:

> Here demands for autonomy and self-fulfilment assume the form given them by Parisian artists in the second half of the nineteenth century who made *uncertainty* a lifestyle and a value: being able to possess several lives and, correlatively, a multiplicity of identities, which also presupposes the possibility of freeing oneself from any endowment and rejecting an original debt, whatever its character. Viewed thus, liberation is predominantly conceived as setting free the oppressed desire to be someone else: not to be someone whose life-plan has been conceived by others

(parents, teachers etc.); to be who one wants to be, when one wants it. (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, pp. 433-434, original emphasis)

In their portrayal, the older "second" spirit of capitalism brought liberation from other forms of alienation: for example, with the establishment of the modern welfare state there came job security and improved working conditions for the working classes. However, in the 1960s and 1970s the regulated, codified organisation of working life became more and more the subject of a kind of revived artistic critique. The new spirit of capitalism, then, promised to bring liberation concerning this dimension. However, following Boltanski and Chiapello

> These gains in liberation were made at the expense of demands of the first type: far from finding themselves liberated, many people were instead casualized, subjected to new forms of systemic dependency, obliged to confront undefined, unlimited and distressing exigencies of self-fulfilment and autonomy in a greater solitude, and in most cases, separated from the lived world where nothing helped them to fulfil themselves. (ibid, p. 436)

Thus, individuals are faced with excessive self-fulfilment demands and also the norm to realise themselves in their work, sometimes to an extent which Boltanski and Chiapello call imposed self-fulfilment. At the same time, following their diagnosis, the security mechanisms are falling apart, which leaves the persons involved in a situation of latent insecurity (ibid). I will address this latter point in chapters 4, 5 and 6 by arguing that, concerning the topic insecurity and social security, the different welfare state and labour market policies of Denmark and Germany are of relevance. Boltanski's and Chiapello's emphasis of the topic of insecurity, I would argue, is partly due to the location of their analysis in France (see the discussion of the localisation of the discourse on "precarious work" originally stemming from France in chapter 4).

Discussions on the topic of norms and demands of self-fulfilment and self-realisation very often follow two rather opposing hypotheses (Holtgrewe 2003). On the one hand, there is the understanding that, via the norm of self-realisation, a subjugation under market demands and thus, self-exploitation is taking place. (Moldaschl (2002), McKinlay & Starkey 1995, Rau 2005). On the other hand, there are perspectives which emphasise the

possibility for the individual's personal development and empowerment (Gorz 2001, Lazzarato 1996).

3.3.1 Self-realisation as subjugation

Proponents of the first discourse very often draw upon a Foucaultian theory tradition. They can be found, for example, within critical management studies (McKinlay & Starkey 1998). Referring to an understanding of power that inscribes control mechanism in the individual or subject her/himself, concepts referred to are governmentality or self-technologies, applied on and by the individuals as self-submission mechanisms. With his concept of governmentality Foucault (2004) refers to the entanglement of the state's governance and the technologies of self-governance in contemporary Western society. This mode of government or "governmentality" developed over time and became dominant from the 18th century onwards. The modern form of subjectivity evolved that also made a different way of governing possible, which is in some ways to be found within the subjects themselves. Thus, individuals emerged having an notion of her/himself that views its own self, its body, and its life as something that can be shaped by her- or himself. By the end of the 19th century, this understanding transcended the bourgeoisie and became normality for everyone. This notion also implies that the individual has to be able to practise self-governing, that is, to apply what Foucault called "self-technologies". Thus, governing become less and less an issue of repression and control and more and more one of active self-control and self-discipline. Isabell Lorey (2006) states this succinctly when she notes that the:

> Focus of the analysis is a regime that is not only imposed on the people, their bodies and things, but in which they are at the same time actively taking part. It is not the question of a regulation of autonomous, free subjects, that is in the centre of the problematising of technologies of governmentality, but the regulation of the conditions in which these so-called autonomous and free subjects emerge in the first place. (Lorey 2006, p.3, author's translation)

Thus, the very process of subjection already implies a process of subjugation, which is internalised by individuals. Within this theoretical, diagnostic context, then, the wish for self-realisation is very likely to lead to self-exploitation: individuals who see themselves as

autonomous and free, aim to realise themselves within their work and thus also want to show and reproduce their inner self (which is, according to this view, produced and inextricably entwined with the mode of governmentality and thus the governing order). Hence, they exploit themselves even more efficiently and without any need for repression from the outside (Lorey 2006).

Alexandra Rau (2005) connects this general perspective with an analysis of the role of psychology and psychotherapy in contemporary societies. In her article, she proposes a shift from psycho technologies to psycho politics as the new dominant mode of governmentality. The diffusion of psychological knowledge and psychotherapy into every-day life, so her line of argumentation goes, made it the main stage for subjection today. At the same time, these psychological discourses are focusing on concepts and ideas like authenticity, identity development, and self-determination. These, however, have been topics of the agenda of the new social movements in the second half of the 20th century, being central to the thinking of the artistic critique (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). Thus, following Rau, governing techniques and self-technologies are used by some for the sake of liberation and empowerment. Thus, although trying to become liberated, they are staying within the mode of governing.

Against this background, self-determination is thought to be the new way of life. The self-realisation norm thus preaches to the converted and constitutes a part of the above named dominant mode of governmentality.

> The crux of the matter is, that the employees are not only confronted with an "inner land seizure" (Moldaschl 2002) but that they are as well feeling "empowered", "better" and more "self-realised". (Rau 2005, p. 158)

Thus, in the end, the individuals are, on this view, adjusting themselves with relish and for the sake of self-realisation to the demands of the market.

Within the Anglo-Saxon academic debate, these approaches inspired by Foucault have especially been criticised by scholars from labour process theory (Braverman 1974), a strand of theorising which is located in a materialistic and Marxist theory tradition. For

instance, Thompson and Ackroyd argue against the theories inspired by Foucault in the following way:

> The shift towards the primacy of discourse and the text encourages the removal of the workers from the academic gaze and the distinction between the intent and outcome of managerial strategies and practices is lost. (Thompson & Ackroyd 1995, p. 629)

Thus, in their view, the "real" effects of managerial discourses, as well as their relation to other structural factors, discourses, and practices, and the (within in this perspective implied) at least partly competent and possibly resisting practices of the individuals cannot be seen.

3.3.2 Self-realisation and potential empowerment

On the other side, there are sociological and critical approaches which are identifying positive aspects and (possible) consequences of the new self-fulfilment norms in the realm of paid work that emphasise possibilities of empowerment for the individuals (Holtgrewe 2003).

Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) and André Gorz (2002), for instance, argue by drawing on Marx that the competencies individuals are developing in the "new" flexibilised and knowledge-oriented capitalism can contribute to the growth of productive forces. Higher qualification levels, more complex and holistic work tasks and a development of information and communication technologies, which enable and demand more communication, can thus become the basis of social transformation and empowerment. (Dant 2003)

Gorz, for example, drawing on Braverman's (1974) insight that "scientific management" (that Taylorist work organisation is minimising the worker's autonomy) emphasises Bravermann's thought that the worker can find some freedom outside the work sphere. Thus, possibilities of individual sovereignty are based

> upon activities unrelated to any economic goal which are an end in themselves: communication, giving, creating and aesthetic enjoyment, the production and reproduction of life, tenderness, the realisation of physical, sensuous and intellectual capacities, the creation of non-commodity use-values (shared goods or services) that could not be produced as commodities because of their unprofitably – in short, the

whole range of activities that make up the fabric of existence and therefore occupy a primordial rather than a subordinate place. (Gorz 1997, p. 81)

Of course, Gorz's inclusion of domestic and household work into that sphere is to be criticised from a feminist point of view, as he seems to ignore totally the societally structured gendered division of labour and its consequences. However, the hypothesis that this "non-work" sphere is having the potential to empower individuals allows him to argue that the "new" knowledge-intensive work organisation within flexible capitalism can advance the possibility for the workers' emancipation. As the growing demand for self-realisation in working life, which is also a demand for certain subjective abilities of individuals, contrivable and sustainable only outside of the work sphere, this outside, which, following Gorz, is the place for individual freedom, is becoming more relevant. Thus, Gorz states that

> a society, in which everyone expects everyone else to further develop her/his artistic, sensual, cognitive etc. abilities and which provides means and possibilities for that, is radically opposite to a society dominated by achievement and exploitation restraints, but it is still already potentially innate in the current development. (Gorz 2001, p. 18, author's translation)

Within the sphere outside the economical and paid work, Gorz thus sees the place for emancipation. Tim Dant summarises this view as follows:

> The critical theorists, writing in the middle of the twentieth century, saw free time as vulnerable to domination through the cultural system, but Gorz sees it as a sphere of life which individual interests, perhaps shared with other members of the family or community, can be pursued outside the sphere of economic rationality. The self-rewarding activities of "making bread ... playing an instrument, gardening, campaigning, exchanging knowledge and so on" (Gorz 1989,p. 168) are those that will shape unaliated individual identity. (Dant 2006, p. 149 - 150)

Lazzarato's (1996) line of argumentation goes somewhat in the same direction as Gorz's. Being rooted in the Italian operaism tradition, Lazzarato especially elaborates on the concept of immaterial labour. He interprets the transformation of work from the 1970s onwards as a shift from manual labour to immaterial labour; the latter being defined as "the labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity"(Lazzarato 1996, p. 132). Work organisation, then, becomes very different:

All the characteristics of the post industrial economy (both in industry and society as a whole) are highly present within the classic forms of "immaterial" production: audiovisual production, advertising, fashion, the production of software, photography, cultural activities, and so forth. The activities of this kind of immaterial labor force us to question the classic definitions *of work* and *workforce,* because they combine the results of various different types of work skill: intellectual skills, as regards the cultural-informational content; manual skills for the ability to combine creativity, imagination, and technical and manual labor; and entrepreneurial skills in the management of social relations and the structuring of that social cooperation of which they are a part. This immaterial labor constitutes itself in forms *that are immediately* collective, and we might say that it exists only in the form of networks and flows. (Lazzaroto 1996, p. 136, original emphasis)

Through this distinctive character of immaterial work, its immediate collectivity as well as its network form, there is room for inter subjectivity and creativity, which cannot be completely subsumed under capitalistic control. This is the place where Lazzarato identifies potential for empowerment and liberation. It is this thought that Hardt and Negri (2000) are drawing upon as well:

Today productivity, wealth and the creation of social surpluses take the form of cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks. In the expression of its own creative elements, immaterial labor thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism. (ibid, p. 294)

Thus, they identify a potential for resistance here, as immaterial labour is making new forms of politicised social relations possible (Dant 2006)

This form of recent "digital Marxism" provides us with a positive interpretation of new orientation modes and norms as regards work. However, when the "digital Marxists" are arguing that the new modes of production and work organisation can transcend and outgrow its capitalistic instrumentalisation, they are possibly overlooking the tensions that are at play here. In addition, on the more positive side of the discussion, but rooted in a different theoretical tradition, is Himanen's "Hacker ethic" (2001). Inspired by Weber, he contrasts the protestant ethic with the newly emerging work ethic of hackers, who, Himanen suggests, are combining work and fun in a independent and self-determined manner .

So far in this chapter I have discussed two different interpretations of the same development, namely the emerging norm or orientation mode of self-realisation or self-

fulfilment via work. However, in my view, both perspectives, the subjugation hypothesis on the one side and the empowerment or liberation approach on the other, suffer from a similar problem as the aforementioned German de-limitation of work (*Entgrenzung*) debate shows: that is to say, they both proposing a linear process of societal change, which, although being characterised by ambivalences or even dialectical antagonisms, is having a theory defined direction or even outcome. Such ontological determinations, however, are dangerous, especially within empirical research, as they already define what to find out in the empirical analysis.

In contrast, in this research project I am aiming for a theoretical framework that is able to grasp the ambivalences and asynchronies of the proclaimed societal change, or, more specifically in this context, the change of norms in the realm of working life. As Ursula Holtgrewe puts it:

> Management discourses and entrepreneurship to be institutionalised all-over are definitely influencing orientation patterns and practices of the subjects. They [*the subjects, B.F.*] struggle with them. In order to analyse, how and with which consequences they are doing this, it is though important to take subjectivity seriously as an independent level of structuring and not as a functional reserve and to empirically [...] look at the *processes* of the constitution and transformation of subjectivity. (Holtgrewe 2003, p. 30-31, author's translation, original emphasis)

Again, it is my opinion that structuration theory can provide an adequate over-all theoretical framing: that is, that the self-realisation norm can be understood as one orientation pattern alongside other, possibly conflicting norms and systemic structures, ties and restraints. Thus, we can more adequately grasp the complex settings individuals are embedded in, as well as taking both the subject or micro level seriously in relation to the empirical data. In contrast to the above criticised time diagnoses of diverse shades, which theoretically identify and thus define the direction of on-going societal change, we are able to empirically analyse the individuals' struggle and handling of complex old and newly emerging social norms, institutions and structures. One example in the context of the above discussed transformation of norms could be the question of how individuals are dealing with their own demand for self-fulfilment in their work, and the entwined danger

of self-exploitation, a question which, within the above described subjugation and empowerment hypotheses, is already answered theoretically.

3.4. "Re-drawn" work: Some concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have been aiming to provide a (none-exhaustive) overview of recent theoretical and time-diagnostic approaches on the proclaimed on-going transformation of work. The freelancers, whose work and life patterns are in the centre of analysis in this research project are supposed to be affected by these transformation in a distinctive way. Paying attention to aspects relevant for their specific situation, I have specifically focused on two aspect of the literature. Firstly, I have been discussing work unbound in the context of work organisation as the erosion of previously existing structures of work, and thus on the emerging need for the affected individuals to organise working life themselves. Secondly, I have been looking at proposals of how to understand the newly emerging orientation mode of self-realisation in working life. In conclusion, I am suggesting a structuration theoretical framework. I am arguing that with the help of structuration theory we are better able to adequately conceptualise the ambivalences and asynchronities of the on-going transformation process. Moreover, it enables us to empirically analyse the individual's reactions, handling and consequences on the micro-level as embedded into societal structures at the one hand, but without determining the outcomes theoretically on the other. Thus, within this project, structuration theory forms the general theoretical framework by guiding the conceptual approach towards dynamics of change and persistence. Of course, structuration theory is located on a high level of abstraction. In the next chapters I will try to "fill in" the abstract framework with the help of an analysis and comparison of the two countries' structural properties. Thus, we can analytically include the different welfare states and labour market regulations as specific spatio-temporal settings, an aspect specifically relevant for this research project. In the next chapter I will present and discuss the latter point in detail.

4. "Precariousness" versus "flexicurity"? Setting the stage for comparison

In this chapter, I want to provide some theoretical aspects necessary in order to make comparisons in this project. Additionally, relevant instruments, regulations, and policies of the two welfare states and labour markets in question (namely Denmark and Germany) are presented in a more descriptive manner. Let us briefly recapitulate what subject is to be compared in this research project: In focus is the way in which individuals deal with their very flexibilised work patterns in the context of their life. We could ask ourselves at this point, why it is relevant to compare this in the context of the national regulatory frameworks (like the welfare state or the labour market). One underlying hypothesis of this research project is, as stated in chapters 1 and 3, that these contexts have an influence on those individual practices in several important ways. On the one hand, the specific shape of the flexibilised work forms, which are of interest here, and their challenges for the individuals, are, I am arguing, influenced by those national frameworks. On the other hand, the ways and possibilities for the individuals to handle the challenges are, at least in part, shaped by those frameworks. As Gottschall and Wolf (2007) put this:

> Against the background of different national labor market regimes, as well as a segmentation of national labor markets, we expect that the transformation of work is limited and heterogeneous and that dynamics vary and are not simultaneous. (Gottschall & Wolf 2007, p. 13)

This argumentation can be substantiated theoretically with the help of structuration theory sketched out in the previous chapter (chapter 3, see also Giddens 1984). With Giddens, we can see institutions like the welfare state and labour market regulations as distinctive parts of social systems of different spatio-temporal location and range. In this chapter, I am going to clarify the specific characteristic of these elements of the social systems in order to be able to determine their possible relevance and interplay with the individual freelancers' strategies.

Firstly, I present some insights from the field of comparative welfare state research, which will give an overview of the over-all design and logics of the two welfare states. Next,

I introduce two approaches, namely the debates on "precariousness"[11] and "flexicurity," relevant to the subject at hand. The approach on "precariousness" or "precarious work" has recently gained a lot of attention in some countries. In Germany, for example, a study drawing upon this approach received a lot of public attention in 2006, leading to an inflationary use of the term in the media (FES-study: Müller-Hilmer, 2006).

Within this approach flexibilisation and de-regulation of work are (at least partly) conceptualised in the context of other societal institutions than the workplace: welfare state institutions, for instance. At the same time, the individual social position of those affected by precarious working conditions, including their possibilities for societal participation, is focused upon. Topically, the question of the individual's insecurity is very much in the centre of discussion (Castel, 2002, Brinkmann et al, 2006).

However, and despite the explicit inclusion of broader societal issues, the conception of precarisation is not sensitive to the variations of different welfare states. Being most prominent in France and Germany, its analysis remains (sometimes without being mentioned explicitly) within specific national frameworks. This fact is stated quite clearly by the French sociologist Robert Castel's (2002) in his book, *The Transformations of the Social Question*, which has come to serve as the point of departure for most of the contemporary theorising around the question of precarisation. Concerning the design of the book, which draws upon detailed long-term historical developments in France, Castel's states in the 'Preface' to his book that it 'was impossible to take into account the problem of the diversity of social states and the specificities of current conditions in different countries of Western Europe' (ibid, p.xxv).

In contrast to the above, the "flexicurity" approach grounds its considerations explicitly in the insight that welfare states, and especially labour market regulations, differ from country to country. This is due to the fact that it is mainly derived from the field of macro-economical research. Moreover, and quite contrary to discussions of

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11 I am very well aware, that the terms "precarious work", "precariousness" and "precarisation" etc. are neologisms in English and linguistically far from elegant. As the debate I am referring to mainly took place in French and German, these terms are merely direct translations. Though, for the lack of better terms, I stick with those.

"precariousness," proponents of "flexicurity" start from the premise that it is possible to achieve both *economic flexibility* and *social security* for individuals under certain conditions. Within this discussion, Denmark has often been called the "best practice" model.

Though differing in relation to the academic disciplines the two approaches are stemming from, the focus of their analytical attention, and their conclusions, they nevertheless share the same assumptions (at least to some extent) regarding the relationship between flexibilisation, de-regulation, and transformation of work on the one hand, and the topic of (different) welfare states, and labour market policies and regulations on the other. They are also posing hypotheses concerning the question of what these developments mean for the individuals who are faced with these new working conditions. Consequently, I will argue that the two approaches are able to describe some of the dynamics taking place in one of the two national contexts respectively; namely "precariousness" in the case of the German situation, and "flexicurity" concerning the dynamics in Denmark. On this view, they can thus serve to strengthen the picture of, and provide some suppositions regarding, the different shapes of the transformation of work, as well as the consequences of these for the individuals concerned, in the two countries.

Towards the end of this chapter, I describe in more detail how, and in what ways, the freelancers are included or excluded from social security institutions in the two countries in order to render more precisely their social security situation. Taking into account the two approaches named above, with their profoundly different assumptions regarding the relationship between flexbilisation and individual social security, my aim is to ascertain whether the freelancers social security position in Germany and Denmark can be called either "precarious" or "flexicured," or something in between. I am doing this in order to prepare the ground for a contextualisation of the empirical findings of the freelancers own perception as regards the question of (in-)security, and the role this topic plays in their work and life practices and strategies (see chapter 6). Thus, I am trying to grasp the respective structural framework or context the freelancers are located in. By

doing so, I can also clarify the differences of these contexts, which can subsequently help to contextualise the differences concerning the subjective relevance of the topic (in-)security found in the analysis of the empirical material.

4.1. Different worlds of welfare capitalism

I argued above, in line with Gottschall and Wolf, that the embodiments of the transformation of work, including its consequences for the individuals, are shaped by the varying national regimes of welfare states and labour market regulations and policies. Gøsta Esping-Andersen, known for his influential typology of welfare state regimes, would surely agree with this. In his account on welfare state change in what he calls "post-industrial economy," he writes

> that existing institutional arrangements heavily determine, maybe even over determine, national trajectories. More concretely, the divergent kinds of welfare regimes that nations built over the post-war decades, have a lasting and overpowering effect on which kind of adaptation strategies can and will be pursued. Hence we see various kinds of post-industrial societies unfolding before our eyes. Welfare states respond quite energetically, although far from uniformly, to past crises. This is certainly also happening today. (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 4)

Before having a closer look at Esping-Andersen's analysis of the welfare state regimes in times of post industrialism, I want to shortly recapitulate his "three worlds of welfare capitalism" (Esping- Andersen 1990), in order to clarify Esping-Andersen's point of departure on the one hand, and to present the different logics and principles the two welfare states in this research are built upon on the other.

In his typology, Esping-Andersen classifies (mainly European) welfares states into three types. In order to do so, he analyses (besides the size of social spending) the character and extent of social rights granted by the welfare state. He refers to T.H. Marshall's concept of citizenship, which consists of social rights, as being the core of the welfare state (see Marshall 2000). Esping-Andersen's first criterion for classification is the level of de-commodification in a given welfare state. De-commodification means the (partial) suspension of the individual's (labour) market dependency by the welfare state.

> [...] the concept refers to the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 37).

The welfare state's impact on societal stratification is Esping-Andersen's second criterion. He sees the welfare state as a "system of stratification" (ibid, p. 23). Thus, he assigns the welfare state a role in the (re-)production of societal class structure.

> Welfare states are key institutions in structuring of class and social order. The organizational features of the welfare state help determine the articulation of social solidarity, divisions of class, and status differentiation (ibid, p. 55).

Because of the underlying differences of "logics" and forms of welfare state policies and programs, Esping-Andersen stresses that the respective welfare states do have very different impacts on social structure. These varying effects make up one dimension of his typology. The third aspect of his classification is the way in which market, state, and family are assigned duties and responsibilities for the provision of social contributions and services (ibid). On the basis of these three dimensions, and by taking into account their historical-political developments, Esping Andersen identifies three ideal typical welfare state regimes: namely, the liberal, the conservative-corporatist, and the social-democratic.

According to Esping-Andersen, liberal regimes are rooted in the political ideas of liberalism. These contain a trust in self-regulating forces of the market (at least in some versions). Thus, social policies and benefit schemes are having a residual character, and are only allocated to those who are seen as not commodifiable. Market participants are urged to privately insure their social risks (e.g. illness, old age, disability). Hence, the liberal welfare state enforces structural social inequalities. For Esping-Andersen, examples of such regimes would include Great Britain and the USA (ibid).

The most important goal of the conservative-corporatist welfare state is "status-preservation".

> Be it in favour of strict hierarchy, corporatism, or of familialism, the unifying theme is that traditional status relations must be retained for the sake of social integration (ibid, p. 68).

Therefore, the welfare state aims to preserve and reproduce social status. The state plays an important role in the provision of social benefits and for de-commodification; although, for most of the time, this is dependent on the income level the person has had before. This happens mainly through state-run social insurances, to which the employees contribute according to their income. Social benefits independent of income and contribution beforehand are usually only provided by the state if social insurance and the family fall short. Thus, the institution "family" plays an important role, which is also the case concerning services like child care. The principle of "subsidiarity" is applied, which means that the state only steps in if the family fails in providing the service or benefit in question. Esping-Andersen finds embodiments of this model mainly in continental Europe: in Germany, Austria, France and Italy, for example (ibid). However, this regime cluster appears to be the most heterogeneous of the three, as familialism is not as distinct in France as it is in Germany; a fact that Esping-Andersen admits as well (Esping-Andersen 1999).

The underlying idea of the social-democratic welfare state is one of universalism. Thus, for Esping-Andersen, the social-democratic welfare state is characterised by universal social rights (entitlement via citizenship) and a high level of de-commodification. The policies and benefits usually target the individual, not the family. Hence, they can minimise dependencies on the market as well as the family. This makes the state the main provider of social benefits and services, including, for instance, care services like child care and elderly care. This welfare state type aims for the biggest possible diminishment of social inequalities. The comparably big financial burden needed to finance de-commodification measures and comprehensive social services is mainly financed via income taxation. Esping-Andersen locates this regime cluster in the Scandinavian countries: Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (ibid).

As previously mentioned, this welfare state typology attracted a lot of attention, and subsequently became the target of critique. Esping-Andersen admits in one of his later books, that his typology is drawing on the notion of the standard worker or standard

employment, that is to say, that his subject of analysis on the micro-level is the standard worker.

> The typology, regardless of political origins, becomes static in the sense that it reflects the socio-economic conditions that prevailed then, namely an economy dominated by industrial mass production; a class structure in which the male, manual worker constituted the prototypical citizen; and a society in which the prototypical household was of the stable, one-earner kind. (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 74)

This, of course, has given rise to critique; and feminists and scholars from the field of gender studies have been particularly vocal on this point. Ann Orloff, for example, states:

> Provision of welfare "counts" only, when it occurs through the state or the market, while women's unpaid work in the home is ignored. Furthermore, the sexual division of labour within states, markets and families also goes unnoticed. (Orloff in Pfau-Effinger 2000, p. 33)

Because of these shortcomings, feminist scholars in the field have developed typologies based on the gendered impacts of welfare states; examples being the "male-breadwinner-model" (Lewis and Ostner 1994), the regimes of gender policy (Sainsbury 1999), or the adult worker model (Lewis 2004). In the next chapter, I will discuss this topic further, with a special focus on the two welfare states in question.

4.1.1 The conservative vs. the social-democratic welfare state: Gendered policy logics

In their contributions, feminist or gender-sensitive scholars bring into focus the question of care: childcare or care for the elderly, for example. Welfare states regulations and policies are involved in the organisation of care, namely by the form and magnitude of allocation of public care facilities. Following the argumentation of Kilkey and Bradshaw (1999), this does have gendered consequences: As it is mostly women who provide "familialised" unpaid care work, the welfare state is heavily involved in shaping women's access to the labour market through the provision or non-provision of public care.

Following Esping-Andersen (see above), the family as an institution is playing a very important role in the conservative welfare state regime (in which the German welfare state is located). Focusing on the consequences for women and their access to the labour

market, Diane Sainsbury sums up the intertwined policy logics of the conservative type as follows:

> The gendered consequences of four interlocking features – the subsidiarity principle, the male breadwinner regime, continental family law, and the Bismarckian solution – are that women find themselves in a double bind. Women provide care for others but are less likely to be eligible for benefits to pay for their own care; or they are eligible only for means-tested benefits. [...] The paucity of public provision of welfare services in the conservative / corporatist welfare states is often attributed to the principle of subsidiarity. It establishes the family as the preferred site of care, and shapes the delivery of services outside the family.[...] Compared to the liberal and social-democratic welfare states, women are more likely to be out of the labour market providing care as unpaid work for family members and as volunteer workers in the homes of others. Since caring activities are not paid work, women are excluded from the social-insurance schemes that form the backbone of social provision in the conservative welfare states. (Sainsbury 1999 p. 255 - 256)

Thus, conservative welfare states are structurally advantaging the male breadwinner/female home-maker family arrangement. The situation is very different in social-democratic welfare states. Sainsbury argues that differences to the other two regime types, and especially to the conservative welfare state's gender policy regime, can be found due to the following circumstances: in the social-democratic welfare state regime, a tremendous expansion of public services took place, and at the same time these services came to be viewed as social rights instead of market commodoties. Moreover, social rights are, in principle, based on citizenship (in contrast to work performance like in the conservative welfare state). Additionally, most of the benefits are financed via tax revenues and not via social insurance contributions as in the conservative welfare state type. According to Sainsbury, these characteristics result in the following policy logics:

> This gender regime and the social-democratic regime have complementary logics. Social rights based on citizenship / residence simultaneously weaken the influence of the market and the family on entitlements. This principle of entitlement individualizes and thereby defamilializes social rights; [...] At the same time, public services provided jobs, and provision of day-care made it easier for mothers to work. Most importantly, the goal of equality underpins both logics. (ibid p. 260)

Sainsbury stresses that these accounts on the intertwined policy logics are, like in the case of Esping-Andersen's welfare regime types, ideal-typical (ibid). However, the provision of care services, especially child care with all its gendered consequences, still makes up one of

the largest differences between the Danish and the German welfare state, which is very much in line with the above described policy logics in the conservative type (Germany) and the social-democratic type (Denmark): Denmark has the highest coverage rate of public child care services for children aged 0–3 years within the European Union (Borchorst 2002). In 1996, the proportion of children in full-time day care places was 46% for children between 0-3 years, and around 80% for children aged 3-6[12] (Rostgaard & Fridberg 1998, p. 154). 64% of all children between the age of 1 and 3, and 91% of all children between 3 and 6 are enrolled in public day-care in Denmark (Gulløv 2008).

In line with Sainsbury's ideal typical logics, the picture in Germany is very different . Regarding children under three years, the supply rate of public childcare places in 2002 has only been at 9%[13] (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2005). However, here a differentiated look at the regional allocation of child care place makes sense. This is due to Germany's history: whereas in the former West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany or FRG), childcare supply rate for children have always been extremely low (e.g. in 1986 1.6% for children younger than 3 years, Joos 2001 p. 147) in former Eastern Germany (German Democratic Republic or GDR), the childcare coverage was more or less similar to Denmark (in 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin wall, 56.3% of all children between 0-3 were allocated a public day care place in "Eastern Germany", and virtually all of the children between 3-6 years, ibid, p. 147). After German reunification, the supply rate in the new "Länder" dropped significantly to 41.3% in 1994. When looking at the absolute numbers, we can see that in 1994, less than a third of the number of places of 1989 were available (ibid, p. 147). Concerning this development, Magdalena Joos states that:

> This cutback in day-care facilities, besides the large loss of jobs especially for women –
> two systematically related processes – contributed notably to a development that made
> the Eastern German women and mothers the "losers of *(German, B.F.)* reunification"
> (Joos 2001, p. 146, author's translation).

12 This rate is calculated as the number of full-time day care places available per child. (Rostgaard & Fridberg 1998)

13 The supply rate documents the number of child care places in relation to the number of children in the respective age groups. However, in contrast to the above named rates calculated by Rostgaard & Fridberg, it includes full- and part-time places. (Joos 2001)

When looking at the even more differentiated supply rates from 2002, we can identify tremendous regional differences: When distinguishing between the rates of the Western German regions without the cities of Bremen and Hamburg (*Westliche Flächenländer),* the Eastern German regions without Berlin *(Östliche Flächenländer),* and the city regions of Hamburg, Bremen and Berlin together *(Stadtstaaten),* we can see that the allocation of day-care places for children under 3 years of age is by far the lowest in the Western German regions at 2.4 percent. In contrast, in the Eastern German regions it was 37%, and in the city regions 25.8%. These numbers seem to indicate not only a difference between East and West, but also between urban and rural regions. This can be seen in the case of the Western city regions of Hamburg (13%) and Bremen (10%), where the supply rate was higher that in other Western regions like Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg (both 2%). However, within the latter, a similar urban – rural divide could be found in the allocation of day care services, as in the big cities the supply was significantly higher than in smaller ones or on the country side. Concerning the supply rate for children in the age group 3-6 years, supply rates are generally much higher: In the year 2002, it was 90.6% in the Western regions, full supply in the Eastern regions, and 84% in the city regions. Differences between Eastern, Western, urban, and rural regions could be found in regards the question as to whether the day-care places were full-time or not. In the Eastern regions (98%) and the city regions (76%) a majority of the allocated day care places were full-time ones, quite in contrast to the Western regions (24%) (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2005). Summing up, we can see that the day care service supply in Germany appears to be quite fragmented, along both an East-West and a urban–rural divide.

Compared with the aforementioned Danish rates, we can see that there is a difference especially concerning day-care of young children. Moreover, it appears that many of the places in Germany are not full-time, whereas the high Danish coverage rates are calculated on the basis of full-time places. As regards regional differences in Denmark, Rostgaard and Fridberg (2002) state, that 'children living in urban areas tend to be cared for in public care more often than children in rural areas' (ibid, p. 110). However, these

differences are not substantial when compared to the differing rates in Germany. Honig (2008) has shown that many parents in Germany draw on other care solutions (if they do not practise a breadwinner-home-maker model), thereby in large parts making use of care possibilities to be found in their social networks. Social networks, on the other hand, do not play a role for the care arrangements of Danish parents (Rostgaard & Fridberg 2002).

In this context, the literature very often refers to women's labour force participation rates as related to day care possibilities (Fagan et. al. 1997). When looking at the rates from the year 2008 we can indeed see that the women's labour force participation rates in Denmark (74.2%) was higher than that in Germany (65.4%). In addition, we can also see that men's labour force participation rate were higher in Denmark (81.9%) than in Germany (75.9%) (Massarelli 2009). Thus, we can easily see the differences between the Danish and German welfare state set-ups as concerns child care services and related gendered consequences. In addition to the political "socio-technical" approach of conventional welfare state research, which directly relates instrumental incentives (like the availability of child care) to social behaviour (like women's employment), several scholars (e.g. Pfau-Effinger 2000, Bothfeld 2008) emphasise other important aspects, like normative attitudes and cultural dimensions: these include, for example, opinions on the "good" upbringing of children.

In her article on newer reforms of German family policy in the context of the general welfare state setting, Bothfeld describes how the families' practices and understandings shifted away from the policies and regulations strongly rooted in the male breadwinner-system: She identifies a East-West divide as regards normative perceptions – in 2006, only 20% of East Germans stated that the male-breadwinner/female-home-maker constellation would be the ideal family form, compared to 53% in Western Germany. However, we can trace a departure from the traditional male-breadwinner arrangement within family practices: in 2003, only 20% of families followed the model of the pure male breadwinner arrangements in Germany, with most parents living in a male breadwinner/female part-timer model. Thus, we can easily suspect that a large percentage of the latter are faced with difficulties in finding day-care possibilities for their children. Bothfeld argues that from the

side of politics and policies, there was only a reluctant and slow adjustment to these changed living patterns. The newest reforms in the field of family policy, namely the new parental leave programme introduced in 2007 (see below chapter 4.5), and a firm (at least rhetorical) commitment to massive expanding public day care facilities, were the most significant attempts of a paradigm change in this policy field. However, when taking the whole "package" of policies and regulations into account, the picture of a strong fragmentation of entwined policies in the field of mothers' employment and family policy emerges.

Bothfeld identifies inconsistencies and incoherences in these policies:

Character of fragmentation in the fields employment, social security and child care			
	Importance of employment	Social security	Child care
Inconsistency		x	x
Incoherence	x	x	?

Table 3: Character of fragmentation in the fields employment, social security and child care, Source: ibid, p. 29

Regarding the first column, Bothfeld is referring to the field of labour market policies and recent reforms of unemployment and social assistance benefit programmes. Here, the notion of employability for everybody and strong pressures to participate in the labour market have been established (e.g. in the so-call Hartz4-reform, where activation and a stronger pressure towards getting into employment have been introduced), while at the same time benefits have become means-tested in a way that can be called "familialising". Thus, Bothfeld identifies incoherence regarding the notion of the importance of women's employment in the set-up of labour market policies. The second point/column, refers to part-time employment, which, as we can see above, is the main form of women's' participation in the labour market in Germany. In the last decade, part-time employment has become more supported by regulations and policies, however, within the public social insurance system (which includes health insurance and pensions (see below in chapter 4.5), full inclusion is still based on full-time employment. Long-term part-time work is still associated with non-sufficient pensions in old age. Thus, practising part-time work has

become easier, but is still going on at the expense of social security. Hence, Bothfeld sees incoherence as well as inconsistency. Concerning the last point, Bothfeld identifies a greater potential for coherence, at least on the level of programmes and proclaimed political goals (namely the massive expansion of child care), because in this particular field a rhetorical paradigm change has been taking place in the form of a clear commitment to expanding public child care facilities without connecting this expansion to the introduction of "familialising" instruments. However, in practice, this proclaimed expansion has not yet taken place. Thus, the infrastructure of public day care is still insufficient in certain regions, which is why inconsistency can be identified (ibid).

Summing up, the German framework for families and parents can be called fragmented and even partly polarised concerning several dimensions. This seems to be the case on the institutional level (as regards welfare state and labour market regulations, for instance) as well as on the level of norms and understandings. This is especially the case when it comes to the question of normative notions of child care and supply, which, as noted, are strongly differentiate along regional lines (East-West, urban-rural). Looking at Denmark, we can identify a very different situation. As Ellingsætter (1997) states, for example, the male-breadwinner norm has practically vanished. In her study, 63% of the parents questioned were preferring a family model, where both fathers and mothers where involved in work and family duties in equal share (ibid). However, several scholars (Bergquist 1999, Siim 1997) have noted that in practice, care duties are not shared equally and often are mainly taken over by women. As Birte Siim states:

> Indeed the dual breadwinner norm rests on an *implicit* and invisible premise about the
> need for parents to share caring work that contrasts with gendered practices. (Siim
> 1997, p. 143)

When it comes to child care in Denmark, having pre-school children in day care institution appears to be normatively rooted: In her article, Eva Gulløv analyses what constitutes a "good" childhood in Denmark, and argues that the notion of the good upbringing of children is connected with institutional day-care.

> The day-care institution has become such an incorporated part of children's ordinary
> conditions the institutional socialization is seen as essential to a "normal socialization"

of children. [...] While day-care institutions as mentioned were regarded as a "supplement" to the upbringing in the home of the family in the 1970s, it is now clear that the socialization functions of the institutions are seen to a much greater extent as connected with the child's basic individuation process, and thereby in a more far-reaching sense in the construction of the modern child.(Kampmann in Gulløv 2008, p. 133)

Hence, we can conclude that the Danish welfare state framework and related norms and perceptions concerning family arrangements and the "good" childhood are much more consistent than in Germany. Welfare state services and regulations clearly promote dual-breadwinner families. As well, the dual-breadwinner model is rooted in the normative level, which includes a notion of equally sharing paid and care work amongst the couple/parents. However, this raises the question of how equal care work is practically shared in the family. Additionally, the understanding of a "good" childhood is tightly connected with public child care. Thus, we can see large differences between the Danish and the German welfare states and policy frameworks concerning child care and the family. The freelancers' narratives of their family life will be contextualized within these respective frameworks (see chapter 8).

In what follows, I will discuss the challenges "postindustrialism" (which includes the transformation of work and employment) is posing to the above described welfare states, before introducing two approaches, "precariousness" and "flexicurity", that propose certain hypotheses about this topic.

4.1.2 Welfare states in post-industrial times

In some of his later contributions, Esping-Andersen deals with welfare states and their reactions to developments in what he calls "post-industrial economy". Following Esping-Andersen, "post-industrial economy" emerged, amongst other things, with globalisation, new technologies, an expanding service sector, and a high employment orientation among women. He argues that in order to be able to trace the challenges these developments pose for contemporary welfare states, the interaction between labour markets, families, and the welfare state must be placed in focus. One of the problems with these post industrial developments, as Esping-Andersen has noted, is the fact that welfare states were

established in times in which the risks of exclusion had a very different shape: '[t]he design of contemporary welfare states reflects a risk structure that is closer to that of our fathers and grandfathers than of young families today' (Esping-Andersen 1999, p. 10). Thus, he analyses under what institutional preconditions the welfare states are meeting the "new risk structure," and how they respond (ibid).

Interestingly enough, Esping-Andersen's analysis seems to capture the "ghost" of path dependency. According to Esping-Andersen, the social-democratic welfare states seem to be quite well-equipped for the challenges of post-industrialism: the high level of universalism that characterises its welfare policy profile appears to be, at least in principle, inclusive of flexibilised "atypical" non-standard workers. Moreover, on the ground of his analysis Esping-Andersen states that social democratic welfare states have met the challenges of post-industrialism with social-democratic, which is to say, universalistic answers. Seen from an over-all perspective, current welfare state reforms seem not to have de-institutionalised universalism. A lot of the new policies were shaped by both universalistic and individualistic principles. This trend, however, is not unchallenged in the respective welfare states, since none of them are purely social-democratic (or liberal or conservative). One example of this is the design of the Danish second tier pension system, which does not follow universalistic principles but, instead, follows a contribution-based funding principle.[14] Nevertheless, Esping-Andersen argues that the over-all policy design of the Danish welfare state is clearly social-democratic (Esping-Andersen 1999, 2002).

The conclusion that universalism (constituting a fundamental part of Esping-Andersen social-democratic type) is still prevalent in the Danish welfare state has been doubted by other scholars in the field Bent Greve, for example, states that

> changes in social policy in Denmark over the last 20 years seem to indicate a more mixed picture of the Danish model – one which is moving away from a purely universal, citizenship-based model towards one which still relies to a very high degree on universalism yet which also has been changing to include more corporative elements, with regards to both social services delivery and financing. (Greve 2004, p. 167)

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14 I will come back to this fact later on, as it is relevant concerning the "social security"-background of the freelancers.

Thus, Greve challenges Esping-Andersen's hypothesis that the welfare states' answers to the post-industrial transformation of work is that strongly characterised by path-dependency, at least in the case of Denmark. Jørgen Goul Andersen (2007) shows this development of turning away from universalism very clearly for the field of old age and pensions in Denmark. I will discuss the Danish pension system in detail later on in chapter 3.6, as it could pose a future problem for Danish freelancer's social security.

Continuing with our discussion of Esping-Andersen, conservative welfare states confronted with post industrial dynamics and risks face much bigger problems. Because these systems are built upon the standard worker,his security and status preservation, these welfare states provide good protection for those with life-long standard employment patterns. However, those who cannot follow the "life-long standard-employment-patterns" are faced with considerably higher exclusion risks. Taking into account that such new work and employment histories are one of the characteristics of post industrial economy, this insider-outsider problem becomes very relevant. As Esping-Andersen states:

> Strong protection for the stably employed combined with huge barriers to labour market entry has, in many countries, nurtured a deepening abyss between privileged "insiders" and precarious "outsiders". (Esping-Andersen, 2002, p., 16)

As well, the conservative welfare states' reactions to post industrialism has been following the logics of the conservative welfare state regime, which in this case means searching for solutions with the help of familialism. The basic principle of familialism has been untouched or even enforced in several policies and social security measures. Other responses to post industrial economy, according to Esping-Andersen, were ad-hoc non-contributory programmes, which are ill-equipped to meet the challenges posed by these developments (see Esping-Andersen 1999, 2002). Nonetheless, considering the newer reforms of German family policies, like the new law reform concerning divorce and maintenance expenses, as well as the new parental leave programme (see above) the German welfare state, often seen as a prototypical conservative welfare state, has recently introduced de-familiarising elements (for a discussion about the new divorce legislation,

see, for example, Brantner & Rönicke 2009, about the parental leave programme, see Bothfeld 2006). We can also question Esping-Andersen's notion of strong path-dependency from this perspective.

However, whether or not the Danish and German welfare state reacts to post industrial challenges with their respective path-dependent solutions (universalism/familialism), by reflecting the discussion on the differences in the over-all design of the two welfare states in general, we can indeed expect to see very different social security conditions for freelancers in the two countries. In what follows, I shall discuss two approaches that thematise the transformation of work at least partly in combination with the welfare state and labour market structures.

4.2 The debate on precarious work, precariousness and precarisation

The terms "precarious work," "precariousness," and "precarisation" originate from a debate about précarité within French politics, which began in the late 1970s. Prior to this time, the word précarité was not used with this contemporary connotation in French. Jean-Claude Barbier (2008) writes about the use of the word:

> Key collective meanings, deeply embedded in French society, are associated with it, as testified by the expressions used by politicians. For instance, in his last meeting in the presidential election campaign in 2002, where he was opposing the extreme-right candidate, Jacques Chirac pronounced a solemn call to resist both précarité and xenophobia (Barbier,2008, p. 34).

Within French sociology, it was Agnès Pitrou who first applied the term in 1978, when she wrote about precarious families, and referred to an unstable and unfavourable life situation of those families in general, the employment situation being only one part of it (Barbier 2008). Pierre Bourdieu (1998) has used the concept in some of his more political contributions. He describes precariousness as a societal trend towards generalised insecurity, stemming from developments (he names flexibilisation as one of them) in the economy and the labour market:

> Precariousness has a deep impact on those suffering from it. As it leaves them in the dark about their future, it denies them at the same time all rational anticipation of the future and particularly the minimum of hope for and belief in the future, that is

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necessary for a mainly collective revolt against a however severe unbearable future (Bourdieu 1998, p. 97, author's translation).

As mentioned previously, Robert Castel developed the concept of precariousness both analytically and theoretically in his long-term study of the development of paid work in connection to the development of the welfare state in France during the last two-hundred years. In this study, Castel focuses on the development of the integrative aspect of work that came into being because of the establishment of the welfare state:

> Indeed there is a strong correlation [...] between the place that one occupies in the social division of labour and one's participation in networks of sociability and in systems of protection that "cover" an individual confronted with the vagaries of existence (Castel 2002, p. xv).

Following Castel, through this entanglement (regular) paid employment not only constitutes economical citizenship, but is also a necessary constitutive basis for social citizenship. Stated otherwise, because of the proclaimed correlation between economical citizenship and social citizenship, atypical work or unemployment *can* lead to severe problems of exclusion. Developments within the organisation of business and the economy (e.g. the diffusion of neoliberal thinking, de-regulation of work, flexibilisation of production and employment/work) led to an extension of work or employment forms that were, and still are, atypical; that is, they do not consist of the characteristics of "standard employment" and *can* thus be precarious. Following Castel's analysis, those developments led to a split in the labour market and the working population into three zones: On one side, there is the shrivelling "zone of integration", containing those people within standard employment who still enjoy full welfare state security. On the other side there is the "zone of disaffiliation," consisting of people who are more or less permanently excluded from regular employment (for instance the long-term unemployed). In-between these two zones a "zone of precariousness" came into being, populated by a heterogeneous group of people with atypical, precarious work. Castel names several forms of temporary and part time work as examples of precarious work. According to Castel, the ones struck with precarious work, tend to arrange themselves with these conditions. This, in the

end, leads to problems with future planning and any (positive) anticipation of the future; a point also emphasised by Bourdieu (see the citation above).

> How do we invest these situations with meaning and attach goals to these trends? The dream of the "interim", this is the desire to become permanently employed, linked however with doubts that seriously undermine the hope of ever reaching it. It is less the initiative to labour that is lacking, than the omnipresence of discontinuous and literally meaningless employment, which can hardly serve as the basis for imagining a tolerable future. This way of living in the social world requires strategies for survival that are rooted in the present. Out of this develops a culture that is, according to the felicitous expression of Laurence Rouleau-Berger, a "culture of waywardness". (Castel, 2002, p. 389)

This precarious group's exclusion is not described as something static or fixed. Their situation and social position is, rather, characterised as fluid, ambivalent, and by being included and excluded at the same time or in short-time sequences (Manske 2007, Castel 2002). In their study on precarious work in Germany, Brinkmann *et al* (2006), emphasise that although precarisation and precarious work are consequences of atypical work, not all forms of atypical work can be called precarious. In their account, they explicitly exclude IT-freelancers from precariousness, despite their clearly atypical and flexibilised work form (ibid, p. 60). On the other hand, Klaus Dörre, one of the co-authors of the aforementioned German study, characterises some highly skilled jobs at German universities as precarious (Dörre & Neis, 2008). Most of the studies on "precarious work," including the one by Robert Castel, locate the individuals threatened by "precariousness" amongst people with lower or no education. However, they explicitly state that highly educated persons can be struck as well[15] (Castel 2003, Manske 2007).

Apparently, the category of "precarious work" seems to be a bit imprecise and contested amongst scholars. Which work forms, then, fall under the category of precarious work? Within the German debate, most of the scholars (e.g. Brinkmann *et al* 2006, Manske 2007) can agree at least on the following three defining dimensions of precariousness:

> (1) *reproductive-material dimension:* Work is precarious if the activity that constitutes the principal income is not a living wage and/or is not paid well enough to go beyond a societally accepted cultural minimum [and/or is limited in time, apposition from Manske 2007, p. 24]

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15 I will come back to this – in the light of this project – crucial question later.

(2) *social-communicative dimension:* Work is precarious if it locks out the working person from an equal participation in social networks that emerge at the working place and through the work activity [...]

(3) *legal – institutional dimension [...]*: This means that work or the working person tend to be excluded from a full participation in institutionalised social rights and possibilities of participation. (Brinkmann et al, 2007, p. 18, author's translation)

After presenting the concept of precariousness and precarious work, it has to be mentioned that such conceptions are not unproblematic. Alexandra Manske, for example, criticizes the following points: firstly, like Esping-Andersen's model or the discourse on de-limitation of work in German sociology (*Entgrenzung,* see chapter 3)*,* the concept of precariousness takes industrial societies' standard/regular employment model as its starting point. Manske senses in some of the contributions to the German debate a certain positive overrating of this standard employment model. She criticises the implicit notion of the "good old days" of work stability. This is problematic because it ignores the fact that the German model of standard employment is institutionally based on the male-breadwinner model. It thus excludes the fact that large groups of the population, namely women and, to some extent, immigrants, have never been included within standard employment. Nevertheless, I want argue that taking standard employment as a point of departure makes sense if inclusion to social rights in a certain society are – as proclaimed – based to a certain degree on this model.[16] Of course, any approach that analytically deals with the standard employment model should be aware that this model, at least in its German occurrence, has a serious exclusion problem, and should therefore not be approached uncritically. (see Manske 2007)

Manske also criticises the tendency of precariousness research in Germany to predominantly focus on the "lower levels of the work society" (Manske 2007, p.35, author's translation). Of course, there are some good reasons for doing so, taking into account that better educated people working under precarious conditions might have more and better resources (e.g. through their family) to deal with their precariousness. Moreover, quantitative studies have shown that women with lower professional education in female

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16 I will show in chapter 4.5 that this is the case for the German welfare state

dominated parts of the service sector are amongst those groups most likely to work under precarious conditions in Germany (Manske 2007, p. 35). Nonetheless, as we will see later on in this chapter, the work form "freelancer" is excluded from full participation in social rights granted to the standard employment model in Germany; that is to say, that the freelancers in Germany have to deal in some way or other with this situation, which, considering the above named definition, is precarious (for findings on this, see chapter 6). Focussing exclusively on the "lower end of the labour market" in the context of precarious work would be to neglect the complexities of inequalities and exclusion in contemporary societies (Manske 2007).

Taking the discussion on the differences in welfare state regimes described above into account, we can now pose the question as to whether or not precariousness is a phenomenon which only occurs in conservative welfare states like those of Germany and France. Following Esping-Andersen, social rights in conservative welfare states are very much dependent on work or, rather, on regular standard employment. Thus, precariousness in the above described conceptualisation is very likely to be found predominately in countries whose welfare states are predominantly of the conservative type. But what does working in flexibilised work mean in Denmark and other social-democratic welfare states? Supposing a high level of universalism (be it higher following Esping-Andersen or more mixed according to Greve) in welfare state policies and regulations, we can expect that freelancer's exclusion from social rights is not as distinct as in Germany or France. Indeed, there is a different approach to the question of post-industrial transformations of work and welfare states, namely the approach of "flexicurity," which, on the one hand, presents a view which is quite the opposite to the precariousness hypothesis, and, on the other hand, identifies Denmark as one of the "best practice" countries of the flexicurity model. The flexicurity hypothesis proposes that, under certain conditions (which, following Madsen (2008) and others, are quite well fulfilled in Denmark), flexibility and flexible work forms can be combined with inclusive social rights and welfare state programmes.

4.3. Combining flexibility and security with the help of "flexicurity"?

One aspect emphasized by Esping-Andersen is the way in which the labour market is regulated (Esping-Andersen 1999, 2000). This leads us to the aforementioned "buzzword" in the field of labour market research: "flexicurity." Like "precarious work" and "precariousness", the concept originally stemmed from a political debate that took place in the mid 1990s in the Netherlands and has subsequently been discussed at the EU-level. It has simultaneously been taken up and developed by social scientists and labour market researchers (Kronauer & Linne 2007). One commonly used definition states that flexicurity is

> a policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a deliberate way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, work organization and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weak groups in and outside the labour market on the other hand. (Wilthagen & Tros in Kronauer & Linne 2007, p. 14)

Formulated in this way, flexicurity refers to a political reform programme to be applied in times of the "post-industrial economy," which is (apparently) in need of flexibility among the work force. It draws upon insights from economics and labour market research, which state that, amongst other things, the globalisation of economies leads to a need for flexibilisation (e.g. for companies) amongst employees. Furthermore, it is assumed that any increase in flexibility of the employees/work force will lead to a decrease of employment security. The flexicurity approach, then, argues against this assumed trade-off, and proclaims that under certain conditions, employment flexibility and security can be achieved simultaneously. Wilthagen has called this the flexibility-security nexus (Muffels 2008a, 2008b).

The perspective on flexicurity described above has also been called the liberal view on flexicurity, because it focuses on the economy and sees flexibilisation as an economical necessity required in order to enhance the competitiveness of European economies. The "trade-unionist" perspective on flexicurity, as Fink (2006) calls it, has a different point of departure, namely the workforce under the conditions of post-industrialism. Thus, social security is emphasized (not competitive economies) and flexicurity is seen as an alternative

to flexibilisation and de-regulation only. This approach sees social protection of workers in the context of de-regulation and flexibilisation as the main goal of the concept of flexicurity (Fink 2006).

With reference to the concept of flexicurity (be it with a "liberal" or a "trade-unionist" perspective), a number of researchers in Europe subsequently analysed labour market and welfare state regulations and policies in order to find out how much they resemble the "ideal" of flexicurity, and how and in what ways flexicurity could be enhanced and enforced (Muffels 2008a, 2008b). Kronauer and Linne state that the focus of what is to be secured through social security is going to be changed with flexicurity – from "stable employment" to "employability." With Esping-Andersen, we could argue that this accords with the "new risk structure" in post-industrial economy. Indeed, as Kronauer and Linne state, it aims at a new adjustment of social welfare state principles – and therefore, can and should be questioned regarding its impact on (in-)equality, exclusion and inclusion (Kronauer & Linne, 2008).

Within this discourse, Denmark has often been called a model country or blueprint of how flexicurity is possible. This is due to what has been called the "golden triangle" of flexicurity, which, following Madsen (2008), consists of (1) a highly flexible labour market with a high degree of mobility among workers, including a low level of employment protection, which makes it possible for employers to flexibly adapt the workforce to their demands; (2) a high economic support in the case of unemployment; and (3) active labour market policies for the unemployed. Concerning the second point, the flexicurity literature often only mentions the quite generous unemployment benefit, but in fact it also refers to other aspects of the social-democratic welfare state, which is built upon universalistic principles. With regards to the Danish flexicurity model, as a possible model of best practice, Madsen concludes:

> If a liberal regime of employment protection is combined with institutions that support income (and employment) security, one can obtain a competitive employment system and social welfare combined. The challenge is to achieve the level of thrust between the social partners which allows for employment protection to be reduced, while security mechanisms are being created. (Madsen 2008, p. 360)

It becomes clear that most of the flexicurity literature including in the above cited article by Madsen refers to employment and employees, which (again) leaves out the freelancers this study is concerned with. Nevertheless, flexicurity seems to be a relevant aspect, as freelancers can be positioned amongst the most flexibilised work forms, which makes the question about their social security extremely relevant. We could also assume that a welfare state relying on universalistic principles could provide the best possible "security conditions" not only for flexibilised employment but also for freelancers.

Lise Lotte Hansen (2007) criticises Madsen's analysis of the Danish flexicurity model: in line with criticism on Esping-Andersen's welfare state typology mentioned above, Hansen accuses Madsen and other flexicurity experts writing about Denmark as a "model country" concerning flexicurity of ignoring the fact that the Danish model of childcare services is constituting a precondition for the possibility of being flexible for parents (mainly mothers). The fact that there is easy access to high-quality public day-care allows parents with young children to participate in flexicurity. Thus, Hansen suggests to extend the flexicurity triangle to a square by adding public care to it. Following on from this, she suggests a change of name to "flexicarity" in order to show the importance of care services for the model (ibid).

Concerning the "ideal of flexicurity," that is, labour market flexibility combined with social security, it comes as no surprise that the conservative welfare state, here relevant in its German embodiment, scores quite low. Fink and Tálos (2008) quite pessimistically state in the end of their analysis on flexicurity in the conservative welfare states of Austria and Germany that:

> In general, the suitability for flexibilisation in conservative welfare states like Austria and Germany can be rated as low. The main problem lies in the still dominant orientation on life-long employment in the organisation of social security or rather in the thus predominant reproduction of income inequalities in the labour market by the welfare state. Taking into account the growing labour market flexibilisation, this is leading to a wide divergence in the level of benefits and in many cases to benefits that are so low that they do not sustain a living. Furthermore, there are several forms of fundamental exclusion. Although this implies a considerable need for action, the governments of the two countries concerned [Austria and Germany, B.F] do not take

adequate measures, or even do not take measures at all (Fink & Tálos 2007, p. 413, author's translation).

It is quite striking how all considerations about the conservative welfare state model in the context of the current transformation of work (namely flexibilisation and de-regulation) come to similar conclusions, be it calling it precarious work (Castel 2003), the insider-outsider problematic (Esping-Andersen,1999?) or, in the context of flexicurity, fundamental exclusion (Fink and Tálos, 2007). On the other hand, there is the social democratic welfare state model, which, through its universalistic principles, appears to be better equipped to deal with these developments. The "flexicurity" model in Denmark, which seems to be especially well equipped to face these challenges due, as flexicurity researchers like Madsen state, to very liberal labour market regulations, is a case in point.

This raises the question as to whether Germany is, indeed, the "homeland of precariousness," while Denmark, for its part, is the "homeland of flexicurity." In any case, it becomes clear that freelancers in Germany are faced with very different structural conditions than their Danish counterparts, including possible consequences for individual social security. This has to be taken into account when asking the interviewees about their handling, coping, and strategies in dealing with freelance work. Hence the need to contextualise the empirical material referring to the issue of (in)security in the narratives of the Danish and German freelancers within the above described macro-societal framework becomes clear.[17] However, when atypical work is thematised, freelancers are not very often included (or, like Brinkmann *et al' s* (2006) account on precarious work, explicitly excluded). Obviously, and maybe because of the hybrid status between entrepreneur and employee, they seem to be the very atypical "atypicals." In the next chapters, then, I am going to take a closer look at what the "social security situation" for freelancers looks like in Denmark and Germany.

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17 I will do this in chapter 8.

4.4. The hybrid status of freelancers in Germany and Denmark

Within this chapter I am going to discuss the "hybrid" status of freelancers as regards the regulation of work.[18] Karin Gottschall and Sigrid Betzelt (2003) discuss the above-mentioned hybrid status of freelancers in Germany in their article about the regulations of new work forms. They focus on the cultural sector with its high proportion of freelancers/solo-self-employed and argue that professions in the cultural sector, and especially those solo-self-employed, indeed have a specific position in the German system of professions. They compile a comprehensive typology of professional and labour marked positions, which is based, amongst other things, on insights of the sociology of professions, life course research, and labour market and welfare state research. They identify four regulations types and analyse the position of the freelancers (or "solo-self-employed", as they coin them) within the German system of regulation. It has to be mentioned, that the typology consists of an ideal typical classification. Additionally, some employment forms are not included, most prominently the *Beamte,* civil servants like teachers, university professors or policewomen and -men, who, again, have a very specific pattern of inclusion to social security, differing from all of the above described forms. However, in order to see the hybridism and in-betweenness of the freelancers or solo-self-employed, the provided regulation types are sufficient.

Gottschall & Betzelt include a wide range of dimensions in order to get a very rich picture of regulations and their consequences. They identify the following four types: (1) vocational employees, (2) semi-professions, (3) "solo-self-employed," and (3) classical professions. Their analysis shows that the regulation of work goes beyond welfare state regulations, and that questions of education and (market-) access are also playing a role. The "vocational employee" type clearly refers to the "standard employment pattern" in Germany. This type is strongly included in state regulations. The intertwining begins with a vocational education within clear profiles of jobs and access criteria. Via corporatist arrangements, like collective labour agreements and labour legislation by the state, the

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18 I will mainly focus on the situation of freelancers in Germany, because for them this status is important for social security (which is not so much the case for the Danish freelancers). (see as well above)

vocational employees enjoy relative long-term stability and security concerning their job and social position. Additionally, they are fully included into the social security system via the public social insurance. This type appears to correspond with Esping-Andersen's "insider" or the inclusive standard employment Castel draws upon. Taking into account that the German welfare state is a quite strong male breadwinner regime, the standard employee corresponds with the male breadwinner.

Its female counterpart, then, would be the semi-professions. The term stems from the sociology of professions and describes vocations that, although being located in the service sector as well as applying complex knowledge in their jobs like the classical professions, did not (yet?) achieve an institutionalised status as a "real" profession (Schnell 2007, Hjort 2004). In Germany, such jobs are to be found mainly in the social, educative, and health fields of work, where women are predominant. Examples are nurses or kindergarten workers, which, in addition, are jobs that presuppose vocational education. However, as Gottschall and Betzelt argue, the regulation of these jobs is on a lower level than those of the standard, vocational employee (and, as we will see later, as the classical professional as well). Here, again, we can trace this already in the ways in which education is organised – unlike the standard employee, these educations are not organised within the dual vocational educations systems, which is regulated and steered consistently all over the country, but in full-time schools run by the state or being privately owned. Sovereignty over these institutions is assigned to the federal authorities, that is, the *Länder*, which results in very heterogeneous non-standardised education with various names and titles, which are not state-protected. There are, moreover, no nation-wide quality standards for these educations. The working conditions in these fields are unattractive, considering the low income level and the often none-full-time, none-standard employment relationships, which often do not result in an adequate social security level as such. Here again, we have to consider the strong institutionalised male-breadwinner regime with its often familiarised benefits: viewed historically, this specific organisation of the semi-professions relies on the assumption that they are not life-long professions and serve as a kind of

additional income for the household, earned by a part-time housewife. This implies that the main orientation of these (female) semi-professionals is on household and family tasks and not on a career. Social security rights for these part-time housewives/semi-professionals are/were[19] not only stemming from their employment status, but also from their status as a housewife (via the male-breadwinner). This is why Gottschall and Betzelt assume that the ideal typical life course-patterns of the semi-professionals, as well as the vocational standard employees, are the male or female standard biography in the male-breadwinner/female (part-time) housewife household. However, nowadays these ideal typical patterns do not always reflect reality. Hence, Esping-Andersen's statement, that the design of contemporary welfare states does not fit into the risk structure in the society any more, seems to apply here (see above, see also Esping-Andersen 1999). In addition, the critique of the German "precarisation"-discourse by Manske appears to be relevant on this point: a lot of the female semi-professionals have never worked in non-precarious work or employment forms, and those who did not enjoy the social security via a male breadwinner in the household, were always faced by exclusion from certain social rights and welfare state benefits anyway. This argument is very much in line with quantitative empirical findings on precariousness in Germany, which show that exactly this group, namely women with vocational school educations working in female dominated parts of the labour market are, alongside men and women with low or no education, constitute those most likely at risk of living under conditions of precariousness. (Manske 207, p. 25)

Another traditional work form in Germany is the classical professional. This type of work mainly includes medical doctors and lawyers, as well as architects, who often work as classical self-employed. Following Gottschall and Betzelt, they are secured by a "institutionalised privilege structure" (Gottschall & Betzelt 2003, p. 210) in Germany. One important part of this is their possibility for strong self-regulation via their professional organisations and chambers: in the case of lawyers and doctors, this relies on a state-

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19 I use past tense here, because, as mentioned before, some of the "familialised" or "familialising" social rights have recently been disestablished. However, the status and organisation of the "female" semi-professions has not been changed accordingly, which is a fact that should as well be discussed within the discussion about "precarious work".

guaranteed monopoly on the market for certain service provisions that guards those classical professionals from competition by other professional groups, and from dumping prices. Additionally, homogeneous education provided by the state (mainly university education) provide formal access criteria. Access, quality standards, and prices are controlled either by self administrated organisations or by partly public institutions. These, with the help of the state guaranteed privileged positions, grant comparably high incomes to the classical professionals, which means that they are able to afford private social insurances; which is to say, they are not included in the public social insurance system. Nevertheless, as Gottschall and Betzelt argue, they are safe-guarded by state regulations, mainly concerning their market position, which also grants them high incomes, and thereby the possibility to get social security (ibid).

As we can see, the three old "regulation types" of work in Germany all rely on the state as the provider of regulations, guarantor of a market monopoly or provider of social security. At the same time, we can see a gender segregation, especially concerning the semi-professionals, which, in order to be fully included within social security regimes, rely on a (male) breadwinner in a standard employment relationship. Thus, semi-professionals have always been one of the most likely groups to be threatened by precariousness (ibid).

In contrast to classical professionals, as well as to the vocational employees, the solo-self-employed or freelancers in the cultural sector are much less safeguarded by state regulations. Gottschall and Betzelt argue that they are in an intermediary position between the two types: in contrast to the professionalised employees they are not integrated in company structures and hierarchy, and are enjoying the privilege of a rather free and self-determined work organisation (however, it has been doubted, how self-determined their work organisation is in reality, see chapter3), and are in this respect comparable to the classical professionals. However, unlike the classical professionals, they are selling services to markets where they do not have a monopoly guaranteed by the state. In addition, they do not rely on state certified educations; the access to the market is not restricted via the educational system, which means that people with a wide range of different educations from a wide range of educational institutions (universities, private schools etc.) as well as

autodidacts are competing in an unregulated service market. Those educations do not have standardised qualification levels, neither do the contents of the various educations. Furthermore, the professional organisations do not have the power to enforce regulations concerning prices, and so on. This results in a strong market dependency of the individuals. Market positions have to be established, re-established, and maintained within network structures, making the (labour) market for cultural services more flexible, but also more risky. Thus, those solo-self-employed or freelancers rely a lot on their individual social and cultural capital in order to sustain their position in the market. Concerning social security, the freelancers in the cultural sector (but only those in the cultural field) can be included within a special branch of the public social insurance system, the *Künstlersozialkasse* (artist's social insurance – KSK hereafter). This social insurance provides health insurance, pension insurance, and care insurance. However, the freelancers have to fulfil certain criteria in order to be accepted to this insurance system. Moreover, analyses of the pension level of the KSK-pensioners have shown that many of them do not reach a level that can sustain a livelihood in old age.[20] All these aspects bring Gottschall and Betzelt to the conclusion that the freelancers' position concerning their economical, social, and professional position is in-between 'privilege and precariousness' (ibid, p. 214, author's translation). Consequences of this position are not only a quite market-dependent existence and a need of operating in a network-regulated field, but also a quite special situation concerning social security (which I will elaborate on later in chapter 4.5) .

The conditions for freelancing in Denmark is quite different. Although a division of professions, semi-professions, etc., also play a role, and freelancers do not become "real" institutionalised professionals in Denmark (Hjort & Weber 2004, and for a discussion about professions in Denmark, see Katrin Hjort's (2004) edited book), it appears to be very likely that this will, as regards the issue of social security, not play as much of a role for the Danish freelancers as it does for those working in Germany. I am assuming this because social security in Denmark is not in such a high extent dependent on employment form

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20 I will elaborate on KSK more detailed below in chapter 4.5

and status. Thus, being a "real professional" or a vocational employee or not is not so important for the inclusion in welfare state programmes.

However, concerning registration at the tax authorities, the status of freelancers is often not clear. Some (most) of them are registered as employees (lønmodtager) there, others have the status as entrepreneur, depending on how their work live is organised. (Land 2009) And, since the Danish welfare state is not a purely social democratic welfare state, we will see later on that the freelancers' work form (as not being an employee) could possibly play a role concerning the issue of old age pension (see below, chapter 4.6). Similarities between Danish and German freelancer's positions can be found concerning their market position, since the Danish freelancers have to operate in an unregulated market. Additionally, they are in similar ways faced with network structures. As this chapter is concerned with questions of social security and their (possible) connections to the individuals' own perspective on (in-)security, I will now turn to a detailed discussion of the ways in which freelancers are included (and possibly excluded) in the two respective welfare states.

4.5. The freelancers' social security framework in Germany

As mentioned above concerning social security, most freelancers in the cultural field in Germany (but only those who work in the cultural sector) can be included into a special branch of the public social insurance. This "artists' social insurance," with the *Künstlersozialkasse (KSK),* as instrument came into being in 1983. Christiane Schnell argues in her account on the regulation of cultural work in Germany, that the introduction of the KSK was part of the new agenda of the social-liberal government of the 1970s[21] (Schnell 2007). In order to explain the design of KSK, let us first shortly recapitulate the basic structure of the public social insurance (of which KSK is a special branch) in Germany. As KSK is sharing some of the main features and is grounded on the same

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21 From 1969 to 1982 a coalition of the social democratic (SPD) and the liberal party (FDP) was in government in Western Germany (BRD). The legislation on which KSK is grounded (*Künstlersozialversicherungsgesetz)* was drafted in times of the social-liberal government, however, it passed the parliament only after the change of government in 1982 (conservative-liberal government under Helmut Kohl).

principles, this appears to be very useful. As described above in the account on the "three worlds of welfare state capitalism," Germany's welfare state is based on the principles of a social insurance, which, although including some elements of solidarity, is based on prior contributions according to income. The public social insurance is, therefore, one of the main elements of the welfare state. For most of the employees in Germany, membership and contribution to the social insurance is compulsory. Exemptions include the aforementioned *Beamte* (which is a special category of civil servant who do have their own security programme, and which is mainly funded by the state), the self-employed (except, as we will see later, those in the cultural sector via KSK), those with incomes above a certain amount can chose if they want to be insured in some kind of private social insurance or stay in the public system, and those with part-time jobs who earn less than a specific amount (so-called *Midi-* or *Mini-Jobs). Such groups* are not or only partly included to the public social insurance. This social insurances covers certain social risks, such as old age (via pensions), illness (via health insurance), need for care (via care insurance), and unemployment (via unemployment insurance). All of these parts of the public social insurance are organised as so-called pay-as-you-go systems, that is to say, that the contributions of the members are not put into funds but spent at the same time for the pensions, etc., of members. In principle, contributions of equal size are paid to all of the insurance providers by both the employees and the employers. The state, however, is also involved in the financing through grants (Neumann & Schaper 1998).

These general principles are also applied in the design of KSK: besides the individual freelancer or self-employed, the parties who are consuming the cultural products produced by freelancers are obliged to contribute as well. This *Künstlersozialabgabe* (artist's social security payment) is being paid by all companies and organisations who charge and use the work of freelance artists, journalists and the like. A certain percentage of the overall amount spent to pay the above named has to be paid to the KSK by those "users" of cultural products. In 2008, the exact percentage paid was 4.9%, in 2009 it is presumably going to be 4.4% (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales,

2008). In addition, the state contributes to the financing of the KSK via grants. The risks insured are old age (pensions), illness (health insurance) and need for care (care insurance), however, unemployment is excluded. Nevertheless, since 2006, all self-employed (not only those in the cultural sector) have the possibility for a voluntary inclusion into the public unemployment insurance. However, this is only possibly for freelancers or self-employed who have been employed in the last two years prior to their transition to freelancing/solo-self-employment. They are paying a flat-rate contribution, unlike standard employees, who pay a certain percentage of their income as contribution (Mediafon, 2009a) Within KSK, the members contribution to the respective social insurances depends on their yearly income as well. They are paying 19.9% of the over-all income to old age insurance, 15.5% of the over-all income to health insurance, and 1.95-2.2% to care insurance (Künstlersozialkasse, 2009c).

There are certain criteria the freelancers will have to fulfil in order to get access to KSK. Most important is the criterion of "individual creative achievement" (*eigenschöpferische Tätigkeit*); this is used to classify any possibly artistic (or journalistic/writer's) work as belonging to the field of art and culture. The problem here is that most of the jobs and the qualifying exams are not trademarked. Neither do those people have any monopoly on the market of cultural products (see above, chapter 3.4, open market structures). This leads to definition problems about which job or work profile does contain enough "individual creative achievement". In addition to the criterion of "individual creative achievement," the cultural workers have to earn a minimum income with those jobs that consist of "individual creative achievement". Since 2004, this minimum income is fixed at an amount of €3900 per year or 325 per month (however there are exemptions from this for job beginners) (Künstlersozialkasse, 2009a). Freelancers or solo-self-employed who do have other incomes besides the ones that consist of "individual creative achievement" (e.g. graphic designers, that besides their design work make acquisitions for their customers) and who earn more than €400 per month, are not fully included in the KSK (no health and care insurance) (Mediafon, 2009b).

Concerning the problematics of access to KSK, there is a so-called *Künstlerkatalog* ("artists catalogue") with more than 80 job titles that are entitled to be insured via KSK. In unclear cases, there exists a board which decides over the individual's access to KSK. The institution of KSK is heavily struck by the expansion of the cultural sector and the cultural market since its foundation in the 1970s/80s. Initial prognoses in the drafting phase of the *Künstlersozialversicherungsgesetz* have calculated with a maximum of 30,000 members of KSK (Schnell 2007). Meanwhile, KSK itself states on its homepage that in 2008 it had 159,532 members (Künstlersozialkasse, 2009b). Thus, KSK has expanded heavily.

Following Schnell, this expansion was caused, amongst other things, by the emergence and development of the new media. At the same time, this development made job profiles containing "individual creative achievement" more heterogeneous. Due to the big run to KSK, its access practices became more restrictive. Currently, 25-30% of all applications to KSK get refused. Quite problematically, the administrative discretion is extensive due to the increasing permeation of technology in creative work, heterogeneous job profiles, job access possibilities, and the vagueness of the access criterion of "individual creative achievement". Those having education within classical arts (and the respective certificates) can get access very easily[22], whereas those with more technical backgrounds and educations can experience problems. This became especially apparent in the field of web design (which is also one of the activities of some of the freelancers in this study) coming into being in the 1990s, and rapidly expanding thereafter, where exactly the above named focus on educational background was practised, leading to exclusions of some web designers with a technical education. Only after legal proceedings in 2005, initiated by a web designer with a university degree in architecture, who brought her rejection of insurance by KSK to trial, that "web designer" as a job profile was included in the *Künstlerkatalog* ("artists catalogue"). Thus, all web designers ought to be included in KSK, regardless of their educational background. However, concerning other new job profiles in the field of culture, the problem of administrative discretion remains (Schnell 2007).

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22 This has been reported by interviewees as well (of which three in Germany have an education background in the classical arts)

Although the freelancers in the cultural field can get access to public social insurance, experts (e.g. Betzelt 2002) prognose a low pension level amongst KSK members, that in many cases will not be securing a subsistence. The average income of the freelancers can give us one hint at the expected pension level, since the pension level is related to the size of the contributions, which are based on income (see above). According to KSK, the average yearly income of all members of its in 2008 was 12,616 Euros; the average amongst female members being lower (€10,721), the average amongst men being higher (€14,242) (Künstlersozialkasse, 2009d). Unfortunately, there are no reliable data on current KSK-pensions available. This is partly due to the fact that the public social insurance statistics do not distinguish between the different causes of respective pension rights (which are just added as points); the social insurance status (KSK, employee, other) can only be traced in the last three years prior to retirement. Another reason is that KSK has only existed since 1983, which means that any current pensioner can at most be insured via KSK for 26 years. Thus, most of the current KSK-pensioners will either be partly relying on pension rights earned through some other status (e.g. as employee) or have a quite short contribution time. However, Haak and Himmelreicher (2006) analyse a data set including the pension rights (points) of pensioners who have been insured in KSK at the time of their retirement. Those pensioners retired between 2000 and 2004. On average, the KSK-pensioners have earned 25.7 points, which in 2009 would result in a monthly pension of €682. Additionally, Haak and Himmelreicher state about their detailed analysis, that the pension levels amongst the KSK-pensioners are very diverse and are very much divided following the disciplines: while some of the pensioners from the area of journalism and writing do get comparably high amounts of "pension points", a large group of pensioners from the fields of arts and music are faced with pensions that are below social assistance levels. However, it has to be taken into account that the pensioners in this analysis could have been insured in KSK for 21 years at most (Haak & Himmelreicher 2006).These hints imply a risk of old-age poverty for KSK members. Being a member of KSK appears not to be a shell proof safeguard against poverty. Reasons for this can be found in the considerably low incomes of the KSK members.

However, one of the German freelancers interviewed in my study is not even a member of KSK (see chapter 5), which might imply an especially precarious situation concerning social security and pension/old age.[23] I will discuss this case later on in chapter 6. A non-representative survey of the trade union agency for freelancers in the field of media and culture (Verdi Mediafon) amongst their users implies that he might not be a singular case: in the 2000/2001, 309 users of Verdi Mediafon, being freelancers in the field of media and culture, have been asked for their current "social security status". The majority, around 60%, were members of KSK, and thus had health and care insurance, and were member of the public pension system. 12% had private health insurance, but 30% had neither private nor KSK health insurance. 22% were neither in the public pension system (via KSK) nor did they have any private pension plan or other savings to secure old-age (Betzelt 2002). Why so many of them were not in KSK does not become clear. However, it might be related to KSK's restricted access.

In the following, I want to provide a discussion of the topics of maternity and parental leave regulations as these play a role for the social security of families. Another reason to include those issues here, is that they are very often connected to work and employment prior to having children. Thus, the question regarding if and how much the "atypical" freelancers are included in these benefits becomes relevant. As mentioned before, in 2007, a new legislation concerning parental leave came into effect. Because of its design, many (including the German government itself) have proclaimed a paradigm change. However, in her analysis of the introduction of the new parental leave scheme and its implication for the German gender regime, Silke Bothfeld speaks of a fragmentation and thus, in some ways an overlapping of conflicting paradigms concerning family policy in Germany (see chapter 4.1.2).

The predecessor of the new *Elterngeld* (parent's money) was the so-called means-tested *Erziehungsgeld* (upbringing money). The latter was a flat-rate amount paid to every parent staying at home up to two years after the birth of a child. Thereby, it did not play a role if the parent in question was working or not prior to the birth of the child. The

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23 I will discuss this case later on in chapter 5.

Erziehungsgeld consisted of either €300 per month per child for 24 months or an amount (flat-rate as well) of €450 per month for 12 months after the child's birth. It was combined with a right for parental leave of up to three years after the birth of a child (Bundesministerium für Familie, Frauen und Senioren, 2009)

In contrast to the old programme, the means-test was set aside. Instead, the new *Elterngeld* was opened to everybody and the size of the amount was made dependent upon the income of the parent who is taking the parental leave. From 2007, the monthly amount constitutes 67% of monthly income before taxes; €300 being the minimum (also for parents who did not have any income prior to birth) and €1700 the maximum. Additionally, an incentive was introduced to encourage fathers to take some months of parental leave: the benefit was set to a duration of 14 months as a whole (for both parents), however, if only one of them takes parental leave it was restricted to 12 month. Thus, taking into account that mainly women took (and still take) parental leave, at least two "daddy's months" were introduced. Parents on parental leave are allowed to do part-time work up to 30 hours per week, the income being deducted from the basis from which parent leave benefit is calculated. The benefit is financed by the federal government budget through taxes. The motivation behind the introduction of this benefit is quite clear and has also been stated publicly by the the government, namely a change from a male-bread-winner (with part-time housewife) to a (at least partly) dual-earner system (Bothfeld 2005, Mediafon 2008).

Freelancers and self-employed are also included in this benefit (which, despite its relation to income, indeed includes all parents). Additionally, though freelancer and self-employed mothers are not included in the legal compulsory maternity leave 6 weeks prior and 8 weeks after giving birth, they are, under certain circumstances, entitled to maternity allowance: this allowance is paid by the public health insurance; freelance mothers (and mothers-to-be) who are, via KSK, members of the public health insurance, are entitled to get the allowance, which consists of 70% of their prior income. For KSK-members, the reported over-all yearly income is used for calculating the amount. Also included are those

non-KSK members who are voluntarily insured in the public health insurance. Those who are insured in a private health insurance cannot get maternity allowance. However, some of the private health insurance providers offer contracts, which include some monetary benefits during maternity leave (Mediafon 2008). Those women (or their partners) who do get maternity allowance from their health insurance, usually do not get parental benefit in the first two months after giving birth, as the former is fully deducted from the entitlement to parental benefit. Thus, in these cases, the first two months are automatically counted as mother's parental leave time. Otherwise, the 14 months of parental benefit can be distributed flexibly between the parents, as long as at least two months are taken by the other parent (mainly the father). It is also possible to take parental leave simultaneously with both parents in parental leave (Mediafon 2008).

Usually, amongst employees, the average monthly income after tax and social contributions is taken as the foundation for the calculation of the benefit. However, this is different for freelancers and self-employed: in their case, the tax declaration of the year before the birth of the child is taken as the basis of the calculation. This can be interpreted as a clear disadvantage for freelance parents, assuming at least a tendency towards a yearly wage raise. As income from possible part-time jobs during paternity leave are deducted from parental leave benefit, this is also the case for payments freelancers receive in their parental leave period. Taking the frequent delays in the customer's payments into account, this could be a disadvantage for freelancers as well as this would mean that income earned a long time before parental leave would be counted in and deducted from the benefit (Mediafon 2008).

Summing up, the German freelancers are indeed faced with adverse and even precarious conditions concerning social security. With KSK they do have a possibility to be included in the public social insurance system. Though there are several problems connected with KSK for the individual freelancer's social security. Firstly, access to KSK can be difficult for some of them, especially so in the field I am focusing on in this study (new media/multi-media). Because the main access criterion of "individual creative achievement" being somewhat vague and causing administrative discretion, this can,

together with KSK's current interest in restricting access, lead to obstacles concerning the possibility in becoming a member. Additionally, there are some other criteria, that can expel freelancers from (full) inclusion (e.g. minimum income, income over €400 monthly from non-creative tasks). Secondly, being a member of KSK does not automatically lead to a sufficient old age pension; even though there is no reliable data on KSK pensions, the existing studies on the subject at least imply a problem of old age poverty. Taking the quite low yearly income stated above into account, it can be suspected, that the freelancers or solo-self-employed will presumably not be able to put money into private pension fund savings. However, freelancers are included in the newly introduced parental leave scheme. Some disadvantages in comparison with employees could emerge, but freelancers who become parents are still included to the general social security programme.

4.6 The freelancers' social security framework in Denmark

After having described the social security framework for freelancers in the cultural field in Germany, I will now turn to a discussion of the social security conditions for freelancers in Denmark. Recapitulating the principles of the social-democratic, universal welfare state type Denmark is usually assigned to, and the flexicurity-literature, which often describes Denmark as being a "best-practice-model," we can suspect that freelancers are more included in the Danish welfare system.

One part of the Danish welfare state, where universalism is (still) fully implemented is health insurance. Since 1973, it has been a tax-financed universal system which covers all inhabitants of Denmark; entitlement is granted via citizenship/ residence (Løkke 2007). Hence, as membership does not require any special insurance via employment or privately, all freelancers residing in Denmark have access and are automatically included.

Unemployment insurance is voluntary for everybody (as well employees) in Denmark. Every working person can become a member of an unemployment fund and has the right to get unemployment benefit after at least one year of membership (Parsons et. al. 2002). Freelancers and the self-employed can also become members of such an unemployment fund . However, there are some conditions to be fulfilled in order to gain

the right to get unemployment benefits. Amongst other things, the freelancers have to document their working hours in one way or another, which can pose a problem as many of them charge fixed prices for a job. Moreover, they have to work a fixed amount of hours during three years, which, taking the "bulimic career patterns" of freelancers into account, can possibly prove to be difficult as well (HK freelancer, 2009).

As already mentioned in chapter 4.1.3, the Danish pension system no longer fully follows the principles of universalism. The current Danish pension system is usually described as "multi-pillar-system,"which is to say, it consists of several elements, which, in the end, will all contribute to the individual old age pension. These elements in the Danish system are either taxed financed or follow funding principles (Andersen 2007). The following table gives an overview over several pension system pillars:

The Danish Pension System (in the year 2007)			
Pillar 1 A tax-financed public pensions	*Folkepension* (people's pension, national pension)	Basic Amount	Financed continuously by taxes (pay-as-you-go principle)
		Pensionstillæg Pension subsidy	
	Supplementary pension benefit (*ÆLdrecheck*)		
Pillar 1 B special public support schemes for pensionists	Housing benefit Heating costs benefit		
	Other individual subsidies		
	Several tax advantages and discounts		
Pillar 1 C funded public pensions	Subsidiary pensions (contribution, funding principle)	*Arbejdsmarkedets Tillægs Pension (ATP)* (= labour market's subsidiary pensions *Særlig Pensionsopsparing (SP)* (= special pension fund) suspended	Pension funds, funding principle, paid by pensioners (indirectly state subsidised via tax allowances)
Pillar 2 collective contribution-based private pensions	*Arbejdsmarkedspensioner* Labour market pensions		
Pillar 3 Individual voluntary private pensions	Other private pensions		
Gray boxes: means-tested			

Table 4: The Danish Pension System, Source: ibid, p. 17, author's translation

This table shows very well that the elements of the Danish pensions system are either tax-financed (upper part) or funded (lower part). The tax-financed parts, then, are (like the German public social insurance) pay-as-you-go systems, that is, the taxes are used for pensions at the same time/in the same year. However, the other elements follow the logics of the funding principle, which means the contributions of the individuals are put aside (and, most of the time, invested in some assets) and are thus financing the future pensions. In principle, this means the individual finances her or his own pension (Andersen 2007).

In its beginnings, the Danish pension system consisted only of the universal, tax-financed *folkepension* (pillar 1), with its flat-rate pension benefits. *Folkepension* was introduced in 1956, but only in 1970 did it became fully universal. Access criterion is based upon citizenship/residence. However, full *folkepension* is only granted to those who reside 40 years of their lives or longer in Denmark. Those with shorter periods of residence can get a percentage suspension. The underlying idea of *folkepension* was that everybody should be able to secure her or his subsistence in a satisfactory way in old age, thereby being rooted in universalism. However, as Jørgen Goul Andersen argues, since the early days of *folkepension* the Danish pension system developed into one of the most complex pension systems in the world; gradually, the one-pillar (*folkepension*) system was modified into the multi-pillar-system of today (Andersen 2007).

The first modification already happened in 1964, when the means-tested pension subsidy (*pensionstillæg*) was introduced. The other new part was the creation of Arbejdsmarkedets Tillægs Pension (ATP hereafter). ATP is obligatory for employees and is based on the principle that every employee contributes equally and gets the same out as a pension in the end. Two third of the over-all contribution is paid by the employer, one third by the employee. Hence, employees are automatically included into this pension pillar. Freelancers and self-employed can be included on a voluntary basis, but only if they officially have the status as "selvstændig" (entrepreneur – see the discussion above, chapter 4.4). However, they have to contribute with the full amount. Another criterion is that they must have been employed and contributed to ATP for at least 3 years in order to be

included as a member (alternatively, they can pay an amount which equates the sum of three years over-all contributions) (Andersen 2007; ATP, 2009a & 2009b)

In 1998, *Særlig Pensionsopsparing* (SP hereafter) was established additionally to ATP. SP was obligatory for everybody, including freelancers and self-employed. 1% of the yearly pre-tax income was used for the contributions to SP. In the beginning, it was designed as a redistributive programme: although the contribution was depending on income, everybody should get the same amount of pension in the end (however, depending on the duration of contributions). This was only implemented in the years 1999 and 2000, afterwards the system was changed into one following actuarial principles, which is to say, a system in which the level of the pensions payments would be following the actual size of the amount paid beforehand. However, the whole programme of SP was suspended in 2003. Finally, as a part of the tax reform in 2009, all former contributors to SP were free to withdraw their SP savings. This was considered a stimulation of the propensity to consume in times of the current world-wide economic recession (Andersen 2007; Møberg 2009).

Following Andersen, the biggest pension reform in Denmark was not launched by the government and the parliament, but by the social partners in collective labour agreements: Pillar 2, the labour market pensions gradually came into being this way. In 1993, nearly every public and private employee was included in one of them. In 2007, the contribution to pension funds run by trade unions, was around 12%. They are obligatory for employees. Freelancers and self-employed, can, under certain conditions, be included by paying the whole contribution themselves. In the meantime, there are additional pension funds for freelancers and self-employed, however, the latter is voluntary (Andersen 2007, Pension Danmark, 2009).There is one more piece to the jigsaw; specifically, the private and voluntary pensions, which constitutes pillar 3 (Andersen 2007).

According to Andersen, two important developments in the Danish pensions system can be identified. Firstly, there is the change of the former universal *folkepension,* which over time became targeted more and more towards the low-income pensioners. A large parts of the tax-financed portion of the pension-jigsaw are means-tested (e.g.

pensionstillæg, ældrecheck), whereas the non-means-tested part of folkepension became smaller. At the same time, the funding-based part of the pension system became more important. Jørgen Goul Andersen argues that the Danish system became one of the most funding-oriented pension systems in the world. Hence, he sees the intra-generational contract implicit to pay-as-you-systems nearly abrogated. At the same time, this makes it quite unpredictable, as the system highly depends on the return-rate of the invested capital.[24] It is exactly these developments, which caused Esping-Andersen to comment upon the significant break with the principle of universalism concerning the field of old-age and pensions (Andersen 2007).

As it became clear from the description of the respective pillars above, freelancers (or solo-self-employed) are not automatically (and obligatory) included in any of the funded programmes, except for SP. Thus, it becomes clear, that if the freelancers neither become voluntary members to any of this programmes (however facing some access criteria (e.g. ATP) and less attractive conditions than employees) nor have any other form of private pension saving, they will have to rely on the tax-based, pay-as-you-go part of the pension system, the part which is more and more targeted towards the poor. It seems to be at exactly this point, where the Danish welfare system left the path of "universalism," where those very "atypical" freelancers are faced by exclusion from welfare state programmes.

In 2009 the basic amount (*grundbeløb*) (see table 4, above) is kr5254/€700 before tax, and the means-tested pension subsidy (*pensionstillæg*) kr2470/€329 for married or cohabiting pensioners and kr5289 for singles (Ældresagen 2009). Taking the other means-tested benefits (see table 4, above) into account, we can see that basic financial security for old age still exists for those pensioners solely relying on this pillar of the pension system, who spent their whole working life in Denmark. Anyway, Andersen's considerations on the future of the Danish pension system cast some doubts on the question of whether the tax-based universal old-age security will remain on the same level in the future. One reason for this is the on-going slow erosion of the adjustment of the pension rate to wage raises, which will slowly lead to lower pensions. Another point is political insecurity – pension

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24 The current world-wide financial crisis seems to prove the argument of unpredictability true.

policy has been very shifting over the last decades (e.g. the short life of SP) in Denmark and may possibility continue to be in the future. Moreover, Andersen sees a danger in a declining lobby for those pensioners depending on tax-financed pensions and subsidies. If the richer part of the pensioners will, through their other pension savings, become independent from tax-financed pensions, this will politically weaken the position of the pensioners relying on tax-financed pensions. Already, one of the means-tested subsidies, namely housing benefit, has been under discussion (Andersen 2007).

Concerning parental leave programmes, freelancers, no matter if they are classified as self-employed (selvstændig) or as employees (lønmodtager), are included in the several leave rights, which are, in sum, 18 weeks of maternity leave for mothers (4 weeks prior to giving birth, 12 weeks after giving birth). Fathers have a right to a paternity leave of a length of 2 weeks within the first 14 weeks of the child's life. Parental leave, to which both mothers and fathers are entitled makes up 32 weeks after the first 14 weeks (Ministeriet for Familie – og Forbrugeranliggender 2006).

When it comes to monetary benefits during these leave periods, freelancers are generally included in the right to get a monetary benefit from the communes (in sum for a maximum of 52 weeks for both parents) if they meet certain criteria (having been self-employed for a minimum of 6 months in the year before the birth of the child). These benefits are equalling to 90% of prior earnings (there is, however, a maximum amount). Nonetheless, during the past few years there has been a debate about the lack of possibilities for freelancers to get the full income refunded for a certain amount of weeks; as is the case for 80% of Danish parents (employees) (Ellingsætter & Leira 2006, p. 19). The freelancers, no matter if they are "lønmodtager"-freelancer or "selvstændig"- freelancer, do not have this possibility. Several trade unions and professional organisations, who initiated the debate, are proposing to give the freelancers the possibility to be included into the parental leave funds (*barselfond*), which have been established in order to make full

income refund for this certain amount of weeks possible[25] (for the debate, see Bonde 2009, Bondesen 2009, Stampe 2009).

Summing up, the freelancers are included in most of the social security programmes in Denmark. Inclusion to the universal health insurance is unproblematic. In addition, freelancers can be included into the voluntary unemployment insurance, however with less attractive conditions that the employees. Concerning the question of old-age and pensions, the picture is a little bit more mixed: although freelancers are potentially excluded from most of the programmes that are based on funding principles (or rather, are not automatically included and can be voluntarily included under less attractive conditions), relying partly on the universal pillar and partly means-tested pillar of the pensions system does not result in a strong risk of old age poverty today. However, as this pillar more and more develops into a programme targeting the less well-off, this could possibly change in the future. Taking parental leave schemes into account, it can be stated that freelancers are reasonably well secured. However, they are not on par when compared with other Danish employees,, since they do not have the possibility to get full income refunds for a certain percentage of their leave period (like most of the employees).

4.7 The freelancers' frameworks: Some concluding remarks

Let me shortly summarise the insights we have come to in this chapter about the "labour market positions" of freelancers in Denmark and Germany. Being faced by similar market structures (open, unregulated market for their services) there are quite large structural differences concerning the freelancers access to social security and welfare state programmes. Thus, different profiles concerning inclusion and exclusion of the "very atypical" freelancers become apparent. Can we now come to any conclusions concerning the "precariousness" or the "flexicurity" of the freelancers concerned? The freelancers in Germany have been located between privilege and precariousness by Gottschall and

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25 The debate is indeed built around the issue of equal rights for freelancers and self-employed. Mogens Blicher Bjerregaard, the chairperson of the Danish Journalists' Organisation *(Dansk Journalistforbund)* argues like this: "If we want to have a flexible labour market, we also have to give freelancers the same rights as employees when having children" (Bondesen 2009, own translation)

Betzelt. The privileged part of their position is to be found mainly in aspects of work content, organisation and possibly education. The creative character of their work, which is often connected with self-actualisation, does not follow patterns of precarious work.[26]

However, concerning precariousness, I have presupposed that possible precariousness could be found concerning the so-called legal-institutional dimension:

> *legal – institutional dimension [...]*: This means, that work or the working person tend to be excluded from a full participation of institutionalised social rights and possibilities of participation. (Brinkmann et al, 2007, p. 18)

The German freelancers are indeed faced with an adverse situation concerning their social security, though there is KSK, the "artists' social insurance", which, in principle, can give them access to the public insurance system. However, access to KSK proves to be difficult in some cases and KSK pensions can at least be doubted to be subsistence securing. Thus, the freelancers are (in any case partly) excluded from full participations social rights in the German welfare state. The Danish freelancers, being automatically member of the health insurance and the basic pension system, are much more included within social rights. Following Esping-Andersen and Bent Greve, we can argue that this is due to the fact that there is still a high degree of universalism implemented in many features of the Danish welfare state. However, the part of the Danish welfare state which is clearly no longer characterised by universalism, namely the pension system, might (possibly) become the Achilles' heel for the freelancers' social security. Doing some kind of pension saving seems is crucial for the freelancers in order to ensure a sufficient pension level in old age. Hence, we can conclude that the German freelancers concerning the legal-institutional dimension can be called "precarious" and the Danish freelancers as not "precarious" under the current conditions. Thus, we can indeed speak of some kind of "flexicurity" in the case of the Danish freelancers. However, because of the above described "pension situation" there might be a future risk of precariousness.

One aspect to be taken into account in this discussion is the income the freelancers are earning. This, of course, refers to the aforementioned reproductive-material dimension

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26 I have discussed the problems and ambivalences of self-realisation in chapter 3.

of precariousness. If they are scoring high incomes, the risk for precariousness is definitely lower, or rather, the freelancers could possibly not be called precarious at all. On the contrary, they would more resemble the classical professionals (in the German case), who could afford to care for their social security themselves. This is the scenario Brinkmann et al (2006) have in mind in their account, which explicitly excludes freelancers from precarious work forms. Thus, they fail to consider the existing statistics, that at least do exist in the case of KSK-members. The average income of KSK-members, are, as shown above, quite low and do not indicate that freelancers are able to care for their own pension savings. Unfortunately, I do not have comparable numbers for the Danish freelancers. However, I have information about the interviewees' yearly incomes, which have been included to the analysis.[27]

Another aspect, which plays a role in the possibility of precariousness for freelancers is their "bulimic career patterns," by which I mean the fact that their income is very volatile and very often differing every month, which can make financial security difficult.

So far, I have shed light on the structural conditions regarding social security for freelancers in the two countries relevant to this research project. As the empirical material consists of narratives of individual freelancers, including their individual view on their own social security, a perspective on the relation between the individual and welfare state policies in general and concerning situations where they are excluded from some rights, as well as the question of what an incomplete social security framework like the one of the German freelancers means for the individual's life organisation, appears to be needed. Within the precariousness-discourse some assumptions about the implications of being precarious are made. In his account on precariousness, Robert Castel draws a very negative picture of the consequences of precariousness, mentioning an emerging "culture of waywardness" with vast implications for the individual's attitudes (Castel 2003). This reminds us of Richard Sennett's (1998) hypothesis, that the flexibilisation of work leads to a corrosion of human character. Castel, on the other hand, is rooted in a Durkheimian

27 I will discuss the topic of income in the context of the findings later on in chapter 6.

tradition, which leads him to a focus on the potential of precariousness to cause an anomic state in a society as a whole (Castel 2002). The flexicurity perspective, on the other hand, is not so much interested in the personal consequences for the individuals. However, it seems to be assumed implicitly that social security is something positive for those working under flexibilised conditions.

The ambition of this research project, however, is to analyse the individuals' practices and understandings in radically flexibilised work forms. This necessitates some approach on the linkage between the structural framework and the individuals micro-level life worlds. In chapter 3, I have introduced structuration theory as an over-all approach towards the question of how to conceptualise this connection. In the next chapter, I will try to "fill in" this framework with concrete theoretical considerations. That is to say, I will elaborate on the topic of trust, especially concerning the issue of trust to political institutions. I argue that this can contribute some important insights to the interpretation and understanding of the freelancers own perception of insecurity in the context of varying societal frameworks and welfare state institutions.

5. (In-) security, trust and the welfare state

In the previous chapter, I discussed the structural conditions as regards the welfare state and labour market regulations that freelancers are facing in Germany and Denmark. The underlying assumption is that there is some kind of interrelation or link between the freelancers' inclusion or exclusion from social rights and welfare state programmes and their individual concepts concerning (in-)security in their life and work. Thus, the question is, how we see and understand this connection. In chapter 3, I introduced Giddens' structuration theory as an over-all approach to the relationship between structure and agency. In this chapter, I want to shed light on concrete questions of this relations in the context of insecurity in order to "fill in" Giddens more abstract framework. I want to theoretically investigate the relation between societal regulations and the individuals' understandings, practices and strategies concerning the question of insecurity in the context of so-called social risks. I am arguing that with the help of the concept of "trust" we can understand at least some of the dimensions of the aforementioned interrelation.

Presupposing a certain level of insecurity or uncertainty in the freelancer's work (and life) caused by their very market-dependent work-form, in this part of the chapter I am interested in how and in what ways we can think and understand the possible impact of the above described structural frameworks (i.e. mainly welfare state and labour market regulations) on the individuals conception of the issue of personal and biographical security (or insecurity). This includes, for example, the question of what precariousness means for an individual.

As stated in chapter 4, in his account on precariousness Castel provides us with some assumptions on the effects of precariousness and thereby induced insecurity for the individual ("culture of waywardness" Castel 2002, p.389). However, it does not become clear how he conceptualises the linkage between this "culture of waywardness" and the precarious conditions it stems from in detail. On the other hand, comparative welfare state research often seems to imply a rational or "rational choice" relationship between the individual and the state. Many of the scholars seem to implicitly operate with a rational

citizen, that handles her or his social security issues and the connected questions of life-style out of rational and utility-maximising motives. This has been criticised by Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2000), for example, who proposes to include cultural elements in order to understand this relationship.

In order to approach the question of the relationship between the individual and macro-structures like welfare state programmes, I want to introduce the topic of trust at this point. In my opinion, the concept is relevant here for at least two reasons.

Firstly, trust, becoming a more frequently discussed topic in sociology recently, is very often seen as an adequate concept being applied to explain and understand human agency in situations or under conditions of uncertainty and vulnerability (Möllering 2006). Theorists like Luhmann (1979), for instance, have stated that it is trust that makes it possible for individuals to act in insecure and uncertain situations. As I have been arguing above, seen from several points of view, freelancers living and working situations are especially characterised by uncertainty. Hence, in a study which is interested in the freelancer's coping, handling, and strategies, the introduction of the concept of trust appears to be very fruitful.

Secondly, it is a very specific form of trust that I am interested in here; namely, the trust in certain political institutions. In sociology, it is mainly the topic of interpersonal trust which is elaborated upon, but institutions as the object of trust (or the "trustee") have been discussed as well, though mainly amongst political scientists (e.g. Möllering 2006). Hence, with the concept of trust we can try to approach the individual freelancers' relation towards the welfare state institutions relevant for their social security. One hint as to how the concept of trust could be a useful tool in this context can be found in Esping-Andersen's account on welfare states (chapter 3.1.), in which he mentions the coverage of individual's social risks as one of the central tasks of the welfare state. Furthermore, he problematises the notion that in times of postindustrialism welfare states do not include coverage of the "new" social risks any more (Esping- Andersen 1999). So, what does risk have to do with trust? "Social risks" might be problems or conditions that are strongly characterised by both uncertainty and vulnerability: examples of classical social risks that

are safeguarded against by the welfare state would include sickness, old age and unemployment (for a discussion on "old" vs "new" social risks see, for example, Taylor-Gooby 2004). We can easily see that uncertainty and vulnerability are of relevance: we do not know if (and when) illness will strike us, we cannot know what our life situation will be like when we are 65 or 70, and most of the time we cannot predict if and when we will lose our job or income, so uncertainty is very much at play when it comes to "classical risks." Furthermore, these classical risks very often even endanger our ability to secure our livelihood ourselves (as it is possible in the case of illness, unemployment and old age – but also in cases like child birth or concerning the need to care for others), which means they imply a high level of vulnerability. We could even ask at this point if "risk" is the right term to be used for those dangers – as in Möllering's (2006) account, the term risk implies a possibility for a calculation of the possible danger. Möllering contrasts risk with uncertainty, the latter containing dangers that in no way can be rationally predicted or calculated. Taking the above described considerations on core areas of the welfare states into account, it becomes very clear that trust is most likely a relevant concept when it comes to the individual's relationship towards the welfare state. Questions occurring in this context would include question such as whether or not we trust the public pension system to be able to pay out sufficient pensions in the time of our old age. Moreover, what does it mean if we do not? What kinds of strategies would we employ? What kinds of actions would we pursue? We can ask similar questions as regards the "risks" of illness, job loss and child care.

Above I argued that a "rational choice" understanding of the individual's approach to the welfare state would be simplifying. Taking into account, that the "social risks" are very much characterised by uncertainty offers support for this argument. With the help of the concept of trust, it is possible to grasp some of the complexities ingrained in this relationship.

In the following, I am going to introduce the notion of trust in a twofold manner: firstly, I want to shed light on how theorists have conceptualised the meaning of trust on the micro-level in order to be able to understand the individual's actions in the context of

trust; secondly, I discuss the question of how the relation between trust and the welfare state, especially in the light of the different shapes of welfare state programmes, can be understood. The first perspective can help us to understand and interpret the freelancers' narratives with a focus on trust, the second can give us an insight in to how individual trust can be connected with societal frameworks.

5.1. The sociological debate on trust

Trust has become a widely discussed topic within the social sciences. In his account on the theorising of trust, Guido Möllering identifies three strands of thought engaging in the discussion on the "nature" of trust, its emergence, and its functioning in and relevance for society in general. He subsumes them under the three respective labels: (1) "reason," (2) "routine," and (3) "reflexivity," and argues that all three are able to grasp some aspects of the phenomenon of trust, but that they all miss capturing the multi-faceted whole.

"Reason" concerns the broad discussion on trust amongst "rational choice" scholars or scholars, like James Coleman and Robert Axelrod, who are rooted in economical theory. Generally speaking, trust here is understood in terms of a choice made by individuals out of rational reasons. However, as Möllering argues, within this debate trust is mainly applied as a concept when decisions made by actors cannot be explained by calculation.

> Game-theoretic considerations are mainly instructive in the way they are able to describe the kind of dilemma situations in which trust matters as a solution *out-side* of game theory. (Möllering 2006, p. 106)

Thus, following Möllering, game- and rational-choice-theorists fail to explain the phenomenon of trust as such.

The second strand of thought Möllering is taking up, "routine," is possibly the one most relevant for this research project, because of the way in which it focuses upon the role of institutions for trust and its functioning. Here, the "neoinstitutionalists" and their considerations on political institutions are included. Apart from that, Möllering grounds this strand of theorizing in sociological traditions which are occupied with explaining the meaning and significance of "taken-for-grantedness" and routine, namely phenomenology

and ethnomethodology. In the context of trust, it is especially Alfred Schütz's (1967) concept of the "natural attitude" which is of relevance, as it can be interpreted as one source of trust. The "natural attitude," which makes the individual take the social world for granted, is a precondition for what phenomenologists, following Husserl, call the "life-world;" the latter being a stable subjective reality in which individuals live out their every-day-life without doubting it. Part of the conception of the life-world is the assumption that an individual's expectation of other people's views on reality do not differ essentially from their own. The resulting expectations about the behaviour of others, thus, allows individuals to trust each other. Or as Harold Garfinkel, drawing on Schütz's theories, states:

> To say that one person "trusts" another means that the person seeks to act in such a fashion as to produce through his action or to respect as conditions of play actual events that accord with normative orders of events depicted in the basic rules of play [...] the player takes for granted the basic rules of the game as a definition of his situation, and that means of course as a definition of his relationships to others (Garfinkel 1963, p. 193- 194)

This process of the establishment of a life-world, that is to say, the creation of the above named "basic rules of the play" has elsewhere been described as institutionalisation (Berger & Luckmann 1967). Following this line of thought Lynne Zucker (1977) speaks of "institutional-based trust" as one version of trust (the other forms she mentions are "process-based trust" and "characteristic-based trust").

> [...] "institutional-based trust" describes sets of shared expectations derived from formal social structures represented, for example, by signals of membership of professions or associations or by intermediary mechanisms such as bureaucracy, banking and legal regulation. (Möllering 2006, p. 60)

Thereby, institutions and their role are defined very differently than in the aforementioned "rational-choice" approach: whereas the latter see institutions mainly as enforcers and guarantors by a third party, the sociological institutionalist school views institutions as systems of rules and meanings that establish common expectations (Möllering 2006).

Thus, as Möllering sums up, institutionalists see rules, roles, and routines as a source of trust because they are establishing taken-for-granted expectations. Nevertheless,

institutionalists do not determine agency insofar as expecting the individuals to be rule-compliant all of the time since they do see the possibility that individuals challenge or cheat on institutional rules. However, these non-conformist actions can hardly be explained by institutionalist theory itself. Institutionalist theory can very well explain stability and rule-reproduction (or routine, as Möllering calls it), but fails in explaining change or non-compliance.

However, institutionalist thinking opens up a perspective necessary for the approach towards trust in this research project, namely the thought that not only can persons be the object of trust but also institutions themselves. This specific form of trust has especially been debated in the political sciences. In the next section (5.2) I will introduce one of these approaches. In the field of sociological theory Niklas Luhmann (1979) has taken up the topic of institutional trust. He coins it "system" trust and uses the example of money as an abstract system. In such a trust system, a trustor

> basically assumes that a system is functioning and places his trust in that function, not in people (Luhmann 1979, p. 50).

Following Luhmann, this system trust grows through continual experiences with the system and because it relies on diffuse generalization and indifference. Thereby, Luhmann states, that actors do not need to trust the system as a whole, but that it is sufficient, if they trust the inbuilt controls. Another point Luhmann takes up is that system trust relies on the individual's assumption that others also trust the system (Luhmann 1979). Guido Möllering makes an interesting remark regarding Luhmann's theorizing on trust:

> Luhmann does not address a point implicit in his trust concept which I regard as crucial, namely, that trust is essentially not so much a choice between one course of action (trusting) and the other (distrusting), but between either accepting a given level of assurance or looking for further controls or safeguards. System trust (and also personal trust) fails or cannot even be said to exist when this state of suspending doubt is not reached (Möllering 2006, p. 72).

This critical insertion appears to be relevant in the case of the freelancers in this study: what will they do if they mistrust the social security programmes? As it concerns questions

about their own future (e.g. when it comes to pension programmes), so we would possibly think that mistrust will lead to action of some kind.

The topic of system trust has been taken up by Anthony Giddens (1990). In his considerations he also describes how trust in institutions or systems emerges through what he calls "access points." At these points the individuals gain experiences with the system via interacting with other individuals, who are usually experts representing the system (Giddens 1990). I will come back to that topic later on in section 5.2.

The third direction of theorizing, Möllering takes up, which he calls "reflexivity," has a processual perspective on trust. Within this area of trust literature, the emergence of trust is seen as a gradual process of interaction, which in small steps will lead to a growth of trust. The role of positive experiences is highlighted here. Furthermore, scholars assign a certain initiative to individuals, thus seeing trust as being somewhat more active. The latter point has especially been elaborated on by Anthony Giddens (1994), who introduces the term "active trust." From Giddens' view, a reflexive process is needed in order to develop trust, which involves communication and openness. This opening is, according to Giddens, an active move the trustor-to-be is making. However, in Giddens conceptualization this form of active trust stands alongside routine as a source of trust (Möllering 2006).

In his account on trust, Möllering argues that all three perspectives on trust (reason, routine, and reflexivity) are still missing an element in order to explain or understand the phenomenon of trust. According to Möllering, the first debate (reason) does not really come to explain trust within their theorizing, as trust cannot be explained within rational choice or game theory, because it always carries a moment of irrationality. The second discourse on institutions and trust (routine) is not able to explain how trust probably could appear despite the uncertainty and vulnerability that cannot be reduced by institutions. All the more, Möllering argues, that this uncertainty and vulnerability might be a feature inbuilt in dynamic institutions. The third perspective on trust , namely reflexivity, which very much focuses on the process of trust-building can still not adequately explain what it takes to start the trust-process and go on with it in situations when uncertainty and vulnerability remain strong.

In order to understand what happens when people trust, Möllering argues that another element has to be added. In doing so, he refers to an old, but nearly forgotten approach towards trust by Georg Simmel. The latter states that trust contains a "further element of socio-psychological quasi-religious faith" (Simmel 1990, p. 179). Further on , Simmel states that this element of faith is

> the feeling that there exists between our idea of a being and the being itself a definite connection and unity, a certain consistency in our conception of it, an assurance and lack of resistance in the surrender of the Ego to this conception, which may rest upon particular reasons, but is not explained by them. (ibid, p. 179)

Simmel's described "leap of faith" is an essential feature of trust for Möllering, which he calls "suspension," and argues that

> suspension is the essence of trust, because trust as a state of positive expectation of others can only be reached when reason, routine and reflexivity are combined with suspension (Möllering 2006, p. 110).

In order to illustrate his understanding of trust, Möllering introduces the "trust wheel," which serves as a heuristic:
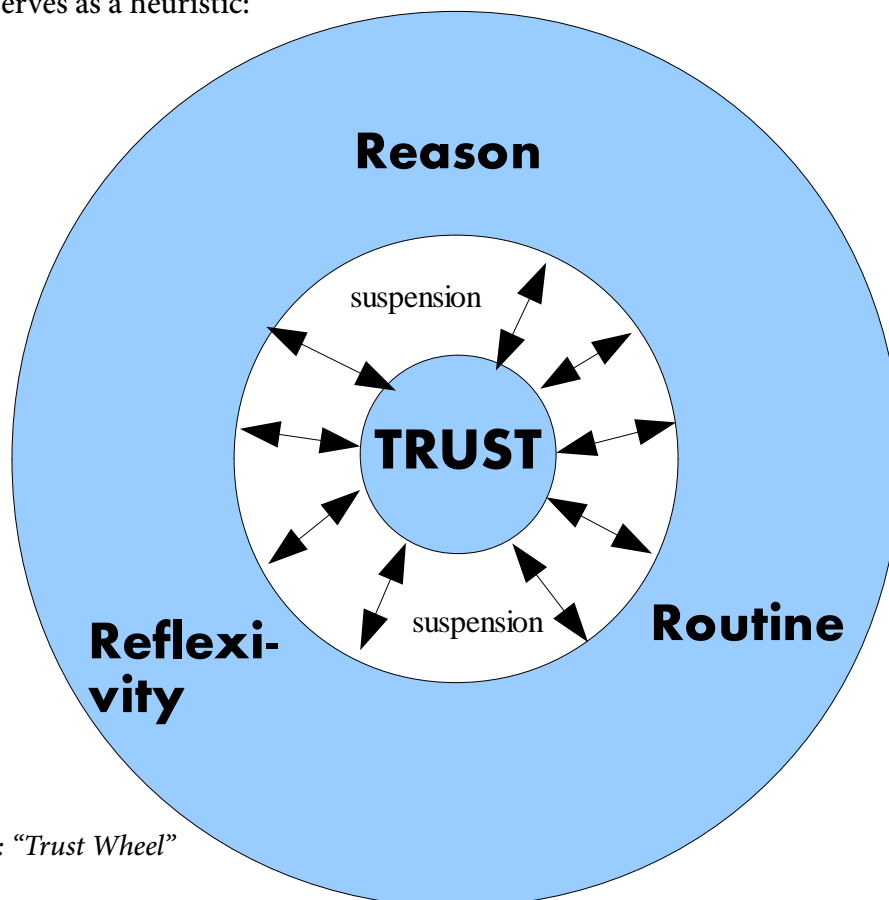
Figure 6: "Trust Wheel"

Source: Möllering 2006, p. 110

Thus, Möllering argues that the element of "suspension" connects the above describe sources (reason, routine and reflexivity) with trust. In other words, without suspension there would be no trust, even if there was reason, routine and reflexivity. Subsequently, Möllering proposes three ways of how this suspension could possibly be reached: (1) an "as-if-attitude," (2) a "bracketing" of uncertainty and vulnerability, and (3) the "will to believe" (ibid).

Möllering's first route to trust is the "as-if-attitude:" he states that 'all trust requires a kind of as-if attitude on the part of the trustor towards the social reality they face' (ibid, p. 112). Trustors are acting as if there was no uncertainty, quite in contrast, they act *as if* a positive future was certain. This is an aspect emphasised by Luhmann, too, as he is assuming that trust always relies on an "illusion" (Luhmann 1979, p. 32). Hence, it rests on the 'fiction of a reality in which social uncertainty and vulnerability are unproblematic' (Möllering 2006, p. 112). Beckert (2005) argues that these fictions are socially constructed, thus created intersubjectively in interaction with others and via institutionalized acting. Nonetheless, these "fictions of trust" have to be achieved and sustained by the trustors themselves.

Luhmann provides us with some examples of how the individual trustor creates the fiction of trust. He introduces the concept of "overdrawn information" (1979, p. 32). "Overdraw information" refers to the situation in which, in the event of insufficient informations, individuals over interpret the available information in order to 'serve as a springboard into uncertainty (ibid p.33). Others (Beckert 2005, for instance) add that the trustee is involved in creating the fiction of trust, thus being co-produced as both trustor and trustee.

The institutionalists approach can thus contribute to an understanding of "trust-as-a-fiction" in the following way: as society in this perspective is socially constructed and actors tend to try to normalize their fictions through activities, then the fictions that trust is based on is only one part of the "fictional" socially constructed world. From this view, we can also see that the fictions (particularly the ones trust is built upon) can be subject to

power and politics. All the more, the latter can try to influence these fictions (see, for example, Möllering 2006).

Ortmann (2005) argues that there are diverse possibilities of how "as-if-trust" or "as-if suspension" can work. Firstly, there is the "as-if" in Schütz's version, the natural attitude that enables action through taken-for-grantedness. Secondly, there is a more performative dimension of "as-if," in the sense of "taking or defining something as something." This describes the dynamics that an actor (or an institution as actor) can become trustworthy because other actors treat him/her/it as trustworthy. Hence, the trustee becomes defined as trustworthy, no matter how much "true" trustworthiness the trustee contains. Thirdly, "as-if" suspension" can appear in the form of idealisations: that is to say, ideal "trustworthy" institutions may not exist as such (and may never have existed), but if the trustors act as if it were so, trust is created. We can easily apply these three modes of "as-if trust" to the example of welfare state institutions – people can trust them out of a natural attitude, taking for granted the positive outcomes (e.g. sufficient pension levels in old age); they could trust (or distrust) the pension system, because all other people around them act as if it were trustworthy (or not); and they could idealize welfare state institutions, thus creating trust. I will come back to the topic of welfare state and trust in the next section (5.2).

Summing up, "as-if trust" emerges because actors make up positive "fictions" out of incomplete information. This leads us to Möllerings second trust-generating suspension mechanism: if the trustors are able to create positive "fictions" this also means they are able to ignore possible dangers or the fact that the missing pieces could imply doubt or danger. This leads us to the second possibility of suspension and thus, second way to trust, namely "bracketing." Möllering borrows the term from phenomenology where it is used as a methodological device in the treatment of qualitative data. However, he applies it to micro-sociological trust-evoking situations. In these situations, vulnerability and uncertainty are "bracketed" as if they were resolved in a positive manner. This mechanism has, again, already been mentioned by Luhmann (1979). He sees trust as a mechanism to reduce complexity and argues that trust is

a movement towards *indifference:* by introducing trust, certain possibilities of development can be excluded from consideration. Certain dangers which cannot be removed but which should not disrupt action are neutralized. (ibid, p. 25)

In his account on trust, Giddens (1991) refers explicitly to the concept of "bracketing:" he defines trust as

the vesting of confidence in persons or in abstract systems, made on the basis of a "leap into faith" which brackets ignorance or lack of information (ibid, p. 244)

Giddens discusses this matter mainly in his considerations on "basic trust" and "ontological security," where, drawing upon Erikson, Goffmann and Garfinkel, he describes the sustainment of self-identity through trust: with the help of trust the individuals are able to create constancy in their own self-identity. Furthermore, he argues, that the ability to "bracket" is already learned in childhood and that it is an important part of the child's socialization, as it enables the individual to trust. For Giddens, "Bracketing" is not a cognitive activity but is, rather, a matter of practical consciousness:

Practical consciousness, together with the day-to-day routines reproduced by it, help bracket such anxieties not only, or even primarily, because of the social stability that they imply, but because of their constitutive role in organizing an "as if" environment in relation to existential issues. (ibid, p. 37)

Möllering argues against the assumption that there is no bracketing or "leap of faith" involved when the trustor can rationalize their reasons for trust or mistrust. As Luhmann puts it:

Although the one who trusts is never at a loss for reasons and is quite capable of giving an account of why he shows trust in this or that case, the point of such reasons is really to uphold his self-respect and justify him socially (Luhmann 1979, p. 26).

In line with this, Möllering argues that rationalization might obscure the "leap of faith" of trust and also the bracketing of uncertainty and vulnerability, but it does not prove that the latter two phenomena are not involved (Möllering 2006).

The last way of how to reach suspension necessary to achieve trust is the "will to believe." Luhmann has pointed out the importance of will and willingness for trust by stating that trust is an 'operation of the will' and that 'the actor willingly surmounts this deficit of information' (Luhmann 1979, p. 32). Hence, the emergence of trust depends on

the willingness of the actor to either "bracket" uncertainty and vulnerability and belief in "positive fictions." Möllering grounds his understanding concerning the question of will in the context of trust on William James' essay 'The Will to Believe' (1948), in which the latter defends the individual's right to believe, even despite evidence (which then can be called faith), and provides an analysis of how faith works. James argues that a precondition of faith is the "sentiment of rationality," by which he means the conviction of the actor (though not being completely justifiable) that something is "true" in the sense that it is useful, give expectations and enables actions. Through this sentiment the "will to believe" is created. In this conceptualisation, faith comes very close to the element of trust which lets the trustor have positive expectations towards the action and intentions of others, who are out of her or his control. James also stresses the "leaps" faith allows us to do. This idea matches very well with the understanding of the leap needed to trust in Möllering's conceptualisation of trust. James stresses that those leaps enabled by faith are not taken foolishly. As Möllering puts it in the context of trust:

> Faith as a part of trust has to resonate with the actor's experience. It has to feel right, true, plausible and so on in spite of inconclusive evidence. It follows that trust rests on a kind of "will to trust", but trust cannot be willed against the trustor's very personal and private sentiments. (Möllering 2006, p. 121)

In this project, I want to base the approach to trust on Möllering's conceptualisation, which means that "reason," "routine," and "reflexivity" are seen as sources for and "suspension" as an important aspect of the emergence of trust. Thus I have clarified the general theoretical background concerning trust for the discussion on trust at the micro-level. What is still missing is a perspective on trust to the welfare state and to welfare state policies. And, more specifically, an approach to how the differences in welfare state policies and individual trust described in chapter 3 could be related. The above described discussion on institutions as the object of trust provides some useful insights, however, it still lacks a comprehensive perspective on the specificity of welfare state institutions. Thus, in the next section I introduce Bo Rothstein's considerations on the topic. In his book *Social Traps and Problem of Trust* (2005), Rothstein discusses issues of trust to and in different welfare

states, and so I want to discuss his assumptions in the light of the general theoretical background discussed thus far in this chapter.

5.2 Trust and the Welfare State

The issue of trust toward state institutions has been mainly discussed in political sciences. I want take up a concept from the field of neoinstitutionalism in political sciences (e.g. Braidwaite& Levi 1998, Rothstein 2005). Most of the neoinstitutionalist debate on trust within political sciences involves the question of how state institutions can create more trust amongst their citizens as well as trust towards the state, its government, and its institutions (Braidwaite & Levi 1998). Bo Rothstein's (2005) account on trust is concerned with a question stemming from this field: he asks how "social traps" (i.e. situations in which individuals or groups are unable to cooperate because of mistrust and lack of social capital) can be overcome. In other words, he investigates how trust and trustworthy institutions can be created by states and governments. In doing so, he points out some reasons and arguments on the foundations of trust towards political institutions, which is the form of trust I am interested in here.

In his account, Rothstein focuses on two points that are involved in the creation of trustworthiness (and non-trustworthiness) of political institutions. The factors he emphasizes are a high degree of universalism in the design of political institutions on the one hand, and the relevance of a collective memory concerning those institutions, on the other. Concerning the first point, the one of universalism, Rothstein bases his argument in research findings from the fields of economics, psychology, and political science. These strengthen the assumption that there is a linkage between what is called "procedural fairness" and the credibility and trustworthiness of institutions. If people perceive the way political institutions are working as fair and just they tend to trust these institutions more. Thus, trust towards political institutions is connected to their legitimacy and some form of moral ethics.

> What we trust in those institutions is thus nor that they will act in our direct personal interests to the extent that we get special favors in relation to ther citizens. Trust does not come out of actual contents; it is based on respect for procedures. (ibid, p. 145)

Hence, Rothstein assumes, that universalism makes welfare state programmes as objects of trust more likely to be trusted. In the light of the above described sources for trust, we can see how universalism, especially in a mixture of "reason" and "reflexivity," can indeed contribute to trusting.

Concerning the issue of reason, the perception of fairness and the fact that universalism in principle means that everyone is included, that is, that the individual in question is included as well, can contribute to a rational, calculative source for trust. Reflexivity, then, can refer to the experiences of the individuals with universal and hence inclusive welfare state institutions. Thus, in this processual perspective, trust is sustained. Taking Rothstein's assumption concerning the relationship of trust and universalism seriously, we will expect to see trust differences in the two countries concerned in this study (as the Danish welfare state is still characterised by universalist principles, whereas the German welfare state was never universal). In contrast to the claimed universalism-trust relation, we can assume that non-universal welfare state programmes which include means-testing or, as in the case of KSK described in chapter 4, demand the fulfilment of certain criteria in order to gain access, will produce encounters with the institution which might be more negative in the sense of lessening trustworthiness. All the more, as we have seen above, the administrative discretion concerning access to KSK is significant, and could lead to a feeling that KSK is not a fair institution, thus causing a possible distrust-relationship to emerge. However, as we have seen in chapter 4, the Danish welfare state is not purely universalist, most obviously seen in the field of old age/pension policy, which would imply that the lower level of universalism and the exclusion of freelancers from important parts of the pension system would, in the end, lead to a lower level of trust (at least among the excluded, i.e. in this case the freelancers). This would be especially the case if trust would be a phenomenon unequivocally based on rationality and rational choice. However, as written in section 5.1. above, scholars like Luhmann and Giddens agree that trust always contains irrational elements.

The other point Rothstein makes, namely the one about the collective memory concerning the welfare state and welfare state policies, provides us with more explanations

on the possible irrationality of trust in the context of the welfare state. In doing so, Rothstein roots his understanding in Halbwachs' (1992) concept of the collective memory. The latter serves as a phenomenon containing several aspects of how the individuals remember the collective past:

> The central issue in research on collective memories is how societies and groups will remember their pasts. The word "remember" should be interpreted rather broadly here to include everything from how people choose to honour certain historical phenomena through politically resolved ceremonies and memorials (museums, statues, publications) to more experience-based memories or reminders of the past handed down from one generation to the next (Rothstein 2005, p. 162).

Thus, the concept of "collective memory" is, on the one hand, rooted in the culture of a country or any other collective but, on the other hand, it does not rely only on culturalist explanations. In Rothstein's conceptualisation, the collective memory is not only created by culture and history itself, but is shaped and used strategically by political elites in political struggle. With this addition, Rothstein includes insights from constructivist and/or post-structuralist thinking. However, he refuses to accept that historical narratives are only the product of construction by powerful elites:

> The ingredients of the collective memory are neither a purely social construction nor historical fact established once and for all, but rather always found somewhere along the line between those two poles. (Rothstein 2005, p. 163)

Another aspect of collective memory Rothstein emphasizes is it's character of being alive and further developing in the present. The practical experiences of individuals becomes a part of the collective memory:

> Collective memories need not to be false – that the Swedish tax administration is not severely tainted by corruption is not a strategically established myth, to take but one example. This image of the Swedish administration lives by virtue of individual citizens' concrete experiences of the organisation. This approach tells us that trust in public institutions is not determined by the existing culture; it is instead something that is built or destroyed through the real experiences of citizens in their dealings with the institutions and through the image as collective memory that political leaders manage to establish. (Rothstein 2005, p. 165)

Conceptualised in this way, the collective memory carries a lot of the elements, described above, that are essential for the emergence of trust. Of course, the above described role of

"fictions" is relevant here: collective memories are a part of these fictions and are surely involved in the creation of fictions about certain welfare state programmes. Moreover, Rothstein's understanding that the collective memory can become subject to manipulation matches with the aforementioned fictions. However, Rothstein's concept contains an additional moment of rationality or reason, since he is insisting that it is not merely a construction but also that such constructions are connected in some way to what is "real." As the latter citation shows, these moments of rationality emerge, amongst other things, through the individuals' concrete experiences, hence a processual perspective is applied that which includes reflexivity. As the collective memory is described as something (relatively) stable over time, institutionalisation is also playing a role.

The inclusion of the concept of the collective memory can contribute to a contextualisation of differences in individual trust towards the welfare states in different countries. In the case of the two countries addressed in this research project, it is obvious that the collective memories in general, and the question concerning the welfare states in Denmark and Germany, are different. All the more, the welfare state, as such, will play a different role in the collective memory of the two countries. As the word "collective" already shows, the concept of the collective memory contains an understanding of intersubjectivity. It is not only the individual's singular fictions that allows the individual to trust the welfare state, but also the existence of an intersubjective "fiction," that emerged over time. However, this fiction is sustained, challenged, and changed in the here and now.

Together with Rothstein's assumption on the interconnection of universalism and trust in welfare states, it becomes possible to grasp general national differences in the individual perception of welfare state institutions and the security against risks and uncertainty that they provide. This is also related to the question to what extent people trust these institutions, since this will be one aspect of their general perception of these programmes. We now have a "toolbox" with which to proceed in order to approach and contextualise the individual's narratives concerning the question of their own perception of security of welfare state institutions. In the next chapter, chapter 6, I am going to present

the interviewees' considerations on the topics of (in-)security and (un-)certainty, and I will discuss the findings in the context of trust and societal frameworks.

6. (In-)security and (un-)certainty in the lives of freelancers

In this chapter I will present and discuss the empirical findings and the results of the interview analysis on the topic of (in-)security and (un-)certainty and its role in the freelancers' lives. Herein their practices, coping and strategies will be focused on. These findings will be discussed in the light of the previously described welfare state backgrounds, the debates on flexicurity and precarious work (chapter 4), and the insights on the sociological conceptualisation of trust presented in chapter 5. Initially I was looking for differences and similarities in the freelancers' handling of their flexibilised work (and life) patterns in Denmark and Germany. Early in the research process, already in the stage of interviewing, I started to notice a difference between the Danish and the German freelancers in the way the interviewees thematised and talked about their work and life, namely concerning the role and relevance the freelancers were assigning to the issue of (in-)security and (un-)certainty. In chapter 2 I reflected on this from a methodological perspective: Approaching the research process from a hermeneutical view I argued that the fact that the interviews with the Danish freelancers differed so much from the interviews with the German freelancers concerning this topic has irritated my, the researcher's, fore meanings and biases, and that this very moment of irritation and its reflection has been fruitful in the sense that it brought about very interesting interpretations and results. Within this chapter I now want to discuss these findings with regard to content.

I have argued before that freelancers are highly exposed to insecurity and uncertainty. The first reason for that can be found in what Rosalind Gill (2002) and others have coined "bulimic career patterns", which is the insecurity the freelancers are faced with concerning their income. As they are not employees and thus do not receive a monthly salary, their income is directly market-related and non-stable. In chapter 4 I argued, that in this manner the freelancers' position within the labour markets of both countries differs from the "old" self-employed professionals like e.g. self-employed doctors or lawyers, as the latter can draw upon a market monopoly provided by the state. Therefore the "old" self-employed professionals' market position is well protected by state regulation, in contrast to

a wide range of "new" self-employeds, including the freelancers who are in focus in this study. (see as well Gottschall & Betzelt 2003)

The second reason refers to the "social security background" provided by the welfare state. This dimension contains questions like how and in what way the freelancers are secured in the case of situations in which their ability to sustain their livelihood independently is in danger. Here the conditions for freelancers in Denmark differ profoundly from the ones in Germany: In a conservative welfare state like the German one, whose institutions are so much built upon the "standard employment model", being a freelancer can lead to serious exclusions or, in other words "precariousness". (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1999, Castel 2002, Brinkmann et al 2006, Manske 2007). The Danish welfare state, usually classified as a social-democratic welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990) is much more inclusive for freelancers (which can be explained by the fact that it is characterised by universalism), however, due to welfare state change and reform, the old age pension system especially can, in its current form, lead to exclusion of freelancers (see chapter 3 or e.g. Ploug 2004, Andersen 2007). I have presented the profoundly different structural "social security backgrounds" in Denmark and Germany in detail in chapter 4.

In other words, the first insecurity dimension or source refers to the financing of the current everyday, the second one to more long-term safeguards against so-called "social risks". I am assuming that these two dimensions of insecurity are interlaced in the individual evaluation of personal (in-) security, but nevertheless in what follows I will try to distinguish them analytically, in order to be able to reach differentiated conclusions.

Within the following presentation and discussion I want to show that the difference found in the freelancers' notion of (in-) security and related anxiety is not solely related to their different institutional social security and inclusion in welfare state programmes, but also a question of trust, in the sense of "system trust" as Luhmann (1979) calls it. I will argue that a difference in trust towards the welfare state in question is playing an important role in the individual freelancer's exposure and evaluation of the role and relevance of insecurity and anxiety for her/his life. I will focus especially on the "pension question" at this point, because it is here that the Danish freelancers are faced with a certain exclusion

from welfare state programmes (see chapter 4) as well, which could possibly give reasons for a certain feeling of insecurity.

6.1 Role and relevance of (in-)security and (un-)certainty in the freelancers' narratives: "German Angst" vs "Danish Easy-going"?

Above I mentioned the irritation I experienced as regards the difference between Danish and German freelancers' narratives on their strategies and handling of work and life. This irritation stemmed from the fact that this difference concerning the role and meaning of (in-) security also manifested itself in the organisation of the interviewees' speech, thus leading to very different interview structures. As already described in the account on methodology and method (see chapter 2), I did the interview collection in Germany before doing interviews in Denmark. Therefore when I came to the field in Denmark, I was already experienced in "freelancer interviewing", I had established routines and expectations on how such interviews should take place. In other words (from hermeneutical terminology) in approaching the interviews I had fore meanings, which were challenged by the ongoing research process.

The main difference in the organisation of speech and narration was that the German freelancers (in contrast to the Danish freelancers) brought up and problematised the topic of insecurity unsolicited most of the time and very early in the interviews. This becomes e.g. especially clear in the interview with Petra, a 40 year old freelancer located in the Ruhr-area in Germany, whose narration is strongly characterised by de-problematising nearly all of the potentially problematic topics in the interview. Nevertheless, insecurity is the only topic she herself presents as a problem, also defining it as the one big disadvantage of freelancing as a work-form. She comes up with the topic when being asked about the advantages and disadvantages of freelancing and states:

> The disadvantage is of course, that one never knows, when the next job is coming in. [...] there is always this uncertainty [...] (case except 1 appendix 1 p.15 / transcript 1, appendix 2)[28]

After having introduced and problematised the topic of insecurity, the German freelancers subsequently describe a lot of strategies and actions they undertake in order to deal or cope with this problem. And they actually "do" a lot in order to cope with it. For example, Madhi, a freelancer who is located in the Ruhr area as well, talks about two dimensions of the "insecurity–problem" and identifies two ways of handling it. The first one is a strategy applied in working life, where he talks about acquiring some additional customers or jobs as a "back-up" in the case of meagre times .This has not proved to be simply a positive strategy, as Madhi describes the effect of it in busy times as leading to a lot of stress and to the need of passing some acquired jobs or orders on to others:

> [...] and then, however, we were somehow partly afraid, and that was the mistake I think, to somehow continue to acquire jobs right in the middle and despite the high order volume, right? (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21 / transcript 2, appendix 2)

The other dimension Madhi addresses refers to the more emotional or "coping" side of the problem. In one part of the interview, he speaks quite at length about his coping strategies. Here the latter can be summed up as "bearing up", "ignoring" and "fatalism". Madhi states at one point:

> You know, it is all about emotional states, right? [...] If you do something like that [=*freelancing, B.F.*] I think you have to bring with you a portion of stupor, as I would call it and maybe as well a bit of (.) trust in God or something, you know, accepting your fate or something like that, by saying "oh, every cloud will somehow have a silver lining" and so on; [...] If you take everything too seriously [...] I don't think you are going to be happy with it. (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21 / transcript 2, appendix 2)

As this example illustrates quite well, the question of insecurity is thus a big issue, which obviously requires a lot of "work" or activity from the German freelancers in order to deal with it. This problem and all its consequences can be found in different ways or embodiments in all of the German cases, with the partial exemption of the case of Jan, who

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28 For the sake of clarity and comprehensibility all of the interview quotations have been translated from either German (German interviews) or Danish (Danish interviews) to English by the author. However, all of the case excerpts with a lot of the quotations in their original language are to be found in the appendix 1, pp 15 - 177. Additionally the interview transcripts are provided in full length in appendix 2.

mentions the topic but defines it as a problem of the past. This is why I will discuss his case more closely later on in chapter 5.2. Others, like Nina and Elena (both freelancers from Berlin) stress e.g. the existential character of this problem of insecurity: Nina describes how she learned to live with the constant fear of losing her livelihood (*Existenzangst)* while Elena shows that this problem of insecurity recently became an existential one for her whole family.

While interviewing the Danish freelancers, however, the topic was almost never mentioned unsolicited (with the exception of Susanne, which is the reason why I will discuss her case later on in this chapter). With growing irritation over the fact that the interviewing did not "function" the way I was used to, I started to directly ask about the topic. When explicitly asked about it, some of the Danish freelancers talked about the insecurity inbuilt in the freelancing work form and the strategies they were applying against it. However the topic was never assigned the relevance, gravity and existentiality as in the German cases. Furthermore, and despite being directly asked about it, the Danish freelancers did not talk very much about the topic (which is also why in this chapter there might be a slight weighting of quotations towards the German freelancers). Morten, a freelancer based in Århus for instance, describes how he always has a financial cushion matching a few monthly incomes on his bank account. However, he emphasises that this is not in any way a conscious or active strategy:

> I have actually not so much thought about that, so, this is actually a bit unconscious, I think. [...] It is running how it is running on a somehow unconscious level. So it's not like I actively think a lot about how much [*money, B.F.]* it should be because of this and that. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p.155 / interview transcript 12, appendix 2)

When it comes to the question about if this financial insecurity and uncertainty makes him feel afraid, he strongly denies it. Another Danish freelancer, Christian from Copenhagen, uses his savings for a similar kind of security-strategy in the context of "bulimic career patterns". This gives him the possibility to be

> a little bit more relaxed, because I know very well, that I am not screwed. That makes it possibly less hectic for me, if I lose a bit of money in one month. (case excerpt 13, appendix 1, p.168 / interview transcript 13, appendix 2)

In a different passage, however, he limits the proportions of how "screwed" he possibly could become:

> It has to go tremendously very wrong, before you can become totally screwed in Denmark. (case excerpt 13, appendix 1, p. 168 / interview transcript 13, appendix 2)

The only Danish freelancer who brings up the topic of insecurity and uncertainty herself is Susanne, who is a 43 year old freelance graphics designer living in Copenhagen. At the time the interview took place, she had only been working as a full-time freelancer for 6 months. This could be one possible reason why the topic of insecurity plays a bigger role in her account than in the other Danish freelancers' accounts, as she does not have a long experience with "bulimic career patterns". Although she has 15 years of experience of freelancing as a side job, she is lacking long-term experience in being dependent on the unstable income which characterises freelance work. She mentions the topic of insecurity when being asked about the advantages and disadvantages of being employed in contrast to freelancing:

> So, the advantage of being employed clearly is that you get the feeling of having a secure framework. Whether this is fake or not does not matter. It is a secure framework you are in. Your pension is taken care of. This and that. But I have been working as an employee at the theatre for 12 years, where we closed down the department I started in. So in this way I would say, I don't trust the [...] "employee labour market" very much. For me, in the graphical branch it is just as unstable as freelancing. (Case excerpt 8, appendix 1, p. 116 / transcript 8, appendix 2)

Thus Susanne depicts that a (feeling of) security is indeed of relevance for her, and that it is in some way missing for her as a freelancer. Apart from that, based on her experience, she does not view "employee-security" as a "real security" any more, by defining instability and insecurity as something being inherent in the branch and not in the work-form.

In other parts of the interview it becomes clear that it is again the "bulimic career patterns" which are a source of insecurity for her. In contrast to e.g. Morten she has installed some quite thoroughly thought through security mechanisms: She has calculated how much money she needs to finance her (and partially her children's) life like it was before as an employee. On the basis of these calculations she pays herself a kind of salary

from her freelancer income and keeps the rest as savings. In this manner she has already accrued an amount equalling three monthly incomes. Another source for security is her apartment – she has a big flat from a housing co-operative *(andelsbolig)* in the center of Copenhagen, which she easily could divide into two parts, renting out one part in times of financial difficulties. All the more she stated that at the time of the interview, she had already acquired enough jobs for more than one year in advance, which would bring enough income to finance her life on today's level. By reporting all these reflected and thought-through safe-guards against times with low orders or job offers, her interview differs from the other Danish interviews.

Apart from her being a relative newcomer to full-time freelancing, a reason for that might be found in her life situation: She is the only single freelancer with young children in the study (divorced, 2 children, 5 and 9 years old).The other two single persons in the Danish sample either have no children (Christian) or were divorced only after the child was grown up (Ole). Therefore even though she is sharing the responsibility (also financially) for the children with her former husband, she does not have another income in her household to "pool" with. The importance of the household or the presence of another income in the household / family for the freelancer's coping and strategies towards their "bulimic career patterns" has been emphasised by the findings of other studies in the field: In their account on freelancers' "risk management" in Germany and the United Kingdom Karin Gottschall and Daniela Kroos (2003), for instance, highlight the role of the household or the family for dealing with that insecurity. The income of the freelancer's partner very often serves as a kind of financial cushion. As Susanne does not have the possibility to (fully) do this any more, this absence might have caused her to install other "back-up" plans. It might also be one reason why she, as the only Danish freelancer, presents the problem of "insecurity" as something relevant.

Hence, we can sum up that insecurity indeed constitutes a problem for Susanne, and that she has also created some safe-guard mechanisms against it. Nevertheless, when asked if this insecurity is also connected with fear or the feeling of being afraid, she states:

I am not afraid of sinking into poverty. I am afraid, because it is so difficult to come back [...] in such a creative branch. If you have been dropping out, so, if you get on the wrong track, then there is not so much that sticks to you. And then that's just how it is.
(case excerpt 8, appendix 1, p.116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

Thus the fear Susanne is expressing does not refer to the risk of losing one's livelihood, but to the risk of getting excluded from the creative field or branch. In her presentation the problem of insecurity appears to be less dangerous, and the connected fears appear to be less serious, than in the case of the German freelancers. Therefore even though insecurity plays a role in her account on working and living with freelancing, the difference presented previously (though maybe in an alleviated form) between the Danish and German freelancers' accounts on the topic of (in-)security also remains in her case.

Summing up, within the interview material a remarkable difference between German and Danish freelancers could be found. Whereas the German freelancers report a great deal of insecurity which is connected to a strong feeling of being afraid, partly even in existential dimensions, the Danish freelancers in general attach less importance to the topic of insecurity, and the fear emphasised in the German cases is either not there at all, or is not assigned such a gravity (in the case of Susanne). The difference does not only become striking content-wise, but also by looking at the structure of the interviews as concerns the organisation of speech. So what is it that constitutes this remarkable difference along country lines? Is it possibly the expression of stereotypically-assigned collective national character traits, like "German angst" on the one hand and a certain "easy-going-ness" on the other? The chosen theoretical and analytical framework of this study calls this into question: The debates on "precariousness" and "flexicurity" (see chapter 4) can already give us some hints at how this difference could be understood. However, before reflecting on the phenomenon with the help of theoretical considerations, I want to try to come closer on the grounds of the empirical material of this study. In the next step I will take a closer look at how the German freelancers present and understand the topics of insecurity and the connected fears. I am going to do this by comparing the interview from amongst the German freelancer group that is most strongly characterised

by the topic of insecurity, and the one which is characterised least strongly by those topics. Thus some patterns of what actually makes up the "German freelance angst" will become clear.

6.2. To be afraid or not – a question of privilege vs. precariousness?

In this chapter I want to present more closely the accounts on the topic of insecurity of two freelancers, namely Jan and Elena, who are both based in Berlin. Although they have quite a lot in common (they even graduated from the same university in Berlin), their account on the two topics in question is very different. In the following I want to discuss why this is so.

Jan and Elena are both 40 years old and they have both been studying fine arts at the same art school in Berlin. Both of them have as well a second university degree within the field of design. As well, they both have around the same (quite long) experience with freelancing. Jan reports that he has been a freelancer for 10 years, Elena names 13 years of experience, however, in the early years on the side of her art studies. Another commonality is that they both have a child (note that it was quite difficult to find a female freelancer in Germany with a child) and live with their partner (Elena)/ wife (Jan). Jan's wife was at the time of the interview expecting their second child. Quite surprisingly, Jan is the one with the lowest yearly freelance income amongst the German freelancers. This is remarkable because he at the same time is the one that indicates to be least affected by fear, and who defines the problem of insecurity as a problem of the past. His yearly income before and after tax is below €13 000 / kr 97 500. Elena is earning more, with a yearly income after tax and social security contributions between €13 000 and 19 999 / kr 975 000 – 149 992. Elena is originally from Greece and moved to Berlin 13 years ago. She graduated in graphics design from a Greek university, and subsequently worked as an employed graphics designer at a newspaper. She moved to Berlin in the early 1990s in order to study fine arts and because of Berlin's image as becoming an exciting place after the fall of the Berlin wall and German reunification.

The reason why Jan is earning so little money can be found in the fact that he is working freelance more like a part-time job[29] – he usually rejects big, stressful, but well-paid jobs, and instead uses the time for childcare and household tasks, plus the completion of a new education as an arts' therapist. As mentioned before, he does define the question of insecurity and the related fears and anxieties as a problem of the past, a problem he had 10 years ago when he started as a freelancer:

> When I started [...] it *[the unstable income, B.F.]* was really connected with a whole lot of fears, right? Because it was really like suddenly "One month without having earned any money, oh my god! And if this will go on like that..." and so forth. Thus, the fears were there and they were really massive and then I realized that there was really a lot of money again, then there was the other side, then I earned breathtakingly much money in one month. So sometimes , back then, I earned 20 000 German marks in one month, and then I thought YES, right? Great, now things are going well, fantastic and so on [...] Meanwhile, in those 10 years I realized, there are ups, there are downs and you have to have a certain level of trust. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

In this passage, Jan describes how he as well had experienced anxiety in connection with "bulimic career patterns" in the beginning of his freelancer career. Then he assigns experience a great role for losing these fears, interestingly enough with the help of trust, as he states in the end. Nevertheless, in direct comparison with Elena, who has worked as a freelancer for about the same length of time as Jan, we can ask the question if it is really only a matter of experience

However, in the directly subsequent passage of the interview, Jan is limiting the relevance of experience as the main source of the removal of fear and producer of trust:

> At this point, I have to say, that because of this insecurity in the beginning I have in those years, when it went quite well, around the year 2000, I have built up reserves, I own this flat, I could afford an old age pension scheme, I have filled in an investment account, so I have a little cushion. So that I now can wave aside a little, concerning old age security, right? No sweat, and what is great by now, my wife earns money as well, and that is for our monthly expenses, right? Yes, this money is just always there. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Here, Jan provides us with two more sources for losing anxiety and insecurity: The first one refers to a financial cushion he was able to accrue in the beginning of his freelance

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29 I will come back to that topic in chapter 8 .

career. He did not only use this money for savings but also for investing into social security as concerns the risk of old age.

The second source, is, once again, the household or the partner's income. Jan's wife, a Spaniard, works as an employed technical translator, thus earning a steady salary. As Jan states, that her salary is enough for the monthly expenses, the pooling of incomes as a form of risk management of course makes sense.

Notice the date, Jan assigns to the period of time in which he created his financial cushion – it matches more or less the "gold-feverish" time of the dot.com-bubble. As it becomes clear in other parts of the interview, he made a little fortune in the dot.com-bubble and managed not to lose it in the burst.

Additionally to his private social security arrangements, he is also a member of the artists' social insurance (*Künstlersozialkasse / KSK)*, as described in chapter 4, and is thus included in the public social security system in Germany. As I discussed previously in chapter 4, although this means inclusion in the public pension system, it can be seriously in doubt that it will provide a sufficient old age pension for KSK-members.(e.g. Betzelt 2002, Haak & Himmelreicher 2006). Jan seems to be very well aware of this problem, because he states with reference to the KSK-pension: 'If this would be my pension, oh dear, oh dear! That would be really bad.' (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Thus the assumption that Jan's financial cushion has something to do with the suspension of fear he experienced, is backed up. In another paragraph he explicitly refers to this:

> Then I have a certain sum in the flexible saver account, which I can draw upon, if it gets tighter here or if there are any investments[...] So if that money disappeared suddenly I would start to worry. But that has never happened so far. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

We can therefore sum up that Jan found a possibility to achieve an individualized social security (in contrast to a collective one through e.g. welfare state institutions). We can also see in his case that this individualized social security plays a role in the question of anxiety

and fear. The problem of "precariousness", as conceptualized by Castel (2002) and others, which would possibly have struck him if he were dependent only on the public social security system via KSK, does not bother him any more. In the case of Jan it was "lucky cautiousness", or possibly smart behaviour on the market, that gave him the possibility to install an individualized social security, but we can easily imagine how the question of social or class background can play a role here. Comparing Jan, being the "odd one out" concerning the relevance of insecurity and anxiety in the freelancers' narratives, with the other German freelancers in the study, we can also see that none of the other freelancers in the study has the luxury of such a big financial cushion as Jan. In order to understand better how this difference looks like in detail, I will now contrast Jan's case with that of Elena, which in several ways is the "most negative" of the German freelancers.

In her account, Elena mentions the unstable income and the non-sufficient social security as relevant dimensions of insecurity for her. However, when directly asked about the "bulimic career patterns", Elena does not evaluate them as bad:

> I don't find it really that bad. There are these null-months *[months, in which she does not earn any money, B.F.]*, but they are becoming fewer [...] I have observed that on average three times a year I get this panic, that I will not make it financially [...] I am starting to search for job ads [...] But I can remember every time, that it was the same the year before around the same time period and actually it's nearly always the same times. And when you observe this, then you develop a patience with yourself. Then you also know that you have to earn a certain amount in May, because there will be nothing until September or so.[30] (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

Hence, we can see that Elena also stresses experience as an important way out of being afraid. Despite de-problematizing the "bulimic career patterns" at this point, however, they actually lately became a bigger problem for her (and her family). As mentioned before, Elena lives together with her partner and their child. Her partner is an architect, who lost his job as an employed architect just over one year before (at the time of the interview),

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30 The interview with Elena took place in German, although she is not a native speaker. She started learning German 13 years ago, when she moved to Berlin. Her general German language ability is very high, but still there are minor grammar and /or word order mistakes in her spoken German. I have decided not to convey them to the English translations , thus all potential linguistic mistakes are unintended and caused by the author's own English language incapabilities as non-native English writer.

and remained unemployed ever since. Now, he is also trying to become self-employed (Elena mentions, that the date he started into self-employment was only a few days ago at the time of the interview). Elena is quite concerned about his move into self-employment:

> That means he tries it *[self-employment B.F.]* somehow, but he is just not the type and for me this means a lot of pressure, right? [...] This means I have to support the whole family with these fluctuations. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

Here again we can see the importance of the second income in the household to pool with. In the subsequent passage of the interview Elena also makes explicit that before his unemployment / his start into self-employment, her partner's income

> was always there, and that makes a difference, right? Seen from the family's perspective, there was not really a hole, right? You only had this stressful thoughts for yourself, for your own business, right? And from now on these thoughts become existential, that is the difference. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

Elena therefore shows how the situation changes when the pooling-of-incomes is missing as a securing factor. This again substantiates the assumption that the second income in the household is an important safeguard for the freelancers. When it comes to social security, Elena is also a member of KSK and additionally she has taken out a minimal *Riester-Rente* (private pension scheme, which is publicly subsidised). When asked what she thinks of her own social security, Elena is very negative: 'Very Bad! That is really the black hole. Yes, KSK is of course really incredibly good.' And later on she states that KSK 'is our rescue, right? Without it, it would be really bad.' (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2) Thus in contrast to Jan, Elena is really dependent on KSK for her social security. Despite this shown positive opinion on KSK, she is nevertheless sceptical about how far KSK can provide an adequate social security:

> And concerning old age provisions, the feelings that you get from everywhere... No matter what you read, that practically everything, even the KSK contributions, goes to the normal pension system, which presumably will not have anything. And then financially it is also like that, you don't get any loan either. As a freelancer you are really at the very bottom in this society, right? And thus, there are nearly no possibilities to buy a flat or to invest anything, that you could say "o.k., I won't get any pension, but I can at least ensure my own four walls or something like that, right? The

only loan I ever got was for my computer, and that was it. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

In this paragraph, Elena gives several very interesting statements. In the first part she emphasises that the pensions system will not have any money anyway at the time of her retirement. The assumption that the public pension system is dysfunctional can also be found in the statements of the other freelancers from the German group (see below, chapters 5.3 and 5.4). A consequence of these negative expectations of the pension system is that she does not assume she will get a sufficient pension in old age via KSK and the public system.

In the second part of the citation, Elena describes that she does not have the possibility to organise old age security individually either. Here she does not only talk about her individual situation, but she puts her situation into a larger, societal background, by stating that freelancers are positioned at the bottom of society. Thus she interprets her situation or rather, the situation of freelancers in general, as societal exclusion. In another part of the interview she makes this view even more explicit:

> Most of all, when I compare it with my parents or grandparents – we are really, really fine – but we are in a sorry state as concerns that: We are forty now and we can't do anything, I mean I can't offer my son anything, absolutely anything. We just manage to go on holidays once a year and that's it. You cannot invest anything, I mean the thing with the [*missing, B.F.*] borrowing capacity is very difficult. We are actually in an age in which it's usually getting a little bit better in the job, but there is no opening up in society, which could allow you to risk something [...] and to invest something [...], right? We all wait until our parents die, and then we get a flat for the child, then it makes a very small circle, but societally freelancers are really disadvantaged, very much so. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

This statement is quite remarkable for several reasons: In a nutshell, what she is complaining about in this passage is a certain exclusion from society ("there is no opening up in society"). More precisely, it is an exclusion from society's wealth she is describing. This also falls into place when taking into account that she expects a certain redistribution will happen along family lines ("a very small circle"), but that societal redistribution is not taking place (any more). With this perspective on freelancers' problems in German society she is quite alone in comparison with her fellow German freelancers within this study. It is

not that the other freelancers do not describe similar problems (because they do), but they mostly draw "individualised" conclusions from it, they ground their problems in individualised narratives. Or, putting it the other way round, Elena is the only one who assigns society any responsibility, and who claims that society should take any measures of redistribution, thus seeing her (and the other freelancers') situation as exclusion.

Elena's perspective on the freelancers' situation in Germany resembles in some ways the theoretical "time-diagnostic" assumptions of the "precariousness" debate discussed in chapter 3: Robert Castel (2002) argues that the centrality of work in society on the one hand, and the fact that the welfare state is structurally built on the "standard employment model" on the other, is leading to dynamics of exclusion for those in atypical work. Drawing on the insights of comparative welfare state research (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999), I have argued in chapter 4 that this time-diagnosis has to be located within the context of different labour market and welfare state regulations and institutions, and added that we can speak of "precarious" conditions for flexible workers in general, and freelancers in particular, only in the so-called conservative welfare state (ibid). Elena's situation can, at least concerning the "reproductive-material dimension" (see e.g. Brinkmann et. al. 2007), be called precarious. Interestingly enough, Elena herself assigns one reason for her problematic situation to societal exclusion, unlike the other freelancers.

What is it that we can derive from the comparison of the case of Jan with the case of Elena, as concerns the question of insecurity and anxiety? Amongst the German freelancers, Jan is the one, who assigns insecurity least importance in his life, and also does not display the connected fears or anxiety, whereas Elena's account is very much characterised by both insecurity and fear. One essential difference between the two can of course be found in Jan being (relatively) privileged, whereas Elena's situation can indeed be called precarious. Jan thus has the possibility to "buy" himself out of the otherwise potentially threatening precariousness. This precariousness is, like Castel (2002) and others state, at least partly caused by an exclusion of "atypicals" from certain social rights. Both stress the importance of "experience" for getting rid of the fears, but Elena's case shows us that experience alone does not go very far when circumstances create a more vulnerable

situation. In Elena's case, it was her partner's unemployment that brought about the increase of insecurity. This also strengthens the significance of the household, or rather a second (steady) income in the household, which is used as a safeguard against insecurity by the freelancers. This has also been found in other studies, e.g. by Gottschall et. al. (e.g. Gottschall & Kroos 2003)

Therefore we can identify two important issues which contribute to the rise of insecurity amongst the freelancers (who are struck by a certain level of insecurity through their work form), namely inadequate social security from the welfare state and the absence of the possibility to "pool" income. Jan is indeed in a privileged position having a second income in the household (which, according to his own statement, is big enough to pay the "normal" monthly expenses), plus enough savings to use them as a second safeguard for financing present everyday life on the one hand, and buying him enough private social security on the other. Taking this context into account, it is no longer surprising that insecurity and anxiety do not play a big role in his life (in contrast to the other German cases).

Can we thus use these insights from the German cases as explanation for the difference found between the German and the Danish freelancers? At least on the first glance this appears to be convincing: In chapter 4 I have shown that freelancers in Denmark are much more included in welfare state institutions than in Germany. Furthermore, the case of Susanne (the only Danish freelancer, who makes insecurity an issue unsolicitedly) can also be understood on these terms, as she is the most vulnerable as regards "bulimic career patterns" amongst the freelancers in Denmark.

However, as we have seen in chapter 4, the Danish freelancers' social security is not completely consistent either, with the pension system being the "Achilles' heel". And even though the freelancers in Denmark might be faced with problems concerning old age subsistence (if they do not actively install a form of private or labour market pension), in the interviews they do not show any sign of worry about that at all. And not least, theoretically, this topic involves questions of how the relation between the individual and welfare state institutions are conceptualized. I will come back to the latter later on in this

chapter. Firstly, in order to shed light on the question of how the freelancers in the two countries actually evaluate the respective welfare states, including their own social security arising from them, I will present and comparatively discuss their statements concerning the topic in the next chapter.

6.3. The freelancers' views on collective social security and the welfare state

As we could see above, Elena refers to the topic of her own social security as a "black hole" and evaluates it very negatively. This pattern can be found elsewhere, for instance in Madhi's account. He states when asked about his own social security:

> Very, very exasperating topic. Actually I don't want to talk about it, it's always really very depressing somehow. (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21 / transcript 2, appendix 2)

Thus he is problematizing the topic very strongly. He is the only one amongst the German freelancers who is not a member of KSK at all. He has previously been a member of the public social security system (which includes pensions), as he took a vocational education, and subsequently worked several years as an employee before his university education and his freelance career. Since the start of his university education, however, he has not contributed to any kind of old age pension scheme whatsoever.

In general, the German freelancers speak very positively about KSK, which is providing them with access to the public social security system (see also Elena above). Nina, for example states about the topic of social security:

> In my opinion, social security is essential. Everyone who does not have health insurance is nuts. On the other hand, if there wasn't KSK I would have to pay 280 Euro per month only to be insured.*[Here she refers to health insurance only, B.F.]* Concerning this I find the regulations in Germany pretty bad. KSK is a real blessing, as it buffers the amount the state requests by being a virtual employer. (case excerpt 4, appendix 1,p. 56 / interview transcript 4, appendix 2)

What is also remarkable in this quotation, is how well Nina is informed about KSK and how it functions: Reiterating the details about KSK from chapter 4, the description of KSK as providing a kind of "virtual employer" is quite fitting. The freelancers in Germany are all really well informed on their social security in general and KSK in particular.

The freelancers in the study also express concerns in relation to KSK's mode of operation and especially its access criteria (most of all the criterion of individual creative achievement (*eigenschöpferische Tätigkeit),* which has led to ambiguity as well as administrative discretion, see chapter 4). Madhi, for instance, argues that one main reason he did not try to become a member of KSK is that it would be a kind of fraud (although his work probably would be assessed as containing enough "individual creative achievement" for KSK, it is not completely certain he would be granted access, as he is a graduate from a technical discipline (architecture), see the subject of administrative discretion & ambiguity, e.g. in Schnell 2007 and chapter 4):

> Actually it would somehow not be fair in the sense that I am not an artist, I am more a service provider [...] If you then have a real artist, who lives for his art, right? No matter how, right? And he saves all his money for buying a canvas in order to be able to scribble on it, maybe this kind of person exists? [...]Therefore he should rather somehow... yes, and I manage it somehow differently. (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21 / transcript 2, appendix 2)

It is one of the absurdities of the institution of KSK (which in its full name is actually called "artists' social insurance") that the self-definition of a person (possibly eligible for access) as not being an artist can lead to a voluntary exclusion from it. Elena, who in general sees KSK as some kind of "last resort" for her and her family's social security, also expresses some moral reservations:

> For instance as a graphics designer I don't find it completely [...] fair, that I get public subsidies for my insurance, whereas others, who are as well at the border concerning the definition of what is artistic or not..., right? If I would only live from fine arts, which is my second education, if I would only live from that eventually, I would understand it better. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

Thus, at least some of the freelancers are ill at ease with the indeed ambiguous access practices of KSK (see chapter 4), and criticise it as unfair, doubting that the bureaucratic rules and procedures are just. Another doubt the German freelancers are raising, regards the question that the public pension system as such (in which most of them are included via KSK) will be able to provide sufficient pensions (or even if it will provide pensions at

all) in the future, i.e. their own retirement age. We have already seen this in the statement of Elena above. And Nina states quite bluntly:

> I have mentally bidden farewell to the thought that this state in my country will give me anything in old age. In my opinion it is a question of time until the whole thing collapses. (case excerpt 4, appendix 1, p. 56 / interview transcript 4, appendix 2)

Summing up the German freelancers' attitudes towards the subject of social security the picture is very pessimistic: Not only are most of them quite downbeat as concerns their own social security status, they also raise doubts on the general functionality of the public social security system in the future. These doubts refer mainly to the pension system. Furthermore, some of them question the fairness and justness of KSK, which is the public social security institution in charge of them. It is notable as well that the freelancers are generally quite well informed concerning the modes of operation of social security.

Therefore most of the German freelancers in this study try to establish private social security in the form of pension or other saving schemes, which are, due to low incomes, quite limited. Jan constitutes an exemption on this point, as his financial cushion allows him to "buy" himself out of the problem on a level he presents as satisfactory. Madhi, on the other hand, choses the strategy of "ignoring" or, in his words, applies a "portion of stupor", as he does not pay into any form of pension saving at all. Asked about his plans for old age security, he describes rather cloudy ideas about investing in real estate sometime in the future.

When looking at the freelancers in Denmark and their opinion on the topic of social security, the picture is different. Let us first of all have a look at how the Danish freelancers in the study are "organising" their own social security (concerning those elements which are voluntary for them): Following Andersen's (2007) discussion on the Danish pension system, the labour market pensions (*arbejdsmarkedets pensioner*) have become the most important pension pillar in recent years. It is exactly here I assumed the "Achilles heel" for the Danish freelancers lay, as they are not (automatically) included in that. Thus I presumed that the voluntary inclusion in a private labour market pension scheme would be of great importance for their individual social security. (see chapter 4)

However, amongst the six Danish freelancers in this study, there is only one, Signe, a 34 years old graphics designer from Western Jutland, who pays into a private labour market pension scheme. Signe is a quite special case amongst the freelancers in this study in general: Suffering from a chronic disease, which is not officially approved as a disease on the one hand and which is making continuous contact with other persons (e.g. in an office, at the workplace etc.) very difficult for her on the other, freelancing constitutes the only possibility for staying in the labour market for her, as it allows her to work in (relative) isolation at home. Thus, she decided that being a member of an unemployment fund does not make any sense for her (because she would not be able to accept practically any other "normal" job), and that she should rather use the money for pension savings. The story of her disease has also influenced her view on the welfare state and especially her view on bureaucratic rules, procedures and actors connected to it. She describes e.g. the conflict with her unemployment fund after she had left her employment because of the disease as a hard struggle:

> I had tried to secure myself, I had also taken out such an unemployment insurance, and I fought with them for over one year before I got the money, right? Because well, it is not an approved disease. [...] And well, they had their own psychologists, who said what they wanted to hear. That's how it is, if you have one of those diseases which are not approved and not on their "who's" list. [...] So it is the expert, they find, right? [...] And who says, well, that's just something people make up, that's what they make their psychologists say. And so you don't get anything, right. [...] The whole thing went through the appeals board (*ankenævnet).* (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2)

These experiences taint her opinion of the welfare state and the social security system as such and therefore her evaluation is quite negative. However, it does not lead her to the expression of problems of insecurity or anxiety, although she states clearly that her only alternative to freelancing is social assistance (*kontanthjælp)*, including (once again) a struggle on the topic of her "employability". It has to be mentioned that she is well safeguarded concerning the "pooling-of-incomes" dimension, as her husband works as a well-paid engineer.

Ole, a freelance illustrator and graphics designer based in Aalborg, is with his 49 years the oldest freelancer in this study, and thus the one closest to retirement age. Nevertheless, he does not pay to any pension scheme at the moment and he also states that he cannot expect to get much from the labour market pension he was contributing to during his employment prior to freelancing. When it comes to his general opinion on the welfare state, Ole criticises current reforms and politics very strongly:

> I am sure, that with the government we have at the moment, they are turning off the lights[...]. So they have reaped enough for themselves in one way or another, no matter what you sign... (case excerpt 10 appendix 1, p. 136 / interview transcript 10, appendix 2)

We can clearly see that Ole is not content with current welfare state politics. However, these negative expectations about the future of the welfare state do not lead him to insecurity or even fear. He states several times that he did not really think a lot at all about the subject of social and old age security. As an old age safeguard he names his (and his ex-wife's) house, which is clear of debt and was, at the time of the interview, to be sold soon, which would bring Ole a certain financial cushion.

This certain "coolness" as concerns their missing pension schemes very much characterises all of the freelancers' interviews in Denmark. Although some of them admit a certain problematic when directly asked about their lack of pension schemes, they do not seem to bother too much about it. Lise, a 35 year old freelancer from Copenhagen, described a kind of "light" ignoring-strategy as well, when it comes to the question of her non-existent pension scheme. Even Susanne, who, as described previously, is the only one amongst the Danish freelancers who introduces the topic of insecurity herself and mentions the pension question in this context (see above), states that she has until now not taken care of a new pension scheme and reports that she actually has never really informed herself about it either. This is quite surprising when we take into account how well and thoroughly thought through she has installed safeguards as regards the insecurity stemming from "bulimic career patterns".

The two young men in the Danish part of the study (Morten, 31 years and Christian, 34 years) are both neither members of an unemployment fund, nor do they have any pension scheme. Their argumentation on why they chose not to be included in these two safeguard mechanisms shows some kind of individualistic values. Morten stresses that the reason he does not want to become a member of a pension fund lies in his wish to have self-determination, to be in charge of his savings and not to give it into the hands of others. In accordance with this, he is accruing savings in the form of, he claims, his collection of old electric guitars and and an investment account.

In the context of social security, Christian makes some interesting remarks about Denmark and the Danish welfare state in general. This happens against the background of his work biography: Christian has recently been living in New York, USA, for half a year, and being asked about the differences between Denmark and the USA he states:

> Well, in Denmark we are so damn spoiled, and we are doing extremely well, and we all have this security net, and this is not right, in principle. An awful lot has to go wrong before you can become totally screwed in Denmark. Because we have all of these security arrangements, and that's why we are also a little bit spoiled and lazy. And that's something, where you really could learn something from the USA, where they are really sharper and they are "on" all the time. Of course, it can be a little bit too extreme sometimes. (case excerpt 13, appendix 1, p. 168 /interview transcript 13, appendix 2)

Thus, he buys into the argumentation that too much social security would cause the individual to give a lower performance. Concerning this line of argumentation, his own account becomes inconsistent – in another passage he states that his financial cushion gives him the possibility to not accept all of the job offers, but to focus on those which are exiting and promising, which contradicts the assumption that the threat of losing one's livelihood is contributing to a better individual performance. However, what is interesting, in the context of this chapter, is how he characterises the topic of social security and the welfare state in Denmark: In his view, there is a lot of social security in Denmark. For him, social security in Denmark is even too generous, including a notion, that nothing can go wrong in Denmark anyway. Because of the proclaimed connection between (a lack of)

achievement and (too much) social security, Christian has chosen not to become a member of an unemployment fund:

> So, I want to have a little bit of a dagger at my throat, and to say [...] in this area there is no security. I think, this also gets you going and makes you sharp a little. A little bit like in New York, where it is more difficult to get these security arrangements. So, no, I dropped that. (case excerpt 13, appendix 1, p. 168 /interview transcript 13, appendix 2)

When it comes to the question of the lack of a pension fund however, Christian states that he is planning to pay into one in the future.

Summing up, the Danish freelancers (with the exception of Signe) do not bother too much with questions of social security, also concerning old age security, which is the field where they are excluded from, an important feature of the pension system (namely the labour market pensions). What is very interesting here is that even their quite different political or moral perspectives do not in the end lead to different views on personal social security issues. We could e.g. suspect that Ole, who expresses quite strongly his expectation that the current Danish government is dismantling the welfare state, would also raise doubts about his own social security because of that view. However, this is not the case. Not also are they quite "cool" about their social security in old age (partly despite the fact that it can be doubted that their current provisions are sufficient for securing livelihood in old age), they are also ill-informed about it (especially in comparison with the German freelancers). In their narratives they evoke the understanding that everything will turn out fine, a notion that Christian describes more explicitly in his view of the Danish welfare state.

Comparing the German and Danish freelancers' statements and evaluations on the topic, we can see quite a strong contrast, which can be summed up as follows: The German freelancers are very pessimistic about their own social security and the collective system of social security in general (mainly concerning the pension system), they are generally well-informed about their social security topics, they express a great insecurity and also anxiety connected with these topics, and they try to take measures against it, whereas the Danish freelancers do not seem to bother too much about these topics, they show nearly no sign of

insecurity and practically none of anxiety, they are quite ill-informed, especially as concerns their own old age security, and they do not in general take a lot of measures to organise their own old age security.

How can we now understand this remarkable difference? When we look at the differences in the social security that the respective welfare states are providing for the freelancers in question, we can find rational reasons for this: In chapter 4 I have argued that the social security position for the German freelancers can be described as "precarious", whereas the position of the Danish freelancers can be called more "secured". Robert Castel (2002) and other proponents of the "precariousness" approach draw a relation between the "precarious" position of individuals and feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Indeed we can interpret the German freelancers narratives on the topic as in line with that. Nevertheless, what about the Danish freelancers' accounts? On the one hand the Danish freelancers, being better included in welfare state institutions, actually have less reason to be affected by insecurity and the fears connected to it. However, when it comes to old age security (the "Achilles heel") there are not so many rational reasons for the feeling of security. How can we, especially in the case of old age security, explain the absence of insecurity (and anxiety) amongst the Danish freelancers?

Another aspect, which is relevant in this context, is how far the freelancers themselves are aware of the above mentioned rational reasons or not. In the case of the German freelancers, we could see that they are generally very, sometimes even extraordinarily, well informed about social security issues, i.e. they are also very aware of their precarious situation. This is very different in the case of the Danish freelancers, especially in the case of old age security, as they quite frequently describe how they have not thought about it and have not informed themselves about it, i.e. they present quite a low amount of knowledge about their own provisions as concerns old age security. Though despite not really having any rational evidence about the question of their old age security, they seem to evaluate it as good, or at least good enough to not think about it further. Not least because of the latter findings, which appear as a rather naïve handling of their situation at the first glance, I assume that the "insecurity" difference found along country

lines in this study is only partly grounded in differences of the freelancers' social security backgrounds, but also in differences in trust, or, more specifically, differences in institutional or system trust. As I have been discussing in chapter 5, a lot of scholars (e.g. Simmel 1990, Möllering 2005) agree on the assumption that trust always contains a moment of irrationality, which Simmel, for instance, describes as a "further element of socio-psychological quasi-religious faith" (Simmel 1990, p. 179). With the help of this element, the trustor is then able to have positive expectations of the future actions of others (or in this case institutions). I propose that the inclusion of the concept of trust in the context of this study leads to fruitful conclusions and interpretations of the findings on the differences in the role and relevance of insecurity in the lives of the freelancers. In what follows I want to substantiate this proposal.

6.4 A question of trust?

Although the kind of trust I am referring to here is connected to institutional trust or trust of the welfare state or welfare state programmes, the kind of trust relevant here differs from pure institutional or system trust, as it refers to more general positive expectations of one's own, individual future as well. When taking into account that the "pension question" and the question of social security is very much in focus here, trust in the welfare state and its institutions is, of course, highly relevant.

However, it might not be the only catalyst of trust in a positive individual future. Above I have emphasised the radical market dependency of freelancers, therefore we can easily imagine that the situation of the economy, i.e. economic boom or recession, can play a role for the individual's evaluation of individual / personal future (in-) security. Stephen R. Barley and Gideon Kunda (2004), who did detailed ethnographic research on independent contractors in mainly technical IT jobs in the US, a work form comparable to the freelancers in this study, reflect on the question of which role the situation of the economy plays for the contractors. As regards the economic cycle, in the course of their study they observed a drastic change: Doing fieldwork in the end of the 1990s, the dot.com bubble burst shortly after their data collection was finished, which meant that their

findings actually portray the situation before and during the peak of the dot.com boom. Something similar also happened during this research study, as I collected the interviews with the freelancers in 2007 (Germany) and 2008 (Denmark), times in which there was a considerable economic growth in Germany and outstanding economic boom conditions in Denmark. However, since then the economic situation has changed drastically in both countries, due to a world-wide economic crisis in autumn 2008. This background, as well as the differences between both countries, should be reflected on at this point.

The question of social security, however, was not of interest in the study of Barley and Kunda. However, in their interview material they find a notion of strong self-reliance amongst the contractors, which lets many of them also articulate a certain feeling of security:

> Many even claimed that their future was now more secure, because they were continually employable, or at least more easily employable than laid off employees with similar qualifications. (Barley & Kunda 2004, p. 289)

We can imagine that this self-reliance as a source of security is more likely to occur in times of economic growth, where there are most probably plenty of jobs or orders for freelancers and contractors. As Barley and Kunda put it, their American contractors found security, positive expectations and hence trust through relying on their human and social capital. However, Barley and Kunda do not know either if this was only the case in the high times of the dot.com bubble. They also wonder what the subsequent economic recession could have meant for the contractors:

> Did the contractors' belief in the security of human and social capital survive the crash, as advocates of free agency might contend? Were contractors the first to bear the brunt of recession as institutionalists might argue? How did the changing conditions affect those committed to a contracting lifestyle? (ibid, p 292)

Unfortunately, it is the fate of studies like this or Barley and Kunda's, that this can neither be answered for the above named contractors nor for the freelancers in this study. We have to keep in mind as well that the situation concerning social security for contractors and / or freelancers in the US is vastly different to the "social security background" of freelancers both in Germany and in Denmark (which, as we could see in chapter 4, also differ

profoundly from each other). However, the argument of the economic boom as another catalyst of trust via self-reliance could also possibly be applied in order to understand the remarkable difference in the perception of security and insecurity by the German and the Danish freelancers: Although the interview collection in both countries took place in times of economical upswing, the range of this prosperity was still vastly different. Whereas the Danish economy was also at that time, as in the previous years, in an historical economical boom situation, with extremely low unemployment rates and shortages in labour supply, the German economy was just recovering from recession, was hit by the "jobless growth" phenomenon, and was still faced by reasonably high unemployment numbers. Freelancers in Germany found themselves in a market with strong competition and a negative price spiral after the dot.com crash (see e.g. Manske 2007), however, some in my study report that it was getting better recently at the time of the interview (2007, see e.g. Elena, case excerpt / transcript 7). In Denmark, many freelancers reported that they were getting so much job offers that they had the possibility to chose the most promising ones. (see e.g. Morten and Christian). In chapter 2 I mentioned the difficulties I had in finding Danish freelancers to participate in the study (in contrast to Germany, where it was quite easy to find freelancers willing to participate in the interviews). Usually the freelancers contacted in Denmark explained their refusal with the fact that they were too busy at that time, which could also be interpreted as a sign for very good market conditions in Denmark.

However, this does not explain the differences found in the freelancers' statements on their own social security (see above). In what follows I am elaborating on the dimension of system or institutional trust.

In chapter 5 I introduced trust as a theoretical concept in a twofold manner: Firstly I elaborated on the role of trust on the micro-level, i.e. by discussing the several sociological approaches to trust, and their assumptions on which role trust is playing for individuals and social interaction, how it is used and how it can potentially emerge. Secondly I focused on the embodiment of trust as institutional or system trust, and more precisely on institutional trust in the form of trust in the welfare state and / or welfare state institutions, by mainly drawing upon Bo Rothstein's (2005) considerations on the topic. I argue that

this twofold focus makes it possible on the one hand to interpret the individual freelancers' narratives on the micro-level, and on the other hand to contextualise them within the structural "social security framework" that I analysed in chapter 5. My hypothesis is that the difference presented above is to be understood not only in the context of different welfare states, but also against the background of different levels of trust in them. I am thus proposing that the Danish freelancers' view on the topic of social security, and especially on the question of pensions (as it is the one example, where trust probably is unjustified in the freelancers' case), is characterised by trust, whereas the German freelancers do not have the same trustful view of their welfare state.

How can we now view the findings described above in the context of institutional trust? In chapter 5 I introduced Möllering's (2006) conceptualisation of trust, which puts suspension at the heart of trust, drawing on Simmel's (1990) notion of the element of faith. In the context of Luhmann's (1979) considerations on system trust, Möllering (2006) makes the interesting remark (see above, chapter 5) that trust implies as a consequence the acceptance of a a given level of assurance or, in the case of distrust, the search for further controls or safeguards.

In some ways this describes very well one of the differences between the German and the Danish freelancers: Whereas the former try to seek possibilities for further safeguards, the latter are apparently accepting the given level by not worrying too much about the situation and not thinking of further possibilities. And we can quite clearly see that in the German cases a suspension of doubt is not really happening, at least as concerns old age security. By applying a notion of trust, with its inbuilt element of irrationality and faith, the carelessness and "naivety" of the Danish freelancers can be understood. Even the "strange case" of Ole could be understood with the help of trust, as his statements concerning current welfare state politics (the government turning off the lights of the welfare state) appear at first glance to be quite contradictory to his described actions (namely not worrying too much and not paying into any pension scheme). However, it might be the case that trust in the welfare state even survives negative expectations towards political actors and leaders. Luhmann (1979) states that in the case of system trust, the trustor

presumes that a system is functioning, and that she/he then places trust in this functioning and not in people. Therefore Ole could still trust the system in general, despite his very negative evaluation of current politics in the field.

In chapter 5 I based my approach to trust on the conceptualisation of Möllering (2006), who describes three different sources of trust that can lead to the "suspension" mentioned above, namely reason, routine and reflexivity. With the help of the concept of reflexivity we can have a look at Signe's case, who in some ways seems to be an exception amongst the Danish freelancers, as she is the only one contributing to a pension scheme, and she is also showing open distrust to some institutions of the welfare state. In the case of trust-building as regards system trust, Luhmann (1979) and Giddens (1990, 1994) both emphasize the importance of experience with "access points", as Giddens calls it, i.e. the encounters with individuals representing the system or the institution, who are usually experts. Sitkin and Stickel (1996) analyse the opposite, the emergence of distrust as "the road to hell" in an organisational context. Signe's disappointing encounters with welfare state institutions during the story of her chronic disease can thus be seen as similar "dynamics of distrust". At first glance, the emphasis on experience with "access points" seems to be inconsistent with the statement of Luhmann I referred to above, that it is enough that the trustor trusts the functionality of the system, and does not need to trust the people in charge. However, we have to keep in mind the difference between the two dynamics: The former refers to concrete experiences with the institution in question, therefore refers to the functioning of it, whereas the latter refers to more abstract evaluations of actors, in this case political leaders.

The examples of Ole and Signe illustrate quite well why the introduction of trust in the context of this comparative study is very fruitful. On the micro-level, the behaviour of the Danish freelancers especially can be interpreted and understood with the help of trust. In contrast to that, I have argued that the German freelancers' relation to the welfare state is strongly characterised by distrust. Madhi, for instance, who is, as I have described above, applying a "portion of stupor" in order to deal with the problematics of insecurity, helps himself with a kind of diffuse "trust" in higher authorities instead, like god or fate (see

above). In the following I want to discuss how and for what reasons the two welfare states in this study could possibly be assigned with such different levels of trust / distrust by the individual freelancers, mainly with the help of Rothstein's (2005) assumptions on the topic. He identifies two main features of the welfare state, which he finds crucial for the creation of trustworthiness, namely universalism in the context of legitimacy and the relevance of the collective memory as concerns welfare state institutions. In chapter 5 I showed that Rothstein's considerations can be very well connected to the the more general theoretical claims on the "nature" of trust I have described before.

Rothstein's first point about universalism as a creator of trust-relationships strengthens the assumption that there is a linkage between the individual's perception of procedural fairness on the side of the welfare state institutions and the credibility and trustworthiness of institutions. Following Rothstein's argumentation, this is the reason why universal welfare state institutions have the highest potential to be seen as trustworthy, as they, ideally, include everybody. (Rothstein 2005) Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) and others have argued, that universalism (still) is a dominant characteristic of Scandinavian welfare states. In chapter 4 I pointed out that the Danish welfare state is indeed more inclusive for atypical workers like the freelancers in this study than the German welfare state, mainly due to universalist features. On the other hand, and this became clear mainly in the field of old age security, several Danish welfare state reforms have dismantled universalist features in some areas of the welfare state, as e.g. Bent Greve (2004) argues.

In the empirical material of this study we can at least find some hints of the opposite, namely of distrust in Germany: Madhi and Elena raise doubts on the fairness of KSK as concerns its practices of access, which are clearly far from being universal. And the narrative of Elena, which clearly shows that she interprets her situation as societal exclusion, and her claims that societal redistribution is missing, are backed up by the assumption that she perceives a problem of lack of fairness and injustice in German society in general, and concerning the welfare state in particular.

The second point Rothstein makes is a bit more complex and includes a wide range of components. Drawing on the conceptualisation of Maurice Halbwachs (1992), Rothstein

argues that the collective memory about the welfare state and welfare state institutions is an essential ingredient for the emergence of institutional trust. Thereby the collective memory is defined rather broadly, as the way societies and groups remember their past.

In this concept, Rothstein also includes the possibility that the collective memory, or certain parts of it, can become subject of manipulation or be used strategically by certain groups or elites in society (Rothstein 2005). As I argued in chapter 5 it is here especially where the more general assumptions on trust meet with Rothstein's account, particularly concerning Möllering's proposal that positive "fictions" are needed in order to create suspension. (Möllering 2006)

Collective memory is a huge concept, and taking the two welfare states relevant in this study as well as the two countries, including their history, into account, we can easily imagine that the collective memories are vastly different. Any discussion on this topic can only be cursory at this point. Therefore I will restrict the discussion here to those aspects that in some way or another are thematised in the empirical material.

There is one quite remarkable aspect in the statements of the German freelancers which I have not addressed in more detail so far, namely the kind of catastrophic expectations of Elena and Nina, which contain the notion that the German public social security system will collapse completely in the future, or in any case not be able to provide any pensions at the time of their own pension age. Amongst the generally very negative evaluations of the German freelancers, these even stand out as seemingly exaggeratedly negative. In her account Elena gives us a hint of where this opinion stems from, by basically stating that one can read this everywhere, thus referring to some kind of public or media discourse. There are several analyses of the public discourse on the pension system in Germany, which come to the conclusion that this expectation of a "future collapse" of the public pension system is a scenario being launched in the context of a neoliberal reform agenda (e.g. Christen 2008, Baur 2009). In his account on the neoliberal discourse and its contents concerning old age security in Germany, Christian Christen states:

> Despite diverse interests, autonomously operating actors and argumentative modifications, since the 1970s there has neither been a change in the theoretical

approach nor in the claims: On the basis of a normative critique of the welfare state it has warned of an excessive ageing of the population and a socio-economical crisis scenario has been evoked, thus enhancing the legitimacy of reforms. Since the 1990s this negative approach has been completed by a disproportionately positive portrayal of the efficiency of financial markets concerning capital accumulation, financial investments and the generation of economical dynamics. In this combination the market driven *[i.e. funds based, B.F.]* old age security, or rather the respective reform process, is not only being declared as the "necessary evil", but furthermore a more profitable, more stable and more just financing of pensions for everybody has been announced[...]. (Christen 2008, p. 191, author's translation)

In this context the individual expectation of a future collapse of the public pension system appears plausible. This continuing public discussion on the functionality, or rather the proclaimed dis-functionality, of the public pension system can be thought to have found its way to the collective memory of the welfare state in Germany.

On the other side, a similar evokation of a catastrophic future scenario concerning parts of the welfare state or the pension system did not take place in the Danish interviews. Taking a look at the Danish value survey, with data collected in 1981, 1990 and 1999, we can see that trust towards the public system as a whole did remain stable, and even rose slightly during that period. (1981: 47 %, 1999: 55 % Levinsen 2002) Considering these findings, the assumption that Danish welfare is generally more trusted than German appears to be convincing. As described above, we can interpret the Danish interviewees statements on the topic as trustful.

Summing up, the remarkable difference along country lines concerning (in-)security and (un-)certainty and their meaning for the freelancers' practices can not solely be understood by the indeed different welfare state frameworks (and an implicit "rational" relation towards them by the interviewees). This became clear through the example of old age and pensions. I have introduced the concept of trust in order to interpret the freelancers' narratives regarding this question and also as an element to clarify the micro-macro relation theoretically. The interpretation of the freelancers narratives with a trust-perspective appears to be convincing.

7. The freelancers' work and life: Self-realisation and work unbound

As we could see in chapter 3, a lot of scholars (e.g. Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, Rau 2005) assume that there is a new norm concerning work emerges and that its significance for the individuals' lives grows: It is assumed that people are increasingly seeking self-realisation or self-fulfilment from work. It has been discussed how far this norm plays a role for all forms of work, or if it is only affecting the well-educated, "white-collar" part of the labour force. (e.g. Heidenreich 1996). Whether or not this changing norm applies to parts or the whole of the society, however, is not so relevant to this project, as we can expect the new media freelancers within this study to be amongst those with a high demand for self-realisation. The work of the freelancers in the new media contains creative, even artistic, elements. Furthermore, the branch also has an image of being highly creative, as e.g. Rosalind Gill (2002) describes it. Thus, unsurprisingly, self-realisation and self-fulfilment plays a role in all of the interviewees' narratives. The varying "societal frameworks" did not appear to be of importance concerning the topics of self-realisation and work unbound. The freelancers in Denmark and Germany were faced by similar challenges, which will become clear in this chapter.[31] In the following section (7.1.) I want to firstly present the freelancers' views on the topic of self-realisation in more detail.

7.1 The importance of self-fulfiment and self-realisation

All of the freelancers interviewed within this research project emphasised, at one or at several points of the interview, aspects of self-realisation in their work, as well as its importance to them. When asked about the meaning his work has for him, Berlin-based Jan, for instance, first and foremost highlights fun, and states that without it he could not work at all (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76/ interview transcript 5, appendix2). Christian describes the relationship to his work as some kind of passion: It means a lot to him, he is "burning for it" and it is a big delight to him. (case excerpt 13, appendix 1 p.168/ interview transcript, appendix 2)

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31 Which is also why I am presenting the findings in a "non-comparative" way in this chapter.

Elena and Nina refer to their work as a vocation (*Berufung*) (case excerpt 4, appendix 1 p. 56 / interview transcript 4, appendix 2 and case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97/ interview transcript 7, appendix 2). Ole's account on that question is similar: He describes how, after some meandering in other jobs or professions, he found what he is doing now, namely illustration and graphics design, because this was what he always really wanted, which means, he finally found his "real" vocation. (case excerpt 10, appendix 1, p. 136 / interview transcript 10, appendix 2) Susanne presents her work as crucial for her own identity, for whom she *is*:

> Interviewer: And what does your work mean to you?
> Susanne: Well, it probably *is* me. [...] I suppose it is my identity, that's what you can say. [...] It is both where I am hiding and where I am exposing myself. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

And Morten states:

> It means a lot to me.[...] In a way, after all, it is defining you as a person a bit. [...] Because what you do is what you stand for. [...] It defines a big part of who I am. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155 / interview transcript 12, appendix 2)

Thus, both Susanne and Morten are revealing that their work has a very strong importance for them, and that it is strongly connected to their understanding of themselves, their personality and authenticity.

Marion is grounding her demands for self-fulfilment in her self-understanding as an artist: Being an artist is a very important topic in her narrative, and already at the very beginning of the interview she introduces herself as one. For her, it is because she is an artist that she highly prioritises freedom and self-determination. She also argues that she can find relative freedom in the freelancing work form, which she presents as one reason why she chose it:

> Because me being an artist... well, I still understand myself as an artist, I am still doing art. But I know, I can't make a living from that, and therefore this kind of work is the optimum, as I am relatively free. (case excerpt 3, appendix 1 p. 43 / interview transcript 3, appendix 2)

Generally we can see that what constitutes the passion and dedication for the freelancers are aspects like fun, self-determination, creativity, and the possibility to express themselves

in their work. Thus, their own accounts come close to what in the literature has been called self-fulfilment or self-realisation (e.g. Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). Therefore the previously mentioned assumption that this group is very likely to be one with great self-realisation demands is supported. The interesting question to be posed to the empirical material is, what this means for the organisation of their work and life.

Another freelancer, Madhi, takes up the contrast between "old" and "new" work in order to explain what his ideal of work would be:

> I would say, there are people, who realise themselves in their job, and then there are people, who do this in their spare time, right? And if I would be in employment, I would most definitely try to be a clock puncher [...] and in my spare time I would put a scarf around my neck, hey man, now I am realising myself and I would be doing fantastic things, going gliding in whatsoever place somewhere or something [...] and if you can do that in your work and if your work is fun...(case excerpt 2, appendix 1 p. 21 / interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Within this passage, Madhi implicitly locates self-fulfilment within the workform of freelancing, therefore giving us a hint that it is playing a role for him as well. Subsequently he describes his ideal of work in general as such:

> In the past, as a child or youngster, when you were tinkering with your moped, you know, you were sitting in the garden and screwing and pottering about and at sometime it was getting dark, right? And you were totally annoyed because it was dark and you rather wanted to go on. And then you got a lamp and you went on screwing [...] and you were looking forward to get up in the morning and continue with it. And that would of course be the perfect job, where you could say, gosh, I don't realize that I am working it just runs smoothly, right? I know, this doesn't work but (.) if you could somehow get close to that, it wouldn't be too bad. (case excerpt 2, appendix 1 p. 21 / interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Madhi's ideal concept of work reminds us of the ideas of the "artistic critique" (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005), as work that is done out of interest, containing moments of fun, and which is accomplished in a self-determined way. It also reminds us of the ideals of the "digital marxists" (Gorz 2002, Lazzarato 1996). Madhi does clearly present this understanding as an ideal. When directly asked if his freelance work is coming in some way close to this ideal concept, he highlights positive aspects like fun and a sense of achievement when finishing jobs, as well as the self-determined way in which the freelance jobs are accomplished. However, though clearly locating self-realisation in freelance-work

previously in his account, his described ideal of work remains unconnected with his own work practices. His account at least gives us a hint of some kind of scepticism about how far he actually can realise himself through his work.

With that view he is not alone amongst the freelancers interviewed in this project. Although all of them emphasise self-realisation, and also define it as a reqirement for working, most of them already limit and differentiate its scope and relevance on the level of concepts and understandings. Furthermore, they are portraying consequences of this limitation or critique in their practices. In the next section I will firstly present their conceptual de-limitations to the self-realisation demand.

7.2 Drawing a line: Self-realisation demands and its limits

So far in this chapter we could see that the freelancers are indeed emphasising very much aspects of self-realisation within work, and that they are embracing the idea. They themselves require and wish to fulfil themselves within their work. In chapter 3 I discussed a Foucault-inspired discourse within the sociology of work (e.g. Rau 2005), or more precisely, amongst those investigating the proclaimed change of work norms and ethics. I referred to their line of argumentation as the "subjugation hypothesis" (see as well Holtgrewe 2003), as they are interpreting the consequences of the emergence of the "self-realisation norm" as self-exploitation and as self-subjugation under market demands. Are the freelancers, who indeed seem to be very much "infected" by self-fulfilment demands, be practising happy self-exploitation?

Although for the freelancers studied in this project, work is constituting a means of self-realisation, most of them mention other aspects of their life as providing meaning and self-fulfilment as well. Those who have children mention them often, and more specifically caring for them and life with them as one aspect. Susanne, for instance, who strongly connects her work with identity (see above), states later in the interview that being a mother is constituting the other pillar of her identity. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2) And Morten, whom I also cited above with a very

strong statement on the entanglement of work and identity, limits the importance of the former as well by referring to his son:

> Well, but he [his son, B.F.], who just dropped by, he means more. Well, he is surely number one. Well, it's like, if you have a child, it automatically moves up into the first priority. And that's just how it is, and that's how it should be. And everything, including oneself, moves down to the third or tenth priority, depending on how much room he needs at this point. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155)

The other freelance parents, for example Jan (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2), also mention the importance of their children and of being a parent, however, they do not directly connect it with questions of identity as much. On the other hand, neither do they bring up the topic of identity as explictly in connection with work as Susanne and Morten do. They mention their children mostly in the context of considerations about how to organise their work and life.

The demand for self-realisation in work , however, is not just limited, or even questioned, because of children and the family. Some of the interviewees discuss this topic in the context of other issues as well. In what follows, I want to discuss in more detail the considerations on self-fulfilment and self-realisation by Nina, a 34 year old freelancer from Berlin, who works in the fields of graphical design and journalism (the latter means primarily writing articles about design for professional journals). Her account is interesting in this context because she is the only one amongst the freelancers in this study who presents herself mainly as an entrepreneur, and as being driven first and foremost by an entrepreneurial spirit. She even explicitly distances herself from the wish for self-realisation, which she locates mainly among "creatives"[32]. She is portraying these creatives as follows:

> [...] a creative, weird mind, that says: "Love me because I'm creative!" Which is, in my view, the biggest problem of creatives, that they still bring with them too much vanity or bring in too much of themselves, of their person. In the end, however, it is all about selling; mhm, YES, my opinion. (case excerpt 4, appendix 1 p. 56 / interview transcript 4, appendix 2)

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32 That her approach is the exception at this point, however, is not so surprising, given the specific branch the freelancers are working in, namely graphical work of all kinds

Thus Nina refers to a dilemma the freelancers are very often faced with, namely the ambivalence between the freelancer's wish or demand for self-fulfilment on the one hand and the exposure to market logics on the other. She points out that when the "creatives" want self-realisation, it is in reality about economic and market issues. This, however, is also a point which is made within the theoretical discussion (see discussion in chapter 3). She states about this ambivalence:

> It is a contradiction as long as the creative STILL thinks that he puts himself into his work and through this has to be appealing to others. I mean this very, very artistic thinking, that because I am creating something, I give away a part of myself and this part has to appeal to others, but it's not about recognition, it is about passion but as well about payment and a job [...] We are service providers, we are problem solvers, we would LIKE to be artists but then you can't exist in this society the way you want. (case excerpt 4, appendix 1 p. 56 / interview transcript 4, appendix 2)

Therefore she explicitly criticises the idea of a tight interrelation of work on the one hand and self-realisation, self-expression and identity as well as the search for recognition via work on the other, an interrelation which we could indeed find in the account of other freelancers (chapter 7.1, especially Susanne & Morten). She still demands some kind of subjective involvement like passion, but focuses mainly on economical and professional thinking. Hence, her own way of handling this dilemma – on the more conceptual level – is throwing herself into entrepreneurship and embracing economical strategies and values, and also a certain form of professionalism. However, she is not completely abandoning aspects of self-realisation in her work, as she is speaking about passion and calls her work a vocation *(Berufung)*(see chapter 7.1.). The emphasis on an economical view can be traced in her practices as well, as she was, at the time of the interview, pursuing a new education in the field of business studies at an evening university. The "economical" interpretation of her strategies and practices goes so far that she even sees, for instance, her habit of working free of charge for non-commercial and artistic projects in that manner: She states, that these projects in her portfolio would bring her new and better customers in the future, which is why she will gain economically.

Looking at the example of Nina more generally, we can understand her considerations as struggling with the ambivalence between creativity and self-realisation

claims on the one hand, and market logics on the other, as an ambivalence both typical for the freelancers' work and, following the theoretical literature, also in the context of "new" work norms. The solution Nina choses, namely to strongly buy into the economical or entrepreneurial side, very much characterises her narrative, which means that it plays a role in nearly everything she talks about

Although none of the other interviewees rejects ideas of self-fulfilment as strongly as Nina, others do identify the problem of self-realisation vs market logics as well, but are, however, drawing out different conclusions. Jan, for instance, states several experiences he has made in the graphical and new media branch, that it often

> [...] is not about the quality of the design [...] but about completely other things, about making money, quite simply. And that I find nauseating, and I am as well a little bit disappointed, right, *[about, B.F.]* this superficiality. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

These insights induce Jan (among other things) to take quite drastic action, namely his exit out of the field of work, which is already in preparation at the time of the interview: He is pursuing a new education as an arts' therapist and wants to slowly drop out of the graphical branch in the near future. His decision to do that has, according to the reasons he provides in the interview, everything to do with self-realisation and the problem he has identified in his field of work. The following quote consitutes the end of the interview, being Jan's summary, his final statement about his work:

> The fulfilment somehow disappeared a bit, I have to say. I mean, it's fun to create and so on, but sustainability, as I would call it, is missing a bit. That's one reason, why I now say, alas, off to new shores! [...] Doing presentations and so on is fine as well, is important as well, is having a function as well, but there is the desire for more... for more depth, somehow. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

In his statements we can indeed find hints that Jan really seeks some kind of self-fulfilment within his job, but he has also been confronted with the ambivalence between self-fulfilment and making money. In contrast to Nina, this did not lead him into economical and entrepreneurial thinking, but into changing work fields. In a way we can interpret Jan's account as some kind of "disappointed love-story" - because of the tension between a

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demand for self-fulfilment and market logics, Jan could not find the former in his freelancing job in the graphical branch any more.

The discussion within this chapter shows that the freelancers are struggling with and working on the concepts, self-understandings and identity-related questions in connection with their work. Although they do (in different degrees) expect and desire to realise themselves through their work, this neither means that there are no other important and identity-related issues in their life (e.g. for some, the family and children), nor does it mean that they, because of their wish for self-fulfilment, would uncritically practise happy self-exploitation. Some of them are struggling quite hard with the contradiction between self-fulfilment and market logics they are faced with, and they are drawing conclusions from it, although in very diverse ways. That the conflict or ambivalence *is* there becomes very clear as well. What role are these concepts or ideas playing for the freelancers' work patterns? Does the strong demand for self-fulfilment despite other important realms in their lives lead them to self-exploitation? The latter would be the expectation of the supporters of the "subjugation-hypotheses" (see chapter 3). In the next chapter I am going to discuss the "invasive" power of work, which is indeed expressed by some of the freelancers. I will present the ways the freelancers are confronted with it and are discussing and practically dealing with it.

7.3. "...but I am always working": The "invasive" power of work

Susanne from Copenhagen, one of the freelancers who strongly identifies with her work (see above, chapter 7.1) is very job-focused and practises "workaholic" work patterns.[33] She is 43 years old, divorced and shares the childcare responsibility for her two children (5 and 9 years old) with her ex-husband. Calculating the working hours she herself reports during the interview, her average working hours are around 55-60 hours a week. She describes the timing of her working week as follows: She begins working between 9 – 11 a.m. and continues until 5-7 p.m.. Most of the time she also works in the nights from 8 p.m. - 12 p.m. Additionally she works every second weekend, but only "part-time". Several times a

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33   I have already introduced her in chapter 6.

month she does a night shift, i.e. she works the whole night as well. This usually happens before deadlines. Her big workload, however, seems to pay off financially, as she is by far the best earner amongst the freelancers in this study (with a yearly net income between kr 500 000- 749 999 / €66 666 – 99 999, see as well table 2 and case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116).

After describing her working load she comments on it herself with the words '...but I am always working' (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2) And to the question if she likes the pattern of working during the day as well as in the evenings / nights, she answers:

> I like it. But it is a bad habit, I think. Well, it is difficult for me to find something else to do [...] Well, I could imagine spending time on something else. Well, a private life or something like that. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

We can clearly see how much time work takes up and how central it is in Susanne's life, but we can also spot some ambivalence between Susanne's passion for work on the one hand and on the other hand its invasive power, pushing everything else aside.

Because of the shared custody, Susanne's children live with her every second week (the other time they stay at their father's). This rhythm structures Susanne's working life in several ways: In the weeks without the children, she is nearly working non-stop, but in the weeks with the children,however, she manages to take at least some breaks. She states about the weeks without the children:

> This is a 100% working week. Until now I didn't succeed to put a holiday into them. But I often succeeded in putting holidays into the weeks I HAVE the kids, and then I keep the kindergarten child home and the girl comes home early from school. It's very likely that I anyway sit at the computer, but it [...] means some calm days for the kids, right? And for me. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

Therefore the children are giving her the possibility to limit the "invasive power" of work (that she portrays again). However,it does not mean she is not working. She reports very much a blurring of boundaries between work and life, also in her life with the children:

> [...] Everything is flowing together. That I am standing there, cooking, while I am thinking about a lay-out. And I am talking with a customer on the phone while I am

bathing my son *[B.F, in the original she calls his name]* , right? And making corrections while I sit and watch him, playing with his play-station or something. Well, it is a big mix-up. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

This "mix-up", or blurring of boundaries between work and life, is one very prominent topic in her interview[34], as is the previously mentioned description of the "invasive power" of work. Work in general is thus pictured as something very ambivalent: On the one hand, it is a passion for Susanne and she ties it together with questions of identity (see chapter 7.1.), whilst on the other hand, she portrays it as having a "devouring omnipotence", which she is fighting in order to gain some free space. This becomes clear in the statement above, where she talks about "succeeding" to hold some free days or holidays from time to time. When she is talking about holidays and going on family holidays the power of work becomes apparent as well:

> I have tried to take out one week in summer, where I go away on a trip with the children. But this presupposes that I definitely go away, otherwise I am at work. If the children have holidays, like on Monday, which is a holiday... Such a day always takes me by surprise [...] And most likely I am working [Interviewer: On holidays?] Yes. Well, I am completely missing out on that, if it is holidays or Sundays or whatever. So I am really bad with holidays. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

One other measure (besides e.g. going away on a trip) for fighting this power of work is planning so-called "dead periods" *(døde perioder)*:

> And I am making dead periods [...] Dead periods workwise, where I can't work [...] Like on thursday next week I have a dead day, where there must not happen anything and which is protected. Such days I make, and then often I sleep. (laughs) [...] Well, I am making these dead somethings just to recharge my batteries a bit. (case excerpt 8, appendix 1 p. 116 / interview transcript 8, appendix 2)

Again Susanne describes work and her own passion for it as something very invasive, from which other things, like the "dead days" or "dead periods" must be protected. The metaphor of "dead days" is very telling as regards the centrality of work in her life. Referring to a work-free day as a "dead day" emphasises the omnipotence of work again. Besides that, it is striking how she describes the very act of "protecting" as something very active - it is her herself who has to create these possibilities for protection, it is her own

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34   I will discuss this topic in general and in more detail in chapter 7.4

agency. At the same time, the "invasive power" of work is as well her own inner "monster". It is here the "subjugation" hypothesis seems to have a point: Susanne's passion and demands for self-realisation appear to bring her into a situation of self-exploitation, or at least into a situation in which work does have some "invasive power". However, even the "workaholic" Susanne is pointing out the ambivalence of this situation, and tries to apply some strategies against it. We can quite clearly notice her struggling with the problematic, regardless of if she is successful in the end or not. In chapter 7.2 we could see an example of this struggle on the conceptual level, but here it appears quite distinctly in its "practical" embodiment. Susanne is also not the only one, who is struggling with this ambivalence, a lot of the other freelancers are occupied with it in one way or another. We can e.g. see this in the case of Elena: She applies a strategy she calls "taking yourself seriously" in order to establish some kind of protection. She describes this strategy as such:

> Yes, this is a very simple core feeling, that you should have, about what your work is worth or what you yourself are worth. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97 / interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

For her this strategy of "taking yourself seriously" is not only of practical relevance for her organisation of work and life, but is also a more fundamental approach on how to view work (and life). In order to explain this further, she uses a metaphor:

> Well, it's like growing an own skin in order to become less prone to infections. So, you have to follow and cultivate a few rules, then work is going very, very much better, that comes from the inside as well as from the outside. (case excerpt 7, appendix 1 p. 97 / interview transcript 7, appendix 2)

Thus, the metaphor from the realm of medicine again emphasises the need for protection. Who or what Elena needs protection from does not become completely clear, it seems to be both the "invasive power of work" as well as the boundless demands of customers. Her strategy contains several guidelines or rules, like not being reachable for her customers at weekends, or not working too much for too little money. However, Elena also sees it as a more general mental attitude, to limit the power of work over her life. It includes at least partly a shield against tendencies of self-exploitation, which are tightly connected to the

demand for self-fulfiment. Hence we can see how she, like Susanne, is struggling with the demands of her working life and tries to establish some protection.

In contrast to Susanne, who is pursuing an extensive work load (at least timewise), there are other freelancers in the study who are practising freelancing more or less as a part-time job, namely Lise from Copenhagen and Jan from Berlin. They, like Susanne, have children and are working with this reduced workload in order to have time for family and childcare duties.[35]

Although this difference concerning work organisation ("workaholic" vs. part-time) appears to be related to priorities and concepts, we can also see that the part-timers Lise and Jan both have a partner with a full-time job and / or financial back-ups, and therefore differ concerning the more structural preconditions as well. Susanne and Elena, on the other hand, could hardly choose to work part-time, as Susanne is divorced and therefore has to keep her own household finances running by herself, and Elena is the family bread-winner, at least at the time of the interview (see chapter 6). Thus there is also simply the financial need to pursue a full-time work schedule at a minimum. However, what they are struggling with is not only the pressure to earn money, but the "invasive power" of work as well, which is tightly connected to a demand for self-realisation.

We have seen that in order to limit these pre-empting powers, both Susanne and Elena are applying quite practical strategies (like changing location by going away for holidays, explicitely defining work free days etc.). Therefore we can see that the freelancers' protection is happening in practices and the concrete organisation of everyday work and private life. A closer look at those practices and strategies also reveals that the freelancers can and must organise their working day more or less by themselves. The "invasive" power of work is one aspect Susanne and Elena are trying to fight by work organisation measures. However, it might be the fact that work has to be organised by the freelancers themselves that is contributing to the "invasive" power of work. An insight into the concrete nature of work and life organisation by the freelancers in general appears to be very rewarding. In chapter 3 I discussed considerations of several scholars about the challenges and problems

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35 I am going to discuss the issue of family arrangements further in chapter 8.

"work unbound" is posing to individuals. The freelancers, here, seen as a group of workers especially faced with the characteristics of work unbound, are confronted with "self-programmable" work, i.e. they have to organise their work by themselves, although under the premise of project deadlines set by the customers. Therefore looking precisely at how and for what reasons they are arranging their work and life patterns the way they are appears to be fruitful for an investigation of "new" working life. Interesting topics include for instance how work and family life are synchronised. In the next sections, I am therefore going to present and discuss the freelancers' organisation and management of everyday life.

7.4 Flexible interpretations of "flexibility"

Flexibility is one of the "buzzwords" in the context of "new" work organisation and the transformation of work. In chapter 6 I discussed one dimension of flexibility, namely uncertainty and insecurity. I have referred to the freelancers' "bulimic career patterns", emphasising their relevance for financial insecurity. However, they play a role for the organisational dimension of "flexibility" as well. Gill (2002) mentions on the basis of her findings that concerning flexibility and the organisation of the freelancers' working hours, the deadlines set by the customers and the needs of the projects / jobs were paramount. She writes about her respondents:

> Many projects had extreme tight deadlines (which workers agreed to meet in order to get the contract) and these necessitated intense round-the-clock working for a short period, which might then be followed by several weeks with no (new media) work at all. (Gill 2002, p. 83 – 84)

Thus, we can easily see how the "bulimic career patterns" are relevant for the organisation of everyday life concerning "work" as well as "life" aspects. In order to approach the freelancers' handling of these issues, let us first look at their definition or thoughts on the topic of flexibility.

Despite the quite faint picture Gill (ibid) is drawing, many of the freelancers I have interviewed in my study highlighted flexibility as a positive and attractive dimension of the work form "freelancing". Petra, for instance, a single forty year old freelancer with no children from the Ruhr-area in Germany, calls flexibility the biggest advantage of her

freelancing life. This allows her to organise working life after her own desires. For instance she highly prioritises working at night, which could be a problem in another job, but not as a freelancer. She points out that because of this she has the possibility to, for instance, spontaneously go for a swim in the afternoon. (case excerpt 1, appendix p. 15 / interview transcript 1, appendix 2) Morten, the freelancer based in Århus / Denmark, even states that flexibility is

> one of the reasons , why I am self-employed. It means, that you can sort of design your working day or week yourself. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155 / interview transcript 12, appendix 2)

Marion, the freelancer with the artist identity (see above), emphasises liberating aspects of flexibility as well. (case excerpt 3, appendix 1 p. 43 / interview transcript 3, appendix 2). And Signe, the freelance graphics designer from Western Jutland who works from home, also depicts the positive view of flexibility, mainly pointing out that it enables her to reconcile work and family tasks in a very satisfactory way. (case excerpt 11, appendix 1 p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2)

> However, on the grounds of the freelancers' statements it can also be questioned how big their possibilties for free and self-determined time management are. Petra, for instance, in answering the question of how she in practice organises her working time, limits her previously proclaimed freedom as follows:

> Interviewer: So, do you organise your working time around your private life or the other way round?
> Petra: No, if I do a job, then it is in any case first priority. Anyway. (case excerpt 1, appendix p. 15 / interview transcript 1, appendix 2)

> Morten states that in the days before the project deadlines, he is working around 14 hours a day, a lot of these hours in the nights. He describes these practices as follows:

> Well, if it is stressful, well [...] You do want to deliver things on time, and that anyhow means something as well [...] And if you haven't really scheduled it properly, and that's what you usually haven't done (laughs)... So up to a deadline it's just a little bit hectic. And so it is, well. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155 / interviwe transcript 12, appendix 2)

On the basis of these statements, we can question at least the proclaimed freedom of time management. The projects and their deadlines seem to have more influence on work organisation than e.g. Petra and Morten want to admit. It seems, that Gill's (2002) finding applies as well here. However, there are also other views on the topic of flexibility. Jan seems to refer to a different understanding of flexibility, when he states:

> Jan: Now it is important to me, that I also have spare time, that I can integrate it well, NOW I realise that you reach the limits of THIS field of work, that is problematic, right? But apart from that...
> Interviewer: In what way? [...]
> Jan: Well, you are not as flexible anymore. [...] Generally, if you have a family [...] and you share the tasks, that is household and childcare work, then the flexibility is extremely limited (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Therefore Jan is understanding flexibility differently than the other freelancers cited above. Flexibility in his view means the request by customers for him to be flexible (and not the other way round, like the notion described above, that work is flexible to be scheduled by the freelancers). Therefore his interpretation is more in line with Gill's finding on the paramount importance of the projects' and customers' deadlines. This might be one part of Jan's previously described "disappointed love" experience (see chapter 7.2).

The birth of his daughter and Jan's involvement in his family appears to be a turning point in his evaluation of the branch and his freelance work: Jan frequently mentions the family as another important and guiding topic in his work life. The birth of his daughter 4 years ago in general constitutited an important break for Jan, which is a topic he is taking up several times during the interview. He describes it as follows:

> And since the child is here, it does not work otherwise. It has been a very large break and as well simply a decision. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Jan speaks about a conscious decision at this point. In the course of the interview, it becomes clear, that the decision he took was a refusal to fulfil the extensive flexibility requirements any longer. He states about these demands:

> In this branch it is common, that many customers see you as a mere service provider, who is instantly available everywhere and who can perform a little magic, right? And

who can conjure something fantastic from this complete bullshit they are delivering, right? (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

After the birth of his daughter, however, he argues, that he cannot bear these stressful parts of the "bulimic career patterns" any longer:

> That would be unthinkable now, right? Doesn't work, right? Because not only timewise I wouldn't be able to make it, it's as well THIS stress, I cannot inflict it on my family, it would rub off on them, that's not an option, right? (case excerpt 5, appendix 1 p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

It seems, using Giddens' terminology, that we can see a conflict in systemic requirements in this case, i.e. conflicting demands from the realms of work and family. In this situation Jan changed his work patterns. From the birth of his daughter onwards he reduced his workload drastically[36]. Furthermore, he interprets this conflict *as* a conflict that is problematic as well: He clearly depicts a nearly boundless flexibility demand towards him on the one hand, and the contrary needs of family life on the other.

What can we now conclude from the freelancers' view on flexibility? At the first glance, flexibility (in the sense of a schedule of working hours determined by the freelancers themselves) is very attractive to most of them. It can, however, be questioned how much freedom they actually have in scheduling their working time. Rosalind Gill's (2002) finding that the needs and deadlines of the projects, and hence, the needs of the customers are always sacrosanct and paramount, appears to be confirmed here as well.

By looking at Jan's narrative, we can see a different understanding of flexibility, one that resembles much more Gill's hypothesis of the importance of the deadlines and the customer's wishes. In this context Jan's statements clearly show a conflict between the demands of the family on the one hand and the flexibility required of the freelancers on the other. Jan has then chosen a certain way of handling this conflict.[37] This adds another detail to Jan's "dissapointed love"-story.

In the context of work flexibilisation, the "blurring" of boundaries between work and life has been discussed as one (possible) effect (see chapter 3). In the following section I am

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36 I will discuss his work practices and their change in the next section (chapter 7.8.2)
37 I will discuss this topic further in chapter 8.

going to discuss, how the freelancers are dealing with flexibility and the "challenge" of "work unbound".

7.5 Limiting the "unbinding of work" - or not?

In chapter 3 I discussed considerations about "work unbound" and the blurring of boundaries between work and life. As depicted above, reasons and also problematics of these "blurring" processes can be found in issues concerning time and place on the one hand, and the (at least seeming) absence of given structures in the freelancers' work organisation on the other. However, the projects' deadlines (as we could also see in section 7.4) in any case do provide some sharp limitations to the seemingly individual control over work organisation by the freelancers. In this chapter I want to discuss the freelancers' practices and strategies regarding the blurring of boundaries between work and life within this context of partial self-determination, partial outside pressure (deadlines) and the need for self-organisation.

In her study on project-based new media work in Europe, Rosalind Gill (2002) states, that the greater part of this kind of work is done from home. The freelancers' working places in my study are to some extent mirroring this picture, with eight interviewees working at home and four of them working in rented offices or studios. Some of the "home office freelancers", however, like Lise and Petra are working at the customers' offices as well, when they have the opportunity. Lise does this on a regular basis with her job at the university (see below, chapter 8). Like the majority of Gill's freelancers, Lise really would love to work from a shared office, as she is clearly missing professional contact and networking, but she chose the home office because of her clear priority for her family (see below, chapter 8). The other family-oriented part-timer of this study, Jan, moved his workplace into his home after the birth of his daughter, because this made it easier to combine work and childcare / family duties. (see chapter 8) For Signe, the freelancer with the chronic disease (see chapter 5), the possibility to chose working from home as a freelancer constituted the only opportunity to stay in the labour market in the first place.

Madhi, Ole, Christian and Morten are all working from rented offices, which they share with other freelancers.[38] As assumed in the literature (see chapter 3), having the workplace in the home might foster the blurring of boundaries between work and life. Is the contrary (having an outside office) then used by the freelancers to draw a line?

Madhi insists on working in his office; he even refuses jobs if the customers would require him to work at their locations / offices. Elsewhere (Fersch 2008) I have discussed Madhi's spatial work organisation in detail: I have argued that his firm insistence on his office as the only workplace is rooted in the fact that the shared office with other freelancers is crucial for his freelance career, insofar as it constitutes the network that at least partly provides him with jobs. The colleague-relationships rely informally on a certain solidarity and reciprocity, which Madhi only seems to trust if they are happening face-to-face on a daily basis. A firm line between work and life is a result of this as well. However, this "side-effect" does not play a role at all in Madhi's account. (see ibid and case excerpt 2 appendix 1 p. 21 / interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Christian also draws a clear spatial line such as Madhi; he reports that he is only working at home very seldomly. However, this happens not for the same reasons, as his office mates are from other fields of work (mainly journalism), and thus are not a work-relevant network for him. For Christian, the rented office does indeed seem to be a possibility to structure work and to draw a line between work and life: Work happens within his office and he also has very defined working times, namely from around eight a.m. to six p.m.. Sometimes, usually in the busy times before deadlines, he additionally works in the evenings, which very often happens in his office as well. In his account he also rejects very much demands of all-encompassing availability by customers, as he refuses to do "night shifts" and to take work with him on his holidays. However, he states as well that he can use his financial cushion (see chapter 6) in order to only take jobs that fit his own preferences, e.g. for time organisation. Summing up, Christian appears to be a freelancer who uses a rented office for the purpose of establishing a separation between work and life.

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38 The fact that all freelancers with rented offices in this study are male mirrors the findings of Gill, who found that a larger proportion of women are working from home.

He is doing this in the spatial dimension as well as the temporal dimension. However again, this is not without preconditions, as his savings allow him to choose jobs according to his preferences. (see case excerpt 13, appendix 1 p. 168 / interview transcript 13, appendix 2)

Ole and Morten, the other two freelancers with a rented office space, also do some work from home. For Ole, this is a question of work content: He works in his rented office (a shared office building with other freelancers and micro-firms but with individual office rooms) from around 9 / 9:30 a.m. to 4 / 5 p.m. Additionally he works on average one hour per day at home. This hour is usually spent on essentially creative work, like the development of ideas and on sketches done without the computer. The office hours he spends with more routine and implementation tasks. Ole explains this distribution of work with the fact that at home he is not disturbed. Therefore in Ole's work organisation, the spatial possibilities are used for the distribution of several work tasks, and this is also enhanced by the use / non-use of technology (the computer). Ole's spatial organisation of work thus does not principally aim at the possibility of separating work and life. (see case excerpt 10 appendix 1 p. 136 / interview transcript 10, appendix 2)

Morten, although he shares an office space in the back room of a shop in the center of Århus, is doing a greater share of work from home. This is partly motivated by his wish to spend time with his son and his partner. He describes his usual working day as follows: In the morning, after having taken his son to the day care center at 8:30, he works in his office until sometime in the afternoon, when he goes home to spend some hours with his son and his girlfriend. In the evenings / nights he usually works again for a number of hours from home. As we could see in section 7.4, Morten works a lot of hours before project deadlines, and "night shifts" are very common. Morten evaluates his opportunities to structure his working day himself as very positive and states that it is one of the main reasons for why he chose to work as a freelancer (see above, section 7.4). Morten also explicitly embraces the blurring of boundaries between work and life. He mentions the topic in the context of the meaning of work:

> Interviewer: What does your work mean to you?
> Morten: Well, it does mean a lot.[...] It's a little bit the fact, that it somehow glides into each other [...] That's what I am doing. [...] This boundary is very fluid, the one between work and non-work. So that means really really really a lot. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155 / interview transcript 12, appendix 2)

Thus blurring the boundary between work and life is actually a strong preference for Morten. In his account this blurring has two dimensions: Firstly, a blurring between work and hobby, for instance by also making music (as his hobby) in some jobs:

> If I am making music [...] Well, I don't have so many distinct music jobs, but I have some and it means a lot to me to play music; and so it is as well a part of my job in a way, as I am also earning money with it. (case excerpt 12, appendix 1 p. 155 / interview transcript 12, appendix 2)

Here again we can see the demand for self-realisation. The "blurring" of work and life can be traced concerning work content as well. The second dimension is the one originally applied in this chapter, namely the temporal and spatial "blurring" which Morten is embracing very much as well.

In chapter 6 we could see that Morten and Christian are the ones among the Danish freelancers who are mostly driven by individualistic values and who value self-determination the highest. Interestingly enough, the ways they are using their possibility for "self-programming" their work patterns are very different, and therefore their actual work practices are very diverse: Whereas Christian is drawing a firm line between work and life, Morten is very much "blurring" boundaries between work and life. Morten uses the blurring of work and life, at least partly, to spend time with his family.

As mentioned previously, we can imagine that those freelancers working in a home office have more difficulties limitig the "blurring" of boundaries, if they want to do this. When looking at those among the freelancers in the study working from home (which is the majority), we can see that none of them are separating work and life as firmly as Madhi and Christian do with the help of an external rented office.

Marion, the 43 years old freelancer from Berlin, who does not have any children and is not living with her partner, but in a flat share with two other women where she also works, describes her everyday organisation as very much "blurring the line" between work

and life. She describes her combination of work and life as fluid (*fließend*) several times in the interview. For her, this is part of her self-understanding as an artist (see above, chapter 7.1):

> But because I am an artist as well, this has never been a taboo for me. Well, for me it has always been together. (case excerpt 3, appendix 1 p. 43/ interview transcript 3, appendix 2)

In her case the "blurring" of boundaries happens in all three presented dimensions, namely temporally, spatially and socially. Her working days are usually organised unboundedly timewise, except the two afternoons she works in her steady-side job, a so-called "400-Euro-Job" that ensures her a monthly core income. She really embraces the temporal "blurring", mentioning the possibility to take time off in between, to go out for a coffee if the weather is nice. Spatially she "blurs" the boundaries in a twofold manner, as she works at her own home (1) and at her boyfriend's home (2) as well. She evaluates this very positively:

> For me this is a quite nice form. I have two offices, where I can sleep as well. And well I have a little bit two offices, two homes or something, which is quite funny, but in the long run it doesn't work, it is very very tricky, because you always forget to bring something from A to B. In principle, however, I really like to work where I live, because I can work in a "fluid"[39] way. And if I don't feel like working, I can take to my couch or something, which is something I can't do in an office. (case excerpt 3, appendix 1 p. 43/ interview transcript 3, appendix 2)

The "social" blurring of boundaries is taking place, because her boyfriend and one of her flatmates are working as freelancers as well (although her boyfriend is freelancing in another field, mainly in computing). Therefore she does projects with him as well and talks about professional matters with her flatmate at the kitchen table. Again, she interprets the "blurring" very positively "as an artist". Despite the very positive picture she is drawing, she mentions a negative side to this as well:

> I realise that private life is sometimes missing out a bit. Well, going on a trip somewhere is just not possible, when I am busy. Then I can sometimes go out somewhere for one hour or two, but weekends are often not possible. Going on a trip or something doesn't really work out. (case excerpt 3, appendix 1 p. 43/ interview transcript 3, appendix 2)

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39 In German she uses the term "fließend" (here translated as "fluid").

Therefore although Marion highlights the positive sides of her "work unbound" she also sees a downside to it this. We can again spot an "invasive" dimension of work: When Marion is busy, simple private life is reduced to a minimum. Thus we can suspect a link between work unbound and the invasive potential of work.

For Signe, as mentioned previously (for instance in chapter 6), freelancing constituted the only possibility to stay in the labour market. She narrates her way into freelancing as a kind of conversion: Being thrown in at the deep end, and having difficulties to get used to working alone and not sitting in an office with other people, she now states that in her view it was not only the sole possible work arrangement for her, but also the best. This preference she substantiates not least by the possibility to "blur" the boundaries between work and life:

> Interviewer: So that means that freelancing [...] was your only way into the labour market [...]?
> Signe: Yes, and now I also think, it's the best, right? But it has always irritated me, that you should sit there and stare and wait, if there wasn't anything to do at the workplace. But you had to sit there and wait. It could well have been possible that there was a job coming in, right? Now I can go on and do something else. Sitting in the sun for half an hour, if the weather is like that, right? I can cycle into the city and do the shopping, or whatever, right? [...] And there is no one that frowns on me, because, well, it's me who decides, it's me, who has to carry the can for it, if it comes to that. (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2)

Signe records accordingly that her work organisation actually is quite "blurred", which she evaluates very positively. She states that 'working time is much more fluid, right? You work, when it fits you.' (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2) It is also giving her the possibility to combine work and family in a satisfactory way:

> I have just thought, I don't think I could cope with having children and at the same time have to go out of the door every day and ... If you are at home, then you can as well do something else. So you can hang out washing and and empty the dishwasher, right? So I can go on and do a bit of the houshold work [...] so you don't have to do it in the week-ends. I think, that is great. I think, that is really great. (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2)

Jan, who deliberately relocated his office into his home when his first child was born, organises his working day in a similar manner as Signe:

> Well, I mean, here work is partly not delimitable. [...] You can just now do something in the kitchen etc. and then you are sitting there in the evening instead. Well, I am not able to say, how many hours I work. (case excerpt 5, appendix 1, p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Therefore the blurring of boundaries between work and life is going so far, that Jan is not able to distinguish and count the working hours. Signe states this as well and explains it as follows: 'I would say, I don't divide things that rigidly, like many other people do, as I know.' (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2) Lise, the Danish part-time freelancer works in quite a "blurred" manner as well, mainly adjusted to a good reconciliation of work and family life. Concerning this respect, Lise also evaluates this "unbound" and blurred way of working very positively. She states about this:

> It is also that given that it's easy, that it's me, that I can schedule my time myself. And it's me who says, now the fridge is empty, now I have to go shopping. So I have to work in the evening instead. (case excerpt 9, appendix 1 p. 127 / interview transcript 9, appendix 2)

Thus, we can see that several freelance parents use the possibility to "blur" the boundaries between work and life in order to get a satisfactory combination of work and family life.

However Lise, for example, also points out some downsides of her family-oriented "unbound" part-time freelance model. There are mainly two disadvantages she emphasises: Firstly it is the isolation of working alone from home that she sees as a negative aspect. She admits missing the professional exchange and "sparring" with others. The second point she mentions is the experience of being most productive work-wise when not being disturbed by any other duties (e.g. child care). Thus, a really "unbound" work-life arrangement, as for example Susanne is portraying (see above, section 7.3), is for Lise happening at the expense of productive work. However, because her complete work organisation is oriented towards her family responsibilities, this does not constitute a serious problem for her. In contrast to that, Signe evaluates the "blurred" working patterns as solely positive. She explains that she does not have a problem in "taming" work unbound, unlike for example Susanne. In the following quote, she explains how she takes time off:

> Well, that's what people are asking about most often: "Well, what if you want to take time off?" So I am saying, well then I am just taking it. Then I am saying to myself,

now I am off! Now I don't feel like doing more today! And if someone rings I say, well, I would like, that this waits until tomorrow. Then people usually say, that this is fair enough. If you don't say that, then people just stock up on you, right? So they are just pushing, if you don't refuse. But I don't have any problems to refuse, and I don't have problems to say to myself, now I am taking time off, and now I want to take time off. I don't have any problems with that. (case excerpt 11, appendix 1, p. 145 / interview transcript 11, appendix 2)

Thus we can see that Signe sometimes draws a line and delimits the blurring of boundaries between work and life in order to have spare time. Apparently this has to be signalled clearly to the outside, i.e. the customers, which is a point Elena states as well. (see section 7.3) In Signe's account, unlike for others, such as Susanne, Elena and Nina, this seems to be no problem.

Nina, who also works in quite "blurred" patterns and who in general also embraces them, describes yet another problematic of "blurred" working patterns in the context of difficulties in really taking time off. She describes it as a mental problem, a problem of not being able to not think about work. She explains the problem with an example of her last holiday:

I realised it last year. With my boyfriend I was on holiday, we were in Australia for four weeks and we both shot a lot of digital photos. And we could see then, after three of four weeks we were relaxed. You could really see it, o.k. now we really got into the country, now we forgot back home or were far away. It is getting on my nerves in the sense, that I like to put myself under pressure, but I as well like to relax. But that's something that I should learn over time, this chilling out. So, I am getting on my nerves with my own demands. (case excerpt 4, appendix 1 p. 56/ interview transcript 4, appendix 2)

We can therefore see that Nina has a problem of drawing a line "in her head" when she wants to take time off.

Concerning the question of the blurring boundary between work and life, we can see different patterns amongst the freelancers of this study: Some are limiting it, others are actively enforcing it. Indeed it seems a way to reconcile work and family. However, a lot of the interviewed freelancers who do not have children work in a blurred way as well. We can observe the tendency that blurred boundaries between work and life contribute to the

"invasive power" of work. However, the freelancers' evaluations of their work organisation ("blurred" or not) vary greatly as well.

7.6 The freelancers' organisation of work: Common traits and diversity

Following and comparing the freelancers' accounts on topics like self-realisation and the organisation of work, we can identify at least one distinct common trait: The demands of and wish for self-realisation or self-fulfilment could be found consistently in all of the narratives, although in diverse and more or less strong ways. This, however, comes as no surprise, given the field and content of the freelancers' work. What became clear as well, is that the freelancers, here seen as extreme cases for individuals in "new" work contexts, are faced with the tendency towards and the danger of dynamics of self-exploitation, as we could see especially in the case of Susanne. We can clearly see the power of such dynamics like the "invasiveness of work". The freelancers' passion for their work and their self-fulfilment wishes appear to be a double-edged sword, an ambivalence to be struggled with. Nevertheless the analysis of the freelancer cases within this study shows clearly that the freelancers are reflecting, balancing and struggling with this ambivalence. They are putting the demands from the realm of their working life in relation with other important dimensions and "systemic requirements" of their lives. The solutions the individuals are drawing on and the strategies they are applying depend on their priorities and concepts, but as well on their situative, "structural" pre-conditions (e.g. being the family-breadwinner).

Although flexibility appears to be one of the most attractive characteristics of freelance work, we can trace its limits as well, as the customers' deadlines appear to be sacrosanct and can lead to "bulimic career patterns". However, there are at least parts of the work organisation which the freelancers can determine flexibly themselves. Concerning the organisation of everyday life and the topic of work-unbound, we can see the emergence of very diverse patterns. There are part-timers as well as "workaholics". Some freelancers are "blurring" the line between work and life quite extensively, others are trying to draw a line. The "blurring" is evaluated as overly positive and some use it for a satisfactory

combination of work and family life.[40] However, we can also see that a blurred boundary between work and life can contribute to the "invasive power" of work. Again we can see that the specific individual work and life arrangements of the freelancers are depending on situative preconditions as well.

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40 In the next chapter (chapter 8) I am going to discuss the topic of freelance family arrangements in more detail.

8. Freelance family arrangements

Within this chapter I want to shed light on the freelancers' family life, or more precisely, on how the freelancers arrange their family life in the context of the specificities of their work. The discussion in chapter 7 already indicates that family arrangements are a very interesting topic in the context of freelancing, and possibly also some kind of "acid test" for freelancing as a work form. In the context of this study, family arrangements appear to be especially relevant for two reasons: Firstly, the work-family balance appears to be a field where the freelancers are confronted with conflicting "systemic requirements" which they have to deal with or handle in one way or another, thus constituting an interesting topic in the context of the analysis of new work patterns. Certainly these conflicting "systemic requirements" have been posing problems and challenges to individuals in "old" work relations as well. However, because the freelancers' work organisation is to a certain degree "self-programmable", they might have other possibilities to combine the two realms as well as other challenges to meet. In chapter 7 we could also see that the better reconciliation of work and family life is indeed a reason the freelancers themselves are mentioning as one of the advantages of the work form of freelancing. Secondly, family policy and related norms and concepts differ very much in the two countries compared in this study. Therefore a look at the freelancers' family organisation appears to be rewarding from a comparative perspective as well.

One aspect that immediately catches the attention when looking comparatively at family issues is that most of the Danish interviewees in this study have children and most of the German interviewees do not. Taking into account that the majority of the Danish freelancers are on average several years younger than their German counterparts in this study (with the exception of Ole, who at 49 is the oldest freelancer in this study), we can also quite firmly rule out the argument that it is related to age bias.

Furthermore,at the interview stage, it already turned out to be difficult to recruit a female freelancer with children in Germany. In the final freelancer sample of this study, there are three freelancers based in Germany with children (2 male, 1 female) and four

without (3 female, 1 male), while five of the Danish freelancers do have children (3 female, 2 male) and only one does not (1 male). No claims for representativity are made with this sample. However it might still mirror the over-all picture, as in Denmark the total fertility rate[41] in 2007 was 1.8, whereas in Germany it was 1.4 (UNICEF 2009). Whether or not the sample in this study reflects the over-all situation in Germany and Denmark and / or the situation amongst freelancers in the two countries can not be clarified here.

We can only speculate about possible reasons for this difference. Some authors (e.g. Gottfried & O'Reilly 2002, Rüling & Kastner 2007) explain the low German fertility rates at least partly with the poor possibilities to combine work and family in the conservative welfare state's male breadwinner regime (see also chapter 4). However, in chapter 4 we saw as well that there has recently been a paradigm change/shift in German family policy. The proclaimed changes were certainly not implemented at the time the empirical material of this study has been collected.

The findings of this study presented in chapter 6, which included the appearance of a strong feeling of insecurity and anxiety among the German freelancers and its near absence among the Danish freelancers, might provide a possible pattern of explanation. Some authors (e.g. Düntgen & Diewald 2008, Kreyenfeld 2008) discuss and analyse the question of to what extent (economic) insecurity stemming from flexibilised work organisation affects individuals in their family planning in Germany, and they are indeed seeing a relation between "atypical" working conditions and a delayed or suspended family planning. The fact that the German freelancers, in contrast to the Danish ones, in general expressed great feelings of insecurity and anxiety (chapter 6) might also serve as a possible explanation for the difference along country lines regarding having children or not. However, these considerations are only hypothetical and cannot be analysed within the framework of this study.

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41 The numbers presented here are the total fertility rates for the two respective countries, which aim to depict the the average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime, if she were to experience the exact current age-specific fertility rates through her lifetime, and (2) she were to survive from birth through the end of her reproductive life.

Therefore in this chapter I will, relying on the empirical material of this study, present the family organisation and arrangements of those freelancers in the study who have children in more detail. Furthermore I am going to discuss the findings in the context of the research literature and the comparative framework of this study.

8.1. "Workalism" vs Part-Time Freelancing

In chapter 7 I already discussed Susanne's "workaholic" work patterns in the context of the "invasive" power of work. As described, Susanne has a long working week with 55 – 60 hours per week. This makes her the freelance parent in the study working the longest hours, followed by Elena with 55 weekly hours on average. In chapter 7 I already remarked, that another commonality between them is that they are the family's breadwinner. In the case of Susanne, we could also see that the children were giving her reasons to make work breaks and to help her structure her working day. In contrast to these two more-than-full time freelancers, there are also two parents in the study practising freelancing with reduced hours, which means having a part-time schedule.

In chapter 6 and 7 I have mentioned that Jan practises freelancing like a part-time job. As it became clear previously, he took the decision to do so at the time of the birth of his first child four years ago. At the time of the interview his wife was expecting their second child. Before the birth of Jan's first child he had been renting out an office space at a design agency, but he then moved his work place to his home. He accounts for this move through the demands of the family, as he can save time for the family, and he can do household tasks in between his freelance work as well.[42] He also structures his working time at least partly after the needs of the family and especially his daughter:

> In the morning I firstly take my daughter to the nursery, and then I am back at around 9 a.m., I eat a little breakfast, and then I begin. [...] On Mondays and Fridays the nursery is open until 4 p.m., otherwise until 5 p.m., and then I pick her up. [...] Then my wife comes home around half past five and if there is nothing *[no work, B.F.]* then I continue looking after her, and then we are on the playground or something. And if there still is something *[work, B.F.]*, then my wife takes over, while I continue working. Then I have the evenings and sometimes the weekends, well, that's quite flexible then. And sometimes, if there are really extreme things, then my wife has to take my

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42 see also below

daughter to the nursery, if there is no other way, if there are meetings, certain appointments and so on, right? But that is my little time frame... (case excerpt 5, appendix 1, p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Thus, we can see that his childcare and household duties play a role in structuring his working life. From this description of his temporal organisation of work, however, we can ask ourselves if he really is working part-time, or if it is a more or less normal full-time working week he is pursuing. Jan, however, reports later on, that he is also doing a great deal of the household work (like cleaning) within the above named working hours.[43]

Another hint, which gives us reasons to interpret his work patterns as part-time work is that after the birth of his daughter he observed a slump in his turnover-volume, becoming half as big as it was before. His yearly freelance income at the time of the interview was under € 13 000 / kr 97 5000 (before and after tax), which is one of the lowest amongst the interviewees in this study. Therefore the before-after comparison especially and the low income strengthen the assumption that he is practising some kind of part-time (with more or less hours) work.

The low freelance income, especially in comparison with his statement that it was twice as large before the birth of his daughter and the start of his strong family commitment, shows us as well that the decision to prioritise family life is not without consequences for his freelance career. He states:

> At this point it's really contradictory *[in the context of stressful and "last minute jobs", B.F.]*, you just have to cut back. Those are the jobs that now are more or less missing and that's why I am now earning considerably less than before, right? (case excerpt 5, appendix 1, p. 76 / interview transcript 5, appendix 2)

Amongst the freelancers interviewed, there is another who is practising freelancing part-time, namely Lise from Copenhagen, Denmark. She is an architecture graduate, working in the fields of logo and print design. She is 35 years old and has two children and is living together with them and her husband. Being the supplementary earner and working as a part-time freelancer is a very prominent topic in her narrative: This self-understanding influences a lot of her decisions, practices and strategies in her freelance

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43 I will discuss work practices like this more detailed in the next chapter (chapter 7.8.2)

working life. She names the possibility to be a "part-timer" as one reason why she actually started freelancing. Her part-time schedule is also the reason why she at several times in the interview presents herself as not being "seriously" self-employed.

The first one and a half years of freelancing she received a supplementary benefit *(supplerende dagpenge)* from the unemployment insurance, which was also why it was easy for her to practise freelancing in this way. She depicts this model as a conscious, joint choice by herself and her husband, when they had children:

> And so it is a question of priorities, as we have small children. And it is not my income, it should stand and fall with. [...] This brought along [...] that he could work unhindered, so that if we have ill children, it is me who is in charge of it. So I didn't accept more jobs, only to an amount that I could see, there is a buffer zone as regards time. (case excerpt 9, appendix 1, p. 127 / interview transcript 9, appendix 2)

Her working day is, like Jan's, structured by the day-care times of her children. Her main work hours are from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.. Usually before deadlines she works additionally on three or four evenings for two or three hours. She has one regular job at the university she graduated from, filling seven hours a week. These seven hours she spends at the university, either on one day or dividing them to two mornings. From this description of her work organisation and her working hours, we can conclude, that she is working part-time with less hours than Jan. However, she falls in the same income bracket as Jan does, i.e. having a yearly freelance income below €13 000/ kr97 5000 (before and after tax).

Lise is very content with her reconciliation of work and family life, however, she is very aware that this is the case because she arranges it to be so:

> My main priority has been, that at three o'clock it was over, because now it's children's time. (case excerpt 9, appendix 1, p. 127 / interview transcript 9, appendix 2)

As mentioned above, being a part-time freelancer with emphasis on childcare duties is of importance to a lot of her decisions and practices in working life in general. For instance, her motivation to work is not primarily based on the goal of earning money. She talks about this in the context of her plan for the near future to somehow get into full-time work (either as a full-time freelancer or as a full-time employee):

Well, so I am forced to have a completely different attitude towards my income. As I have to work in order to earn money. Now, I am working because it's fun. [...] Very often, I think, that my motivation stems from being asked. [...] That there is someone, who would like to have me for a job. (case excerpt 9, appendix 1, p. 127 / interview transcript 9, appendix 2)

Thus we can see that being the supplementary earner also contains a privilege, namely being free from the need to earn enough for a living and thus being able to work mainly for fun. However, Lise describes the experience as well that this prioritisation of childcare duties and her choice of being part-time has not served her career:

I have now tried to find a job. And I can really well see, that the fact, that I have taken out these years and said, I work as a self-employed on the back-burner, hasn't exactly spangled my CV. Well, I am not the one that is invited to a job interview, unless there are seven others, which are insisting and saying, it's her we should have.[...] Well, I am not the first choice. I don't know if it smells too much like [...] I have been a housewife, in the context of my work field. (case excerpt 9, appendix 1, p. 127 / interview transcript 9, appendix 2)

As we have seen in the case of Jan as well, the choice of being part-time seems to be not without consequences. The financial consequences, thematised in Jan's interview, are not as relevant to Lise because of her supplementary-earner-privilege of not being reliant on the earnings. However, it might be the case that her part-time job on the more symbolic level has negative consequences for her future career. In any case she suspects the latter.

On the basis of the cases of Lise and Jan, we can also see that there are not only consequences, but preconditions as well for being able to chose to be a part-time freelancer: In chapter 6 I pointed out, that Jan does not only have a wife, who is working full-time and earning a wage that is enough for financing the everyday of their family, but that he additionally has a quite luxurious financial cushion, which enables him to waive his previous, better income. The condition of having a financial cushion of some sort (savings and / or partner with a good wage) clearly applies in the case of Lise as well. It became very clear in her interview that in the preceding years her family has in no way been dependent on her income.

Comparing the two part-timers of this study, we can also identify an interesting difference between the two, namely concerning the evaluation of their part-time freelance

model: Lise, although stating that part-time freelancing was her choice and emphasising several advantages of the part-time model, in general evaluates it more negatively, e.g. by portraying it several times as a non-serious version of self-employment, thereby devaluing it herself. (see above) Jan is clearly not doing that, and instead he is blaming the branch and the customers for their flexibility demands, which are in his view very often non-compatible with childcare responsibilities. Additionally he is emphasising the importance of and the fulfilment stemming from childcare and household tasks (see above)

Interestingly enough this is a difference, Henninger and Gottschall (2007) have found between male and female part-time freelancers in Germany as well: The female part-timers were in general more negative about their work-family arrangement than the male part-timers, who appraise it as a win-win situation. Henninger and Gottschall conclude that freelance mothers, being the supplementary, part-time earners,continue to struggle with expectations arising from a traditional gender role, for men, this arrangement seems instead to be a result of personal choice and can be changed, if necessary. (ibid, p. 65)

Hennninger & Gottschall's study on freelancers in the German media industry reveals as well that Jan is not the only male part-time freelancer in Germany: Within the qualitative part of their study, in which they interviewed 39 freelancers in the fields of journalism, design and software development, focussing among other things on their family arrangements, they found five families with children with a female breadwinner and male part-time worker and care-giver. Drawing on a typology of family forms in combination with priorities in work and family life by Rüling at al (2004), they distinguish between "structurally equal" partnerships, i.e. partnerships in which both partners focus on work or family or a combination of both, and "structurally specified" partnerships, i.e. partnerships in which the two partners differ in the priorities, therefore they are either living in a traditional male breadwinner/ female caretaker or a female breadwinner / male caretaker family. The latter they call a "reversed gender role arrangement". Their findings indicate that freelancers without children mainly live in "structurally equal" partnerships, whereas amongst those with children, "structurally different" partnerships are most wide-spread. However, this does not mean anymore that those are male-breadwinner families:

It is within these arrangements that we can observe a further change: among this group, partnerships based on traditional as well as on reversed gender roles are evenly represented. Thus, in our sample, gender arrangements based on reversed gender roles are emerging as a less traditional pattern, with men taking over care responsibilities. On the one hand, this arrangement fits with the German institutional setting, characterized by a limited provision of (affordable) childcare and by half-day schooling, that promotes such a specialization; on the other hand, it contradicts the roles that gendered norms would predict for men and women. (Henninger & Gottschall 2007, p. 66 & 67)

Thus, in the context of the German framework, we could imagine that the freelancing work form could promote such a reversed gender role family arrangement, taking into account the "bulimic career patterns" of freelance fathers and the financial importance of a second, steady income. However, in the case of Jan, we could at least partly question the hypothesis posed in the citation above, that it is the limited provision of day care, i.e. the German "institutional" setting, that is responsible for his and his family's decision to opt for a "reversed gender role" model, as he reports to have found more or less full-time day-care for his daughter since she was around one year old. I would rather argue that it has (at least partly) something to do with ideological or normative understandings, which are certainly connected with the institutional setting. I will elaborate further on that thought in the next section (chapter 8.2.)

Of course, we have to take into account that Lise's part-time work is taking place in a quite different context, namely in the Danish institutional context, that supports a dual-earner model. The dual-earner model is also rooted on a normative level. (see discussion in chapter 4) Therefore although the difference in evaluation between male and female part-time freelancers can be found in Henninger's and Gottschall's study in Germany as well, we could suspect that Lise's own devaluation of the part-timer / care taker model has to be related to and understood in the context of a dual-earner norm. Taking the different institutional and the related normative context into account, it is, however, quite striking that Henninger's and Gottschall's German female freelance part-timers are also evaluating their situation similarly negatively.[44]

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44 Given the different frameworks, we might have suspected that being a female part-timer with emphasis on reconciliation of work and family life might be more legitimate in Germany.

As we can see in this chapter, there are certain freelancers that organise their work as a kind of part-time pattern, with an emphasis on combining it with childcare duties. However, there are also other modes of work and family organisation, as we could see especially in the cases of Susanne and Elena. Their cases in comparison with the part-timers Jan and Lise also show that the choice of the work and family arrangement, which the freelancers can indeed choose more freely than other people, is not only related to the individual's priorities and wishes, but also to the conditions the individuals are faced with: Not only do Jan and Lise show a certain priority for family, but they can also financially and "infra structurally" afford to work a reduced schedule. And although at least Susanne could well afford to work fewer hours (as the best earner in the study), which would be more difficult for Elena, the family breadwinner with a quite meagre income (see chapter 6), choosing a part-time or work pattern with drastictly reduced hours would be hardly possible for either of them.

We can see a variety of work / family arrangements among the freelancers in this study, however, the differences are not running along country lines. We could identify one part-timer in Denmark, one in Germany, and one freelance mother with long hours in Denmark as well as one in Germany. In the next section I will focus on a topic that is usually referred to as one of the biggest differences concerning family and gender policy between the two countries, namely the question of day-care. I will take a closer look at how the freelance parents in the study are making use of day-care outside the home and also how they are presenting and talking about the topic.

8.2. "...she is a day-care child"

When looking at the topic of child day-care, we can find a striking commonality among all of the freelance parents in this study – all of their children are or have been in one or another form of public day-care. Again, in light of the differences in the institutional backgrounds or frameworks, and especially given the gap in day-care infrastructure in Germany, that could come as a surprise. Here again we have to take a possible bias of the study's sample into account: With the work status as the main selection criterion (i.e. only

"actively" working freelancers), former freelancers now acting as a full-time housekeeper were excluded. The fact that it was difficult to find a freelance mother in Germany might also indicate that this could be the case for many / some female freelancers. Another possible bias could lie in the fact that the the majority of the interviewees (with the exception of Signe), and all of the interviewees in Germany, are based in big cities, where in the case of Germany a better day-care infrastructure is to be found. (for a discussion on day-care infrastructure see chapter 4) Again, these questions transcend the limits of this study.

Looking at the cases of freelance parents in this study, the day-care practices of the freelancers look fairly similar in Denmark and Germany: Not only have been / are all of the children in day-care, they also started day-care roughly around the same age, that is when the children were around one year old, and all of them started in day-care before their second birthday. Therefore we can not, as in the case of family arrangements, trace severe differences along country lines.

However, there is a difference in how the interviewees talk about their day-care practices: The Danish freelancers do not actually really talk about it, they just matter-of-factly state that their children are in day-care. They only talk about it insofar as it concerns their everyday work and life organisation. This seems to support the assumption of, e.g. Gulløv (2008), that day-care is a part of the "normal Danish childhood." The German freelancers, quite in contrast, use more time to talk about the fact that their children are in day-care institutions. Madhi, for instance, states that his daughter is "a day-care child" (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21/ interview transcript 2, appendix 2). He defines what this means later on in the context of picking her up from the after-school care:

> She actually doesn't want to leave, well she likes it to be there, because of the razzmatazz *[with, B.F.]* all the others kids... (case excerpt 2, appendix 1, p. 21/ interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Thus Madhi highlights how much his daughter likes to be in day care, and that being a real "day-care child" means that she really enjoys being there. The other father, Jan, talks at length about how he and his wife found the day-care center their daughter is in:

> We were looking for it a VERY long time [...] Well, we visited 10 day-care centers and then we found this parents' cooperative, great child-staff ratio, and there you can give your child confidently. Well really, there is nothing better, I am super happy [...] (case excerpt 5, appendix 1, p.76 / interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Later on he exemplifies the proclaimed high quality of the day-care center further. He states that because it is a parents' cooperative, he and his wife are contributing as well work-wise at the day care center. He estimates the temporal input in that kind of work to be around 14 hours per month:

> That's a real work commitment in a sense, but it is of course GREAT, because it is a qualitatively really different [...] kindergarten. [...] Teamwork as well. I know WHAT happens, I can influence it to some extent, and that is important for me.[...] Well I couldn't just give my child somewhere... (case excerpt 5, appendix 1, p.76 / interview transcript 2, appendix 2)

Thus we can identify a "rhetorical" difference between the Danish and the German freelance parents at that point: Whereas the Danish freelancers matter-of-factly state the "normal" detail that the child is in day-care, the German freelancers seem to have the need to talk more about this fact. Their accounts appear to be an attempt to legitimise their decision to put their child in childcare, although by using different argumentation: While Madhi emphasises his daughter's fondness of the childcare center, Jan elaborates on the quality of day-care and his own possibilities to influence it.

Therefore whilst having children in day care in Denmark appears to be very much the norm in the Danish accounts, this does not seem to be the case for the German interviewees. The freelancers Madhi and Jan, belonging to the group of German parents who made use of day-care facilities from early on, seem to sense the need to legitimate this decision unrequested. This finding is related to the normative dimension of the childcare situation in Germany: Fragmentation can be found not only on the level of family policies (see chapter 4 and Bothfeld 2008), but also on the normative level in the re-unified Germany. The topic of day-care has long been and still is an ideological "battleground" in (Western) Germany (e.g. Villa & Thiessen 2008). As we could see in chapter 4 as well the situation was very different in the GDR, where making use of childcare facilities for young children was normal. Consequently, in today's Germany, we can find ambivalent and

conflicting norms about childhood and day-care, as well as a fragmented landscape in the field of family policy. The attempts by Madhi and Jan to legitimise their choices in favour of day-care are to be understood in that context.

In contrast to that, in Denmark childcare is well rooted normatively. As we could see in chapter 4, in Denmark policies, regulations and norms are very consistent concerning this topic. Consequently the fact that their children are in childcare is quite normal for the interviewees: They do not need to talk about it at length.

8.3. Freelance parents in Denmark and Germany: Differences and Similarities

Shedding light on the family arrangements and the everyday management of the freelance parents of this study has indeed revealed differences and similarities in general and along country lines, which, however, might have a different shape than previously expected.

When looking at the practices and arrangements we can identify part-time freelance parents as well as more-than-full-time ones in both countries. In line with the findings of a study by Henninger & Gottschall (2007), the female part-timer (Lise) is evaluating her part-time practice more negatively than her male counterpart (Jan). Here traditional gender norms and expectations may play a role, as well as the fact that Lise is a part-timer in a country (Denmark) where the dual-earner model is rooted institutionally and normatively. By drawing on Henninger & Gottschall's (2007) findings we could see that the "reversed gender role" family model which Jan and his family are practising is not a special case. It can be suspected that the institutional and normative framework in Germany is facilitating such a model if the father is a freelancer. Concerning day-care, the practices of the freelance parents are more or less similar in general. Differences could be found in the discursive realm, in the way the interviewees are talking about day-care. The German parents seem to be faced with the need to legitimise their choice of (early) childcare for the children, whereas for the Danes it was normal and there was no need for further discussion.

9. Conclusions

Within this research project I am exploring the life and work of a group of workers, which is highly exposed to "new" work organisation, namely freelancers in the (new) media branch. Following on from the insight that national frameworks (like welfare state and labour market regulations) are shaping the concrete forms of "redrawn"[45] work and its consequences for the individuals (see e.g. Gottschall & Wolf 2007), I designed the project as a comparative one. The two countries which form the frame of the comparison are Denmark and Germany, whilst it is the narratives of the individual freelancers that are compared. As an overall theoretical frame I chose Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984), as it enables a view on societal transformation processes (like the transformation of work) with all their asynchronities and ambivalences. With structuration theory it is possible to view the transformation of work as the coexistence of the emergence of new patterns and the persistence of "old" structures and institutions side-by-side. This abstract framework has been supplemented by an in-depth description of the welfare state and labour market "landscapes" of the two countries concerned, with a special focus on those parts relevant for freelancers.

Applying a hermeneutic approach towards epistemology, methodology and methods, I have been looking for the differences and similarities in the handling of work and life by the freelancers in Denmark and Germany. The freelancers are seen as a kind of extreme case for "re-drawn" work organisation in this study, as their work form is characterised by flexibility and market-dependency in a distinct way. Previously I mentioned that the specific national frameworks do shape the consequences of the transformation of work for individuals. This also means that the freelancers' possibilities and options of how to handle "re-drawn" work are formed by their varying national contexts. Therefore I have been

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45 In chapter 3 I have argued in favour of using the term "re-drawn" work instead of others, like "de-limited work" or "work unbound" in order to strenghten one basic assumption of this research project: Namely that the current transformation of work does not mean that working conditions become "free-floating" but rather, that they are characterised by the coexistence of old and new systemic, structural and normative ties. (see chapter 3 above)

looking for the differences and similarities in the ways the freelancers are handling their working life.

Concluding the question of differences and similarities, the picture indeed appears to be mixed. The current transformation of work, here seen from the perspective of the "individual consequences", seems to be characterised by asynchronities and ambivalences as well as by old and new institutional bindings. In this thesis I have chosen three different topics, all of which present challenges for the freelancers, that are in one way or another connected to their specific working conditions. Therefore they can serve as examples for the investigation of the freelancers' handling of their work and life. These topics are (1) (in-) security and (un-)certainty, (2) work organisation and (3) family arrangements. The following table gives an overview of the findings as regards the question of differences and similarities:

Topic	Similarities & Differences along country lines
(In-)security and (un-)certainty	- *Differences:* role and relevance of (in-)security and (un-)certainty in the interviewees' narratives - dominant in German interviews, of much less importance and gravity in the Danish interviews ► contextualisation in different frameworks & with the help of the concept of trust
	- *Similarities:* Importance of "Pooling-of-income" / second income in the household in the context of "bulimic career patterns" traceable in both countries
Work organisation	- *Similarities:* - High self-realisation demands - Tendency towards self-exploitation & "invasive power" of work - Blurring of work and life ► diversity of individual patterns of handling the tendency towards self-exploitation, "invasive power" of work & blurring of work and life
Family arrangements	- *Similarities:* - day-care practices - work – family balance (diverse, part-timers and "workaholics" in both countries)
	- *Differences* - "rhetorical" :long attempts to legitimise institutional day-care in the German narratives, short matter-of-factly stating in Danish narratives ► contextualisation in different frameworks, inconsistency vs consistency in normative and institutional backgrounds

Table 5: Conclusions on differences and similarities

In what follows I want to sum up the findings, following the structure of the table:

9.1. (In-)security and (un-)certainty

Concerning the role and relevance of the topic of insecurity, a remarkable difference along country lines could be found in the narratives of the interviewees. While the topic was of great importance and gravity for the German freelancers, the Danish freelancers did not assign it as much gravity. These differences could be traced by taking into account the interview interaction, the structure of the interviewees narratives, as well as content-wise. I

have been arguing that within the freelancers' work and life, two dimensions of insecurity can be found: The first one is connected to the unsteady income of the freelancers and refers to the financing of their everyday life, the second one is related to the question of social risks and the "social security framework" of the freelancers.

Concerning the first dimension (the financing of everyday life), findings from other research projects in the field (see e.g. Gottschall & Kroos 2003) could be supported: The "pooling-of-incomes" within the family, or rather the existence of a second (preferably steady) income, appeared to be important in the handling of this aspect of insecurity amongst the freelancers in this study in general (*similarities*).

We could find differences along country lines as regards the second dimension (the one of "social security"): As mentioned above, the German freelancers' narratives are strongly characterised by insecurity and a connected anxiety, whilst the Danish freelancers appear to be quite "cool" when confronted with questions on this topic. I have contextualised these findings in the different societal frameworks (mainly the different welfare state programmes) with the help of the concept of trust. The latter served as one approach to the relation between structure and agency, which in this context refers to the relation between welfare state institutions on the one hand and individuals' attitudes, practices and agency on the other. I proposed different levels of trust in connection to different welfare states as an adequate theoretical context for an (at least partial) understanding of the empirical findings concerning the topic of (in-)security and (un-)certainty.

9.2. Work Organisation

In the table above I have assigned the topic work organisation the label *similarities.* This might be misleading, as the findings show that the freelancers' handling of their work life in this thematic field is first and foremost characterised by individual differences. What I want to express with this label is the fact that concerning work organisation and norms the Danish and the German freelancers were faced with similar challenges. All of them expressed demands for self-realisation and all of them were confronted with the "blurring"

of work and life. In the findings we could trace a tendency towards an "invasive" power of work and thus towards self-exploitation as well. The interviewees' "answers" to these conditions and dilemmas, however, were diverse. All of them seemed to struggle with, or at least work on, these challenges in one way or another. The concrete practices seemed to depend on other preconditions (e.g. the family or household, financial possibilities etc.), perceptions and preferences. These practices were diverse, often they involved practical limitations of the "unbound demands" (e.g. Susanne's "dead days", Elena's "growing of an own skin", Christian's spatial practices etc.), and sometimes they also included conceptual limitations (see e.g. Nina and Jan).

9.3. Family arrangements

Concerning the family arrangements of the freelancers with children, the findings of the study again show diverse patterns – we could find parents practising freelancing part-time as well as parents with a huge (more-than-full-time) workload in both countries. Many parents in both countries used the possibility of "blurring" the boundary between work and life in order to reconcile work and life. The interviewees in both countries used day-care institutions for their children as well. I assigned these findings the label *similarities* in the table above.

However, in the context of the question of institutional day-care, a difference along country lines could be found. This is not at all surprising, given the vastly different institutional and normative contexts in the two countries. The difference was found on the "rhetorical level" - the German interviewees' accounts on that topic were characterised by legitimation attempts, whereas the Danish interviewees just referred to a "normality". Within the context of the two different frameworks (consistency vs. inconsistency in the field of family policy, institutional infrastructure and norms on family, work and gender) this difference appears to be very understandable. Within the conservative, "male-breadwinner-regime under revision" in Germany, a "reversed gender role" family model became visible, at least in the context of freelance fathers. (see as well Henninger & Gottschall 2007).

9.4 Discussion and new questions

In this chapter I want to discuss the findings of the research project, their contribution to the empirical and theoretical literature in the field and the problems and questions they eventually pose.

First of all, the research findings contribute to an investigation of the freelancing work form and the working conditions in the graphical field / (new) media branch in the two countries in question. The study contributes with insights on the specific logics and working conditions of this extremely flexibilised and market-dependent work form, and especially its consequences for the individual. Interesting new questions emerge in the face of the changed economic conditions. As mentioned in chapter 6, I collected the empirical material for this research project before the world-wide financial and economic crisis in 2008 and the subsequent ongoing economic recession. Therefore the patterns found show only the situation at a specific point in time, namely in a period of economic upswing. Since then the market conditions for the freelancers might have changed enormously. What does this development mean for the sustainability of the work-form "freelancing"? Given their strong market-dependency, it could be very likely that the freelancers were among the first to be hit by the consequences of the recession - how would they cope with and handle the intensified competition for fewer jobs? This would be especially interesting in the case of the Danish freelancers, as in their case this research project could only capture a picture in times of an outstanding economic boom. The changed conditions might as well change the "cool" attitude that was found towards questions of (in-)security.

The findings and conclusions of this project can also contribute to the field of (comparative) welfare state research. Especially the findings on the individual perception of insecurity (see chapter 6) and the accounts of the interviewees on having their children in institutional day-care can show that the relationship between welfare state and labour market structures, societal discourses and norms on the one hand, and the perceptions and practices of individuals on the other hand, is complex and cannot be adequately understood only by the assumption of a "rational" behaviour of individuals within their

specific welfare state frameworks. Other elements are apparently at play here as well. Concerning the "rhetorical" differences between the way the interviewees talked about institutional day-care, the role and relevance of societal discourses and norms has to be emphasised. The fact that a difference between the Danish and German freelancer parents' narratives could not be found concerning the practices themselves, but in they way they were talking about them, can only become understandable if we are taking discourses and norms into account as well. In the context of the discursive and normative framework in Germany, which is characterised by inconsistencies and ambivalences regarding the question of how a family should be organised and what constitutes a good childhood, the legitimation attempts of the German interviewees become understandable. This is also the case when looking at the Danish interviewees' "matter-of-fact" statements – institutional day-care appears to be normal in Denmark, so no further explanations or accounts seemed to be necessary.

The "coolness" found in the Danish freelancers concerning their old age security lets us assume as well that something other than rational reasoning might be involved: In that context I have proposed the concept of trust in chapter 5 and 6 as one element that can help us to understand the relationship between welfare state and labour market structures, societal discourses and norms and the perceptions and practices of individuals. The further development of and theorising on "cultural" elements (like trust) appears to be a fruitful future task in the context of (comparative) welfare state research.

I have designed this research project with a clear theoretical agenda: Based on the argument that theorising on the current transformations of work is all too often grounded in national-specific frameworks of the regulation of work, I wanted to explore a work form extremely characterised by "work unbound" from a comparative perspective. The findings of this study therefore also contribute to a more differentiated theory-building on the transformation of work.

The organisational challenges of work unbound, an intensified self-realisation demand and the "invasive power" of work appear to be overall findings from the study of freelancers. How far this is a trend including all fields of work cannot be clarified here.

However, the assumption that these issues play a growing role for at least a part of the workforce in contemporary Western societies can be strengthened by the findings. My research findings especially contribute to a better understanding of the diverse ways of handling those challenges.

The old "national-specific" bindings appeared to be relevant in regard to other aspects. This became especially apparent concerning the question of the role and relevance of (in-)security and (un-)certainty. Here the theorising on "precarious work", or "precarisation", appears to be especially tainted by "methodological nationalism": The "precarisation of work", in the form it is described by many scholars (e.g. Castel 2005, Brinkmann et.al 2006), seems to be a specific development within conservative welfare states in the course of flexibilisation and de-regulation of work. The findings of this research project clearly strengthen this assumption. The debate on "precarious work" could gain from taking this insight and the relevance of national specificities into account, as it could differentiate their findings and strengthen their arguments. In general, the theorising in the field of the sociology of work, and especially time-diagnostic approaches on the transformation of work, should try to integrate and reflect the specific, varying national institutional and regulatory contexts.

The findings of this study could also serve as inspiration in the much more "practical" realm of politics, or to be more precise, in the field of welfare state and labour market policies and reforms. The grounding, normative base for these kind of considerations is definitely the question of which kind of society we want to live in. If it is the goal of the welfare state to provide sufficient social security for everybody, then this could imply a turn towards universalistic features and programmes, especially in times of a growing flexibilisation of work and the erosion of life-long standard employment: This is especially relevant in the case of the conservative welfare state, in this specific case in the German version. Concerning the field of healthcare and health insurance, in the *Bundestag* election campaign in 2009, all of the parties on the political left, such as the *SPD* (social-democrats), the *Grünen* (green party) and the *Linke* ("the left"), promoted at least some

partial reforms towards a more universalist design of the public health insurance system. (see e.g. Hommel & Staeck 2009) However, with the *CDU* (conservative party) and the *FDP* (liberal party) in the (brand) new government coalition, it can be doubted that welfare state reforms will have a universalist agenda or design. Although the Danish welfare state is (still) characterised by a higher level of universalism, we could see in chapter 4 that, especially in the field of pension policy, universalist features have become dismantled further and further. This field is quite consistently the one where the highly flexible freelancers are excluded from important programmes. Therefore the "reinforcement" of universalism in the Danish welfare state could, at least[46]for proponents of "atypical" workers' social security, be a useful political agenda.

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46 The world-wide financial crisis of 2008 could question the sustainability of funds-based pension systems as well.

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English Summary: Work and Life Patterns of Freelancers in the (New) Media

Within this research project I am exploring the life and work of freelancers in (new) media branch. The freelancers are viewed as an extreme case for new and unbound work organisation, as their work form is characterised by flexibility and market-dependency in a distinct way. Following the insight, that national frameworks (like welfare state and labour market regulations) are shaping the concrete forms of work unbound and its consequences for the individuals, I chose as a comparative design. The two countries, which form the frame of the comparison, are Denmark and Germany, whilst it is the narratives of the individual freelancers, that are compared. As an over-all theoretical frame I chose Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984). With the help of structuration theory I regard the transformation of work as the coexistence of the emergence of new patterns and the persistence of "old" structures and institutions side-by-side. This abstract framework has been supplemented by an in-depth description of the welfare state and labour market "landscapes" of the two countries concerned, with a special focus on those parts relevant for freelancers.

The assumption, that these national-specific frameworks are (co-)forming the specific characterists of "work unbound", means that also the possibilities of the freelancers how to handle their work is shaped by the varying national contexts. Therefore I have been asking for the differences and similarities in the handling of work and life by the freelancers in Denmark and Germany.

The research project provides a differentiated picture of the societal frameworks' meaning for the freelancers' handling of their work and life. The current transformation of work, here seen from the perspective of the "individual consequences" seems to be characterised by asynchronities and ambivalences as well as by old and new institutional bindings. In this thesis I have chosen three different topics, all of which present challenges for the freelancers that are in one way or another connected to their specific working conditions. Therefore they can serve as examples for the investigation of the freelancers

handling. These topics are (1) (in-) security and (un-)certainty, (2) work organisation and (3) family arrangements.

(*In-)security and (un-)certainty*

Concerning the role and relevance of the topic insecurity a remarkable difference along country lines could be found in the narratives of the interviewees. While the topic was of great importance and gravity for the German freelancers, the Danish freelancers did not assign it as much gravity. This differences could be traced by taking into account the interview interaction, the structure of the interviewees narratives, as well as content-wise.

I have been arguing that within the freelancers work and life, two dimensions of insecurity can be found: The first one is connected to the unsteady income of the freelancers and refers to the financing of their every-day life, the second one is related to the question of social risks and the "social security framework" of the freelancers.

Concerning the first dimension (the financing of the every-day life) findings from other research projects in the field (see e.g. Gottschall & Kroos 2003) could be supported: The "pooling-of-incomes" within the family or rather the existence of a second (preferably steady) income appeared to be important in the handling of this aspect of insecurity, amongst the freelancers in this study in general.

Differences along country lines could be identified as regards the second dimension (the one of "social security"): As mentioned above, the German freelancers' narratives are strongly characterised by insecurity and connected anxiety, while the Danish freelancers appear to be quite "cool" when confronted with questions on this topic. I have contextualised these findings in the context of the different societal frameworks (mainly the different welfare state programmes) with the help of the concept of trust. The latter served as one approach to the relation between structure and agency, which in this context refers to relation between welfare state institution the one hand and individuals' attitudes , practices and agency on the other. I proposed different levels of trust in connection to

different welfare states as an adequate theoretical context in order to interpret and understand the empirical findings concerning the topic of (in-)security and (un-)certainty.

Work Organisation

Concerning work organisation and norms, the Danish and the German freelancers were faced with similar challenges. All of them expressed self-realisation demands and all of them were confronted with the "blurring" of work and life. In the findings I could as well trace a tendency towards an "invasive" power of work and thus towards self-exploitation. The interviewees' "answers" to those conditions and dilemmas, however, were diverse. All of them seemed to struggle or at least work on these challenges in one way or another. The concrete practices seemed to be depending on other preconditions (e.g. the family or household, financial possibilities etc.), perceptions and preferences. These practices were diverse, often they involved practical limitations of the "unbound demands" (e.g. Susanne's "dead days", Elena's "growing of an own skin", Christian's spatial practices etc.) and sometimes they also included conceptual limitations (see e.g. Nina and Jan).

Family arrangements

Concerning the family arrangements of the freelancers with children, the findings of the study show again diverse patterns – I could find parents practising freelancing in part-time as well as parents with a huge (more-than-full-time) working load in both countries. Many parents in both countries used the possibility of "blurring" the boundary between work and life in order to reconciliate work and life. As well, the interviewees in both countries used day-care institutions for their children.

However, in the context of the question of institutional day-care, a difference along country lines could be found. This is not at all surprising, given the vastly different institutional and normative contexts in the two countries. The difference was found on the "rhetorical level" - the German interviewees' accounts on that topic were characterised by "legitimation attempts", whereas the Danish interviewees just referred to a "normality". Within the context of the two different frameworks (consistency vs. inconsistency in the field of family policy, institutional infrastructure and norms on family, work and gender)

this difference appears to be very understandable. Within the conservative "male-breadwinner-regime under revision" in Germany, a "reversed gender role" family model became visible, at least in the context of freelance fathers. (see as well Henninger & Gottschall 2007).

Dansk resumé: Freelanceres arbejds- og livsmønstre i den (nye) mediebranche

I det foreliggende forskningsprojekt undersøger jeg freelanceres arbejde og liv i den (nye) mediebranche. Freelancerne er udtryk for ekstreme cases af nye former for grænseløs arbejdsorganisering, fordi deres arbejde i høj grad er karakteriseret af fleksibilitet og markedet-afhængighed. Da nationale rammer (såsom velfærdsstaten og arbejdsmarkedets reguleringer) skaber de konkrete former for grænseløst arbejde, har jeg valgt et komparativt design. De to lande, som danner ramme for denne sammenligning er Danmark og Tyskland, mens det er de enkeltes fortællinger, som er sammenlignet. Som generel teoretisk ramme har jeg valgt Giddens "structuration theory" (Giddens 1984). Med "structuration theory" kan jeg forstå transformationen af arbejde som fremkomsten af ny mønstre såvel som "gamle" strukturers ihærdighed. Denne abstrakte ramme er blevet suppleret med en dybdegående beskrivelse af velfærdstatens og arbejdsmarkedets institutioner i begge lande med særlig fokus på de instrumenter, som er relevante for freelancerne.

Antagelsen er, at de specifikke nationale rammer (delvist) skaber de konkrete karakteristika ved denne nye form for arbejde, hvilket betyder, at freelancernes muligheder for at håndtere deres arbejdsliv er præget af disse kontekster. I dette forskningsprojekt har jeg således søgt efter ligheder og forskelle i freelancernes håndtering af deres arbejds- og familieliv. .

Forskningsprojektet giver et nuanceret billede af betydningen af konteksten for freelancernes måde at håndtere deres arbejde og liv.. Den nutidige transformation af arbejde, her set fra de individuelle konsekvensers perspektiv fremstår som faktisk karakteriseret af nye og gamle bindinger. I afhandling har jeg udvalgt tre forskellige emner, som på en eller anden måde er relateret til de udfordringer, der opstår i forbindelse med "ny" arbejdsorganisation. Disse emner er (1) (u-)sikkerhed og (u-)vished, (2) arbejdsorganisation og (3) familiemønstre.

(U-) sikkerhed og (u-) vished

I relation til dette tema er der en bemærkelsesværdig forskel mellem de tyske og danske fortællinger: mens temaet har været meget vigtig for de tyske freelancere og uopfordret blev nævnt af dem meget tidligt i interviewet, har det haft meget mindre betydning for de danske freelancere. Forskellen har kunnet spores i interviewinteraktionen, interviewstrukturerne såvel som i indholdet.

Jeg har i relation hertil argumenteret for, at (u-) vished/ (u-)sikkerhed fremtræder som to dimensioner: Den første er relateret til den ustabile freelanceindkomst og vedrører freelancernes finansiering af "hverdagen", mens den anden er knyttet til spørgsmålet om sociale risici og social sikring.

I forhold til den første dimension kan resultaterne understøttes af andre forskningsprojekter (f.eks. Gottschall & Kroos 2003). "Pooling-of-incomes" i familien eller eksistensen af en anden (stabil) indkomst fremstår i den forbindelse som en vigtig del af de interviewede freelanceres håndtering af (u-)sikkerhed .

Nationale forskelle har ligeledes kunnet identificeres i forbindelse med den anden dimension: Som nævnt ovenfor, har i særdeleshed de tyske freelancernes fortællinger været karakteriseret af (u-)tryghed og frygt, mens de danske freelancere har fremstået som mere "cool" i den forbindelse. Jeg har kontekstualiseret disse resultater i de forskellige samfundsmæssige rammebetingelser ved hjælp af tillidskonceptet. Sidstnævnte har tjent som tilgang til relationen mellem struktur og handling, hvilket i denne kontekst vedrører de velfærdstatslige institutioner på den ene side og de enkeltes opfattelser, praktiker og handlinger på den anden side. Jeg har i den forbindelse forslået, at forskellige niveauer af tillid tilknyttet til de forskellige velfærdstater kan være en hjælp i forhold til at fortolke og forstå projektets resultater.

Arbejdsorganisation

Når det gælder arbejdsorganisationen og dens normative kontekst, har freelancerne i begge lande været konfronteret med samme udfordringer. Alle informanterne har givet udtryk for et stort behov for selv-realisering og hos alle er der en udviskning af grænser mellem

arbejde og "liv". Jeg har desuden kunnet spore en tendens til, at arbejdet fremtræder som en indtrængende magt og dermed også til selv-udnyttelse. De interviewede forholder sig til disse betingelser og ambivalenser på forskellige måder: Alle informanterne kæmper med eller beskæftiger sig i det mindste med at håndtere dette på en eller anden måde. De konkrete praksisser optræder som afhængig af andre forudsætninger (f.eks. familien, finansielle muligheder osv.), opfattelser og præferencer. Fremgangsmåderne har været mangeartet. Ofte har informanterne inkluderet praktiske begrænsninger ved "grænseløst arbejde" (f.eks. Susannes "døde perioder") og nogle gange også konceptuelle begrænsninger (se f. eks Jans eller Ninas fortællinger).

Familiemønstre

Når det gælder freelanceforældrenes familiemønstre er forskellige praksisser blevet synlige. Der kan findes "deltids"- freelanceforældre såvel som mere-end-fuldtids-freelancearbejdsbyrder i begge landene. Mange forældre i studiet benytter muligheden forl at "udviske" grænserne mellem arbejde og familieliv til at skabe balance mellem de to. Freelanceforældre i begge lande bruger børnepasningsinstitutioner på næsten samme måde.

Dog fremtræder der nationale forskelle i forhold til børnepasning. Dette er ikke overraskende, hvis man tager hensyn til de meget forskellige institutionelle og normative kontekster, der gør sig gældende i de to landene. Forskellen gør sig gældende på det "retoriske" plan. De tyske informanters fremstilling af dette emne er karakteriseret ved "legitimeringsforsøg", mens de danske informanter blot henviser til en normalitet. Indenfor de to forskellige rammer (overensstemmelse vs. uoverensstemmelse i institutionel infrastruktur og normative forestillinger vedr. familie) bliver forskellen således forståelig. I forhold til det konservative "male-breadwinner regime (under revidering)" i Tyskland er et "reversed gender role" familiemønster blevet synligt - i hvert tilfælde i forbindelse med at far arbejder som freelancer.