ETORKIZUNA ERAIKIZ
think tank

WORK OF THE FUTURE
REPORT OF THE 10th MEETING

23/09/2021

Contents

SPACE FOR DELIBERATION ON THE WORK OF THE FUTURE

23 September 2021, 5 pm – 7 pm

1. Programme

Timetable	Theme	Presenter/Driver
5 pm - 5.15 pm	Welcome	Jabier Larrañaga. Provincial Minister (Deputy) for Economic Promotion, Tourism and the Rural Environment
5:15 – 6:00 pm	Presentation of the report	Unai Elorza, Researcher at Mondragon University
6:00 – 6:55 pm	Group dynamic	Unai Andueza, Director of Strategic Projects at the Department of Economic Promotion, Tourism and the Rural Environment
6.55 - 7.00 pm	End of session	Jabier Larrañaga

2. In attendance

- Jabier Larrañaga
- Unai Andueza
- Jon Gurrutxaga
- Sebastián Zurutuza
- Joseba Amondarain
- Unai Elorza
- Rikardo Lamadrid
- Juan Angel Balbas
- Anabel Yoldi
- Ismene Tapia
- Ángel Martin Rios
- Itziar Abarisketa
- Pili Alonso
- Javier Gómez
- Gorka Artola
- Ana Ugalde
- Jabier Iruretagoiena

- Juani Lizaso
- Nerea Zamacola
- Marta Rosende
- Marian Tapia
- Aitor Txurruka
- Miren Larrea
- Mikel Gaztañaga

3. Welcome

The session was opened by the Director of Strategic Projects. He thanked all the participants and reminded them that there was a translation service for anyone so requiring. He asked anyone wanting to speak to use the microphone, as *"there are several participants who have joined the meeting online."* The Director of Strategic Projects again thanked all the participants and gave the floor to the Deputy (Provincial Minister) for Economic Promotion.

The Provincial Minister for Economic Promotion thanked all the participants for taking part *"in a group in which we are discussing a subject that is very important for us: the meaning of work. I would like to present four aspects on which we are going to work between now and the end of this term in office. The first is the question of strategic projects. The strategic projects were launched as the result of a series of reflections within Etorkizuna Eraikiz since 2016. You are already familiar with them: Ziur, Adinberri, Mubil, etc. These projects were launched to respond to the province's strategic challenges."* The Deputy for Economic Promotion commented that *"in addition to the strategic projects that have been mentioned, we have also been working on other aspects. One of them is directly related to what we are going to work on here today."*

"The first of these", he said, *"is digitalisation. We believe we need to address the challenge of digitalisation in this province; but not so much from the point of view of machines, physical investment, equipment, etc., but from an organizational and human point of view. Our companies have a deep-rooted culture of investment and reinvestment. In other words, we do not have a problem making investments on a physical or tangible plane. However, we find it more difficult to invest in non-tangible issues. If we want to achieve digital transformation, though, we will have to invest in these more intangible issues. It's not so much a matter of digitalization as digital transformation."*

He went on to say that *"There is the question of the future of work. However, we approach the future from a concrete perspective. As you know, our business network is made up of small and medium-sized companies. And our medium-sized companies would often be considered small elsewhere. For this type of company it will be essential to have properly qualified staff. At the same time, these companies must remain attractive if they are to recruit and retain talent. These companies will be competing against multinationals offering things that they cannot. In this regard, these companies will have to differentiate themselves in order to compete when it comes to attracting and retaining talent. Offers will often need to be customized. Otherwise, there is a danger that small companies will not be able to attract highly qualified personnel. The other day there was talk about the possibility of employees beginning to work part-time in several companies at once. It is possible that in the future we will work more by projects than by companies."*

He remarked *that "there is another aspect, and that is the question of ownership and its relationship with the scalability of business projects. We often have trouble scaling projects up. In this regard, we need not only a professionalization of management, but also a professionalization of ownership. We need to activate the owners."*

The Deputy for Economic Promotion thanked all the participants *"for accompanying us on this journey through to the next elections."* He then gave the floor to the Director of Strategic Projects.

The Director of Strategic Projects said that *"understanding the future of work is a really important issue for the Provincial Government. We will discuss this issue in this think tank. I would like to explain a few points about this issue. The first is that our goal is the competitiveness of the territory, and these reflections are aimed at achieving that goal. We believe that if companies are competitive and if the province is competitive, we can ensure the well-being of the people and the province."*

He said that *"this group is going to experiment. In other words, we're going to perform pilot tests. That's why there are a number of companies in this think tank. However, at the same time, this think tank is also going to reflect. In other words, in this think tank we will combine practical projects and reflection. We are going to learn from these pilot projects and the aim is to roll out what we have learned in the network of companies in the province. That's why it is important to have companies participating in this think tank."*

The Director of Strategic Projects commented that *"this phase will run to 2023. There will be a total of 8 sessions. I think it is also worth mentioning that there are three other think tanks like this one: one on the new political culture, one on the green transition and one on the future of our welfare systems. These four think tanks are working on different issues. Nonetheless, we have the same methodology."* The Director of Strategic Projects went on to say *"In this first session we are going to address the conceptualisation. There may be some concepts that you do not understand, or which seem abstract to you. Don't worry, these are concepts that we will be tackling during the process. This is just an initial contact."*

The Director of Strategic Projects thanked all the companies attending the session, and since it is their first day in the think tank, he invited them to introduce themselves:

- ECO26 said he was from IZT. *"I am the manager of IZT. IZT works in IT services and digital transformation. We are based in Andoain. We are a cooperative with a workforce of 14 people."*

- ECO27 said he was from Lazpiur. *"I would like to apologize for not being able to attend in person, but we had a visit from a potential client. Lazpiur works in the automotive sector, offering both machinery and services. We are located in Bergara, although we also have a plant in China. It is not a cooperative. Our goal in this think tank is to learn from the process. We want to promote a cultural transformation in the company, and we think that participating in this group could help us."*

- ECO28 said he was from Fagor Industrial. *"We are based in Oñate. We are a cooperative with 600 members. Altogether we have 2000 workers. We work in the hotel and catering machinery sector. We want to implement a profound change in the factory and are implementing it in collaboration with Mondragon University. Transformation of machinery is very important, but transforming people is even more important."*

- ECO29 said she was from Zorrotz, *"a company located in Legazpia. Zorrotz is a worked-owned company [*sociedad laboral*] and is the result of a restructuring. There are between 40 and 45 of us in the company. We are trying to make workers more participative. We believe that participation is very important. Just because you are a member doesn't mean you participate. In that regard, we are looking for greater participation."*

- ECO30 said she was from Sutargi. *"Sutargi is a special employment centre, located in Belauntza. There are 160 workers, and our mission is to integrate people in situations of social exclusion and poverty or with some kind of disability."*

- ECO31 said she was from Oribay, *"a company working in the automotive sector. We have several locations, but the head office is in San Sebastian. There are approximately 100 workers. We are thinking about how to adapt the company to today's situation."*

The Director of Strategic Projects took the floor to "*thank all the companies that have come to today's session and that are going to participate in this think tank. The rest of us are from the Provincial Government, the Basque Government, the Chamber of Commerce, various universities, etc. I will now give the floor to ECO20, who is a researcher at the University of Mondragón. ECO20 will give us a presentation on work and the meaning of work. He is going to provide us with a theoretical framework on the meaning of work.*"

4. Presentation of the report

ECO20 took the floor, greeted the participants and thanked them all for attending the session. He said that "*the presentation will revolve around a report that has already been written. Although it is only a preliminary report, it can help us to get down to work. The report is intended as a conceptual framework to guide us in our actions. When we talk about a conceptual framework, we are talking about how we define the meaning of work. And also about how we can bring the concept of the meaning of work into our day-to-day lives, and what different courses of action are available in this regard.*"

According to ECO20, "*the meaning of work is the fruit of a process, it is not a given, something that just falls out of the sky. It would therefore be wrong for organisations and politicians to try to give work a meaning. It is something that needs to be worked out. It is necessary to generate the contexts, offer tools and create the right spaces for people to develop the meaning of work. The presentation and the report take that as their starting point.*" He said that "*action is always the consequence of a thought, of certain beliefs or of a way of seeing things. That is why we believe it is important that, before starting the experimentation phase, we reflect on the meaning of work.*"

He said that "*the report is structured into two blocks. The first block is about work in generic terms, and it is based on philosophical sources. What do we mean by work? There is a very broad debate about what work is, which will affect the way we conceptualize*

the meaning of work. So in the first block we are going to talk about work, and in the second block about the meaning of work."

"*Work is a somewhat ambivalent term. For some people, work may be a burden or an obligation. For others, it can be a means of personal development and a source of human expression. In fact, work can be both things at the same time. That is why I say it is an ambivalent concept. There are many definitions of work. There are many perspectives: philosophical, economical, psychological, theological, etc. The most dominant perspective has been the economic one — work as a way of creating value. In many cases it is interpreted as the creation of economic value, almost like a commodity. Viewing work as the creation of economic value inevitably leads to one particular form of business management. If you view it in a different way, then the form of management will obviously be different."*

"*I think it may be helpful to take a look at the history of the concept of work. In Ancient Greece and Rome, for example, work was something that was meant for slaves. In the Middle Ages, work took on a more religious significance. That is, work was seen as a way of being closer to God or heaven. In the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, people*

began to speak of personal freedom and liberalism, and with that came a change in the meaning of work. Work began to be seen as something positive. Nonetheless, I believe the fundamental change came with the Industrial Revolution. Then came Taylor and the scientific management of work, which Ford would later put into practice with the creation of the assembly line. I think it is particularly interesting to examine what motivated Taylor to conduct his studies on the work process. At that time, the workers possessed the knowledge of their work, while capital did not. This gave the workers power, because they were the ones understood the work process. So Taylor promoted a kind of de-skilling of workers, and in this way, he denaturalized work. This had a decisive impact on the meaning of work. It is a system that yields returns, but at the expense of turning the worker into an interchangeable part of the work process. In that sense, there was a noticeable change in the meaning of work. The revolution in work that Taylor brought about gave power to business management and established a purely economic meaning to work. In other words, work became the creation of economic value. From this perspective, the worker exchanges his or her time and expertise for payment. This has been the dominant way of viewing work and I think it still is."

"There are also other ways of viewing work. For instance, we have the example of the cooperatives. The cooperative movement in Gipuzkoa proposed that work was a means of dignifying the individual, so that he/she could grow and develop. Through work the person will become free and thus dignified. Mondragon's idea has been to put the worker ahead of capital. These are minority proposals, but they should nonetheless be taken into account."

He went on, *"Having taken a look at the history of the notion of work, now it is time to move on to the concept of the meaning of work itself. Work is central to our lives, and because human beings want to give meaning to their lives, they want to give meaning to work. The issue is that, if work is a purely economic question, human beings will try to find meaning outside their work. Their motivations will lie outside their work. Even so, I believe that we should champion the idea that work can be a space in which that meaning can be developed. It is necessary to go beyond the merely economic concept of work."*

"There are many different definitions. There's one definition which I like which mentions three concepts: meaning, self-fulfilment and purpose. Self-fulfilment is oriented towards the self, towards the person. Purpose is oriented toward others. These two concepts contribute to the meaning of work. The meaning is that the work has value in itself." ECO20 said that next he would *"talk about the results. According to several studies, the meaning of work impacts people's behaviour, their motivations and their performance, affecting absenteeism and well-being. For example, there is one very illustrative study by the consultancy firm McKinsey, which shows the relationship between meaning of work and people's resilience, energy and motivation."*

ECO20 said that *"a sense of work occurs when two dimensions are integrated, the objective and the subjective. The objective part means that the work must be configured in such a way that it has a minimum structure for meaning. On the subjective side, there is variability as to what a person considers to be of value or meaningful. In other words, it is a personal question which depends on each subject. In this regard, there is a definition that I quite like, which is that 'meaning arises when subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness.' There are several aspects that condition both the objective and the subjective dimension. For example, there is the ideology, each person's beliefs, their motivations, the relationship they establish with the context or with other people, etc. The person and their relationship with the context is very important. In this sense, the task of companies or organizations could be to offer certain minimal objective structures so that the person can then develop his or her subjective conception. That is to say, the objective dimension is needed for the subjective dimension to emerge.*

There are many variables that condition the meaning of work. A lot has been simplified in this report, but the intention has been to propose a framework so that we can then move on to action. I would also like to explain that there are three dimensions within which people can develop a sense of work. The first is self-efficacy; in other words, the individual with him or herself — me and my development. This dimension occurs when people sense that they learn, grow and become more competent. But it also occurs when they feel free to choose and manage or when they feel that their work has an impact.

This individual dimension of work helps people develop meaning in their work. There are several theoretical frameworks that explore this individual dimension of work."

On the other hand, there is the mission-related dimension of work. In other words, working for something greater, working for others. Here, work is viewed as something that goes beyond oneself. Having a purposeful job means that you feel you are able to have a broader positive impact through your work. There are not as many theoretical frameworks here as in the individual dimension. And finally, there is the interpersonal dimension, i.e. neither an individual mechanism nor a mission: work is understood with others. It is a social mechanism rather than a psychological one. In other words, work is understood in its relationship to the context. It goes beyond the individual level. The culture of the organization has a very important impact on the meaning of work. The meaning of work is developed jointly with other people, that is, through interaction with other people."

Finally, ECO20 said that *"this report is intended to offer a first approximation. It does not seek to provide an exhaustive description of the state of the art but to identify those areas of work that can best be integrated with the organization's practice. We would also like it to be a vehicle for debate. And that is the end of my presentation. Thank you."*

5. Group dynamic

The Director of Strategic Projects took the floor and said *"We are now going to get into groups. The purpose of this group exercise is for us to answer a series of questions (Appendix A, Slide 24). Four groups will be working face to face. The fifth group will work online. You will work on the questions for approximately 25 minutes. Afterwards, the spokesperson for each group should explain the reflections made in that group"*

The results of the group dynamics were as follows:

Group 1

The spokesperson for Group 1 was ECO31. She said that *"it is not necessary to agree on the meaning of work. Everyone has their own opinion about the meaning of work. In our opinion, everyone has their own conception of what work is. In that sense, we do not believe that a common definition needs to be agreed upon. As regards the second question, we believe that all motivations are important. Even so, we feel that a mention of psychological motivation is lacking. Not only at company level, however. In other words, everything that occurs outside the company later has an impact on it. In that regard, we'd like to know a little bit about how to manage it all."*

Group 2

The spokesperson for Group 1 was ECO2. She said *"the debate has been a whirlwind of ideas. We believe there are two levels: work and the meaning of work. It is important that we define what work is. That is to say, it is important to have a conceptualization. In terms of the meaning of work, we discussed the importance of teams. And from teams we get to individuals, since teams are individuals interrelating with one another. At the same time, the meaning of work will vary from company to company. Another very important element is trust."*

Group 3:

The spokesperson for the Group 4 was DFG3. He said that *"the debate was a brainstorming session. I don't know if I will be capable of summarising everything that was discussed. In answer to the first question, we believe it is important that we reach at least a minimum agreement on the definition of the meaning of work. We know that the meaning of work is constantly changing, both individually and socially. The company is a reflection of what society is. Even so, we believe that society is changing faster than the company. With regard to the second question, we believe that no one element should be prioritized. They are all highly important and inseparable from one another. Even so, we would like to add the social sphere to the mix. A company is not an isolated entity; it*

is linked to society. In this regard, the company cannot have values that are not aligned with the values of society. At the same time, we would like to say that the intergenerational issue should be taken into account in the experimentation phase. The level of qualification also has to be included; it is not the same to be on the factory floor or in the office. For the same reason there must also be a gender perspective. We would also like to add that the legal status of the company influences the meaning of work. A cooperative, whose purpose is to create employment and social wellbeing, is not the same as a company that only seeks to maximize profits. The meaning of work will obviously be different in each case."

Group 4:

The spokesperson for Group 4 was ECO26. He said that *"we believe it is important to discuss the meaning of work. We are not used to talking about it. We often talk about people's motivation. We tend to organise actions with the purpose of motivating people, but we don't consider the meaning that work has. As for the second question, we had a hard time prioritizing any single element. We believe that self-fulfilment is a key element. Nonetheless, feeling that you are making a contribution to society is often very important too."*

The spokesperson for Group 5 (which met online) was ECO23. She said *"it is very important to reflect on the meaning of work. In this regard, it is important to arrive at a common definition of the meaning of work. Otherwise we may be talking about very different things. We believe that we have to go beyond a purely economic definition. This is important because otherwise small companies are going to have major problems recruiting and retaining talent. On the other hand, we stressed that the meaning of work has changed a lot from generation to generation. It is very important to reflect on this. We also considered the word 'work' itself, which carries negative connotations. It is closely linked to payment. In that sense, maybe we should change the word. For example, maybe we should start talking about projects. As to the second question, we believe that all the elements are important. The three mechanisms are highly interrelated."*

6. End of session

The Director of Strategic Projects took the floor to remind participants that *"we have to fill in an evaluation sheet. Those of you who are here in person have a hard copy. Those of you who are online will be sent a link to the evaluation. Also, please remember that there are going to be eight sessions between now and the end of this government's term of office. In this group, there are people who will help us to scale up the projects across the province. We also have representatives from business so that we can conduct experimentation projects. Although the companies will have the opportunity to participate in all the sessions, it is not obligatory for them to attend all of them. Some sessions will focus on the pilot projects, while others will be on governance. It is important that companies attend the sessions on the experimentation work. You are invited to the governance sessions, but we fully understand if you do not attend."* The Director of Strategic Projects thanked all the participants and handed the floor to the Deputy for Economic Promotion.

The Deputy of Economic Promotion said he wanted to *"thank all the participants for their interventions and for participating in this learning process. I would especially like to thank ECO20 for his presentation and for summing up such a complex subject. Thank you all very much for participating in a project that we believe is very important for us, for the competitiveness of companies and the competitiveness of the province. Thank you all very much."*

7. Appendices

a. Presentation used during the session

The Meaning of Work

Conceptual framework to guide experimentation

23/09/2021

Meaning of work in the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa's economic promotion strategies

Fundamentals of the process

- The ultimate goal is to develop a promotion model that combines competitiveness and people's well-being in the Provincial Government's public policies
- **We will combine experimentation and deliberation,** linking the experimental project with the Think Tank
- In the deliberation process, we will promote **collaboration** between the Provincial Government, companies and agents of promotion in the province
- The sessions will combine **two axes (central themes)**
    - **Sharing the lessons and tools** developed through the pilot project
    - **Building collaborative governance** that will facilitate the provision of these tools to companies in the territory
- This phase will run **to 2023**, with **8 sessions per year**
- This deliberation group is **one of the four** in the Think Tank. The others are aimed at transforming the welfare system, supporting the strategy on green recovery and developing a new political culture. **The basic working methodology is the same** and will be developed by the Think Tank's management team.
- **In today's session** we will begin by sharing the conceptual framework on the meaning of work

Some preliminary thoughts

- A sense of work is not received or encountered, ... it **is developed**.

- Political action and those in charge of organisations cannot guarantee that everyone finds meaning in their work.

- What they can do to help develop a sense of work is:
    - **generate contexts** that favour its development,
    - ensure **diversity of options** and
    - provide **resources**.

- Any initiative should entail the **transformation** of work not only in its organizational dimension but **also in the** understanding of what "work" means.
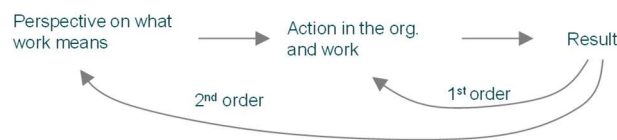
Perspective on what work means → Action in the org. and work → Result

2nd order   1st order

Contents

5

Work

Definition and time perspective

What it is

- How we define it reflects the meaning we attribute to it.

- **Ambivalent position**:

"a burden and an obligation" "experience of oppressive degradation"	"a means for personal development" "a source of human expression"

- **Many perspectives**:
  - Economic: a way of creating value for society.
  - Philosophical: a way of being in life, a means of humanising the world.
  - Psychological: activity for socialising and forming identity, conditioning our well-being and growth.
  - Theological: human activity to complete God's unfinished work.
  - Class perspective: a source of oppression and degradation that must be fought against.

How it has evolved

- In ancient times (Greece and Rome): work subject to necessity; **intended for slaves**; seen as a punishment (e.g. Sisyphus).

- In the Middle Ages: origin in "tripalium" an instrument of punishment and torture. Work had a religious aspect; **a means of absolution** rather than progress.

- Renaissance and Enlightenment: **contrasting perspectives**. The idea that the worker is excluded from self-respect and therefore cannot fulfil himself vs. the concept of the self-interested "motivated worker" as an individual with a passion to develop great social goals.

- Industrial Revolution: **birth of the proletariat and Marx's idea of alienated labour** as individuals who do not own what they do and therefore cannot find meaning in work. The artisan gains status in contrast to the wage earner.

How it has evolved

- Scientific organization of labour:
  - Emerged **to solve the problem that the industry of the time was in the hands of the workers**; who in turn avoided work.
  - The solution consisted of a "division" of labour that allowed "deskilling"; **excluding workers from control of their work** by reducing their role to that of a "resource".

- Work takes on a mainly economic/reductionist sense:
  - Workers exchange their time and knowledge for a remuneration that allows them to live as decently as possible.
  - Labour reduced to a commodity; something instrumental.

- This economic perspective of **"labour as a commodity" is the prevalent view** in today's society.

- However, the co-operative movement in Gipuzkoa **proposed viewing work as a means of dignifying people**, allowing them to grow and develop. Through work, the person will be free and therefore dignified.

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THE MEANING OF WORK

To respond to an innate human need

Sense: a human need

- The need to make sense of one's life **is a universal human motivation**; to feel that one's life is worth living.
    - For example, people are willing to accept 30% lower pay for meaningful work (Hu and Hirsh, 2017).

- The **centrality of work** as a key space to meet this need.
    - According to McKinsey, 70 percent of employees said that their sense of purpose is defined by their work (Dhingra, Samo, Schaninger, & Schrimper, 2021).

- Insofar as a person's work **does not allow for meaningfulness, people will pursue that meaning outside** the workplace (leisure, family, etc).

- There is **great potential for improvement** even in the most impoverished jobs:
    - There is significant evidence that even in very impoverished job conditions, workers are motivated to seek autonomous expression in their work activities (Yeoman, 2014).

Definition: The Meaning(fulness) of Work

- Thirty-two different definitions (Martela and Pessi, 2018):
    - "The degree to which the individual experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile" (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

- "**Meaning**":
    - **The type of meaning** attributed to work.
    - Negative valence: "it is an oppression" "an unpleasant necessity".
    - Neutral Valence: "it's a paycheck".
    - Positive valence: "it is a space for personal development and growth", "a calling".

- "**Meaningfulness**":
    - **The amount of meaning**.
    - Always positive valence. E.g. "work is an oppression" (not very meaningful); "work is a calling" (very meaningful).

- In all cases there is "meaning", but only in some cases there is "meaningful work").
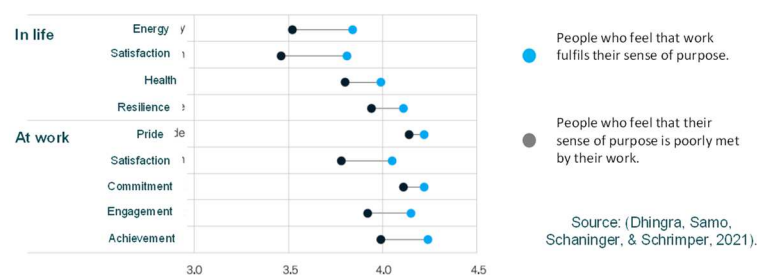
Definition: the meaning of work

- **Meaning**:
  - **Does work have any intrinsic value**? This is the judgment of whether or not it is worth committing to.
  - For example, a person may have certain values and motivations; when their work aligns with and satisfies these values, it will have value/meaning.

- **Self-fulfilment**: **oriented "towards oneself**"; one's growth and development.
  - To what extent are we able to find fulfilment and express ourselves through our work?
  - For example, the craftsman, a professional who owns his own labour and progresses over time with it. The opposite of alienating jobs.

- **Purpose: oriented "towards others"**.
  - Does work contribute to "something bigger"? To something beyond individual profit.
  - For example, when it alleviates suffering, removes difficulties, reduces risks, makes people happier, healthier, more autonomous and capable, etc.

Significado

Autorrealización

Propósito

Results of meaningfulness in work

- Research has shown that meaningful work has an impact on …
  - People's behaviours and **motivations** (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).
  - People's **performance** (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).
  - **Absenteeism** (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997).
  - People's **well-being** (Khan, 2007).
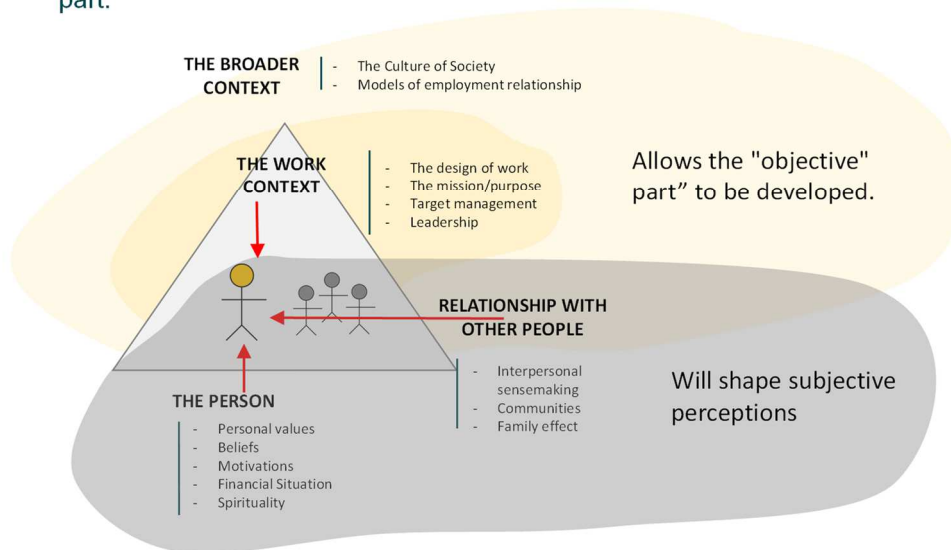
- For example, empirical results from McKinsey show:

People who feel that work fulfils their sense of purpose.

People who feel that their sense of purpose is poorly met by their work.

Source: (Dhingra, Samo, Schaninger, & Schrimper, 2021).

When does it occur?

- **When two dimensions are included**: (i) the "objective" and (ii) subjective.

- The **"objective**" part: work must be configured in such a way that it has a **minimum structure for meaning** (in terms of autonomy, freedom and social recognition).

- The subjective part: there is variability in what a person considers to be of value or meaningful. **Ultimately it is a "subjective judgment**".

- Accepting both parts means that **is not just a subjective issue**:
  - Work must have a minimum "objective structure" and the person must attribute subjective meaning to it.
  - "meaning arises when subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness" (Wolf, 2010).

When does it occur?

- Different sources of meaning will contribute to the "objective" and subjective part.

THE BROADER CONTEXT
- The Culture of Society
- Models of employment relationship

THE WORK CONTEXT
- The design of work
- The mission/purpose
- Target management
- Leadership

Allows the "objective" part" to be developed.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PEOPLE
- Interpersonal sensemaking
- Communities
- Family effect

Will shape subjective perceptions

THE PERSON
- Personal values
- Beliefs
- Motivations
- Financial Situation
- Spirituality

Three dimensions

- **Explain how people can develop meaning in work** and the lines of intervention that can be employed in the context of the organisation.
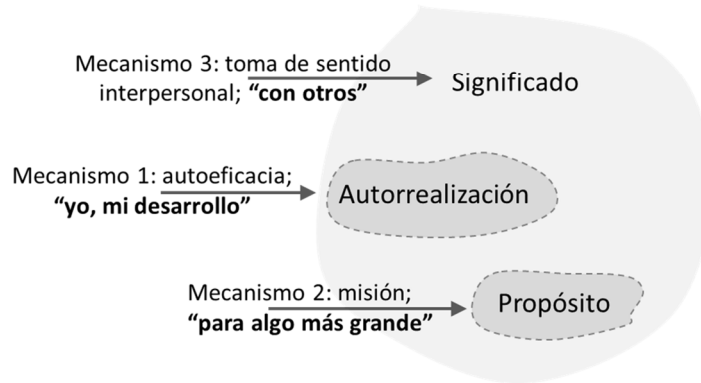
Mech. 1 - "ME": Self-efficacy

- Self-efficacy: individuals' belief that they have **the power and ability to produce a desired effect** or to make a difference.

- Three ways to contribute:
    - **when people feel free to choose** and to manage, they have the feeling that they "control their destiny".
    - **when people feel they learn**, grow and feel more competent.
    - **when people see that what they do has an** (important) **impact** on the organization.

- Theoretical frameworks that can guide action:
    - "Job Characteristics Model" (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980).
    - "Job Crafting" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).
    - Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
    - High Involvement Working Systems (Boxall & Macky, 2009).

Mech. 2 - "FOR SOMETHING GREATER"

- As a sense of direction and intentionality in life; **as something beyond oneself** (Martela & Pessi, 2018).

- Contributes to the development of meaning by connecting present actions with future states or desires.

- Having a purposeful job means that **you feel you are able to have a positive impact on the wider world** through your work.

- Three aspects to be developed:
  - **Definition** of purpose: e.g. Proposal by Collins and Porras (1996).
  - **Put into everyday action**; for example through the "Management by Missions" methodology (Cardona and Rey, 2006).
  - **Internalization** by individuals; for example through mechanisms for participation of the other two (Lleo et al. 2021).

Mech. 3 - "WITH OTHERS"

- It is **a social mechanism** rather than a psychological one.

- There are **two very interrelated perspectives** on this social view of the meaning of work:
  - The meaning of work **is a social construction** which is conditioned by the organizational culture in which the person is operating (Rosso et al., 2010).
  - Sense of work **is developed in interaction with those closest** and through *processes of social interaction ("interpersonal sensemaking")* (Weick, 2001).

- Specific lines of work still need to be found in this area.

To conclude

- This is intended as a first approximation.

- It does not seek to provide an exhaustive picture of the state of the art but rather to identify those areas of work that can best be integrated with the organization's practice.

- **Political action as a key player** (Yeoman, 2014).

- What is required to develop a sense of work in the organization?
  - Minimize the **temptation** to move fast because it **can lead us to action**…
  - … Without a previous reflection **on what "work" means**; since this definition of work opens or closes the range of possibilities for action.
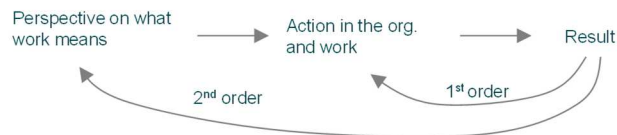
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Group Dynamic

- We will gather in small groups to answer the following questions:

- Do you think it is first necessary to reflect/reach consensus on what work is before starting with specific experimentation initiatives? Why or why not?

- The three mechanisms proposed open up three possible lines of work in the business context.
  - Do you think any is more important to prioritize than any other?
  - Is there any other line of work missing?
  - Do you see something essential or highly recommendable in the experimentation initiatives?

- Group dynamic:
  - 30 minutes for reflection in each group
  - 3 minutes for each spokesperson to present a BRIEF group reflection

Evaluation and next session

Please complete the evaluation form. It is of great help to us in preparing the following sessions

The next session will take place on 21 October, when we will lay the foundations for the process we will be following to address the issue of collaborative governance

In the meantime, we will send you a document with today's conceptualization, so that you can read it at your leisure and make your contributions.

THINK TANK

Deliberation process on the Work of the Future: Working Document No. 12

THE MEANING OF WORK: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

(23 September 2021)

Introduction

The previous working document (2021. About the June session) covers the start of the new discussion group. The bodies participating during the new period, 2021-2023, met for the first time and the bases of the new deliberation process were explained to them. This new group will participate in the experimental initiatives arising around the meaning of work. These experiments will take place in the context of the companies, but in June the participating companies had not yet been decided upon. This September meeting was also attended by the companies that will participate in the experimentation, specifically: IZT, Fagor Industrial, Sutargi, Zorrotz, Lazpiur and Oribay. One person will participate in the deliberation group in representation of these companies. Therefore, given that most of the members of the deliberation group are new (some joined in June and others in September), it is important to share in the working group what the Meaning of Work is and what lines of experimentation there may be.

The purpose of this process of sharing the conceptual framework is (i) to start to use a common language; (ii) to begin to agree on a common understanding of some possibly abstract concepts; and (iii) to understand the different lines of experimentation that may exist in different experimental projects.

Meaning of Work: The Conceptual Framework

The first version of the conceptual framework presented is set out in greater detail in the report of the session. However, the following were some of the most important conclusions:

1) The sense of work is something that is developed. It was emphasized that the Meaning of Work is a theme that is developed within the context of the company; it is not something that is either found or can be given. It is the result of a process that each of us has to go through.

2) The Meaning of Work has different sub-dimensions, as can be seen in the image: (i) meaning, (ii) purpose, and (iii) self-fulfilment. The last two sub-dimensions contribute to improving the first one.

3) Each sub-dimension engenders different lines (or mechanisms) of work for conducting experimentation in the company: (i) improving self-efficacy to improve the subdimension of self-fulfilment, (ii) developing the purpose of work in order to understand each individual's contribution to society, (iii) working on the processes of interpersonal sensemaking in order to develop the subdimension of meaning.

Mecanismo 3: toma de sentido interpersonal; **"con otros"** → Significado

Mecanismo 1: autoeficacia; **"yo, mi desarrollo"** → Autorrealización

Mecanismo 2: misión; **"para algo más grande"** → Propósito

Source: Adapted from Martela and Pessi (2018).

The deliberation group reflected on this conceptual framework. Two topics were discussed in different subgroups:

1) The actions subsequently taken in the company are conditioned by the manager's understanding of work in the context of the company. Participants were therefore asked the following question: Do you think it is necessary to reflect / agree on what the work is before beginning concrete experimentation initiatives? Most of the subgroups in the deliberation group responded in the affirmative, so this reflection will be included in the schedule for later sessions. Specifically: What do we understand by work? How does this understanding condition our daily management and action? What influence does this management and action have on the meaning of work that people develop?

2) Participants were also asked a second question: Of the three proposed lines (or mechanisms) of work, do you see any one as being more important than any other? Do you think there are any missing? The different subgroups that met generally endorsed these three lines (or mechanisms) of work. However, several subgroups stressed the need to address these three lines of work together from a systemic point of view. This may condition the experimental cases to be organised with the companies. The experimentation in these three

lines of work with a systemic point of view will determine the type of experimentation to be decided upon in the companies.

Summarising, this working session in September, fostered the first reflections on the Meaning of Work among the participants. This was a first attempt. It will not fully unify the language and/or create a common point of view. This will be a topic that they will have to continue working on in subsequent sessions. However, it will help to define the types of experimentation to be carried out in the companies. It would be advisable to start holding rounds of meetings with each of the companies (IZT, Fagor Industrial, Sutargi, Zorrotz, Lazpiur and Oribay) in order to discuss with them the three lines of work shown in the figure above and determine the form the experimentation in each company should take. This process of specification will also help to compile everyone's perspectives.