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# **Quality of life of lifestyle entrepreneurs**

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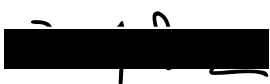
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2019

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Edinburgh Napier University, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

### **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that no material contained within has been used in any other submission for an academic award. All sources have been properly acknowledged, as and when they occur in the body of this thesis.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

(Maria Joao Vieira)

Date: 04.06.2019

## **Abstract**

Owners of small businesses, within the tourism and hospitality literature, tend to be labelled as lifestyle entrepreneurs (LsEs). LsEs are described with an emphasis on the style of life they want to achieve while running their businesses, in opposition to business growth and profitability. Despite an increased interest in LsEs expressed by researchers in recent years, the literature review points to a number of conceptual gaps in the understanding of this group of tourism entrepreneurs. Namely, the shortage of research on the concepts of lifestyle and quality of life (QoL) that so often appear associated with LsEs.

The present research aims to build on recent work and provide an enhanced understanding of the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs, owners of commercial homes. To do so, the research adopts an interpretivist approach that draws on 36 in-depth interviews with LsEs that own a commercial home enterprise in Portugal.

Findings suggest that there are seven issues contributing to LsEs' perception of QoL: location, personal preferences, home, finance, interpersonal relationships, occupation and self-realisation. Self-realisation and occupation are the ones that matter the most, and mirror the holistic lifestyle that LsEs aim to achieve. From an ideal perspective, a life where who they are and what they do is one and the same. Realistically, a life in which what they perceive QoL to be is not harmonious with the QoL their day-to-day activities allow them to conquer.

This study offers theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, it addresses the lack of knowledge regarding the QoL of LsEs identifying what composes QoL from LsEs' perspective, and how it influences their management practices. The research also deepens the understanding of the label LsE, advancing the concept further and suggesting its replacement by the concept of selfpreneur. From a practical perspective, research findings inform policymakers and the banking sector on how to better support this type of small accommodation business, and provides a conceptual framework that can be used to assess the QoL of tourism entrepreneurs.

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## Table of contents

<b>1. I need a break! – Setting the scene.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Research background.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Research justification .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 Research aim and objectives.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 Overview of the thesis.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Arriving at the B&amp;B – Literature Review.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.2 Introducing the concept of LsE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.2.1 A brief history of entrepreneurship.....	8
2.2.2 Entrepreneurship within small T&H businesses.....	9
<b>2.3 The emergence of the label LsE.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.4 LsE as a multifaceted concept .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.4.1 LsE as a multifaceted concept   Migration.....	15
2.4.2 LsE as a multifaceted concept   Gender.....	17
2.4.3 LsE as a multifaceted concept   Family .....	18
2.4.4 LsE as a multifaceted concept   Personal preferences .....	21
2.4.5 LsE as a multifaceted concept   Commercial home enterprises.....	22
<b>2.5 Definition of LsE .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.6 LsE   Existing discourses.....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.6.1 The negative discourse.....	30
2.6.2 The positive discourse .....	31
<b>2.7 LsE   Ethical economy .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.8 On the definition of QoL .....</b>	<b>34</b>
2.8.1 Are QoL, happiness and well-being all the same?.....	35
2.8.2 Quality of life within the tourism literature.....	40
2.8.2.1 QoL of LsEs .....	41
<b>3. Checking-in and house rules – Methodology .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3.2 Research aim and objectives.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3.3 Researcher’s reflexive position.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>3.4 Research philosophy .....</b>	<b>50</b>
3.4.1. Ontology .....	51
3.4.2 Epistemology .....	51
<b>3.5 Research methodology.....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.5.1 Research focus and boundaries.....	52
3.5.2 Data collection .....	54
Pilot study .....	55
Sampling .....	57
Participant selection and recruitment.....	57
<b>3.6 Methods .....</b>	<b>59</b>
3.6.1 In-depth interview.....	59
3.6.2 Interview transcriptions and the native language issue .....	60
<b>3.7 Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>61</b>
3.7.1 Software usage in data analysis .....	64
<b>3.8 Evaluating qualitative research/trustworthiness.....</b>	<b>66</b>

3.9 Ethical considerations .....	67
4. Meeting other guests – Participants .....	69
4.1 Introduction.....	70
4.2 Overall profile of the home-based accommodation businesses and its owners.....	70
4.2.1 Owners .....	70
4.2.2 CHes .....	72
4.3 Synopses.....	75
5. Exploring the surroundings - Findings .....	111
5.1 Chapter introduction.....	112
5.2 Introducing QoL .....	112
5.3 Conceptual framework.....	114
5.3.1. Self-realisation (SR) .....	117
5.3.1.1. Be in control (BiC).....	117
5.3.1.2. Personal aspirations (PA).....	120
5.3.1.3. Time (T) .....	126
5.3.2. Occupation (O) .....	128
5.3.2.1. Day to day (D2D).....	128
5.3.2.2. Emotional business (EB).....	134
5.3.2.3. Professionalization (P) .....	138
5.3.3. Interpersonal Relationships (IR).....	148
5.3.3.1. Sociability (S) .....	148
5.3.3.2. Hosting (Hs).....	152
5.3.3.3. Personal Relationships (PR) .....	158
5.3.3.4. Work-family balance (WFB) .....	162
5.3.4. Finance (F).....	164
5.3.4.1. Business finances (BF) .....	165
5.3.4.2. Profitability (Py) .....	172
5.3.4.3. Importance of Money (IoM) .....	176
5.3.5. Home (H) .....	178
5.3.5.1. Private Home (PH).....	179
5.3.5.2. Shared Home (SH).....	184
5.3.5.3. Work Home (WH) .....	188
5.3.6. Personal Preferences (PP).....	189
5.3.6.1. Hobbies (Hb).....	190
5.3.6.2. Preferences (Pref).....	192
5.3.6.3. Values (V) .....	194
5.3.7. Location (L) .....	196
5.3.7.1. Accessibility (A) .....	197
5.3.7.2 Environment (E).....	199
5.4. Findings summary .....	202
6. Time to rest - Discussion.....	203
6.1. Introduction.....	204
6.2. QoL of LsEs   <i>Desiderata</i> – L, PP and H.....	206
6.3. QoL of LsEs   <i>Modus operandi</i> – IR and F.....	216
6.4. QoL of LsEs   Top layer: <i>Modus vivendi</i> – SR and O .....	229
6.5 Chapter summary .....	245
6.6 Reflections on the label LsE.....	246
7. Checking-out – Beyond the data.....	251
7.1. Introduction.....	252
7.2 Revisiting the previous chapters.....	252

<b>7.3 Key findings.....</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>7.4 Contributions to knowledge.....</b>	<b>259</b>
7.4.1 Theoretical contributions .....	259
7.4.2 Practical contributions .....	259
<b>7.5 Research limitations .....</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>7.6 Future research.....</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>284</b>
Appendix 1 – Definitions of Happiness.....	285
Appendix 2 – Definitions of QoL .....	287
Appendix 3 – List of TURIHAB’s associates .....	288
Appendix 4 – List of B&Bs selected from <a href="http://www.bedandbreakfast.eu">www.bedandbreakfast.eu</a> .....	290
Appendix 5 – Interview Protocol.....	291
Appendix 6 – Extract of Portuguese transcript.....	292
Appendix 7 – Extract of English transcript .....	295
Appendix 8 – Detailed explanation of data analysis process.....	298



## List of figures

Figure 1. LsE as a multifaceted concept .....	15
Figure 2. LsEs' QoL indicators .....	45
Figure 3. Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006) .....	62
Figure 4. Themes development following inductive TA .....	64
Figure 5. Rigour vs trustworthiness .....	66
Figure 6. Geographical distribution of the CHEs.....	72
Figure 7. Conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs.....	205
Figure 8. Interviews' geographical distribution .....	208
Figure 9. SR journey .....	238

## List of tables

Table 1. Quantitative definitions of small tourism and hospitality businesses .....	10
Table 2. Motivations to start up a small T&H business .....	12
Table 3. Family business topics in T&H literature .....	19
Table 4. Entrepreneur's guises .....	26
Table 5. Definitions of LsE and lifestyle businesses .....	28
Table 6. Possible interpretations of the label LsE .....	29
Table 7. Current studies on the QoL of LsEs .....	42
Table 8. Data collection overview .....	55
Table 9. Advantages and disadvantages of CAQDAS usage .....	65
Table 10. Owners' characterisation .....	71
Table 11. Commercial homes' characterisation .....	73
Table 12. Themes' definitions .....	115
Table 13. Themes, subthemes and codes .....	116
Table 14. Theme: Self-realisation .....	117
Table 15. Theme: Occupation .....	128
Table 16. Theme: Interpersonal relationships .....	148
Table 17. Theme: Finance .....	165
Table 18. Theme: Home .....	179
Table 19. Theme: Personal preferences .....	190
Table 20. Theme: Location .....	197

## **List of abbreviations**

A – Accessibility (Subtheme)  
BF – Business Finances (Subtheme)  
BiC – Be in Control (Subtheme)  
B&B – Bed and Breakfast  
CHE – Commercial Home Enterprise  
D2D – Day to Day (Subtheme)  
E – Environment (Subtheme)  
EB – Emotional Business (Subtheme)  
F – Finance (Theme)  
H – Home (Theme)  
Hb – Hobbies (Subtheme)  
Hs – Hosting (Subtheme)  
IoM – Importance of Money (Subtheme)  
IR – Interpersonal Relationships (Theme)  
L – Location (Theme)  
LsE – Lifestyle Entrepreneur  
O – Occupation (Theme)  
P – Professionalisation (Subtheme)  
PA – Personal Aspirations (Subtheme)  
PH – Private Home (Subtheme)  
PP – Personal Preferences (Theme)  
PR – Personal Relationships (Subtheme)  
Pref – Preferences (Subtheme)  
Py – Profitability  
QoL – Quality of Life  
S – Sociability (Subtheme)  
SH – Shared Home (Subtheme)  
SR – Self-realisation (Theme)  
SWB – Subjective well-being  
T – Time (Subtheme)  
T&H – Tourism and Hospitality  
TA – Thematic Analysis  
V – Values (Subtheme)  
WFB – Work-Family Balance (Subtheme)  
WH – Work Home (Subtheme)

# 1

## **I need a break!** **- Setting the scene -**

---

**T**he alarm clock rang at the usual time in the morning, and despite the gigantic wish to turn the alarm off and close my eyes again, I jump out of bed. While dragging myself into the toilet, I start going through my mental to do list for the day, trying to make sure I would remember everything... I desperately need a break! In that same moment, I decide to pick up my phone and search for a B&B that is close enough to drive to, and at the same time in a quiet and relaxing location. After reading some reviews I find one that looks great, located in a national park, room with sea view, very good reviews and available this weekend. It is booked!

A B&B stay is used as an analogy to introduce the chapters to the reader and provide a feeling of embeddedness in the study. In this chapter, in correspondence with the motivations to go on a break and choose a particular B&B, a journey into what prompted the study, some information on the study's background, its aims, objectives and an overview of the structure of the thesis are presented.

---

## 1.1 Research background

Tourism scholars argue that the dominance of small tourism businesses, typically managed by their owners, has increased the significance of entrepreneurship (Shaw & Williams, 2004). However, tourism entrepreneurship literature does not reflect the power owned by small businesses within tourism and hospitality (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Li, 2008). In reality, when conceiving the topic of accommodation, the literature is dominated by research conducted in hotels. A possible justification for such may be the use of a capitalist economy lens that values profit, in which standardised, multinational hotel chains tend to stand out from the rest (Arvidsson, Bauwens, & Peitersen, 2008). Nevertheless, the relevance of small accommodation businesses is underlined in some studies: Andriotis (2002) highlights its positive impact on local economic development; Fuller, Buultjens, and Cummings (2005) discuss its implications for tourism sustainability; Rogerson (2007) argues about its role in policy development and intervention; and Ateljevic and Doorne (2000) add its relevance concerning the support provided to specific lifestyles.

Owners of small businesses tend to be labelled lifestyle entrepreneurs (LsEs) within the tourism literature, and described with an emphasis on the style of life they want to achieve while running their businesses (Lashley & Rowson, 2010; Skokic & Morrison, 2011). The lifestyle label tends to be linked with: owners desire to open a small business where aspects like family, lifestyle and commercial concerns can be considered and balanced (Saxena, 2015); the possibility of merging work and lifestyle as if they are one and the same (Holland & Martin, 2015); and a desire to achieve a certain quality of life (QoL) bounded by personal preferences and values (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). Amongst authors it seems rather consensual that profit and business growth are not LsEs main motivation to begin an entrepreneurial venture (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Shaw & Williams, 1998). Nonetheless, knowledge about the group of tourism entrepreneurs' is scarce (Thomas, Shaw, & Page, 2011) and tends to be focused on the motivations to start the business.

Taking into consideration the apparent agreement that exists in the literature regarding QoL as one of the main drivers for LsEs to engage in tourism related entrepreneurial ventures (Shaw & Williams, 2004; Getz & Petersen, 2005), it becomes relevant to understand how this group of entrepreneurs perceives and defines QoL. It becomes even

more relevant to understand how QoL is defined by LsEs and what it encompasses, considering that the current proposition of QoL as one of the LsEs' main motivations to start an entrepreneurial venture is questionable. Opening a home accommodation business seems to clash with LsEs goal of achieving a better life quality, given that these small businesses tend to be managed by family members, with no employees. If it is true that LsEs open a business because they are not able to cope with a stressful job, long working hours, and dealing with people at work (Baines & Gelder, 2003; Baines & Robson, 2001; Scase & Goffee, 1980), it is questionable how LsEs improve their QoL by opening such a business. Furthermore, if it is true that LsEs have a better life quality after starting a home-based accommodation business, with longer working hours and all the business management responsibilities on their shoulders, then it becomes relevant to understand how they define QoL.

Given the significance of LsEs in tourism and hospitality research, both for the high number of small businesses in the sector and for the opportunity they represent in terms of added knowledge to the current society, having a deeper understanding about LsEs perception of QoL might be helpful in advancing the knowledge about this special group of tourism entrepreneurs.

## **1.2 Research justification**

This research aims to fill the gap that currently exists in tourism literature when the topics of small accommodation businesses, LsEs and QoL overlap. It is argued that the tourism context offers different opportunities for the development of small accommodation businesses, specifically for those people that are attracted to a particular location or that want to pursue a preferred lifestyle (Getz & Carlsen, 2005). Additionally, LsEs have been attracting the attention of researchers (Lynch, 2005b), as they have questioned the dominant line of thought in the sector: subverting the capitalist economy logic into an ethical economy logic by changing profit for well-being (Arvidsson et al., 2008); questioning the managerial knowledge by starting up businesses without previous experience or academic knowledge (Tyrowicz, 2011); challenging management control techniques by for example using seasonality as a tool to reach their lifestyle goals (Goulding, 2009); and puzzling marketers by pushing the sector into innovation, market segmentation and competitiveness development (Komppula, 2014). At the same time, QoL seems to play a crucial role in LsEs' life and in the way they manage their businesses.

Research suggests that QoL works as a driver to engage in tourism entrepreneurial activity (Ahmad, Jabeen, & Khan, 2014), and as a guiding value in business management style (Lundberg & Fredman, 2012). However, despite its relevance, research that focus on the conceptualisation of QoL for this group of tourism entrepreneurs is nearly non-existent.

The present research gives voice to small accommodation business owners, avoiding pre-existing categorisations and preconceived notions and at the same time favouring participants' experiences. By doing so, I recognise myself as one of the main influences in the social construction of the phenomenon under study.

### **1.3 Research aim and objectives**

The aim of this research is to provide a multidimensional picture of the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs that own a commercial home enterprise (CHE).

The aim of the research is addressed by meeting the following research objectives (RO):

RO1. Critically review relevant literature relating to lifestyle entrepreneurship and QoL.

RO2. Investigate how LsEs define and perceive QoL.

RO3. Explore how LsEs' self-perceptions of QoL shape their personal life and their business decisions.

RO4. Discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the research.

### **1.4 Overview of the thesis**

This dissertation is written along seven chapters, as an analogy to an overnight stay in a B&B. **Chapter 1** sets the scene for the present study, presenting information on the study's background, its aim and research objectives, and an overview of the structure of the thesis. **Chapter 2**, addresses the first research objective, by examining the relevant literature, definitions and concepts related with the QoL of LsEs. It begins with an introduction to the concept of LsE. A brief historical perspective of entrepreneurship is provided, followed by its contextualisation within the tourism and hospitality (T&H) literature. Then, the construct of LsE is presented as a multifaceted concept and its definitions and existing discourses are discussed. The chapter ends with a reflection on the topic of QoL, how it has been used amongst T&H research and the QoL of LsEs. **Chapter 3** examines the research philosophy and methodological choices that underpin

the research. It starts with the presentation of the research aim and objectives, and progresses to a reflection about who I am as a researcher and its implications on the research journey. This reflexivity exercise is used to introduce the research philosophy, ontological and epistemological stances. A description of the adopted methodology follows, with the presentation of the research boundaries and focus, and data collection methods. Then, the data analysis process is detailed and the use of a data analysis software discussed. Research quality is assessed, using the concept of trustworthiness, and the chapter ends with a reflection on the ethical issues considered to carry the study. **Chapter 4** introduces the study participants to the reader, as an introduction to the findings and discussion chapters. After a global overview of the participants, each commercial home and its owners are presented. **Chapter 5** discusses the main findings drawn from this research. It provides a comprehensive picture of how LsEs perceive QoL and what it encompasses. It also reveals my interpretation of the findings. **Chapter 6** discusses the findings and their relation to the theoretical concepts presented in the literature review. Finally, **Chapter 7** summarises the most important findings, discussing the theoretical and practical implications. It also provides recommendations for further research.



# 2

## Arriving at the B&B - Literature review -

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**S**aturday morning, after a short drive, I arrive at the B&B. I can recognise the house from the pictures I saw while booking the room. I park the car and head to the B&B entrance. The front door is open, and as I approach it the owners come to the door to greet me. A couple, middle-aged, informally dressed, looking very happy to see me. In a warm welcoming, they introduce themselves, ask me how the trip was, and start talking about the area and its surroundings.

Just like the owners of the B&B welcomed me and gave me information on what to see and do nearby, this chapter provides a review on the relevant literature for the present research.

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## **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of the present research is to provide a composite picture of the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs owners of CHEs. It is of interest to explore and understand how this group of entrepreneurs view and define their chosen way of life, how they perceive their QoL after engaging with a home-business that operates in the accommodation sector, and the impacts of that choice on product construction, business management and on their own lives.

In order to achieve the aim of this research, it becomes necessary to understand the key concepts, theoretical models and literature associated with lifestyle entrepreneurs(hip) and QoL. The present chapter intends to clarify those concepts, informing the research process and facilitating the understanding of the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs. To do so, the chapter starts with a brief introduction to the concept of LsE, followed by an historical perspective of entrepreneurship and the contextualisation of entrepreneurship within the T&H context. The construct of LsE is then discussed as a multifaceted concept, highlighting its different definitions and existing discourses. Then, the topic of QoL is introduced, focusing on how it has been approached within the T&H literature, and the chapter ends with a section on the QoL of LsEs.

## **2.2 Introducing the concept of LsE**

The theoretical construct of LsE is more complex than it appears to be, in the sense that it embraces two different concepts: lifestyle and entrepreneur. These two concepts, based on the familiarity of the words, may seem contradictory. On the one hand lifestyle tends to be related to how people want to live their lives, personal values, personal preferences, leisure, and it seems to possess a more subjective nature. On the other hand, entrepreneur is normally associated with business, profit, work, and through the lenses of the profit driven capitalist society it is desirably measurable with some degree of objectivity. These two concepts combined form the construct “lifestyle entrepreneur”, that brings to life the co-existence of these two apparently incompatible notions. Work and leisure occurring at the same time; business and personal preferences combined together to ensure a way of living; a mixture of a subjective construct (lifestyle) with an objective concept (entrepreneur) add a complexity to its understanding. The intricacy of the concept LsE arises not only from the antonym words that form it, but also from the fact that it is more than the sum of its parts. LsEs are more than business people with a particular interest in

their lifestyle preferences and reducing them to that idea might compromise what the group of tourism entrepreneurs represent in the current society. To better understand the complexity of the construct LsE it is important to know the context in which the concept emerged and how it developed. The next section will discuss the major historical approaches to entrepreneurship and the discussion will follow into entrepreneurship within small tourism and hospitality businesses.

### *2.2.1 A brief history of entrepreneurship*

The term entrepreneurship was brought into the scholar discussion during the eighteenth century, when Cantillon (1953) proposed that the economic market process was driven by entrepreneurship (Swedberg, 2000). Although the debate on the topic started more than three centuries ago, its development and discussion has been discontinuous, oscillating from decades of intense debate to more dormant periods (Acs & Audretsch, 2010; Kirby, 2003; Landström, Harirchi, & Åström, 2012). In the United Kingdom for example, entrepreneurship literature during the period of classical economics (from 1776 to 1870) emerged slowly and was systematically abandoned (Hébert & Link, 1988). During the last thirty years, both in academia and business circles, many studies on the challenges and practicalities of entrepreneurship have been developed (Wiklund, Davidsson, Audretsch, & Karlsson, 2011), however the arguments presented are confusing. Entrepreneurship is a controversial concept in part due to the different approaches and perspectives used by scholars from distinctive disciplinary backgrounds (Davidsson, 2005). Apparently there is no generally accepted theory of entrepreneurship and no generally accepted definition (Alvarez, Barney, & Young, 2010).

The concepts of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur emerged from within the discipline of economics and a large part of the of the studies on the topic have been developed in the context of economics and management (Ireland & Webb, 2006). Early contributions were centred both on the definition of the concept and the role of the entrepreneur. Hébert and Link (1989) are helpful in condensing entrepreneurial economic theories developed throughout the twentieth century into “three major intellectual traditions each tracing its origin to Richard Cantillon” (p. 41). The three traditional schools that characterise the foundations of entrepreneurship are the German school, represented by Schumpeter; the Chicago school, where Knight is one of the key reference authors; and the Austrian school leaded by Mises (Plummer & Pe’er, 2010; Audretsch, 2012).

Despite entrepreneurship's roots in economics, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the discipline became gradually more formalized and mathematically oriented, bringing some challenges to the inclusion of entrepreneurship into theoretical models, leading to a period of decreasing debate within the discipline (Landström et al., 2012). A few years later, scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds started to pay increasing attention to the topic. Academics from areas such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, management and marketing contributed to the building up of entrepreneurship research (Ireland & Webb, 2006). Focusing on exploring how the different disciplines tailored the concept of entrepreneurship would be a deviation to the present research's aim, nevertheless, it is considered important to broadly acknowledge the inputs provided by lenses of scholars from diverse backgrounds, illustrating it with some examples. Anthropologists called the attention for the role of identity, culture and ethics in entrepreneurial theory, and one of their greatest contributions was introducing ethnography as an approach to examine the phenomena. Sociologists brought the context into equation, paying more attention to the impact that the social context might have in the development of new ventures (see Thornton, 1999). Psychologists added a more personal perspective into the debate, focusing on personality traits, skills and behaviours that ensure the success of the entrepreneur (see for example McClelland, 1961). Entrepreneurship has also been studied through the lenses of marketing, with focus on themes like innovation, market orientation and consumer segmentation (see Morris & Gordon, 1987). Researchers from a managerial background have developed studies to understand what originates entrepreneurial activity, how organisations grow and develop, and why they decline and fail (see Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). All these facets of entrepreneurship provided by the different disciplines, led scholars to the discussion on whether entrepreneurship should be a discipline on its own. Low suggested that "entrepreneurship research belongs in the disciplines" arguing that it provides a challenging context to apply and extend the existing knowledge (Low, 2001, p. 21). Furthermore, in the context of small businesses and in particular small tourism and hospitality businesses, it can also be used as a lens to better understand some marginal groups in the current society, as will be emphasised in this discussion.

### *2.2.2 Entrepreneurship within small T&H businesses*

In order to understand small T&H businesses, it is relevant to introduce a body of literature from the small business area together with research specific for the tourism and

hospitality disciplines. A combination of such studies will be helpful in providing a composite picture of the existing research around the topic of small tourism and hospitality businesses in general, and lifestyle entrepreneurship in particular.

Since the early 1980's, the relationship between small businesses and entrepreneurship has been increasingly gaining interest. The early studies tend to refer to entrepreneurship in terms of opportunity, wealth creation and employment generation, and the preferred key measures of business success are profitability and growth (Anderson & Starnawska, 2008; Blackburn & Smallbone, 2008; Stanworth & Curran, 1976; Stringer, 1981; Walker & Brown, 2004). Despite the existence of several definitions of small businesses, authors have not reached a consensual definition (Storey, 1994).

A similar situation occurs within the tourism and hospitality literature, where studies of small businesses use several definitions for the concept without an agreed definition. The table below (see Table 1) summarises some quantitative definitions used by authors in relevant studies of small tourism and hospitality businesses. The information in the table highlights both the non-agreement regarding the definition of small businesses, as well as the variety of measures used by researchers to define it, from number of bedrooms to number of employees.

*Table 1. Quantitative definitions of small tourism and hospitality businesses*

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Ateljevic (2007)	< 30 beds
Buick, Halcro and Lynch (2000)	< 15 rooms
Ioannides and Petersen (2003)	< 85 beds
Lowe (1998)	≤ 30 bedrooms
Lynch (2005)	≤ 15 rooms
Lynch, McIntosh and Tucker (2009)	≤ 11 rooms
Morrison (1992)	< 100 beds
Morrison, Pearce, Moscardo, Nadkarni and O'Leary (1996)	≤ 25 rooms
Peacock (1993)	< 30 employees [restaurant] < 80 employees [hotel]
Thomas, Friel, Jameson and Parsons (1997)	< 50 employees

Stanworth and Curran (1976) criticise the small business entrepreneurship research arguing that small firms research is not properly articulated due to the number of neglected facets. The authors go even further claiming that the phenomenon should be studied in detail to reach an overall understanding of the characteristics of small firms.

Stringer (1981) reinforces that line of argument, emphasising that there are several components left outside of the studies, such as political, psychological and social issues. An additional layer of criticism is added by Shepherd and Wiklund (2005) argument regarding the quantitative nature of the approaches used to define small businesses. From the authors perspective, researchers use statistical approaches like for example the number of employees, number of bedrooms, sales turnover, among others, with the aim to define what characterises a small business. The use of such measures to define small businesses is also criticised by Peacock (1993) as being a poor solution. The author calls the attention of researchers to the use of arbitrary cut-off points in such definitions. Thomas (2000) adds that researchers seem to define the size of the businesses based on particular projects, making it very challenging to reach an agreement. Shepherd and Wiklund (2005) go even further in the discussion emphasising that the use of statistical indicators to define small businesses does not allow the recognition of the sector heterogeneity. Thomas (2000) strengthens this position adding that not acknowledging how heterogeneous small businesses are, within the tourism and hospitality sector, will only complicate its understanding.

Although the majority of the definitions of small businesses in the tourism and hospitality literature make use of quantitative measures, some authors in response to the raised criticisms, propose definitions without that quantitative boundary. Somehow, the criticisms made pushed the research in small businesses to a more diversified range of topics, as the following examples illustrate. Morrison (1998a) defines a small hospitality firm as a business that is personally managed by its owner(s) and that in comparison to largest operations in the industry, is perceived as small regarding its facilities, capacity and number of employees (p. 134). The family owned nature of some of the small businesses reflects another definitional attempt, that focus solely on the family ownership of the business and not on its size (Getz, Carlsen, & Morrison, 2004; Getz & Carlsen, 2000). The concept of CHE proposed by Lynch (2003; 2005) is another example of the broadening of the small businesses research within the tourism and hospitality literature. Lastly, studies about entrepreneurs' motivation to start a business in the tourism and hospitality sector gave place to several definitions of lifestyle entrepreneurs (see further discussion in section 2.5).

Despite being known that factors such as personality, skills, age, gender, lifecycle stage, and socio-political and economic environment influence entrepreneurs' decision to start up a business (Dewhurst & Horobin, 1998), one of the topics that is widely debated in the small tourism and hospitality businesses literature is related to the motivational factors to start up an entrepreneurial venture. The existing body of literature suggests that the motivational factors range between economic and non-economic factors (Shaw & Williams, 2004). In particular, within small scale T&H businesses, non-economic factors seem to be of higher preponderance as summarised in Table 2.

*Table 2. Motivations to start up a small T&H business*

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Additional income	Ioannides and Petersen (2003)
	Business opportunity	Buick, Halcro, and Lynch (2000) Getz and Petersen (2005) Glancey and Pettigrew (1997)
	Challenge	Getz and Carlsen (2000) Komppula (2004)
	Independence; Autonomy	Holland, (2016) Holland and Martin (2015) Saxena (2015)
	Being own boss	Getz and Petersen (2005) Lashley and Rowson (2007) Page, Forer, and Lawton (1999) Thomas, Friel, Jameson, and Parsons (1997)
	Interesting work	Page et al., (1999) Shaw and Williams (1987) Thomas et al., (1997)
	Live in particular area; Support hobbies	Getz and Carlsen (2000) Getz and Petersen (2005) Ioannides and Petersen (2003) Mottiar (2007) Shaw and Williams (1987) Thomas et al., (1997) Williams, Shaw, and Greenwood (1989)
<b>Non-economic</b>	Meet people; To host	Getz and Petersen (2005) Hall and Rusher (2004) Lynch (1999)
	Quality of life; Work-life balance	Getz et al., (2004) Getz and Carlsen (2000) Getz and Petersen (2005) Hall and Rusher (2004) Holland (2016) Holland and Martin (2015) Morrison (2006) Saxena (2015) Szivas (2001)

From Table 2 it can be established that non-economic motives are at the heart of entrepreneurs' decision to open a small T&H business, and it seems consensual among authors to name this particular group of entrepreneurs as "lifestyle" entrepreneurs.

### **2.3 The emergence of the label LsE**

The notion of lifestyle entrepreneur emerges from within the small business and family business literatures. In a seminal work, Gray (1986) refers to the LsE as someone "who enjoys the fringe benefits of success and looks on a business as a means to obtain the trappings of the 'good life' (...) he/she is not interested in any business that might involve personnel or growth problems, or extensive financial or time commitments" (p.16). A few years later, Reid et al. (1999) consolidate the idea that a considerable number of small enterprises tend to be lifestyle oriented as an alternative to growth oriented, grounded on the results from their research conducted among 234 Scottish and Irish family businesses. It is interesting to notice that these early definitions of LsEs tend to focus on the issues of growth and profit. Suggesting an entanglement with the history of the concept of entrepreneurship and its emergence from within the discipline of economics, as well as a connection with the quantitative nature of the small business' definition discussed earlier.

Soon after Gray's study, Shaw, Williams, and Greenwood (1987) associate the label lifestyle with small tourism businesses. The label lifestyle entrepreneur starts to be used in the tourism and hospitality literature, not surprisingly, taking into consideration that small firms dominate the tourism and hospitality industry (Morrison & Conway, 2007). Morrison (1996) argues that there are four main reasons for the existence of a higher number of small business: firstly, the relative ease of entry into the sector due to lower initial capital and required qualifications; secondly, high market demand in specific locations and no corporate standardisation rules; thirdly, due to the small business nature it seems easier to obtain higher levels of customer satisfaction; lastly, a small business, typically managed by a family, can be economically viable mostly due to the use of family labour. The existence of a considerably high number of small tourism and hospitality businesses makes it relevant to explore and research from distinctive angles.

Within the tourism and hospitality literature, the definition of LsE has its roots in the work of Williams et al. (1989), where 411 interviews were conducted among tourism related firms that operate in Cornwall. The authors argue that due to low entry barriers in



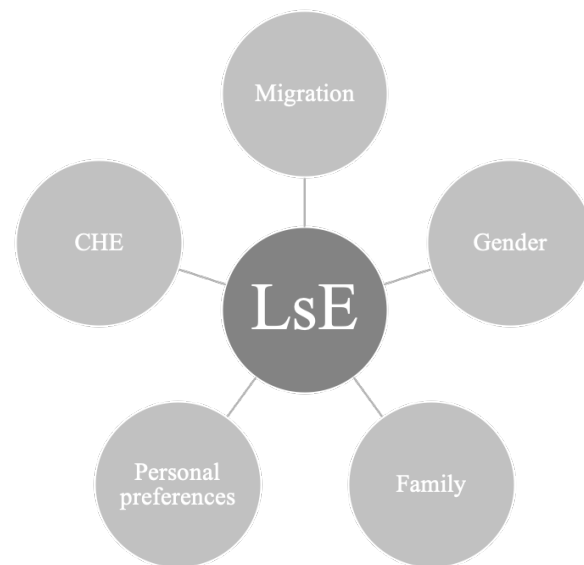
tourism business ownership, namely capital needed and required experience, entrepreneurs open small enterprises such as guesthouses and bed & breakfasts. Furthermore, they describe tourism LsEs as “a group for whom involvement in tourist businesses is as much a form of consumption, as it is of production” (p. 1650), in the sense that by moving to Cornwall in order to appreciate the landscape, enjoy the lifestyle, and at the same time open a small business, these entrepreneurs are also consumers of the product they are producing: tourism. Williams et al. (1989), corroborate the argument that LsEs are non-growth oriented entrepreneurs given that their motivations to operate a tourism business are a mix between profit and socio-cultural factors, neglecting profit as the primarily motivation. Shaw and Williams (1997, 1998) argue that the tourism entrepreneur is different from the entrepreneur in other economic sectors, due to the particular focus on lifestyle motives. The findings of Thomas et al. (1997) strengthen the prominence given to non-financial motives by owners of small tourism businesses. Using a sample of 1300 firms spread across the United Kingdom, the authors conclude that 80% of the owners confirm that their motivations to start a business are attached to lifestyle variables such as living in the area, the possibility of being their own bosses and performing interesting work.

The initial definitions of LsE within both the small business and the tourism and hospitality literature, are linked with two main arguments: firstly, this particular group of entrepreneurs seems not to be primarily focused on enterprise growth nor profit; secondly, their businesses tend to be shaped by owners’ personal preferences and type of life they want to engage with. Based on the assumption that LsEs can be used as a lens to gain a deeper understanding about small T&H businesses (Lynch, McIntosh, & Tucker, 2009), life choices, and from a macro perspective changes in the current society, it is interesting to understand how the concept and its research has progressed.

## **2.4 LsE as a multifaceted concept**

Although there is no agreed definition of LsE within the T&H literature, there is a set of studies that contributed to a better understanding of the concept. Those studies together, form a body of research that expands and progresses the definition of LsE. The term can be considered multidimensional given that there are a set of tangential dimensions, or areas of research within T&H, that shed some light on the concept. The notion of LsE can be seen as a melting pot that brings together several other dimensions related to the

management of small businesses. In other words, LsE can be analysed as a confluence point where multiple dimensions related to small businesses meet, namely: gender issues; family concerns; migration; personal preferences; commercial home enterprises; and lifestyle issues (see Fig. 1). This section begins with the exploration of LsE as a multifaceted concept and will follow to its definition amongst T&H research, considering the contribution of several studies.



*Figure 1. LsE as a multifaceted concept*

#### *2.4.1 LsE as a multifaceted concept | Migration*

Migration has been one focus of small T&H business literature, within which the relationship between migration and lifestyle motives is of particular importance (Shaw & Williams, 2004). Research on the topic provides helpful insights into the understanding of the concept of LsE, particularly regarding its comprehensiveness and connections with overlapping areas of study.

Migration emerges as a relevant area of research, mainly because over the last decades, based on political and economic motives, thousands of migrants left their home countries to look for a better life abroad. These migrants often choose the tourism industry to start their entrepreneurial ventures (Simon, 1993; Ward & Jenkins, 1984). Pechlaner, Bò, and Volgger (2012) investigation into the reasons why tourism is considered an attractive industry for entrepreneurs suggests three main reasons. Firstly, the assumption that there are low entry barriers in the T&H sector, given that skills are transferable and easily acquired. Secondly, it is an industry that values international ties, therefore migrants tend

to be welcomed. Lastly, transcultural skills are considered important within the sector, which is not surprising taking into consideration the high number of travellers from different nationalities that visit foreign countries.

During the 1960s and 1970s there was an increase in immigrant business activity that attracted the attention of researchers to the topic (Armengot, Parellada, & Carbonell, 2010). Since then several immigrant communities have been depicted in the literature (Di Domenico, 2003), and the emphasis on the competitive advantage of business establishment and family ties seems to be consensual amongst authors (see for example Fadahunsi, Smallbone, & Supri, 2000; Ward, 1991). Historically, there seems to be a change in the type of entrepreneurs that decide to move to a different country within Europe to open a T&H related business. Until the late 1990s, family members migrate mainly to reunify the family and usually a pioneer male creates the necessary conditions for the dependant family to follow (Kraler, Kofman, Kohli, & Schmoll, 2011). More recently, a new trend is appearing in which well-educated migrants decide to move out from areas of economic prosperity in the search for a better quality of life (Lardies, 1999). The search for an enhanced life quality, even though the meaning of enhanced life quality is very subjective, appears to be the common denominator for entrepreneurs that choose to migrate to start a T&H related business venture. At the same time, the search for a better QoL is the link between LsEs and the theme migration, whether migration represents moving to another country, or to another region of the country of origin (in-migration). In the following paragraphs two different studies on migration will be briefly discussed to illustrate relevance of migrations studies in the conceptualisation of LsE.

Kordel's (2014) study on German retirement migrants in Spain suggests that the migration was motivated by a desire to "live a leisure-orientated way of life" (p.10). The author argues that the decision for moving is grounded in the perceptions of the place and lifestyle that the migrants have. Those perceptions need confirmation through the daily routines and style of life in the new location. Social ties tend to be created through leisure activities, which in turn re-affirm the initial perceptions and increase the perceived level of security. Spain becomes home, a space of good life for these German migrants, who will eventually return to their country of origin due to age related constraints. This study acknowledges the importance of having a space where life quality is enhanced, a place to

live a good life, based on weather, landscapes, natural resources or familiarity with the local. The search for a “space of the good life” is shared with LsEs.

Holland and Martin's (2015) study explores the work choices of lifestyle migrants in Chamonix. Interviews with lifestyle migrants from the United Kingdom reveal that this highly educated group purposively left their careers to go to Chamonix and work in a tourism-related business. In line with other studies that explore LsE's motivations to engage with entrepreneurial activity in the T&H sector, the authors conclude that the key driver to work choice is lifestyle. Additionally, the findings suggest that work and lifestyle coexist in harmony, in the sense that work and life are one and the same. The respondents use work to instrumentally support their lifestyle, as a means to an end. This allows an alignment between their favourite hobby (mountain related activities) and their work, resulting in an increased satisfaction with work. Holland and Martin's study sets aside the dichotomy profit/lifestyle, suggesting that work and lifestyle can coexist without competing, enhancing one's quality of life.

#### *2.4.2 LsE as a multifaceted concept | Gender*

A significant part of the studies in female entrepreneurship tend to explore women's motivations for setting up a business (see for example Goffee & Scase, 1985; Read, 1998). Read (1998) claims that women motivations to start an entrepreneurial venture are often associated with the possibility of having more control over their own lives, more independence and freedom. However, according to the author, some are affected by factors that have their origin in the concept of home or are associated with their societal roles as women. Being in control of their lives represents the possibility of coordinating their domestic responsibilities and their work lives. Carter (2000) recognises that the pursuing of personal goals is more important to women than profit, arguing that women appear to start entrepreneurial ventures to pursue intrinsic goals such as independence and flexibility. Furthermore, the author suggests that starting-up a business can be a viable solution to effectively run both business and domestic lives. Some studies that examine small hospitality related businesses suggest that it is a type of business dominated by females (Stringer, 1981; Whatmore, 1991). In this respect it is relevant to mention Walton's (1978) study on the “Blackpool landlady”, the female owner of small accommodation businesses who uses the family home as a business to increase the monthly income. More recently, Sullivan and Meek's (2012) review on gender and

entrepreneurship strengthens the idea of female entrepreneurship as a solution for some challenges raised by traditional jobs, such as the work-family balance. Women tend to have a greater responsibility for housework and childcare and in this context starting up a business allows them to gain control over their lives and more flexibility.

#### *2.4.3 LsE as a multifaceted concept | Family*

It is generally accepted that the hospitality sector is dominated by small businesses, however studies conducted with family businesses are scarce (Sweeney, 2008). The book “The family business in tourism and hospitality” written by Getz, Carlsen and Morrison (2004) was pioneer. Prior to this publication, little attention had been given to such type of businesses within the tourism and hospitality literature. Getz et al., (2004) argue that the hospitality industry attracts families to start entrepreneurial ventures, possibly due to location factors and lifestyle issues. The authors highlight the scope and significance of such businesses, arguing that it is relevant to advance research and knowledge on the topic given that family businesses are dominant in many national economies. Family firms are defined by the authors as businesses established based on the preferences of the owners and their families, in opposition to businesses created for profit reasons only. Furthermore, the authors agree that the CHE is considered a type of business that lends itself well to families that wish to increase the time spent at home with their families. Getz and Carlsen (2005) analyse the family businesses research within the T&H literature, identifying four major themes: operations of family businesses; family businesses and entrepreneurship; family roles and responsibilities; and family business development (see Table 3).

In regard to **operations of family businesses**, the authors discuss three topics. Firstly, the challenge of defining a family business, that can be justified as being a perpetuation of the disagreement regarding the definition of small businesses (Thomas, 1998). Additionally, the link made between family businesses and lifestyle issues can be problematic from an economical performance perspective. It seems like small business failure rate is higher (Boer, 1998), probably due to lack of tourism related experience and no formal business related knowledge (Shaw & Williams, 1987). The seasonality of the sector adds some pressure to family entrepreneurs, particularly a cash flow problem (Baum, 1998) that is sometimes turned into an opportunity to spend time as a family and pursue lifestyle goals. Baines and Gelder (2003), for example, discuss the notion of

flexibility within family businesses, arguing that on the one hand it can allow families to arrange the business around the family routine, but it can also restrict family time due to long working hours. The latter seems to be more common in situations where the family home is used as the business base.

*Table 3. Family business topics in T&H literature*

	Topics	Author(s)
<b>Operations of family business</b>	Definition	Heck, Hoy, Poutziouris, and Steier (2008) Middleton (2001) Thomas (1998)
	Performance	Nilsson, Petersen, and Wanhill (2005) Shaw and Williams (1990, 1998)
	Seasonality	Baum (1998) Getz and Carlsen (2000) Getz and Nilsson (2004)
<b>Family business and entrepreneurship</b>	Personal characteristics of entrepreneurs	King (1995) Morrison, Rimmington, and Williams (1999) Williams et al., (1989)
	Motives and ambitions	Ateljevic and Doorne (2000) Basu (2004) Getz and Carlsen (2000) Pearce (1990) Shaw and Williams (1987)
<b>Family roles and responsibilities</b>	Gender	Gladstone and Morris (2000) Kinnaird and Hall (1994) Leontidou (1994) McGibbon (2000) Scott (1997) Sinclair (1997) Walker, Valaoras, Gurung, and Godde (2001)
	Family dynamics	Getz and Carlsen (2000) Lynch and MacWhannell (2000) Stringer (1981)
<b>Family business development</b>	Location	Baum (1998) Morrison (1998) Page et al., (1999)
	Development of the destination	Dahles (1998) Komppula (2014) Tinsley and Lynch (2001)
	Sustainability	Ateljevic and Doorne (2000, 2004) Carlsen, Getz, and Ali-Knight (2001) McKercher (1998)
	Culture	Getz and Jamieson (1997) Gladstone and Morris (2000) Notzke (1999)

(Adapted from Getz and Carlsen, 2005)

The link between **family business and entrepreneurship** is researched with emphasis on: the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs; and entrepreneurs' motivations and ambitions. The question "who are tourism entrepreneurs?" has been debated for decades, and studies suggest some personal characteristics of such entrepreneurs. For example, people that want to be independent and have control (Morrison et al., 1999), and people that are lifestyle oriented (Nilsson, Petersen, & Wanhill, 2005). Small family entrepreneurs' motivations to start-up the business and their ambitions is a well-researched area as discussed in section 2.2.2.

**Roles and responsibilities** of family members are mirrored in studies about gender roles, and family dynamics. Family dynamics are very important in family businesses because it typically involves more than one family member, making the balance between business and family crucial in business management (Getz & Carlsen, 2005). Regarding gender issues, the preponderance of women operating T&H family businesses has called the attention of researchers (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994; Sinclair, 1997; Stringer, 1981) as discussed before (see section 2.4.2).

Concerning the **development of the family business**, the most relevant topics are: the location of the business; the development of the destination; sustainability issues; and cultural issues. Family businesses seem to dominate in more rural and remote areas (see for example Morrison, 1998; Shaw, Williams, & Greenwood, 1988). The setting of the business is critical among T&H businesses, given that natural attractions, landscape and areas of high demand are factors that attract entrepreneurs to certain locations (Nilsson et al., 2005). Amongst the literature, opinions are divided between positive and negative implications of family firms in destination development. On the one hand, research supports the idea that small family firms have a prominent role in destination development (Getz & Carlsen, 2000) given that they ensure an additional income in destinations, and owners develop ties with the location, committing to the area. On the other hand, it seems that their contribution is not long-term due to the high rate of business failure and non-profit motivations (Boer, 1998; Dahles, 1998). Regarding sustainability, some studies argue that family businesses are environmentally friendly, for example Carlsen et al. (2001) argue that family business owners in Western Australia are more inclined to conservation. Font, Garay, and Jones (2014) corroborate those findings, adding that small firms dispersed along 57 European protected areas, are motivated to be

sustainable and their owners take responsibility for the environment. Lastly, culture also exerts influence on family businesses. For example, Shaw and Williams (1998) argue that entrepreneurs tend to become embedded in their local communities, influencing the local culture and being influenced by it. Ateljevic and Doorne (2003) call the attention of researchers to the lack of studies connecting entrepreneurship and socio-cultural aspects, conducting a study in Croatia that illustrates local culture acting as an economic regulator. Since Ateljevic and Doorne's publication an increasing number of studies include a cultural analysis of entrepreneurs (see for example Skokic, Lynch, & Morrison, 2016; Tucker, 2010).

#### *2.4.4 LsE as a multifaceted concept | Personal preferences*

As mentioned before, some early studies within the T&H literature focus on identifying the motivations of LsEs to start-up a small business. Research underlines that the majority of the owners are motivated by non-economic motives, in particular by motives related to the style of life they want to achieve (Dewhurst & Horobin, 1998; Morrison, Baum, & Andrew, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Thomas, 2004). The start-up motivations are commonly linked with LsEs personal preferences, in the sense that what LsEs favour tend to affect their choices. For this reason, studies on LsEs motivations can be seen as a vehicle to understand their personal preferences.

According to Lashley and Rowson (2007) tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are those that start their own tourism related business motivated by the will to change their lifestyle and be in control of their own lives. Being one's own boss is something important to LsEs; they prefer to be personally in charge of their professional sphere. Getz and Petersen's (2005) study on the profit orientation of family business owners in the resort areas of Canada and Denmark, shows that one of the motivators to start up an entrepreneurial venture is interest in people. Ollenburg and Buckley (2007) strengthen this argument, suggesting that farm entrepreneurs in Australia give a particular importance to the social aspects related to the business. The authors argue that having a personal interest in people, and the increased possibility of meeting new people are significant motivations to start a tourism business. In a study with European entrepreneurs that migrate to Cataluña and Languedoc, Lardies' (1999) argues that the primary motives to start operating a tourism business are familiarity with the place and location. Mottiar's (2007) research on LsEs interaction with local entrepreneurs in Westport, reinforces the importance of the location



choice for tourism entrepreneurs and how embedded they tend to feel in the chosen local community, despite their lack of involvement in formal cooperation. Thus, location choice seems to be significant to LsEs life quality, and it also reflects LsEs personal preferences. Skokic and Morrison (2011) reinforce the priority tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs give to the conscious choice of a particular lifestyle over profit and business growth. Furthermore, Lundberg and Fredman (2012) argue that tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs aim to achieve a better quality of life and in order to do so, they chose to leave their previous life to engage in a new lifestyle of their choice. A lifestyle where the professional and personal spheres coexist in harmony, a lifestyle where to work is to do one's favourite activity, increasing the perception of work satisfaction (Holland, 2016). These studies show the importance of work-life balance and life quality to tourism entrepreneurs. It is crucial for LsEs to perceive their life as something that makes them feel like they are living a good life.

Whether it is a matter of being able to control one's life, the possibility of meeting new and interesting people, living in a particular location, or being able to live a life that gives the sense of fulfilment, entrepreneurs' personal preferences tailor their businesses.

#### *2.4.5 LsE as a multifaceted concept | Commercial home enterprises*

The concept of commercial home was first introduced by Lynch (2003) as an alternative to hotels and private homes, despite being influenced by both. CHEs are also a combination of aspects related to the domains of hospitality (Lashley, 2000). A CHE is defined as a type "of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared" (Lynch, 2005, p. 534). Under the denomination of commercial home a range of accommodation types can be included, from bed and breakfasts (B&B) to small hotels, being the key feature to distinguish a CHE from other types of accommodation the concept of home in which the business is developed (Lynch, 2005a).

The construct of CHE challenges the primacy of hotels in the accommodation sector and recognises the relevance of small accommodation businesses. Furthermore, according to Lynch et al. (2009), CHEs can be considered a lens to study small businesses in the accommodation sector. In an article where an United Kingdom perspective on the CHE

is given, Lynch (2005) proposes the study of small accommodation businesses through the lens of CHE. The author argues that the concept can be helpful in the understanding of relevant hospitality related issues, such as: gender issues, host-guest space, home setting, family involvement, importance of owner values in business management, the concept of LsE, among others (p.549).

There seems to be an agreement regarding the connection between CHEs and LsEs, and research on the topic has been increasing in the last decade. Studies regarding the relationship between hosts and their commercial homes, and hosts and guests are particularly relevant to a better understanding of the concept of LsE. Sweeney (2008), for example, studies the relationship between the host, owner of a CHE, and the commercial home, as it influences the product construction and guest experience. The author identifies and explains the main components of the host-home bond in a conceptual model with three areas (home, host, and business), emphasising a complex interplay between host and home. Sweeney and Lynch (2009) further explore the relationship between the host and their home, suggesting a typology of commercial home hosts. The authors propose four categories: economic, the CHE is a resource and owners' main motivation is profitability; eco-socio, the CHE is a form of additional income to support the preferred lifestyle; socio-eco, the CHE provides an attractive style of life and hosts enjoy welcoming and meeting people; and social: the CHE is mainly a place of enjoyment to share with guests. The additional category, ego, is a sub-category of both eco-socio and socio-eco and represents hosts that use their home as vehicle to show their personal accomplishments. McIntosh, Lynch, and Sweeney's (2010) study adds knowledge to the relationship between the hosts and their commercial homes. The authors examine New Zealand hosts, owners of commercial homestay businesses, and identify three themes: self-marginalisation, as hosts marginalise themselves by choosing to have such a business; tyranny of the host, mirrored in hosts' rejection of the standard expectations of commercial hospitality; and authors suggest that by challenging the norms of big hospitality firms hosts provide an anticommercial hospitality.

In regards to the relationship between host and guest, Di Domenico and Lynch (2007) underline the complexity raised by the coexistence of both business and personal spheres in the commercial home, emphasising the challenges it raises. Namely, hosts need to: find strategies to cope with a home that is at the same time work; define the line that separates

guests' desire to interact with hosts and hosts' privacy; find strategies to apply social control to convey a message of ownership and authority. Kastenholtz and Sparrer (2009) analyse commercial homes in rural areas of three different countries (Portugal, Spain and Germany). The authors argue that the relationship between host and guest is crucial to the provision of the tourism experience, regardless of the location of the small business. However, the interaction between host and guest may take place in indifferent moments according to the different locations and cultures, for example in Portugal and Spain it usually happens during meal time whereas in Germany it tends to happen more around organised activities. It appears that the intensity of those relationships is not comparable to the ones usually found in bigger accommodation businesses like hotels.

Understanding the intricacies involved in the relationship between hosts and their commercial homes, and hosts and guests, provides additional knowledge about owners' style of life. Given that CHEs appear to be a type of business that lends itself well to LsEs motivations of being own boss, freedom and increased QoL, advancing CHEs knowledge is at the same time better understanding LsEs and the broader link between this type of hospitality and society.

Studies on the topics of migration, gender, family, entrepreneurs' personal preferences, and CHEs offer valuable information to the comprehension of the label LsE. Each one of them adds a layer of knowledge, providing a different perspective to this intricate and complex academic label. Still, despite the considerable volume of connecting studies that enlarge the knowledge about LsEs, discussed in the previous sections, an agreed definition is still non-existent. The next section focuses on the definitions of LsE, contextualised in the T&H literature.

## **2.5 Definition of LsE**

LsEs are different from “normal” entrepreneurs in that they seem to ground their choices of engaging in entrepreneurial ventures based on intrinsic motivations, such as: lifestyle, quality of life, personal values and preferences. Notwithstanding, it seems like researchers have overlooked that issue until the early 1990s when entrepreneurs' motivations started to be accounted for and investigated. The initial definitions of LsEs support this argument, as authors define LsEs as entrepreneurs that start a business based on non-profit motives (see Gray, 1986; Reid et al., 1999; Thomas et al., 1997; Williams

et al., 1989), limiting its definition to the duality profit/non-profit (Beaver, 2002). The typologies of tourism entrepreneurs suggested by different authors are also a good illustration of the narrowness of the label's initial definitions.

The heterogeneity within the group of tourism entrepreneurs that own small businesses prompt several authors to propose typologies of entrepreneurs/businesses. These typologies are an attempt to create a differentiation between them and enable a better understanding. The segmentation based on entrepreneurs' business orientation is considered the most relevant (Koh, 1996), and several authors proposed typologies on those grounds. For example, Burns and Dewhurst (1996) argue that tourism entrepreneurs can be segmented into lifestyle entrepreneurs and growth-oriented entrepreneurs, based on their motivations to start and run the business. Shaw and Williams (1998) suggest the distinction between two types of small tourism businesses owners: "constrained entrepreneurs" and "non-entrepreneurs". The set of constrained entrepreneurs is characterised by the authors as a group that includes younger owners, usually with a greater level of economic reasons to start the business. They tend to have a professional background that is non business related, and one of the motivations to start the tourism entrepreneurial venture is lifestyle. However, there seems to be a balance between lifestyle goals and business goals that makes the group more prone to business growth and development. The latter is defined by owners that move into tourism destinations mainly for lifestyle reasons. For example people that choose to semi-retire in a specific location, or people that always wanted to have a business and live in a particular place. This group of people is attracted by the idea of being their own boss. They believe that having no one to report to and being able to make their own decisions gives them the perception of a better lifestyle. The authors argue that within this group the entrepreneurial activity is limited, due to aging owners and lack of experience in business management, hence the name non-entrepreneurs. Dewhurst and Horobin (1998) stretch the bifurcation between entrepreneurs that focus more on lifestyle issues and entrepreneurs with growth orientation into a continuum, suggesting that small business owners can be located between commercial and lifestyle goals, depending on their entrepreneurial orientation. Shaw (2003) revisiting Shaw and Williams (1998) typology, suggests that lifestyle oriented entrepreneurs can be subdivided into two groups: non-entrepreneurs and ethically driven entrepreneurs. Non-entrepreneurs' definition is similar to the one provided by Shaw and Williams (1998), for example owners that moved to a

different area due to semi-retirement and decided to have a form of additional income. Whereas ethically driven entrepreneurs are owners driven by personal values and beliefs that decide to open a small business in order to stay tuned with their principles. Morrison (2006) explores the extent to which owners of small family tourism businesses can be categorised as entrepreneurial. Based on the assumptions that the entrepreneurial process suffers influences from social, economic and psychological factors, and that the degree to which the entrepreneurs are influenced by each one of these factors allows their categorisation, the author identifies ten guises (see Table 4).

*Table 4. Entrepreneur's guises*

<b>Guise</b>	<b>Description</b>
Copreneur	Marital and business partners who also manage the business
Ethnic	Entrepreneur from an ethnic minority group
Family	Entrepreneur who mix family and business
Female	Female entrepreneur who uses the business as an alternative to manage family responsibilities
Intrapreneur	A family member, different from the founder, who applies entrepreneurial characteristics to the business
Lifestyle	Entrepreneur whose primary concern is to maintain a preferred way of life
Micro	Entrepreneur who employs less than ten people
Portfolio	Entrepreneur who concurrently owns more than one business
Serial	Entrepreneur who owns a consecutive series of businesses
Social	Entrepreneur who combines commercial skills with social goals

(Adapted from Morrison, 2006, p. 198)

Even though dichotomies may be helpful in facilitating the understanding of the concept, it can also be considered as restrictive in the sense that only the extremes are explained. All the shades in between are not defined, and therefore the risk of oversimplifying a concept that is complex needs to be considered.

As previously mentioned, the concept of LsE emerges from within the small business literature, in Gray's (1986) work, and soon after starts to be explored within the T&H literature. Since then a considerable amount of studies investigate the concept of LsE, making different contributions to the label's definition. Some of the most relevant contributions are shown in Table 5. Firstly, it is interesting to note that there is no agreement on whether it is the business or the entrepreneur that is lifestyle oriented. Nonetheless, the idea besides both concepts is the same, which is the privilege given to issues related to the style of life. Additionally, the notion of lifestyle, applied to the

concept of the single tourism entrepreneur has different names: lifestyle entrepreneur; lifestyle proprietor; small business owners; tourism entrepreneur. The same applies when the prefix lifestyle is used together with tourism businesses: lifestyle business; lifestyle firms; lifestyle oriented small tourist firms (LOST). The multitude of definitions and names given to such entrepreneurs and businesses allows foreseeing the fuzziness of the concept.

The definitions of LsE presented in the table below (Table 5), seem to agree on the importance the style of life has for tourism entrepreneurs, whether style of life means: the possibility of expressing their sociological or political ideology (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000); the alignment between personal preferences and business activities (Hollick & Braun, 2005; Kaplan, 2003; Marcketti, Niehm, & Fuloria, 2006; Saxena, 2015); the prominence of lifestyle/QoL related issues over business profitability (Bolton & Thompson, 2003; Deakins & Friel, 2003; Deakins & Freel, 2009; Heelas & Morris, 1992; Lashley & Rowson, 2010; Maritz & Beaver, 2006); securing enough income to sustain the desired lifestyle (Dewhurst & Horobin, 1998; Morrison et al., 2001); or improving life quality (Heelas & Morris, 1992; Lashley & Rowson, 2010). In respect to the definition of **lifestyle firms**, it is also commonly agreed that the business serves to support lifestyle issues. Williams et al. (1989) findings that small tourism businesses are both a form of consumption and production was the starting point for tourism researchers' interest in understanding this particular type of entrepreneurs and businesses. Morrison et al. (1999) go bit further, adding that the motivation to have such a business is usually lifestyle related, and linked to a desire of balancing family needs, income and lifestyle. Whereas some authors emphasise the relevance of owners' hobbies and preferences in starting-up the business (Burns, 2001; Claire, 2012). Scase (2000) adds a different perspective, suggesting that a lifestyle business allows its owners to run away from the demands of modern life.

Table 5. Definitions of LsE and lifestyle businesses

	Definition	Author(s)
<b>Lifestyle entrepreneur</b>	LsEs often reject economic and business growth as an expression of their sociopolitical ideology	Ateljjevic and Doorne (2000)
	LsEs align entrepreneurial activity with personal circumstances and style of life	Kaplan (2003)
	LsEs prioritise personal over business goals	Bolton and Thompson (2003)
	Lifestyle proprietors are concerned with survival and securing sufficient income to ensure that the business provides them and their family with a satisfactory level of funds to sustain enjoyment in their chosen lifestyle	Morrison et al. (2001)
	LsEs are primarily motivated by the need to succeed at living a certain QoL by maintaining an income which allows them to survive	Deakins and Freel (2006)
	LsEs as seeking to shape a lifestyle not in order to conform to social conventions but in the hope of personal happiness and improved quality of life	Heelas and Morris (1992)
	The tourism entrepreneur tends to be an autonomy seeker who has entered the industry predominantly as a lifestyle choice in which entrepreneurship is closely linked to family and environment	Hollick and Braun (2005)
	[The New Zealand] LsEs are opportunity based entrepreneurs, that choose work-life balance versus wealth creation.	Maritz and Beaver (2006)
	LsEs as individuals who own and operate businesses closely aligned with their personal values, interests, and passions	Marcketti, Niehm and Fuloria (2006)
	LsEs key motives to operate a business are more associated with improving their quality of life	Lashley and Rowson (2010)
	LsEs consider family and lifestyle concerns equally significant in their business	Saxena (2015)
	Small business owners consider business success to be a trade-off between income/growth and quality of life goals	Dewhurst and Horobin (1998)
<b>Lifestyle business</b>	Lifestyle business tend to grow out of a hobby and employ few (if any) others	Claire (2012)
	Lifestyle firms are a form of consumption as much as production	Williams et al. (1989)
	Lifestyle firms' primary concern is to provide a sufficient and comfortable living to maintain a selected way of life	Morrison (2006)
	Lifestyle firms offer alternative paths to success concerned with pursuing lifestyle preferences, and/or an opt out route antidote to modern living	Scase (2000)
	Lifestyle businesses are often initiated by the need to create a chosen lifestyle in which the needs of family, income and a way-of-life are balanced	Morrison et al. (1999)
	Lifestyle firms are businesses set up primarily either to undertake an activity the owner manager enjoys or to achieve a level of activity that provides adequate income	Burns (2001)
	LOST businesses emphasise the importance of lifestyle motives	Carlsen, Morrison and Weber (2008)
	Lifestyle businesses are operated in a manner that incorporates non-financial factors	Thomas, Shaw, and Page (2011)

Despite the variations on what the concept of lifestyle may signify and include, the definition of LsE (both the entrepreneur and the business) is anchored in the concept of style of life. This poses a significant challenge given that the idea of lifestyle is an “extremely elusive, subjective and qualitative concept, determined by the socially constructed values and meanings that operators self-select or have forced upon them” (Carlsen, Morrison, & Weber, 2008, p. 261). Furthermore, the authors argue that based on its subjectivity, achieving a consensual definition of the prefix lifestyle is challenging and “perhaps as idiosyncratic as the individuals who operate the small tourism firms” (p. 260). These are likely the main reasons for the challenge of defining LsEs within the literature. Nevertheless, it is clear that the concept of LsE is a useful lens to provide a better comprehension of small tourism businesses.

## 2.6 LsE | Existing discourses

The concept of lifestyle entrepreneur is complicated. The words that compose it, on their own, suggest that the style of life is something of importance to this group of entrepreneurs when they start up their business. Nevertheless, it is not clear what lifestyle means neither the level of importance it assumes during the business start-up and its development. With regards to the relative importance of the words lifestyle and entrepreneur, three interpretations are possible (see Table 6): firstly, an interpretation in which the word lifestyle assumes more importance than the word entrepreneur, suggesting that lifestyle is the main motivation for this group of people; secondly, a scenario where both words weight the same, suggesting that these entrepreneurs are as interested in business as they are in their own style of life; and the third one in which the word entrepreneur weights more, possibly suggesting that business management and development assume a more relevant role although lifestyle is also taken into consideration.

*Table 6. Possible interpretations of the label LsE*

<b><u>Lifestyle</u> entrepreneur</b>	Lifestyle assumes a greater importance in the definition of the concept LsE.
<b><u>Lifestyle</u> entrepreneur</b>	In the definition of LsE, business and lifestyle are deemed as equally important.
<b>Lifestyle <u>entrepreneur</u></b>	Business assumes a greater importance in the definition of the concept of LsE.

Under the first possible interpretation of LsE, i.e. lifestyle assumes greater importance than entrepreneur, fall the authors that define LsEs as non-economic driven entrepreneurs,



favouring issues related to their style of life and personal preferences. This seems to be the interpretation with more supporters among T&H literature, as previously discussed in section 2.2.2. The arguments presented by such authors gave origin to what in the present research is called “the positive discourse” (see section 2.6.2). These authors that support the second interpretation of the label LsE, argue that both aspects are equally important for this particular group of entrepreneurs. Meaning that during the start-up of the entrepreneurial venture, and whilst making decisions regarding business management, LsEs take into consideration both economic and non-economic issues. Within the T&H literature there are less supporters for this definition of LsEs (see for example Holland & Martin, 2015; Saxena, 2015). Lastly, when in the definition of LsEs emphasis is given to entrepreneur, it is assumed that economic issues are more relevant than non-economic, although the latter are also taken into consideration. This interpretation finds more supporters in the disciplines of economic and business, and authors tend to question the success of such entrepreneurs (see for example Deakins & Friel, 2003; Dewhurst & Thomas, 2003; Scase & Goffee, 1980). The arguments presented by this group of authors support “the negative discourse” that will be discussed in the following section.

### *2.6.1 The negative discourse*

The discourse that depicts a negative image of LsEs is linked with the idea that LsEs are not able to cope with the pressures imposed by the daily modern life (Scase & Goffee, 1980). This idea becomes even more evident in hospitality related organisations, where employees are expected to work long hours, be flexible and committed to the company, but where the job pressures are substantial. Long hours, working in shifts, low wages, and job instability raised by seasonality are just some examples of the demands of an hospitality job (Blomme, Rheede, & Tromp, 2010; Fallon & Rutherford, 2007). In this context, LsEs are considered weak, and opening a business is seen as a cowardly behaviour of non-ambitious people that prefer to work in isolation to avoid the pressure (Baines & Robson, 2001; Lashley & Rowson, 2005).

Economists tend to embrace this negative discourse claiming that this type of endeavour is not professional, not entrepreneurial and constrained (Gray, 2002; Thomas, 2004). Deakins and Freel (2009) go even further arguing that lifestyle entrepreneurs apply socio economic models that are perceived as a prejudicial threat to economic models, leading to practices that jeopardise competitiveness. Also, people more focused on return on

investment, like bankers and investors, seem not to be interested in this group of tourism entrepreneurs based on the assumption that small lifestyle businesses do not show growth propensity given that they tend not to be driven by business growth or profit (Beaver, 2002). Morrison et al. (2001) support the idea of LsEs as entrepreneurs with limited management strategies and strategies focused on return-on-investment. Also, Dewhurst and Thomas (2003) describe LsEs as entrepreneurs with a business rational grounded in sub-optimal results. These arguments led to the classification of lifestyle business as bounded economic activity (Andrew, Baum, & Morrisson, 2001), that does not create employment or innovate (Peters & Weiermair, 2001).

Even in the political sphere this negative discourse towards LsEs can be witnessed. Lifestyle is used as a pejorative label to illustrate the type of businesses that constrains tourism development (Shaw & Williams, 1990, 1998; Williams et al., 1989). Goulding et al. (2005) argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs were considered problematic within destination areas, and Mottiar's (2007) findings strengthen this idea suggesting that LsEs do not participate in formal cooperation, missing the opportunity to take an active role in decision-making. Furthermore, Komppula (2014) adds that the skills of lifestyle business owners tend not to be in line with the development needs of local economies and destinations. As a consequence LsEs tend to be marginalised in political discourses, based on the assumption that they are not worthy of public sector support since their contribution to local economic development is compromised by the focus on lifestyle issues instead of productivity, performance and growth (Nilsson et al., 2005).

Within the literature this negative discourse seems to dominate, perhaps echoing the initial definitions of the concept of entrepreneur and the associations with the ideas of non-profit focus and low economic impact that prevailed since the term lifestyle entrepreneur was introduced. Despite being less dominant, the positive discourse allows a deeper understanding of this group, and an increased knowledge about the positive implications they bring to the sector.

### *2.6.2 The positive discourse*

The positive discourse is supported by the argument that LsEs have the courage to choose the kind of life they want to pursue (Spence & Rutherford, 2001). Their preferred style of life is oriented by inner wills and focused on the significance of personal and social

values. The importance this group of tourism entrepreneurs gives to how they want to live their life, led to the argument that LsEs are brave to pursue their lifestyle preferences because that choice makes them live outside of the norms (Scase, 2000). Following this argument, LsEs can be seen as a minority group, rejected by society, based on their life and work-related preferences. LsEs deliberately choose to live the lifestyle they aspire to, motivated by intrinsic intentions that are outside the conventional economic paradigms. By doing so, they exchange financial compensations for psychological rewards (Lewis, 2008). Seth and Sen (1995) argue that intrinsic rewards allow the development of a personal achievement imagery, and the confirmation of self-identity (Ryan, 1991). The sense of personal achievement and the confirmation of self-identity, in turn, can increase LsEs' feeling of personal satisfaction and life quality.

In order to be congruent with their ideal, the need to achieve the desired lifestyle assumes a relevant role in the way they manage their businesses. Lifestyle is not something to be accommodated by the business, instead it assumes a leading role and conditions product construction (Lewis, 2008). Thus, the business is not seen only as a way to support the lifestyle, but as part of the lifestyle itself because managing the business is intrinsically rewarding (Donkin, 2009). This seems to be even more evident in the accommodation sector, where LsEs have the benefit of not having to go to work, since work and home are one and the same (Lashley & Rowson, 2005). In this context, work-life balance becomes a more flexible equation that can be controlled with less effort (Spence & Rutherford, 2001; Getz et al., 2004). On one hand LsEs live the lifestyle they have chosen, on the other, and as a result, lifestyle entrepreneurship is also a way of challenging the norms that dominate society, economy, work practices, and social values (Inman, 2000; Walker & Brown, 2004). From this perspective, LsEs can be considered agents of the new economy that empowers citizens to get more out of their own assets (Stephany, 2015). It is possible to look at LsEs as agents that reject the post-modern lifestyle, and combine together economic and social purposes as a form of contradicting the neo-economic theories (Bridge, O'Neill, & Cromie, 2003). This take on LsEs is linked with some sort of idealism, that emerges almost as a response to the capitalist society. The liquid society<sup>1</sup> that pushes people to consume more than they need, to aspire more than they can achieve, to live with more quantity and less quality, ultimately to have more and be less (Bauman,

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<sup>1</sup> Liquid society as the reality in which what is transitory is considered more important than what is permanent, and in which utility is regarded as the most important value (Bauman, 2012)

2000, 2004). LsEs challenge the capitalist driven society with their choice to earn just enough to be able to live the life they want to (Morrison, 2002). By doing that, they communicate the idea of sufficing, of earning enough for their needs avoiding life-waste production, almost as if they are applying the concept of sustainability to life itself.

In summary, it can be argued that within the reviewed literature the label LsE is loaded. In the case of the negative discourse it is loaded by the pre-concept of LsEs not being able to cope with the demands of the contemporary society and poor management strategies that lead to a sub-optimal business outcomes. In the case of the positive discourse, loaded with the counter-narrative of LsEs as courageous soldiers that fight for the supremacy of values over material things. Both discourses tend to perpetuate stereotypes that can be hindrances to the understanding of the concept of LsE, their role within the tourism and hospitality research, and their role in the contemporaneous society.

## **2.7 LsE | Ethical economy**

Acs and Audretsch (2010, p.3) define entrepreneurship as “an engine of economic and social development through the world”. In this definition the authors are including the impacts that entrepreneurship has not only on the economy, but also in the society, from a broader societal point of view. Based on that, one can argue that the authors definition is anchored in two cornerstones: entrepreneurship as a vehicle to create wealth, and entrepreneurship as a way to generate well-being. Sarasvathy and Venkataraman (2011) corroborate this idea adding that entrepreneurship “may hide a generalized method capable of changing the way we live, work, and play, and transforming the courses of the careers we build, the shapes of the communities we live in, and the evolution of the socio-political and economic systems we are part of” (p. 115), requesting for entrepreneurship to be recognised as a method. The authors defy the existing knowledge on the topic with their interpretation of entrepreneurship as a societal force able to relieve poverty and create wealth and well-being. Through this lens, entrepreneurs are seen as agents of change based on the power they present to shape the world around them from economic and social perspectives (Audretsch, 2002).

The application of this rationale to the concept of LsEs, in a way, reflects the positive discourse that portrays tourism entrepreneurs as business owners who defy the dominant line of thought in the sector by choosing not to focus on profit and business growth. By

doing so, they are calling the attention to the significance of personal values in both their life quality and product construction and management. In this respect, Lynch (2005) argues that the concept of LsE might be “helpful in moving away from a problematical assumption of the profit making imperative as prime motivation and recognises the significance of personal values in determining firms’ economic performance” (p. 534). Indeed, LsEs through their deliberate choice to exchange profit for well-being sabotaged the capitalist economy logic by choosing to use ethical economy reasoning.

The ethical economy, according to Arvidsson, Bauwens, and Peitersen (2008) is one of the two types of economies in the current society. The authors argue that the information economy is divided into the traditional capitalist economy and the ethical economy. The former is responsible for the material production, the latter for the immaterial production. Ethical economy does not move according to monetary incentives, instead the activity of production is directed by affective affinity, or in other words, by the desire to “accumulate respect and recognition” (p.11) from a particular community. Recognition as a consequence of being generous and sharing, given that in the ethical economy it is assumed that one should give more than one takes to earn the respect of peers. Whereas the capitalist economy is grounded on private property and driven by wealth accumulation, the ethical economy is grounded on networks and driven by the accumulation of social recognition. Furthermore, Arvidsson and Peitersen (2013) describe workers of the ethical economy, or “knowledge workers” (p. xi), as people motivated by the idea of economic gain, but above all, by the possibilities of having a meaningful impact, have a sense of self-realisation and for gaining peer recognition. Through the lens of the positive discourse on LsEs, it can be argued that these tourism entrepreneurs are ambassadors of the ethical economy.

## **2.8 On the definition of QoL**

How one can be better, feel better, and live better are probably questions that have intrigued humanity since the very beginning of existence. Such questions implicitly contain the need to change, improve, enhance, achieve a better situation, or even restart by divesting from what is not important and focusing on what makes one happy. This conceptual idea of quality of life has been thought and debated for long, even though the name used to represent it has varied throughout the time. For example back in the classical Greek period, scholars like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were interested in the search for

the good life (Hughes, 2010; Michalos & George, 2009). Nowadays, the search for happiness persists. The idea of becoming something better is more than a personal motivation to overcome oneself and others. Becoming better is also one of the drivers for the capitalist economy in which “better” is usually a synonym of having more. This idea of “becoming better” has been largely explored in western societies in regard to almost every aspect of daily life, from jobs to leisure, from health to food. The concept of QoL spread across different contexts: CEO’s worry about the welfare of employees; politicians are concerned about the QoL provided to citizens; and concepts such as QoL and happiness are used in the consumerist culture as key-words to make products more appealing to the consumers. In reality, QoL seems to be a trendy concept used in almost every context in the current society, likely because some consumers realised that having more is not the highway to live a more fulfilled life. From an individual perspective, some people choose to reflect upon their lives, assess their realities and make adjustments to improve their overall QoL. LsEs are an illustration of this group of people that through reflexivity decided to change their lives to achieve an enhanced life quality. Despite the fact that everyone understands the meaning of QoL, its definition is very challenging because it depends on personal factors. What one person considers QoL to be, is not necessarily the same as other person.

With the intention of better understanding LsEs’ QoL, after engaging with the LsEs related literature where some indicators of life quality were identified, the study progresses to the topic of QoL. Given that the literature on the topic is very extensive, this section focus on the definitional aspect of the construct reflecting on its challenges. It then progresses to a brief overview on how the tourism and hospitality literature has been using the concept and the importance of its outputs to the sector. Finally, grounded on the considerations made on QoL and LsEs, a reflection about LsEs’ QoL is presented.

### *2.8.1 Are QoL, happiness and well-being all the same?*

From a general perspective, QoL is related with a person's sense of well-being, or satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life (Dalkey & Rouke, 1973). The construct of QoL first emerged in the late 1960’s, following Maslow (1962) hierarchy of needs. Twenty years later it is was introduced with the aim of assessing the impact of health problems on people’s lives (Power, 2003), and since then, it has become an umbrella term that embraces multiple aspects of human life, from physical and emotional states to social life

(Efklides & Moraitou, 2013). Quality of life tends to be used interchangeably with other concepts such as happiness, subjective well-being (SWB), and life satisfaction (Puczkó & Smith, 2011). This alone gives some insight into the challenges of defining and operationalising such a subjective concept (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010).

Theoretical discussions on happiness can be traced back to the classical Greek period. Since then the concept has been adopted by scholars from several disciplines, by public and private organisations, and is used in multiple contexts. When talking about life quality, it seems that the concepts of happiness, well-being and life satisfaction are used interchangeably. The literature is vast and confusing, mainly due to the use of different names to discuss the similar theoretical concepts, and the multitude of angles and perspectives through which the concept is defined and discussed. The following paragraphs introduce these different concepts.

Happiness is one of the concepts that has been used interchangeably with QoL, and among them, it is probably one of the first concepts being discussed by philosophers and psychologists (see Appendix 1). Long has been the debate on happiness, what it means, and how it can be achieved. Focusing on the purpose of this research, a brief highlight of the most relevant definitions together with a discussion on its relevance for this study will be presented.

Back in the classical Greek period, Aristotle (1986) considered that the essence of the good life was to live in a way that reflects character of virtue. According to the author, one would reach happiness by expressing excellence of character. Later on, happiness has been considered the ultimate goal and motivation in life by authors like Blaise Pascal and William James. Pascal (1995) argues that regardless of people's context and reality, there is one thing in common: all of them seek happiness. James (1902) corroborates this argument adding that all men are driven by the idea of achieving happiness. More recently, Phillips (2006) made a distinction between two approaches to happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic. From the author's perspective the hedonic approach is grounded in the philosophical tradition followed by Rousseau and Locke. Therefore it is centred on the individual, own integrity and judgment of what makes him happy, and assumes one is motivated to improve oneself. In contrast, the eudaimonic tradition is based on the Aristotelian notion of the good life. Hence, the goal is for the individual to meet his full

potential, in order to be able to contribute to society and achieve high standards of morality. To most philosophers, happiness is an evaluative matter, concerning the necessary conditions that lead to a good and moral life. In this context, happiness is more than a simple psychological matter because it is intertwined with ethics (Haybron, 2001).

Seligman (2002) is one of the founders of the Positive Psychology movement, and in his work *Authentic Happiness* the author argues that happiness is composed of three elements:

- Positive emotions, related to what one feels and able to maximise pleasurable and positive experiences, if one's life is based on positive emotions one is living the pleasant life;
- Engagement, achieved when people develop their virtues and strengths in activities that they are passionate about, one is living the engaged life; and
- Meaning, reached when individuals apply their strengths in activities that contribute to the greater good, such as parenting, developing friendships or servicing the community, in this case one is living the meaningful life.

All the discussed definitions of happiness are quite subjective and philosophical in nature. The idea of good life that has fascinated classical Greek scholars is fluid and has shifted over time, probably as a consequence of the fast pace with which societies are changing (Michalos & George, 2009). If it is interesting to understand how it is defined, and what influences its definition, authors probably consider it even more interesting to build theoretically upon previous definitions, taking into account changes in society and considering concepts like democracy, liberal education and autonomy, that according to Michalos (2006) are deeply linked with the definition of happiness. However, a concept so subjectively defined is not easy to operationalise.

The evolution of the concept of happiness proposed by Seligman in his work *Flourish*, published eight years after *Authentic Happiness*, is a good example of this concept (re)construction and evolution in order for it to reflect changes in society. Seligman (2011) identified inadequacies in the initial concept of authentic happiness: firstly, the popular connotation of happiness that is bound with the idea of a cheerful mood or positive emotion; secondly, the important place life satisfaction holds in the measurement of happiness, that in Seligman's opinion essentially measures cheerful mood; and lastly,



the fact that the three elements that compose happiness (positive emotion, engagement and meaning) are not enough to specify what people choose to be happy. In Seligman's new conceptualisation, Authentic Happiness gave place to Well Being (WB).

Well-being is also used as a synonym of QoL. Well-being is "an abstract and nebulous term" (Jun, Hartwell, & Buhalis, 2012, p. 322) that positions itself as SWB within the QoL topic. Some authors who use WB interchangeably with QoL tend to differentiate between WB and SWB. The former may include objective conditions, whereas the latter is WB as people define it, which likely includes subjective conditions. For example, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines WB as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2019, p. 1).

SWB is defined as life-satisfaction within the area of happiness economics. Galloway (2006) argues that from an economic perspective SWB can be defined and assessed as a unidimensional concept, i.e. one's satisfaction with life; and as a multidimensional concept, where satisfaction with different domains of one's life are taken into consideration. Furthermore, the OECD (2005) suggests that QoL can be summarised as "the notion of human welfare (well-being) measured by social indicators rather than by quantitative measures of income and production" (p.1). This definition is useful because it suggests that income and economic growth are not the best indicators of WB. It is interesting to note that this definition is given by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development<sup>2</sup>, still it states that social indicators weight more in the measurement of WB.

From a psychological angle, studies suggest that one's assessment of own life satisfaction/ dissatisfaction are a reliable indicator of how one feels about own life, providing a good sense of SWB (Diener, 1984). Given that SWB is related to "the extent to which life has meaning (...) [WB] attempts to understand what makes people happy, contented with life" (Diener, 1984, p. 44). Some years later Diener and Suh (1997) redefine the concept arguing that SWB is a general evaluation of one's QoL, composed of three elements: life satisfaction, defined as a cognitive assessment of how good one's

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<sup>2</sup> A forum to promote economic growth, prosperity, and sustainable development, where the governments of 34 democracies with market economies work together with more than 70 non-member economies.

life quality has been; pleasant affect, related with the experience of high levels of pleasant emotions; and unpleasant effect linked with the experience of relatively low levels of negative emotions. Costanza et al. (2007) use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to define SWB. The authors argue that people need to subsist, reproduce, to feel safe, to feel understood and loved. They add that all of these needs call for fulfilment and SBW is the perceived level of such fulfilment.

WB also emerged as an operationalisation of happiness in the positive psychology paradigm (Seligman, Parks, & Steen, 2004), and therefore, one could assert that there is more to well-being than happiness. According to Seligman (2011), WB is composed of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, accomplishment and positive relationships. Positive emotion is considered a subjective variable and the other four variables have subjective and objective components. Important to notice that according to the author, none of the five elements defines WB, but each contributes to its definition.

An analysis of the literature on the definition of QoL (see Appendix 2), allows highlighting some shared assumptions: it is determined by the individual whose life is being evaluated (Dalkey & Rouke, 1973; Rajeski & Mihalko, 2001); is related to the level of overall life satisfaction (Meeberg, 1993); it is based on objective and subjective indicators (Costanza & Fisher, 2008; Oort, Visser, & Sprangers, 2005); is grounded in the relation between what is positively assessed and what is negatively assessed in one's life (Sirgy, 2012). One definition that seems to encompass all these aspects is the one provided by the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Group (1998) that defines QoL as "individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of their culture and value system and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, and their relationships to salient features of their environment" (p.1).

From a psychological standpoint QoL is related to "the degree to which a person's life is desirable versus undesirable" (Sirgy, 2012, p. 32). This definition on its own is quite subjective, being totally dependent on the person whose QoL is being discussed, and what is considered desirable and undesirable. In a less subjective manner, Neal, Sirgy, and

Uysal (1999) define QoL as a multidimensional construct that incorporates psychological, social and ecological dimensions perceived subjectively by people.

Within the management literature, QoL tends to be presented as a set of dimensions, namely: physical well-being, material well-being, social well-being, emotional well-being (Felce & Perry, 1995). Pukeliene and Starkauskiene (2011) add that the dimensions considered most important for QoL are the physical, material and social well-being. In regards to the QoL of owners-managers and entrepreneurs, Love and Crompton (1999) suggest that some of the most relevant indicators of overall QoL are the quality of the environment, ecology, weather conditions and climate, ambiance and education. The authors also highlight the relevance of QoL perception in business related decision making processes.

Recent research on the topic of quality of life tends to fit in one of two categories. The first one is characterized by the use of objective and quantifiable criteria to measure aspects that have an impact on different things such as health-care systems or ecological state of countries in the world (Yonk & Reilly, 2012). The second one is perceived QoL and capitalizes on subjective indicators, being related to self-reported levels of happiness, life satisfaction and well-being (Costanza et al., 2008). Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2008) argue that the subjective line of research assesses QoL itself while the measurement of objective indicators assesses opportunities to improve the QoL.

The concept of QoL is ambiguous and challenging to define. For the purpose of this research, the sake of completeness and ease of understanding, the concept will be explored within the lines of the second category. Given that the present study aims to understand how LsEs define QoL and its influence on their own lives, product construction and management.

### *2.8.2 Quality of life within the tourism literature*

It is recognised that the tourism and hospitality sector offers potential to enhance the QoL for both travellers and guests (Liburd, Benckendorff, & Carlsen, 2012). Consumers invest in holiday travel and vacations with the goal of improving their QoL, and governments empower tourism experiences and development as a way of improving destination residents' QoL. Leisure and travel are increasingly considered indispensable to emotional

well-being and physical and mental health (Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012), and as a result the tourism sector is presently one of the major forces of modern societies (Weaver, 2006).

The link between leisure and QoL has been well explored in the tourism literature (Liburd et al., 2012), studies have been conducted on how tourism enhances the QoL of tourists (Dolnicar, Lazarevski, & Yanamandram, 2013; Genç, 2012b, 2012a), and its impact on community residents (McKercher & Ho, 2012; Moscardo, 2012). However, research on the QoL from the owner-managers perspective is lacking, in particular research on QoL of tourism entrepreneurs is very scarce.

#### 2.8.2.1 QoL of LsEs

As mentioned before, within the tourism and hospitality literature there are very few studies regarding LsEs' QoL. The existing studies on the topic, listed in Table 7, will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Marcketti et al. (2006) were the first authors to explore the relationship between LsEs and QoL. In order to do so, a systems theory perspective was used on 12 case studies with different types of small businesses (dance company; custom design; 5 retail businesses; stationary; B&B; dolls; and jewellery). The data was collected through a demographic questionnaire and semi structured interviews. Two main themes emerged from the data: increased QoL for the owner; and perception of the business as provider of increased life quality to employees, customers and the local community. The authors assume that lifestyle entrepreneurship is interrelated with the other life domains and chose to use an interpretative framework based on systems theory that depicts a system input, throughput and output process. Inputs mirror LsEs as people driven by family and community values and individual QoL. This study revealed that LsEs' creative skills, talents and wishes are the major input sources, together with family, business goals and life stage needs. LsEs mindset influences the way they create and manage their businesses (throughput). Also, at the throughput stage LsEs family members gave the necessary support and advice regarding business management strategies. The output is LsEs' perception of the impacts of their business on QoL. They consider to have an enhanced life quality and monetary compensation, despite the financial pressures felt by some LsEs to keep their businesses running.

Table 7. Current studies on the QoL of LsEs

Author(s)	Aim	Methods	Findings
Marcketti, Niehm and Fuloria (2006)	Examine the relationship between lifestyle entrepreneurship and life quality	Demographic questionnaire; Interviews	Two common themes emerged from the data: enhancement of business owners' QoL as a result of the entrepreneurial venture; and a perception of the entrepreneurial venture as providing enhanced QoL to employees, customers, and the community.
Peters and Schuckert (2014)	Analyse entrepreneurs' perception of QoL as well as their entrepreneurial activities	Interviews	LsEs clearly perceive the need for a balance between enterprise growth and the QoL, putting a stronger emphasis on QoL. The entrepreneurs strongly linked "entrepreneurship" with "freedom" in terms of decision making, creativity, flexibility, challenge, responsibility, and networking between different stakeholders, and emphasized aspects like "autonomy," "self-dependence," "creativity," and "adventure".
Peters and Kallmuenzer (2015)	Test which factors create QoL in tourism business and how these influence business growth perceptions	Survey	The assessment of six (partially adapted) dimensions of QoL (Physical Wellbeing, Material Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing, Stress Perception, Regional Wellbeing and Civilian Wellbeing) shows that four of them (Social Wellbeing, Physical Wellbeing, Stress Perception and Material Wellbeing) have a positive impact in the QoL of tourism businesses, and only two of these factors (Stress Perception and Regional Wellbeing) have no or little significant influence on the entrepreneurs' perceived satisfaction with business growth.
Peters, Kallmuenzer and Buhalis (2018)	Explore the factors influencing hospitality entrepreneurs' QoL and its relationship with business growth	Survey	The construct Hospitality entrepreneurs' quality of life (HE-QoL) is composed of six dimensions: Physical Wellbeing, Material Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Regional Wellbeing and Civilian Wellbeing. The four dimensions Physical Wellbeing, Material Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing, and Civilian Wellbeing show to positively affect business growth. Two major groups of entrepreneurs show different perceptions of QoL and entrepreneurial competencies: the so-called HE-QoL Approvers showed to be much more confident when they evaluated strategic and operational areas within their business (e.g. marketing, human resource development). HE-QoL Disapprovers evaluated their competencies significantly lower in these areas (e.g. leadership and product development) and their overall business growth significantly worse than HE-QoL Approvers. HE-QoL Approvers show more confidence in their competencies, but also manage to relax (more holidays) and work on their health (more physical exercise). Results indicate a particularly relevant relationship between entrepreneurs' fitness level activity, entrepreneurial competencies and firm growth.

Peters and Schuckert (2014) explore tourism entrepreneurs' perception of QoL conducting 14 face to face guideline-based interviews with entrepreneurs who own hotels, restaurants and B&B in the Tyrolean town of Seefeld, Austria. The interview guidelines included questions on the meaning of entrepreneurship, and meaning and description of QoL. During data analysis three themes emerged: entrepreneurship; meaning of QoL; and QoL and entrepreneurial activities (p. 734). Entrepreneurship is associated with the ideas of freedom to take decisions, and burden due to the unpredictability of the business and the required bureaucracy. The meaning of QoL appears to be different amongst participants, but connected with the environment in which participants live. Regarding QoL and entrepreneurial activities, some participants mentioned how the negative aspects of the business affect them and their families, whereas others perceived the business to provide them a better QoL; growth was deemed as important but balanced with the fear that it would negatively affect their work-life balance as LsEs seem to recharge themselves spending family time; enjoying leisure time in nature is something that increases their perception of QoL.

Peters and Kallmuenzer (2015) explore the relationship between LsEs' QoL and business growth based on the results that emerged from Peters and Schuckert's (2014) study. The authors conducted a survey to assess the QoL and growth perception of 380 tourism entrepreneurs in the Tyrolean hotel industry. The questionnaire's questions focus on the following topics: satisfaction with business growth; satisfaction with QoL; determinants of QoL; information about the entrepreneur and the business (p.4). Findings suggest that the majority of LsEs are satisfied with their life quality, with female entrepreneurs perceiving QoL in a more positive way. An exploratory factor analysis of the data allowed the identification of six components of QoL: social wellbeing, linked with social relations and respect from others; physical wellbeing defined as having a healthy constitution and enjoy work; stress perception, related to the levels of stress in the business and the wish for free time; regional wellbeing, linked with the possibility of doing activities in the region; material wellbeing, related with income and property ownership; and civilian wellbeing, associated with their satisfaction with politics and legal regulations. The analysis also suggests that entrepreneurs' satisfaction with business growth correlates significantly with all dimensions, except stress perception and regional wellbeing. Furthermore, two groups of entrepreneurs were identified: disapprovers, those who have

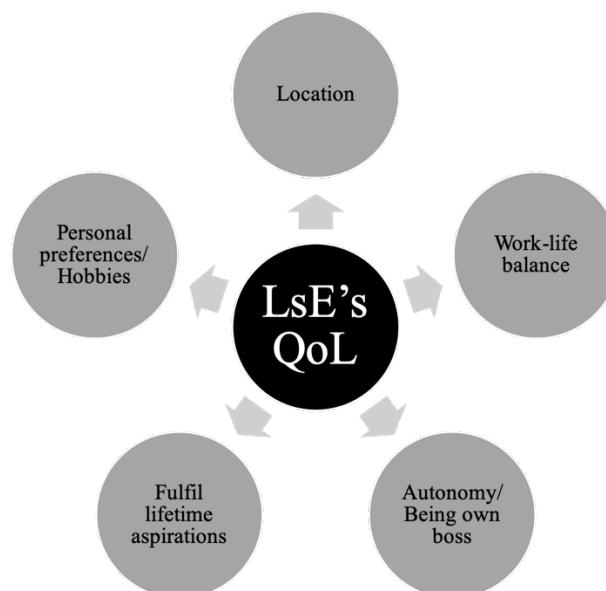
a slightly negative perception of QoL; and approvers, those that evaluated positively their QoL.

Peters, Kallmuenzer, and Buhalis' (2018) study explores the factors that influence hospitality entrepreneurs' QoL (HE-QoL) and its relation to business growth. This research was based on data collected by Peters and Kallmuenzer (2015) and uses the six factors of HE-QoL identified in their study. Findings suggest that satisfaction with own health (physical wellbeing), financial status (material wellbeing), social relationships and family embeddedness (social wellbeing), and satisfactory political and economic conditions (civilian wellbeing) are preconditions for firm growth. Furthermore, two groups of entrepreneurs were identified based on their perception of QoL and entrepreneurial competencies: HE-QoL Approvers, more confident when assessing business strategic and operational issues; and HE-QoL Disapprovers, who assessed own competencies lower and their business growth worse than the other group.

These four studies add knowledge to the topic of QoL of LsEs, however a deeper understanding of how this group of entrepreneurs perceive life quality is lacking, given that the focus of these studies tends to be divided between LsEs' perceptions of QoL and its relationship with business growth or entrepreneurial activities. Exception made to the research conducted by Marcketti et al. (2006) that aimed to explore the concept of QoL amongst LsEs. In this case, however, the use of systems theory might be an hindrance to the understanding of the concept of QoL as defined by participants, as the authors were restricted by the pre-existing categories (input, throughput, and output) and forced to fit the findings within it.

An analysis of the literature review presented in this chapter, allows the identification of some topics considered important to enhance LsEs' QoL (see Fig. 2). The place chosen to develop the tourism related business seems to take a central place, and is pointed by LsEs as an important aspect to enhance their quality of life (see for example Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Getz & Petersen, 2005; Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Mottiar, 2007). The possibility of balancing work and life is also pointed as a reason to adopt such a lifestyle, this balance between work and life allows spending more time with the family. It seems even more important in regards to female entrepreneurs who see the business as a possibility of performing the role of family carer along with the professional role (Getz

et al., 2004; Komppula, 2004; Morrison & Teixeira, 2004; Morrison, 2006). The possibility of managing own time, being their own bosses is another factor mentioned in regards to what motivates LsEs to start up a tourism related business, since it provides increasing autonomy and flexibility (Getz & Petersen, 2005; Lashley & Rowson, 2010; Page et al., 1999). Additionally, being able to fulfil lifetime aspirations contributes to their self-perception of QoL according to the literature (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007; Lashley & Rowson, 2010). Lastly, the possibility of living in line with their personal preferences, being able to do their favourite activities also impacts their life quality perception (Lardies, 1999; Lundberg & Fredman, 2012; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007; Skokic & Morrison, 2011).



*Figure 2. LsEs' QoL indicators*

Assuming that LsEs engage with entrepreneurial activity in order to increase their QoL, and taking into consideration that the knowledge on LsEs QoL is scarce, it is relevant to understand how QoL is defined and perceived by LsEs. The present study aims to gain a deeper understanding on the topic and fill this literature gap.



# 3

## Checking-in and house rules - Methodology -

A

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fter the informal presentations, the owners offer me a little tour of the B&B. They give me the key to my room, offer help with the luggage, and explain the rules of the house. They go through breakfast time and checkout time, and provide me information about the private areas of the house, such as the kitchen and the corridor on the ground floor that is reserved for the family. Still, they let me know that in case I need something, they are always around and available.

In the same way the owners of the B&B presented me the facilities and the house rules, this

chapter informs the reader about the methodological issues that underpin this research.

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### **3.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter the relevant literature is reviewed to establish the general context for the study, through a critical analysis of the two interlinking research topics of lifestyle entrepreneurship and life quality. The present chapter presents a discussion on the research philosophy and methodological choices that underpin the research. Before starting the contextualisation of the study, from a philosophical research perspective, the aim and objectives are revisited. A personal reflection on myself and my PhD journey is then presented with the objective of stating the positionality of the study, by explaining the role of the researcher. I use reflexivity to understand how my experiences and background influence my beliefs, and how my beliefs, in turn, influence the way I conduct this research and the chosen research paradigm. Based on the reflexive piece, the research philosophy is introduced through the discussion of its ontological and epistemological constituents. The chapter then progresses to the method adopted in the conduct of the research, starting with the presentation of the research focus and boundaries, data collection and methods used. The following section explains how the data analysis was conducted and continues with a discussion on the decision to adopt a qualitative data analysis software tool to support the investigation. Ensuring the quality of a research project is crucial, therefore the subsequent section discusses the use of criteria to assess qualitative research, and in particular evaluates the trustworthiness of this research. The chapter ends with a reflection on some ethical issues that were considered when the study was carried out.

### **3.2 Research aim and objectives**

Before introducing the research philosophy and methodological choices, it is important to revisit the aim and objectives of the present research.

Aim: To provide a multidimensional picture of the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs that own a commercial home enterprise (CHE).

The aim of the research is addressed by meeting the following research objectives (RO):

RO1. Critically review relevant literature relating to lifestyle entrepreneurship and QoL.

RO2. Investigate how LsEs define and perceive QoL.

RO3. Explore how LsEs' self-perceptions of QoL shape their personal life and their business decisions.

RO4. Discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the research.

### **3.3 Researcher's reflexive position**

Positivist approaches in social sciences claim that researchers should separate themselves from their research, to decrease findings' contamination (Dupuis, 1999). Reflexivity aims to deconstruct the assumption of the neutral researcher present in the positivist approach. According to Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, and Collins (2005) self-reflexivity encourages researchers to "acknowledge themselves as living, breathing, embodied human beings, who brought their previous experiences and worldviews to their project" (p. 9).

Acknowledging that the researcher is part of the study and influences the philosophical grounding of the research, I decided to start this chapter with a personal reflection. This self-reflexivity exercise aims to provide an insight on who I am and how I see the world, which in turn will help the reader to understand the impact of the researcher on the way the research was conducted, and the findings presented and discussed.

Every research has its own untold history (Ateljevic et al., 2005) and so does this dissertation. This study changed from its initial proposal, mainly in relation to its methodological approach and research philosophy, and so did I. At the beginning of my doctoral project I saw the world differently, based on my previous experiences and knowledge, and that was reflected in what I aimed to achieve in my research. I have an academic background in psychology, and throughout my professional career, I worked as a human resources consultant: measuring people's performance; creating tools to support their personal development in line with organisations' values; finding the best fit for a particular job-description; assessing employees' competencies and psychological abilities, among others. I knew everyone was different and intricate, but my job was to simplify the complex and messy personalities of people into measurable data. I clearly was a positivist that believed in facts and used theoretical frameworks to explain the world, as if everything that happens has a reason.

In my initial research proposal, I wanted to use mixed methods to create an online survey to measure the QoL of LsEs. I intended to use the information gathered in in-depth interviews to construct, validate and apply the survey. Cogitating on the originally proposed methodology, I can see the reflection of who I was and what I did. Once again,

in a kind of psychologically predictable behaviour, I wanted to reduce the way LsEs define QoL into a framework and translate it into something measurable. I think I was falling into the authoritative researcher trap (Kvale, 2006), where interviews are “conversations with a purpose” (p. 483) and the interviewer tends to have more power than the interviewee.

The study started, and what I was expecting to be a straightforward journey turned into a messy and unpredictable expedition. In my professional life, I have conducted hundreds of interviews with the aim of assessing interviewees’ competences, meaning that: I was the one conducting the interview, the power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee were clearly unbalanced; and by the end of the interview, I would compare the interviewee’s answers with the competency level descriptors to label the behaviour with a number. Probably anchored on my experience, I believed that my research journey would be somehow similar. I thought I would easily identify QoL related keywords in the transcripts, in order to construct the survey, and then I would proceed to assess its validity and reliability. However, when data analysis started, the information on the transcripts was so extensive and rich, that I lost myself trying to make sense of it. I felt the data was taking control and I was just following whatever the data was suggesting. My positivist inner researcher was overwhelmed by the messy and unstructured constructivist approach, but at the same time enchanted by the possibilities it was offering. I struggled between giving power to the data and having the power over it. The struggle ended when I was listening to the audio recording of a particular interview (with participant CM). (Re)Listening to our conversation made me reflect upon everything that interviewee made me feel with what she was sharing with me. It was a powerful conversation, CM told me how excited she was with the possibility of making her dream of having a B&B come true. The process of finding the house, rebuilding it, and leaving her job to assume the management of the commercial home. Then, her tone changed, her body language changed too, and tears were rolling down her face as she was telling me how difficult it was for her to cope with financial challenges and the consequences of those in her personal life<sup>3</sup>. I could not stop the way I felt during the interview (Pocock, 2015). I felt sympathy for her, I was actually feeling her pain and had this will to help her somehow. I felt the same way when I listen to its recording, so I questioned myself “If you cannot control your feelings when participants were talking with you, why would you control

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<sup>3</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 170-171

their words?”. There and then I had the answer to my struggle, the only thing that made sense was to give power to the participant’s voice.

The decision of giving power to the participant’s words together with time constraints, made me focus solely on the thematic analysis of the transcripts and deepen the understanding of QoL from LsEs perspective. This situation made me realise that life circumstances also shape the way we see the world. What life throws at us, the place where we are, the people surrounding us, and our roots and belief system form the lens through which we see and understand the world and ourselves. All of us see things from our own perspective, and no viewpoint is better than another. That day, I also thought about myself differently, it was the first time I felt the need not to translate a piece of information gathered in an interview into something measurable. How could I ever translate that into numbers? All the meaning would be lost.

### **3.4 Research philosophy**

Research questions tend to be approached by researchers from different theoretical perspectives and are usually described as research paradigms. Blaikie (2007) discusses such paradigms as broad philosophical traditions used to understand the social world. Each paradigm encompasses a mixture of assumptions – ontological and epistemological – that influence the research questions, the choice of methods and the research outcomes. From this standpoint, paradigms are sets of beliefs that orientate the researcher’s view of the phenomenon under research, influence the research methodology and shape researchers’ interpretations of reality through the way they construct the meaning of the findings and interpret the results (Bryman, 2006; Poni, 2014).

The set of beliefs that define researchers’ own view of the world, also known as paradigm, is composed of three elements: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Ontology guides the type of knowledge production that the researchers do, since it is related to their definition of reality. The epistemology is dependent on what researchers want to be knowledgeable about, what is counted as knowledge. Methodology is determined by the kind of knowledge researchers seek. The researchers can identify their research paradigm by answering three questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22): the ontological question, “What is the nature of reality?”; the epistemological question, “What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?”; and the methodological

question, “How do we know the world or gain knowledge from it?”. I will answer these three questions in the following sections.

It is noteworthy to mention that the concept of paradigm is used in different ways by different authors, and that there is no consistency in the terminology used in social science text books. For the purpose of the present research, it is considered that the main paradigms within social sciences are positivism and interpretivism, as suggested by Williamson (2006). Research in social sciences, then, tends to start with the fundamental question of whether to adopt a positivist orientation or an interpretivist approach (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). The former considers that knowledge is created through what the researcher can observe and experience. The latter concerns meanings of human experiences (Williamson, 2006).

This study aims to explore self-perceptions of QoL, in an attempt to better understand the concept of life quality as constructed by the participants. Each participant has a unique lived experience, influenced by all the contexts, situations and people they shared their lives with. And those personal experiences tailor the way they see the world, and in this particular case, the way they define the concept of QoL. Thus, knowledge is going to be created through the meaning I will give to participants’ views, which makes the present study fall into the interpretivist paradigm

#### *3.4.1. Ontology*

In this section the ontological question “what is the nature of reality?” is going to be answered (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22). Sloan and Bowe (2014) argue that the researcher’s ontological position reveals if the understanding of reality is objective and external to the researcher (realism) or socially constructed (relativism). Researchers who adopt a relativist ontological stance accept that reality is socially constructed, i.e. the external world has no independent existence from the participants (Baggini & Fosl, 2010). Given that the departure point of this study is to deepen the understanding of the concept of QoL through LsEs viewpoint, I am assuming that each participant has his/her own perception of the concept under study. Therefore, a relativist ontological position is assumed.

#### *3.4.2 Epistemology*

This section addresses the epistemological question “What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22). Epistemology concerns what is regarded as relevant knowledge in a particular area of study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), and there are two key positions: positivism and interpretivism. Positivism advocates the use of the methods applied in natural sciences to study social phenomena, and it seeks to predict what happens in the social world by searching for causal relationships. The social world is objective, measurable and governed by natural laws. Whereas interpretivism does not seek an objective truth, instead it assumes that “all versions of the truth are shaped by the viewers perceptions and understanding of the world” (Roth & Mehta, 2002, p. 131).

This research aims to explore the intersubjectivities of how LsEs’ unique lived experiences tailor their conceptualisation of QoL. As mentioned in the reflexive piece, I acknowledge that people have their own experiences, histories, emotions, and beliefs (Fanghanel, 2012). Furthermore, I recognise that those subjectivities generally influence and shape the way they construct the world, and in particular, the phenomenon under research (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). Therefore, the epistemological stand of the present research is interpretivism.

### **3.5 Research methodology**

This section addresses the methodological question, therefore it explains to the reader how I chose to gain knowledge from the world in this research project. It starts by defining the research boundaries and it proceeds to the chosen processes for data collection.

#### *3.5.1 Research focus and boundaries*

It is suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1995) that qualitative inquiry tends to emerge from real-world observations, contextualised with the researchers’ view of the world, theoretical knowledge and scholarly interests. Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasise the challenge of covering all aspects of a research problem, suggesting that researchers should strategically focus on manageable issues to answer to the research question more thoroughly. While defining the aim and objectives of the present research, I had to make a number of decisions to help me achieve that focus and depth of knowledge. I highlight, in particular, the definition of the research aim, participants and geographical focus.

In this research I aim to investigate how LsEs perceive the concept of QoL. Therefore, the first criteria that needs to be met is that participants must consider themselves as LsEs. In the literature, it is argued that LsEs tend to engage in entrepreneurial ventures for different motives, in particular due to the fact that they wish to be able to achieve a certain lifestyle (Shaw & Williams, 1990, 1998; Szivas, 2001; Hall & Rusher, 2004; Getz & Petersen, 2005; Dredge & Jenkins, 2007; Holmengen, 2007), and to spend more time with their families (Komppula, 2004; Morrison & Teixeira, 2004). Taking into consideration these two motivations, CHEs appear to be an appropriate context to conduct this research due to the fact that it tends to be a family business developed on the premises of the owner's home (Lynch, 2005b). The fact that the business and home are one and the same (Seymour, 2015) is supportive of lifestyle aspirations, in the sense that the space in which the business is developed is tailored by the owner in accordance with one's own preferences and in line with personal aspirations. Also, the fact that CHEs tend to be family run potentially ensures that the family can spend more time together. For these reasons, I chose to limit the group of LsEs to owners of small accommodation businesses, in particular owners of CHEs. It is crucial, then, to define the criteria to accept a small commercial business as a CHE. For the purpose of the present research, a small accommodation business is considered to be a CHE if the following criteria are met:

- The owners live on the premises (Lynch, 2005b);
- The business is run by a family (Getz et al., 2004);
- The business is operating based on lifestyle motives (Lashley & Rowson, 2010);
- The business has no more than 11 rooms (Lynch, McIntosh, & Tucker, 2009) as limiting the number of rooms is helpful regarding sampling, in the sense that it defines a cutting point.

Specifying the type of business narrows down the scope of study, but I needed to narrow it further down. Considering that I am Portuguese, I lived in Lisbon throughout the majority of my life, I speak Portuguese, I am aware of the tourism boom in the recent years and the increasing number of new B&Bs in the city, I can argue that my personal experiences, knowledge, and worldview (Marshall & Rossman, 1995), made me consider Portuguese LsEs owners of CHEs as an interesting sampling group. One of the main reasons being that one of the sectors that enhanced the Portuguese economy since the economic crisis in 2008 was the tourism sector. Currently, tourism is the biggest source



of economic exports, and in 2018, it was responsible for 51.5% of services export (IP, 2019). In particular, Portugal has seen a rapid growth of small accommodation businesses, that possibly fit with the definition of CHEs, since the government created the legal entity of *Alojamento Local*<sup>4</sup> (Portuguese-Republic, 2008). Secondly, Portugal's natural conditions (weather and landscape) make it a place that potentially attracts LsEs whose main motivation is related to location and nature-related hobbies. Lastly, Portugal was perceived as having a stricter legislation in comparison to the UK or Germany, particularly in regards to the requisites to start an accommodation business, which was considered an hindrance to the existence of CHEs (Kastenholz & Sparrer, 2009). The changes made to Portuguese legislation in 2008, with the creation of *Alojamento Local*, seem to have turned the hindrance into an encouragement to open such businesses.

### 3.5.2 Data collection

Data collection aims to address research objectives two and three (see section 3.2). This process is composed of two steps (see Table 8): a short structured phone interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005), that aims to ensure the sample is eligible to participate in the study regarding the predefined criteria. In order to be eligible participants must consider themselves LsEs and own a CHE with no more than 11 rooms; in-depth interviews (Jennings, 2005) with pre-selected owners of CHEs, with the threefold intention of: exploring self-perception of QoL; understand differences in QoL before and after engaging in entrepreneurial venture; and identify factors that impact positively and negatively on the perceived level of QoL.

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<sup>4</sup> In March 2008 the Portuguese Parliament approved the creation of the legal entity *Alojamento Local*, defining it as the provision of accommodation services in units that do not meet the criteria legally established for touristic developments. The main reasons for the creation of *Alojamento Local* was the importance of acknowledging the real numbers of small accommodation businesses, and tax reasons. For example, in 2012 the Tourism Association in Algarve region estimated the existence of 700,000 beds in the parallel market. The figure of *Alojamento Local* aimed to reduce those numbers by facilitating the formal (legal and financial) creation of commercial homes.

Table 8. Data collection overview

	Data collection	
	Step 1	Step 2
Research objectives addressed	RO2. Investigate how LsEs define and perceive QoL. RO3. Explore the social, emotional and economic implications of the chosen lifestyle both in LsEs' personal life and business management.	
Methods of enquiry	Structured phone interviews	In-depth interviews
Analysis	Verification of participants' eligibility	Thematic analysis

Before the interviews occur, a pilot study took place so that I could practice my interview skills, test and refine interview questions, estimate interview length, and explore any problems that might arise (Gillham, 2000).

#### Pilot study

A pilot study is defined by Bryman (2004, p. 160) as “a small set of respondents who will be comparable to members of the population from which the sample for the study will be taken”. Yin (2011) adds that a pilot study tends to be used before engaging with the main data collection, in order to test and enhance the research design and methods. The language used by Bryman and Yin can be classified as positivist and therefore considered more adequate for quantitative studies (Sampson, 2004). However, conducting pilot studies in qualitative research goes beyond the enhancement of technical issues. It encourages researcher's reflexivity, and at the same time, stimulates the researcher to think through the whole investigative project beforehand (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012).

Before data collection, in the beginning of March 2016, I conducted a pilot study with two commercial home enterprises' owners. These two interviews were disregarded in the total sample. The pilot study was conducted for different reasons. Firstly, it was the first time that I was experiencing the interview technique within a qualitative research context. Hence, conducting a pilot study was considered an opportunity to practise my interviewing skills. In this regard, being able to interview these two participants provided me with some experience and building a greater sense of confidence. At the same time, the pilot interviews allowed me to estimate the average duration of the conversation and to adjust the communication style between the researcher and the participants. Additionally, the pilot study served to evaluate the flow of the conversation and the clarity

of the questions. Lastly, it allowed me to foresee challenges and think about necessary adjustments in order to ensure a smooth conversation focused on my research aim.

During the first interview, I was nervous, trying to ensure that I would not forget anything, from the informed consent in the very beginning of the conversation, to keeping the conversation focused on the aim of my research. Given that I was doing in-depth interviews, I approached interviewees with the aim of discussing two topics (see section 3.6.1) without structured questions. By the end of the interview, participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the interview flow, clarity of the questions and facilitation process. Right after the interview, I took some notes about my own performance and issues that I felt could be improved. I followed this process for both interviews, after its completion, I spoke with my supervisory team to discuss my experience and how to enhance my performance.

The first interview was the shortest, with a duration of 34 minutes, probably due to a mixture of lack of experience and anxiety. The pressure I was putting on myself affected the flow of the conversation, given that I was more preoccupied with not forgetting anything rather than picking up cues and engaging more deeply in the conversation and guiding it. My reflection on it allowed me to identify the need to improve the flow of the conversation, to enhance my ability to follow up cues provided by the participants, and to let the interviews flow naturally without the pressure of anticipating questions. Not to rush was certainly a learnt lesson from the pilot interviews. Some questions can be done more than once, in a different way or moment, in order to obtain more detailed information. In other cases, I needed to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further. The reflexive exercise helped me to perform better in the second pilot interview, where the conversation flowed more naturally. Participants' feedback was positive for both interviews, they enjoyed being interviewed, considered the questions clear and mentioned that they felt comfortable talking with me. After the two pilot interviews I discussed with my supervisory team concerns about interviewing techniques and participants' feedback. Some strategies were suggested in order to enhance my performance.

## Sampling

In Portuguese tourism related statistical databases, information and numbers on CHEs are not separately presented. The information provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) on tourism accommodation integrates CHEs under the rural tourism (TER) category, which includes farm houses, agritourism, rural hotels, and others (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2016, p. 51). For this reason, it would be very challenging to employ a probability sampling, in which each element of the population has the same chance of being selected (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Hence, the sampling approach for this study is non-probability. Bryman (2012) argues that a considerable part of qualitative researchers uses purposive sampling, meaning that the sample is purposively selected by the researcher so that participants are relevant to the research question. Patton (2002) adds that the main reason behind purposive sampling is in-depth understanding enhanced by the selection of rich cases. Rich cases are those that provide more insight into the research topic.

The number of interviews depends on two conditions. Firstly, the availability and willingness of CHEs owners to engage and participate in the research. It is important to mention that owners' availability is conditioned by the researcher's time frame. Secondly, reaching the point of theoretical saturation, i.e. reach a point in which interviews provide no additional information to the research (Bryman, 2004). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 212) suggest that data saturation has been reached when: "no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category"; "the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation"; and "the relationships among categories are well established and validated". To be able to assess if theoretical saturation has been reached it is necessary to engage in an iterative process between data gathering and reflection upon data gathering. After interviewing 34 CHE owners, I suspected that the point of theoretical saturation had been reached. I decided to conduct two more interviews to be sure that it has been reached. The last interviews allowed me to verify that no additional information was emerging, confirming the theoretical saturation. In total **36 interviews** were completed.

## Participant selection and recruitment

The aim of the present research is to investigate the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs who own a CHE. Therefore, it is important to assure that participants meet the desired

requirements. For that matter, during the processes of participant selection and recruitment, the following criteria must be met: participants own a CHE (as defined in section 3.5.1), and participants consider themselves LsEs.

Two main sources were used to identify CHEs. The first one was TURIHAB, a Portuguese organisation for rural tourism that supports accommodation within commercial homes as a way of promoting service quality and preserve architectural and cultural heritage. After contacting TURIHAB and explaining my research, they agreed in participate with the provision of a list with their accommodations and respective contacts, and support in reaching the possible participants. TURIHAB sent an email to the associates informing about the research project and provided me with a list of the owners that were willing to participate. The list was composed of 97 commercial homes spread across the Portuguese districts (see Appendix 3). Due to time and financial restrictions, I decided to eliminate all the properties that were in the northern districts, remaining a total of 23 CHEs. The second source was a specialised internet site that promotes B&Bs ([www.bedandbreakfast.eu](http://www.bedandbreakfast.eu)). I searched for B&Bs located in central and southern regions of Portugal and purposively chose 84 (see Appendix 4) in which the owners lived on the premises, to increase the likelihood of the accommodation to be a CHE.

When the pre-selection was completed, I sent a letter to each potential participant explaining the research aim, introducing the concept of LsE, and informing that in the near future I would follow up the letter with a phone call to further discuss their willingness and suitability to participate in the study. One week later I contacted all the owners that received the letter. The phone call had two objectives: confirm that owners consider themselves as LsEs; and if the first condition was met, schedule the interview.

The letters were sent on the 22<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and one week later (29<sup>th</sup> February 2016) I started contacting the participants by phone. Phone calls were made by district so that the interviews could be planned accordingly. I allocated two to five days per district, depending on the number of interviews planned. The interviews were scheduled taking into consideration participants' availability during the period of time I was in the district. I was flexible regarding the time of the interviews; my only restriction were the other scheduled interviews. While I was collecting data, by the end of each day I contacted the participants scheduled for the following day to confirm their availability and make the

necessary amendments. The first interview was conducted on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 and the 36<sup>th</sup> interview was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. The interviews took place on the premises of each commercial home, and the conversations were recorded with a digital recorder. Overall, a total of 36 CHEs were visited, and the conversations with the owners generated a total of 42 hours and 35 minutes. The interviews ranged between 40 minutes and two hours and 20 minutes in length, with the majority lasting approximately one hour and ten minutes.

### **3.6 Methods**

#### *3.6.1 In-depth interview*

Interviews are useful for examining the world from a participant's perspective (Silverman, 2011), gaining comprehension into a participant's experiences, and arriving at meanings (Orbuch, 1997). Robson (2002) argues that there are three types of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The author adds that the depth of data obtained from each type of interview is reflected by the followed approach, with the structured interview being the one that yields the least depth and the unstructured the most. Roulston (2010) adds that the different ways in which qualitative interviews can be performed are underpinned by a research paradigm and tailored by the idea of what it intends to achieve. The author suggests that unstructured interviews are flexible, allowing findings to emerge from the conversation. In opposition to structured interviews that impose pre-established frameworks or categories, unstructured interviews do not limit the scope of enquiry. Additionally, this type of interviews incites reflexivity and reciprocity as researcher and participant co-create knowledge. For this reason, the present research employs in-depth interviews as the method for data collection, as the research method had to be flexible enough to allow the exploration of the topic of QoL and to generate in-depth understanding of the perceptions held by LsEs on the topic. This method allows gaining access to the participant's subjective experiences through the presentation of stimuli that prompt reflection on their own experiences, embedded in social norms and personal values and beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Giddens, 1984). Having access to participants' reflections on their experiences, in turn, allows the researcher to gain the desired depth of knowledge.

All the interviews in this research were conducted by me, face-to-face. I consider the unstructured interview a vehicle to understand how the individuals I spoke with made

sense of their world. I used an informal approach, interviews were presented as conversations, flexible in nature, to encourage a greater level of comfort and interest for participants. My ability to jump from one theme into another, as a response to participant's views, allowed them to freely engage in the conversation and at the same time avoided interrupting the conversation or diverting the interviewee's thoughts. This informal approach was used with the intention of discussing two topics: participants' perceptions of QoL, and business impacts on the perceived life quality. Despite having only two topics to discuss, they were covered in detail and I did subsequent questions following interviewees responses to achieve even greater detail (see Appendix 5).

### *3.6.2 Interview transcriptions and the native language issue*

The conversations held with CHE owners were recorded on a digital recorder and later transcribed. The voice recorder used provided good quality recordings, which helped significantly during the transcription process. Each hour of recorded material needed roughly six hours of transcription time. The transcription of interview material is more than a technical feature, it is the initial step in data analysis (Bryman, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Transcripts are a written record of an interaction between researcher and participant, and in the particular case of this research, they are used to facilitate the data analysis and to illustrate findings (Silverman, 2010).

According to Poland (2002), depending on the purpose of the interviews, transcriptions can assume different forms varying from full verbatim transcription to memory-based or note-based transcriptions. In this study full verbatim transcription is used, despite being the most time-consuming method of transcription (Bryman, 2012), given its exploratory nature and the analysis applied to the data.

It is noteworthy to mention that out of the 36 interviews conducted, 26 of them were in Portuguese language (see an extract in Appendix 6) and 10 in English (see an extract in Appendix 7). To safeguard the quality of transcription and at the same time its accuracy, I decided to transcribe the interviews in the language they were conducted. Becoming familiar with the transcriptions, their meanings and my interpretation of it, enabled me to proceed to the data analysis and apply a thematic analysis in English.

There are some debates in the literature about the usage of native languages in research and the possible challenges that may arise from it, particularly in regard to translation. Authors agree that it is problematic to ignore the issue of using foreign language, or to reduce it to a technical issue (see for example Eposito, 2001; Smith, 1996; Temple, 2005; Temple & Young, 2004). In the present research I acknowledge that the choice of transcribing and analysing the data in the language in which the interviews were conducted have epistemological and ethical implications, which makes it crucial to be transparent about it.

Translating the interviews that were conducted in Portuguese into English would require a considerable amount of time and I would need to “clean” the transcriptions. Meaning that in the translation process it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to accurately translate some richness and specificities of the Portuguese language into English. Moreover, transcribing the conversations in the language they were conducted can be considered as an advantage, not only because the mentioned richness and specificities are not lost, but also because the conversations are framed by the social and historical contexts embedded in the language (Poland, 2002).

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Analysing qualitative data, in a way, is to convert the stories told and how I heard them into words. It starts with interview transcriptions and progresses into the analysis of the transcripts. Although the interviews have been transcribed verbatim, meaning that participants words, repetitions, laughter, and pauses have been registered, the way I interpret that written register will impact on the data analysis. It is a reflection of the epistemological stance of this research.

*Stories, narratives, accounts, do not remain unchanged, but are edited, rewritten and interpreted away from the social relationships in which they occurred. Within this process of “working up” data into a sociological research account, the interpretation depends more and more on my own inner dialogue, on finding my way of telling my story of others. (Birch, 1998, p.182)*

Describing how data analysis is done is challenging. Reflexivity, interpretation, analysis and the writing up of the findings are inseparable (Brewer, 2000). There seems to be no “right” approach. The qualitative data analysis process has been frequently criticised as a



method without method that portrays the impression of researchers as artists who base their analysis on intuition (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The authors go even further by arguing that they do not understand the process between high volumes of written data and findings, as if it is an act of magic.

Despite the criticisms, qualitative data analysis is an iterative process directed by the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research, and it is crucial to be methodical and rigorous during the analysis process (Di Domenico, 2003). Snape and Spencer (2003) argue that data analysis is dependent on several aspects, namely research aim and objectives, how the researcher sees the world, and participants' characteristics.

Taking into consideration the nature of qualitative research, and in particular the chosen research paradigm, thematic analysis (TA) seems to be the most appropriate analytical strategy for interpreting the data and presenting the findings (Lacey & Luff, 2009). Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2013) as a “method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question” (p. 178). The authors argue that thematic analysis can vary between inductive TA, theoretical TA, experimental TA and constructionist TA. In the present research, inductive TA is used, i.e. a bottom [data] up analysis that is not shaped by current theories, although it is shaped by the researcher's worldview, disciplinary background and epistemological stand. The thematic analysis follows the six phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), as shown in Figure 3.

Phase	Description
<b>Familiarisation</b>	Data transcription, reading and re-reading transcripts, taking notes with initial thoughts.
<b>Generation of initial codes</b>	Coding interesting issues in a systematic way, along the entire dataset, attributing codes to relevant data.
<b>Search for themes</b>	Arrange codes into potential groups [themes].
<b>Review Themes</b>	Verify if the codes work well with the respective quotations and the overall dataset, generating an analysis map.
<b>Name themes</b>	Iterative analysis to refine each theme. Generate names and definitions for each theme. Refine the story the data tells.
<b>Report</b>	Selection of vivid quotations that support the findings and produce a report.

Figure 3. Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The TA conducted was informed by the above-mentioned phases (see detailed explanation in Appendix 8). I started with data transcription (familiarisation) and proceed to coding (generation of initial codes). In the coding process I used a line-by-line approach, i.e. reading the transcripts one line at the time, I identified interesting issues and labelled them with codes. I followed this process in an iterative way for each transcript, re-reading the transcripts and refining the codes. As the coding progressed, some codes were added, others were renamed into keywords that were more accurate providing greater descriptive power, and some were discarded for not being as relevant as initially thought. These changes were more often during the coding of the initial transcripts, as coding advanced, the changes decreased and in the last transcripts no code changes were required. The fact that the changes decreased along the coding process gave me some assurance and confidence in that the coding system was getting more robust and stable. After coding all the interviews, I grouped the codes with similar features into sub-themes (search for themes). In order to do so, I printed each code on a separate piece of paper and based on similarity of the codes I organised them into groups. This stage is also iterative, and somehow similar to the coding stage, in that changes and exclusions to the sub-themes occur throughout the process (reviewing themes). Sub-themes were grouped into themes making sure that they fit well together and provided the grounds to tell the story about the data (see Figure 4). Names were given to each theme and definitions were created (name themes). A final analysis of the clearly defined themes allowed the emergence of a conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs, which in turn was the base for this thesis' findings and discussion (report). The conceptual framework was developed based on the relative importance of the themes to participants perception of QoL, taking into consideration the frequency of the codes that compose them in order to ensure that the conceptual framework reflects participants voices.

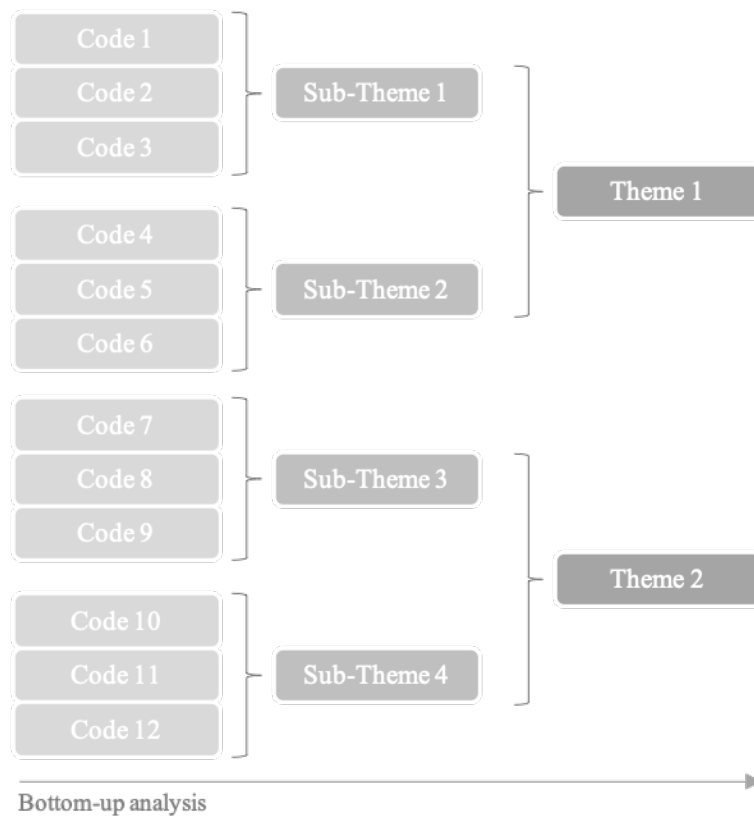


Figure 4. Themes development following inductive TA

It is important to mention that throughout TA, I approached the data without imposing preconceived frameworks or theoretical models. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that who I am and the way I see the world necessarily affects the way I interpret the data, as recognised by the research paradigm of the present study.

### 3.7.1 Software usage in data analysis

The use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) has significantly progressed since the 1980s (Weitzman, 2000). However, its use is widely debated in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). It is argued that the choice of using CAQDAS represents an important issue in qualitative data analysis (Coffey, Holbrook, & Atkinson, 1996). Additionally, the literature in support and against its use is extensive (see for example Atherton & Elsmore, 2007; Evans, 2000; Mangabeira, Lee, & Fielding, 2004; Seale, 2002; Weitzman, 2000). In order to decide whether to use CAQDAS or not it is relevant to acknowledge its limitations and advantages (see Table 9).

*Table 9. Advantages and disadvantages of CAQDAS usage*

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	More time and energy can be channelled into data analysis and interpretation	Conrad and Reinhartz (1984)
	Some of the features offered by CAQDAS can be helpful: different types of data entry, storage of files, automatic searches	Seale (2002)
	Facilitate the process of managing large volumes of data	Fielding and Lee (2002) Mangabeira et al. (2004) Weitzman (2000)
	Allows data backup and protection	Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2004)
	Enhances research transparency, rigour and trustworthiness.	Hwang (2008) Ryan (2009) Smith and Short (2001)
	Offers visual tools to present codes and their connections	Lee and Esterhuizen (2000)
	Replaces the traditional use of pens, scissors and glue, simplifying the coding process and making its analysis less time consuming	Maclaran and Catterall (2002)
	Users tend to use mainly the basic features, not making use of the advanced features	Seale (2002)
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Considerable amount of time required to learn how to use the software	Maclaran and Catterall (2002)
	Most of the features can be used with word-processing software such as Microsoft Word	Stanley and Temple (1995)
	Coding text into fragments can cause decontextualisation	
	The software may distance the researcher from the data	Seidel (1991)
	Analysis through CAQDAS can decrease creativity due to the mechanic nature of the process	Bryman and Burgess (1994) Lee and Fielding (1991)
	Interpretation may be neglected due to a confusion between coding and analysing	Coffey et al. (1996)

After analysing the pros and cons of using CAQDAS, I decided to use the computer software MAXQDA 12 to assist me with the coding. I used the software solely to code the interviews and to export quotations filtered by codes. Although I acknowledge using only basic features of MAXQDA 12, pointed as a disadvantage of software use in data analysis by Seale (2002), I felt that the amount of time it saved me (Weitzman, 2000) by replacing the traditional coloured pens, scissors and glue (Maclaran & Catterall, 2002) were of great convenience. Since I only used the software for coding, the time invested in mastering the software was very little. Eventually being computer literate also helped in minimising the time needed to use MAXQDA 12 (Mangabeira et al., 2004). The coding process was done using the interview transcriptions, therefore I believe that the use of software did not impact data contextualisation. On the contrary, I felt very close to the data.

### 3.8 Evaluating qualitative research/trustworthiness

Criteria to appraise quantitative research is widely agreed upon and is used to evaluate all quantitative research (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984). Good quantitative research is reliable, valid and generalisable. Conversely, there are no agreed criteria to evaluate qualitative research. Seale (2002) believes that “‘quality’ is a somewhat elusive phenomenon” (p. 471) may be a simplistic and naive justification for the challenges of evaluating qualitative research. Another possible reason is linked with the philosophical origin of most qualitative research. Phenomenology, constructivism and pragmatism suggest that a researcher’s perspective, culture, values and goals mediate and restrict the acquired knowledge (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003). Different ontological and epistemological stands lead to divergent views of reality. This diversity, in turn, made scholars question the suitability of using quantitative criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the concept of trustworthiness to assess qualitative research, arguing that it is composed of four factors: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The authors suggest the use of trustworthiness and its components as an equivalent solution to the quantitative rigour composed of internal validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity (see Figure 5).

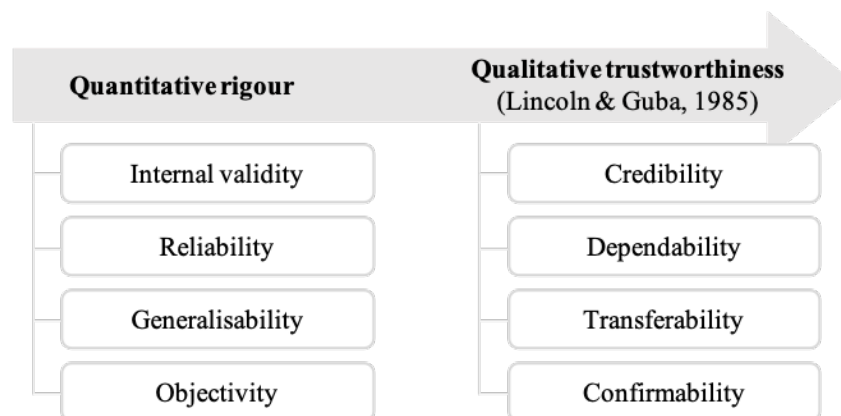


Figure 5. Rigour vs trustworthiness

It is argued that Lincoln and Guba’s trustworthiness proposition is grounded in a positivist social science tradition (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007), raising some suspicion regarding the systematisation of qualitative research that is messy and value-laden in nature (Law, 2004). For the past two decades, a considerable number of studies have been conducted with the aim of clarifying how qualitative research can be of high standard, generating useful knowledge (Yardley, 2017) and there seems to be a convergence of

opinions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). Yardley (2000, 2008) suggests that principles to assess, enhance and demonstrate the quality of qualitative research can be grouped into four key dimensions: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. The author emphasises that these principles are flexible in nature, given that their goal 'is not to prescribe a particular approach to qualitative research but to help researchers to reflect on and justify the methods they use' (Yardley, 2008, p.296).

In the present study, **sensitivity to context** is achieved through the researcher's awareness of the participants' perspectives. My engagement with the topic of this research, thorough data collection, and exhaustive in-depth analysis reflect **commitment and rigor**. **Transparency and coherence** are obtained through a clear presentation of how research findings emerged from my interpretation of the data. Lastly, with regard to **impact and importance**, this study adds significantly to understanding LsEs perception of QoL, it moves the knowledge about LsEs further, and contributes to understanding the role of T&H as a lens to view the changing nature of modern society.

### 3.9 Ethical considerations

This section explores the ethical concerns of data collection, despite acknowledging that ethical issues can arise at any stage of the research process (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews require some reflection upon the ethical dimension (Kong, Mahoney, & Parker, 2002). The ethical issues that can arise in qualitative research are grouped into the following areas: informed consent; privacy; and confidentiality (Bryman, 2004; Christians, 2000; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Informed consent** is widely debated in qualitative research (Bryman, 2004), particularly in regards with the amount of information provided to participants. Miles and Huberman's (1994), for example, argue that achieving a truly informed consent is unlikely due to the impossibility of anticipating researcher's actions. Despite acknowledging this debate, discussing it further is not an objective of the present research. Bryman (2004) argues that in-depth interviews carried out in an overt and ethical manner require an informed consent. In this research, all participants gave their verbal informed

consent in the beginning of each interview and such an approach was approved by Napier's Ethical Committee.

The respect for a participant's **privacy** is a complicated area within ethical concerns (Bulmer, 2001), mainly because what constitutes the private domain varies from person to person. To ensure that a participant's privacy was respected, I built rapport with the participants from the first contact (letter) until the interview with the intention of making them feel comfortable to share their own perspectives. Also, participants were informed that if for any reason they did not wish to talk about a particular topic, I would entirely respect their wish.

In order to safeguard a participant's unwanted exposure, it is crucial to ensure **confidentiality** (Christians, 2000). To guarantee a participant's confidentiality I decided to use a system of letter/number identification for references and retrieval purposes. Although I have detailed information of participants names, addresses and contacts, it will not appear in the thesis. Information that can potentially endanger participants' confidentiality, for example, names of relatives or the name of their commercial home, will also not appear in the thesis.

# 4

## Meeting other guests - Participants -

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**I** return to my room after knowing the owners and the house, open my luggage and make myself comfortable. I am thinking to myself that it seems like I have made a good choice, as this place has a lot to offer. I decide to rest for a while before exploring the surrounding areas, so I head to the garden and have a comfy seat on the hammock. While resting I notice how busy the owners are, and observe other guests arriving and leaving. Some of them had the same idea as me and are taking advantage of the garden. I end up meeting some of them and having nice conversations.

In resemblance with the other guests I have met while making use of the hammock, this chapter introduces the research participants and their commercial homes.

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## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to introduce the participants to the reader, as a preamble to the presentation of the findings and conceptual framework that emerged from the data. With this aim in mind, each commercial home will be presented together with an overall profile of its owners. Presenting the research participants and their businesses intends to provide the reader with a feeling of each unit, almost as if this chapter is a guided tour to each commercial home, allowing greater contextualisation and materialisation of the quotes used in the next chapters.

## **4.2 Overall profile of the home-based accommodation businesses and its owners**

During the primary research phase, 36 in-depth interviews were conducted with CHE owners. The interviews were held at participants' homes according to their availability and preferences regarding whom was participating in the interview (see Chapter 3 for more detail). A general characterisation of the participants and businesses is presented in the subsequent paragraphs. In this regard, it is important to note that the number of interviewees (50) is higher than the number of interviews (36), given that some of the conversations were held with two owners (husband and wife, partners, or father and daughter). The comprehensive characterisation of the participants is followed by a brief synopsis of each businesses and respective owner(s) to give the reader a deeper familiarisation with the context in which the research was developed.

### *4.2.1 Owners*

Conversations were held with 50 participants (Table 10): 15 females, seven males, 12 couples, and two father-daughter teams. Their ages range from mid 30's to mid 60's and all of them had previous professional occupations. The previous professional background varies within a wide range of occupations and sectors, from dancing to astrology. Only five participants had previous experience in the hospitality sector and at the time of the interview, 14 participants are involved with another job along with the activity of running an accommodation business. 29 participants have Portuguese nationality, eight are Dutch, five English, two French, two from the USA, two Belgium, one is Finn and one is Brazilian.

Table 10. Owners' characterisation

Owners				
Code	Age	Gender	Current Occupation	Nationality
AV	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
SC	40-49	F	B&B	English
Pe	50-59	M	B&B and HR	Portuguese
JP	60-69	M	B&B	Portuguese
SV	30-39	F	B&B	Portuguese
FV	60-69	M	B&B and real estate manager	Portuguese
CB	40-49	F	B&B	Portuguese
M	60-69	M	B&B	Portuguese
MJ	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
LV	40-49	M	B&B	Portuguese
IM	60-69	F	B&B and agriculture	Portuguese
AR	30-39	F	B&B and supermarket assistant	Portuguese
CM	30-39	F	B&B and teaching	Portuguese
MM	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
Pa	40-49	M	B&B and consultancy	Portuguese
DM	60-69	F	B&B	Portuguese
NL	50-59	M	B&B	Portuguese
CN	50-59	F	B&B	Dutch
S	30-39	F	B&B	Portuguese
LM	40-49	M	B&B	Portuguese
Mf	40-49	F	B&B	Portuguese
CF	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
CH	60-69	M	B&B, retired, real estate manager	Portuguese
SH	30-39	F	B&B and marketing manager	Portuguese
TR	50-59	M	B&B	English
PR	40-49	F	B&B	Portuguese
Is	50-59	F	B&B and teaching	Portuguese
El	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
Vi	50-59	F	B&B	Finn
Ja	50-59	M	B&B	American
Aa	50-59	F	B&B	Portuguese
Cr	30-39	M	B&B	Belgian
Ba	30-39	F	B&B	Portuguese
TS	50-59	M	B&B and psychologist	Dutch
MT	30-39	F	B&B	Dutch
TT	30-39	M	B&B	Dutch
ML	50-59	M	B&B and astrology	Portuguese
VL	50-59	M	B&B	Portuguese
PP	40-49	F	B&B	Portuguese
JP	40-49	M	B&B and banking	Portuguese
CC	50-59	F	B&B	English
Is	40-49	F	B&B	Brazilian
Co	50-59	M	B&B and financial investor	English
AP	60-69	F	B&B	Dutch
MJ	40-49	F	B&B and martial arts	Dutch
BJ	40-49	M	B&B	Dutch
R	60-69	M	B&B	Dutch
YP	40-49	M	B&B	French
TP	40-49	M	B&B	Portuguese
C	40-49	M	B&B	Portuguese

#### 4.2.2 CHEs

All the interviews took place on the premises of the commercial home. CHEs were located in central and southern regions of Portugal, namely in the following districts (see Fig. 6): Leiria (3), Santarém (1), Lisboa (3 in Ericeira, 11 in Sintra, and 4 in the city centre), Setúbal (4), Alentejo - Beja (7), and Algarve - Faro (3).

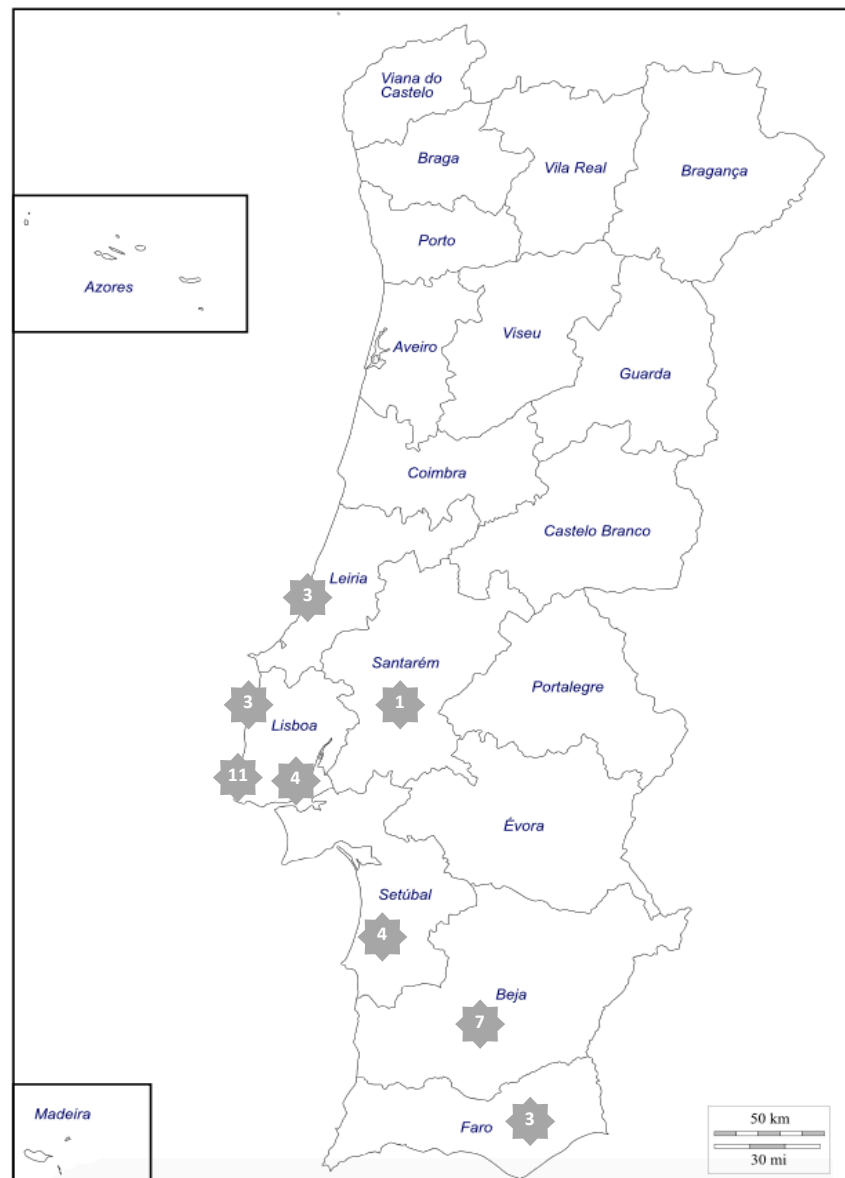


Figure 6. Geographical distribution of the CHEs

A characterisation of the CHEs is presented in Table 11 with information regarding: the type of business, the region in which it is located, the number and type of renting units, its opening year and number of years running (at the time of the interview), and closing period per year.

Table 11. Commercial homes' characterisation

Commercial Homes							
Owners Code	Bus Code	Type	Region	# Units	Opening year	# years running	Closing period
AV	CH1	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	5	2014	2	Jan - Feb
SC	CH2	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	6	2006	10	Dec - Feb
Pe	CH3	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	3	2015	1	-
Jq	CH4	Family	Lisboa	7	2005	11	-
SV FV	CH5	Family	Setubal	10	2008	8	-
CB	CH6	Family	Setubal	11	2012	4	-
M MjF	CH7	Family	Beja	7	2015	1	-
LV	CH8	Family	Beja	4	2004	12	-
IM	CH9	Family	Beja	8 3 flats	2000	16	-
AR	CH10	Family	Beja	4	2015	1	-
CM	CH11	Family	Beja	4	2006	10	-
MM	CH12	Family	Beja	20	1997	19	-
Pa	CH13	Sole proprietorship	Setubal	3 rooms 2 houses 1 tree-house 1 tipee	2013	3	-
DM	CH14	Family	Setubal	3 studios	2015	1	-
NL CN	CH15	Family	Beja	7 4 flats	1997	19	Dec - Mar
S	CH16	Friends partnership	Lisboa (Ericeira)	6	2014	2	-
LM Mf	CH17	Family	Lisboa (Ericeira)	5	2012	4	-
CF	CH18	Sole proprietorship	Lisboa (Ericeira)	6	2012	4	-
CH SH	CH19	Family	Santarem	8	1996	20	-
TR PR	CH20	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	8	2006	10	-
Is	CH21	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	4	1998	18	-
El	CH22	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	3	2012	4	-
Vi	CH23	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	11	2007	9	-
Ja Aa	CH24	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	5	2009	7	-
Cr Ba	CH25	Family	Faro	4	2014	2	Nov - Feb
TS	CH26	Family	Faro	3	2012	4	Nov - Feb
MT TT	CH27	Family	Faro	7 1 flat	2011	5	Oct - Apr
ML VL	CH28	Family	Lisboa	2	2010	6	-
PP JP	CH29	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	8	2015	1	Jan
CC	CH30	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	2 studios	2001	15	-
Is Co	CH31	Family	Lisboa (Sintra)	3	2015	1	-
AP	CH32	Family	Leiria	3 studios	2011	5	Oct - Apr
MJ BJ	CH33	Family	Leiria	2 studios 2 tents	2011	5	Tents: Oct - Apr
R	CH34	Family	Leiria	5	2006	10	-
YP TP	CH35	Family	Lisboa	3	2015	1	-
C	CH36	Friends partnership	Lisboa	10	2014	2	-

The majority (32) of the home-based businesses are family businesses, two of them are co-owned by friends (friends' partnership) and other two by single individuals (sole proprietorship). The properties vary in size and type of accommodation provided: the smallest CHEs have 2 guest rooms (CH 28 and CH30) while the biggest has 20<sup>5</sup> (CH12). The majority of the CHs (28) solely rent guest rooms, five are a mixture of rooms and flats/studios/tents, and other three solely studios. Out of the 36 CHs, 27 are open all year round and 9 are closed for a period of time that may vary from one to six months a year. Finally, the CH that operates for longer opened in 1986 and the 8 newest opened in 2015, the majority of them opened between 2006 and 2015 (30).

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<sup>5</sup> Although the description of CHE defines 11 rooms as the maximum of rooms for a commercial home to be considered CHE (see section 3.5.1), I decided to include this accommodation business (CH12) in the sample for the following reasons: firstly, the other CHE criteria is verified, i.e. the owners live on the premises, and it is family ran business operated based on lifestyle preferences. Secondly, it started as a CHE with 3 rooms and owners slowly developed their home accommodation business through profit reinvestment. Lastly, because it is useful in understanding small business owners' will to grow the business, which is a very contested topic in the literature (see section 2.2.2).

### 4.3 Synopses

After a global characterisation of the interviewees and their commercial homes, this section introduces each CHE and its owners to the reader. A short synopsis of each commercial home provides an idea of whom the participants are, their previous professional background, and their main motivations to open their home to guests. Important to mention here is that the information provided refers to the time of the interview and that the CHs are presented following the order listed in Table 11.

#### CH1 – AV (family business)



**Number of units:** 5 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2014 / **Number of years running:** 2

**Closing period:** January and February

**Owner(s):** AV and her partner LV (not present at the interview), both in their fifties and both Portuguese. LV combines some freelance work as a graphic designer with the B&B management. AV works full-time at the B&B.

**Space:** Located in Sintra, the property is a small farm with two separate houses and a field with sea view. The couple lives on the first floor of one of the houses, on the ground floor is the kitchen and a meal area where every morning breakfast is served. The other house is where the 5 rooms for rental are located. AV and LV are growing an organic garden with different vegetables and fruits along with some animals.

**Motivation to start:** AV and her husband had a previous business related to the provision of a space to develop training sessions and outdoor activities for companies. The business started to decrease, which led the couple decided to look for a property with some land where they could start a B&B. They wanted to be able to have an income and at the same time be closer to nature.

## CH2 – SC (family business)



**Number of units:** 6 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2006 / **Number of years running:** 10

**Closing period:** December to February

**Owner(s):** SC and her partner S (not present at the interview), both in their forties. The couple shares the B&B management as well as the daily tasks. SC is English and S is Portuguese.

**Space:** The house is in Praia das Maças, Sintra. On the ground floor is the couple's private bedroom and an office room, one guests' bedroom, a shared living room, dining area, and a kitchen in which guests are welcomed to use the fridge. The other five guest rooms are on the first floor. Outside, there is a swimming pool area, barbecue, a garden and paddocks where two horses live.

**Motivation to start:** SC was a troop dancer and dance teacher near London. Due to her age, SC decided that it was time for her to find an alternative career. SC was considering moving out of London, to the south coast, and find a house with some space to have horses. To be able to live this lifestyle, SC needed to find a way to fund it. When SC's uncle told her that he was selling his property in Sintra, SC decided to buy it and start a B&B.

### CH3 – Pe (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

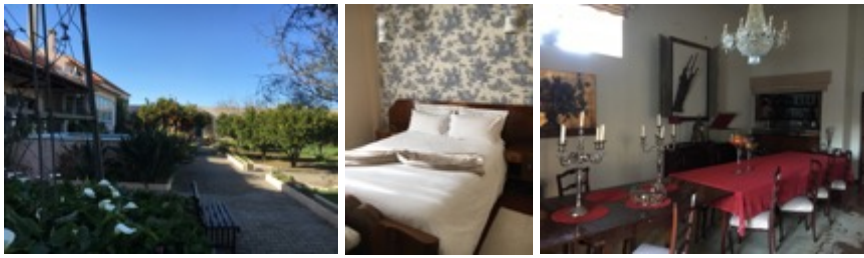
**Owner(s):** Pe and his wife (not present at the interview), both Portuguese in their fifties. The couple shares the B&B management as well as the daily tasks. Pe works as a HR Partner in a bank and his wife was waiting for her pre-retirement so she could work in the B&B full-time.

**Space:** The house, in the heart of Sintra village, is in the family for five generations, and Pe was born there. The two top floors of the house are private, which is where the family rooms, kitchen and private dining room are located. On the ground floor there is a large living room shared with guests, and in the basement the three guest rooms. Outside in the garden, there is a communal patio and esplanade where guests can sit to relax or have their meals.

**Motivation to start:** Both like to welcome guests in their home, their kids no longer live with them and the house is too big for the couple, so they decided to rent the spare rooms. The B&B is also considered a solution to keep the house in the family and protect the heritage.



#### CH4 – Jq (family business)



**Number of units:** 7 double rooms (+ 2 non registered)

**Opening year:** 2005 / **Number of years running:** 11

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** JP and his wife (not present at the interview), are both in their sixties and both Portuguese. JP is retired and manages the accommodation business together with other family businesses whilst his wife is responsible for the cooking and housework.

**Space:** The CHE is in JP's family farm in Santarem. The farm has a main building where the main facilities are located. The seven guest rooms are on the first floor, and on the ground floor there is a communal dining room, the kitchen, JP's office, and a reserved area where JP lives with his wife. There is another small building that gives support to the swimming pool area with toilets, a game room, and barbecue with dining area. Some of the farm's old structures used for treating animals and produce wine were recovered and JP is happy to show it to guests.

**Motivation to start:** The farm has been owned by JP's family for three generations. It used to be agricultural land with different plantations, an extensive area reserved to vineyards, and another area reserved to animal breeding. JP sold part of the land and kept the piece of land that included the farm houses and the family house. The farm houses were old and needed to be fixed, so JP applied for EU funds (QREN)<sup>6</sup> to rebuild them and create an accommodation business.

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<sup>6</sup> The Portuguese Government with financial support from the EU created Quadro de Referencia Estrategica Nacional (QREN) [National Strategic Reference Framework]. Its main strategic goal was the qualification of the Portuguese people and the promotion of high and sustained levels of economic and socio-cultural development and territorial qualification (QREN, 2007). QREN aimed to reduce the disparities between regional levels of development, emphasising its growth, competitiveness and levels of employment. Funds were available between 2007-2013 for winning applications.

### CH5 – SV and FV (family business)



**Number of units:** 10 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2005 / **Number of years running:** 11

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** SV and her father FV. SV is in her thirties and FV in his fifties. SV left her art related job and moved in to the property together with her family, husband and two daughters, to manage the business. FV is retired and manages some agricultural family businesses, giving some support to his daughter when needed.

**Space:** The property is part of Sudoeste Alentejano's Natural Park, it has a large green area and four buildings. Three of the buildings hold the ten rooms and the fourth is a communal area used to serve meals, support swimming pool related activities, including a multipurpose room used for different types of classes like yoga and pilates, and a massage room.

**Motivation to start:** FV has managed agricultural lands all his life and inherited a large farm with some ruins from his family. He seized the opportunity of getting some EU funds (QREN) to rebuild the ruins and transform the space into an accommodation business.

## CH6 – CB (family business)



**Number of units:** 11 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2012 / **Number of years running:** 4

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** CB and her husband (not present at the interview), both Portuguese and in their forties. The couple shares the management of the business and daily tasks. CB loves cooking, so she is the one responsible for all the food and paperwork.

**Space:** The house is part of Sudoeste Alentejano's Natural Park, surrounded by forest, and is composed of two buildings and a swimming pool area. The communal areas such as living room, dining room and esplanade are located on the ground floor of the main house. On that same floor is the private kitchen, the owner's office and three guest bedrooms. On the top floor there is communal large room with TV and games, and CB's private bedroom. The other building has the additional eight guest rooms.

**Motivation to start:** CB was working in Mozambique in a pharmaceutical company when she met her husband. He had some lands in Setubal and CB was passionate about hosting people and cooking, so the idea of using the land to build a home where some guests could stay started to grow. A few years later, they left their jobs in Mozambique and returned to Setubal, where they built the commercial home using QREN funds.

### CH7 – M and MjF (family business)



**Number of units:** 7 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** M and his partner MjF. M is in his sixties and MjF in her fifties. They both manage the B&B and share daily operational tasks.

**Space:** The property is a typical house from Alentejo region: two floors, a big patio on the back of the house and a big balcony on the first floor. On the ground floor, MjF and M have their private bedroom, a communal kitchen with a large fireplace where breakfast and other meals are served, a patio and three guest rooms. On the first floor, there are four guest rooms, and a big balcony where guests can relax. MjF and M like to share the Portuguese culture and costumes with guests so they do different events in the patio and prepare typical food to share.

**Motivation to start:** M is a retired sales representative with a passion for restoring houses. He met MjF and both decided to leave Lisbon and go to Ferreira do Alentejo where M has a family house. MjF started working as a gardener in an organic garden and M restoring the old house. The couple shares a passion for meeting new people and learning about different cultures, so they decided to rent out the spare rooms in their house. MjF left her job and both manage the B&B.

### CH8 – LV (family business)



**Number of units:** 4 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2004 / **Number of years running:** 12

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** LV and his wife (not present at the interview) run the business. They are both Portuguese in their late forties. LV's wife works full-time as an administrative role in the local government, providing support in her free time. LV is responsible for the majority of the tasks related to the management of the B&B business, his wife helps with the housework and their two daughters give a little help, especially during the high season.

**Space:** The house has a large garden on the back with a natural swimming pool, barbecue area with tables, an area with small animals (rabbits and chickens) and an organic garden where they grow vegetables and fruits. The house has four bedrooms, a shared kitchen and living/dining room. LV and his family live in a private area with a separate entrance. LV loves to meet new people and share the local traditions; he often hikes with guests and prepares picnics.

**Motivation to start:** LV used to work in the construction sector, building and restoring houses. When he was made redundant, he decided to restore a property that he had bought a few years back. After restoring the house, LV and his wife thought it was a good idea to rent out the rooms to have an extra source of income, so they started the B&B.

### CH9 – IM (family business)



**Number of units:** 8 double rooms and 3 flats

**Opening year:** 2000 / **Number of years running:** 16

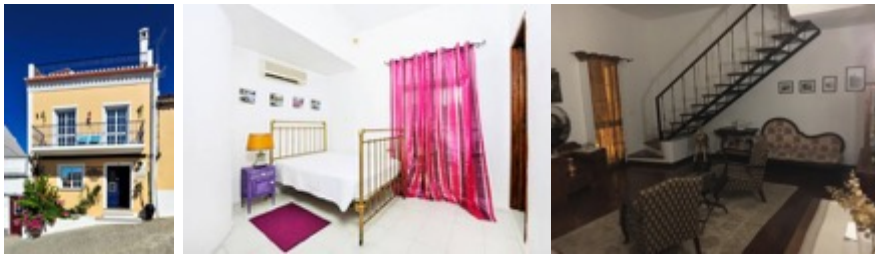
**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** IM and his son J (not present at the interview) run the business together. IM is Portuguese, in his late sixties and he manages the agricultural family business (animal breeding and the production of olive oil and wine), while J manages the accommodation business.

**Space:** The property is a farm with fields for animals and plantations, several buildings to support the agricultural activities, two buildings used for the accommodation business and a swimming pool. On the main building there are 8 guest rooms, a games room (snooker, darts and cards), a large kitchen, a dining area where breakfast and other meals are served, and a private area where J lives with his family. The other building was recently rebuilt and includes three flats usually rent to families.

**Motivation to start:** IM has a passion for hunting and regularly gathers with his friends to hunt. The idea of transforming some of the old barns into a B&B had its origin in those hunting gatherings.

### CH10 – AR (family business)



**Number of units:** 4 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** AR runs the business with some help from her husband. They are both Portuguese, who are both in their early thirties and have two children. AR has a part-time job in the local supermarket and her husband works full-time as an IT manager. AR is responsible for the majority of the tasks in the B&B, her husband gives some support in advertising the property and financial management.

**Space:** Located in the village centre, the house has four guest rooms, a living room, a dining room, a balcony and a kitchen. AR and her family live in a private area of the house, separated by a door.

**Motivation to start:** AR always wanted to have her own business. When the house next-door was put on sale she seized the opportunity to make her dream come true. AR wants to leave her job and makes the business grow, at the time of the interview, she was looking for a land where she can build an accommodation business from scratch.



### CH11 – CM (family business)



**Number of units:** 4 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2006 / **Number of years running:** 10

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** CM was born in Lisbon and is in her late thirties. She runs the B&B with a little help from her son whenever he is not in school. At the time of the interview, CM needed to have a part-time job to have enough monthly income to face her monthly expenses.

**Space:** The house is in a very small village close to Mértola, it has a garden on the back with some areas for guests to relax, a shared living and dining room and four guest rooms. CM lives on the premises with her son, they have one room each on the first floor, whilst the guests' rooms are on the ground floor. Only the family uses the kitchen although guests are welcome to use the fridge.

**Motivation to start:** CM never enjoyed living in the big city and had the dream of opening a B&B in a quieter area. When CM finished her Master's degree, a professional opportunity in Mértola arose to develop a project in organic farming and she decided to buy a house that would allow her to rent the extra rooms and fulfil her dream.



## CH12 – MM (family business)



**Number of units:** 20 double rooms<sup>7</sup>

**Opening year:** 1997 / **Number of years running:** 19

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** MM and her husband are Portuguese in their fifties and they run the business together. They have three sons that are studying and living in Lisbon. MM and her husband live on the first floor of the main building. MM's husband is an artist and the houses are decorated with his paintings and sculptures.

**Space:** The business is in Alentejo, in the countryside and it is composed of several buildings scattered in the spacious land. In the main building, there are different areas for guests to relax with fireplaces, sofas, spaces with journals and books, a small bar, and a dining room where breakfast and other meals are served. Some guest rooms are in the main building, whilst others are in the other small houses. There is a swimming pool, horses, and other activities available for guests.

**Motivation to start:** MM and her husband had the dream of living in the countryside with a house that contains enough rooms to make an additional source of income. They had decided to migrate to Australia when they passed by a land for sale in Alentejo, on their way to a wedding. They decided to buy the land and make their dream come true. The business started with three rooms and grew slowly from there through profit reinvestment.

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 5 (p. 74)

### CH13 – Pa (sole proprietorship)



**Number of units:** 3 double rooms, 2 houses, 1 tree-house and 1 tepee

**Opening year:** 2013 / **Number of years running:** 3

**Closing period:** Open all year round (Tepee only framed during summer time)

**Owner(s):** Pa is Portuguese in his late forties and he runs the business by himself. Pa still works as a freelancer in occasional projects, which is the reason why he spends his days between Lisbon and Setubal, but he intends to stop working and solely manage the business.

**Space:** The *monte*<sup>8</sup> is near Porto Covo, close to the beaches, and has three houses, one tree-house and one tepee. The main house contains Pa's private room, three guest rooms, kitchen, and a living room with an area for meals where breakfast is served. The other two houses have one bedroom, one living room with sofa-bed, and a kitchenette, and usually are rented to families. The tree-house has one room and a bathroom. All the guests can use the common areas of the main house, the barbecue area, and outside dining area.

**Motivation to start:** Pa was a managing partner in an international consultancy company. In the last couple of years, he was questioning the type of life he was living because he was no longer happy in what he called the "corporate tornado". Pa wanted to be more in contact with nature, to reduce his ecological footprint, to eat organic food, to decrease the level of stress and to have a less materialistic life, so he decided to leave his job. As an alternative way of getting income, Pa decided to transform his holidays' *monte* into an accommodation business.

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<sup>8</sup> Portuguese designation for a house in large plot of land, where typically the owners grow vegetables, fruits and animals.

#### CH14 – DM (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 studios

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** DM is in her sixties and runs the business together with her husband. DM is responsible for the housework and guest management, her husband gives a hand whenever is needed.

**Space:** A small *monte* in a village close to the beach in Porto Covo, Setubal. The main house was restructured into three studios (bedroom with bathroom, living room with sofa bed and kitchenette), and a private area where DM lives. Outside, there is a communal space used for different purposes namely meal area where breakfast is served and relaxing area.

**Motivation to start:** DM inherited the property from her father and chose to transform it into an accommodation business to preserve the house and family heritage. DM quit her job to run the property, motivated by the chance of being able to be her own boss.

### CH15 – NL and CN (family business)



**Number of units:** 7 double rooms, 4 flats

**Opening year:** 1997 / **Number of years running:** 19

**Closing period:** December to March

**Owner(s):** NL is Portuguese and met his wife in Holland where he migrated to. They are both in their fifties and have two kids. NL is responsible for the cooking, CN for the housekeeping and they share the rest of the tasks.

**Space:** The *monte* is near Vila Nova de Mil Fontes in Setubal. The main building has a private area where the family lives, seven guest rooms, a communal dining area with an honesty bar, and the kitchen. Additionally, the property has four small houses that were rebuilt into self-catering apartments for families. Outside there is a swimming pool, and a grass area.

**Motivation to start:** NL always wanted to work for himself. The couple bought the *monte* to spend holidays with family and friends. Slowly the property was transformed into a B&B, and when the moment was right the couple decided to leave their jobs in Amsterdam and start running the business.

### CH16 – S (friends' partnership)



**Number of units:** 6 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2014 / **Number of years running:** 2

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** S and a childhood friend decided to start an accommodation business together. They are both Portuguese and in their thirties. S is responsible for all the daily tasks and guest management. S's friend, working and living abroad, gives her support in the financial tasks.

**Space:** The house is located in a village near Ericeira. The guest rooms are on the top floor and have sea view. On the ground floor, there is a shared kitchen where breakfast is made available every morning, a living room with TV and console games, and S's private space. Outside, on the back of the house, there is a swimming pool and a barbecue area for the guests.

**Motivation to start:** S used to work as a project manager in a communication agency in Lisbon. Due to the time spent on commuting, the time left to be with her family was little. S's main motivation to start the business was being able to work at home and have time to spend with her daughter.

### CH17 – LM and Mf (family business)



**Number of units:** 5 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2012 / **Number of years running:** 4

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** LM and his wife Mf manage the business. They are both Portuguese, in their early forties and have two children. LM built everything from scratch: the main building, the furniture, the artificial lakes and all the other spaces on the property. Mf is responsible for all the housework and paperwork.

**Space:** The main building has 5 rooms with separate entrances, and the owner's private area. Inside the property there are two artificial lakes, in which people can bath, an artificial beach, a cave, an honesty bar, places for guests to sit on and relax, and a house with dining area and fireplace.

**Motivation to start:** LM was the owner of a construction company where he worked with his wife Mf. Due to the economic crisis, LM closed his business and decided to transform a piece of land that he inherited from his dad into an accommodation business.



### CH18 – CF (sole proprietorship)



**Number of units:** 6 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2012 / **Number of years running:** 4

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** CF was born in Portugal and is in her fifties. She is responsible for the daily tasks in the B&B and its management.

**Space:** The house is located in Ericeira. In the main building CF has her private area, with a separate entrance, six guest rooms, and a kitchen for the guests. On a separate building, there is a dining room where CF serves a traditional Portuguese breakfast every morning. Outside there is a swimming pool, a barbecue area with some tables, and a hen house.

**Motivation to start:** CF worked as a sales manager in an international company before being made redundant. Tired of working for others and having some challenges to find a new job, she thought about using the spare rooms in her house to make an income.

### CH19 – CH and SH (family business)



**Number of units:** 8 double rooms

**Opening year:** 1996 / **Number of years running:** 20

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** The B&B is owned by CH, his daughter (SH) and his son. CH is Portuguese in his mid-sixties and he is a retired engineer, who still occasionally works in consultancy projects. SH, his daughter, works in marketing but, at the time of the interview, was on maternity leave and giving a hand on the marketing aspects of the family business. CH is responsible for the daily management of the property.

**Space:** The property is a manor house built in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that has been owned by CH's family for generations. The house is located in the rural area of Rio Maior, in the centre of Portugal and relatively close to the coast. It has a rustic decoration and the owner's hobbies are reflected in some spaces, like the gun room where CH's hunting guns are stored, or the *adega* where bottles of wine and spirits collected over the years are stored. The main house is divided by doors into the rooms area and the owner's private area. Outside there is a small garden with a swimming pool, a small building with an entertainment room (TV, snooker table, darts), a bar and a spacious area where breakfast is served.

**Motivation to start:** CH transformed the family house into a B&B twenty years ago, because the house was too big for his family, also as a way to keep the house and its family and social history.



## CH20 – TR and PR (family business)



**Number of units:** 8 family rooms

**Opening year:** 2006 / **Number of years running:** 10

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** TR and PR are an English couple that lived in America for five years due to PR's work as a civil engineer. TR is in his fifties and PR in her forties. The couple shares the daily tasks in the B&B.

**Space:** The main building is where TN, PN and their daughter live, but is it also where the kitchen and two guest rooms are. These two rooms are only rented out in the high season. The old barn was transformed into a building with six additional family rooms for guests. Outside there is a large garden, a paddock for the horses, a barbecue area, and a swimming pool area, all shared with the guests.

**Motivation to start:** TR & PN have a common passion of buying old places and rebuilding them and they dreamt of retiring to Portugal and have a B&B. When PR's contract ended, they decided to make their dream come true and moved to Portugal. They found a farm that had been empty for twenty-five years, very ran down, with a separate building for accommodation and a piece of land for the horse they had promised their daughter, so they bought it and restore it into a B&B.

## CH21 – Is (family business)



**Number of units:** 4 double rooms

**Opening year:** 1998 / **Number of years running:** 18

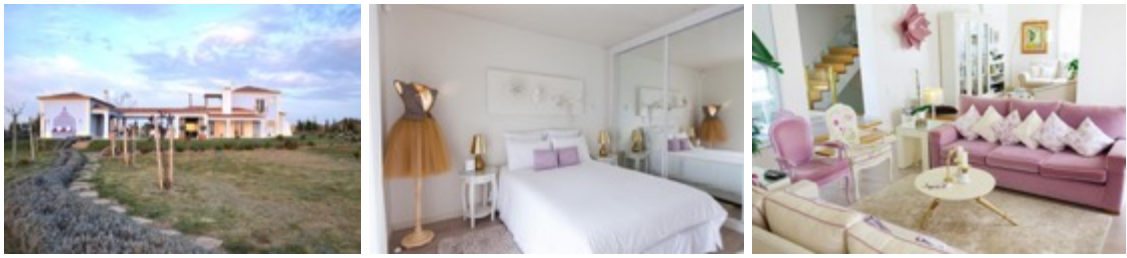
**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** Is is Portuguese in her mid-fifties. Is lives on the premises with her mother and she is responsible for the daily tasks and business management. Is also teaches English to kids in a local school.

**Space:** The family house has four guest rooms, a common living room, dining room, and a kitchen. Is' private area is in the ground floor, she has one room for herself and another one for her mother, sharing the rest of the house. On the back of the house there is a green area, a barbecue, a balcony with some tables, an organic garden that guests are encouraged to use, and 3 small houses that Is uses to welcome her family, friends and guests that became friends with no charges.

**Motivation to start:** Is loves meeting new people, talk in different languages and share life stories, so when she got pregnant from her first child, she decided that a B&B was the perfect place for her to be able to look after her children.

## CH22 - El (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2012 / **Number of years running:** 4

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** El is a Portuguese architect and designer in her fifties and she is the one managing the business on a daily basis, although her husband gives her support whenever he is in Portugal.

**Space:** The house is composed of a main building, a smaller house and a swimming pool. The main building's ground floor has two guests' rooms, a living room, a dining room, the kitchen and a reading area. The top floor is the owner's private area, and the basement is where the supporting rooms (laundry, cleaning, pantry) are located. The small house is where the third guest room is located. El loves to cook with fresh and local ingredients, so every day she prepares breakfast and dinner for her guests. The kitchen is also used in food related workshops that El does every now and then.

**Motivation to start:** El's family had a property in Odrinhas, near Sintra, and she decided to project and design a house, resembling the lavender fields that she fell in love with in her last travel to Provence. The house was intended to be a family home for El, her husband, and their four daughters. However, life circumstances pushed her to open a B&B. Her husband was spending large periods of time working in Angola and El was diagnosed with a health condition that made her retire earlier.

### CH23 – Vi (family business)



**Number of units:** 11 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2007 / **Number of years running:** 9

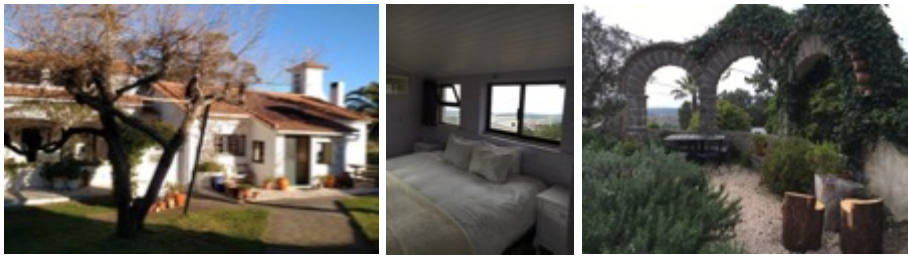
**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** Vi was born in Finland, is in her fifties and is responsible for the management of the daily tasks. She used to work as a consultant in an international firm, but she quit her job to run the B&B. Vi's husband works full-time as a senior consultant and their three daughters no longer live with them.

**Space:** The house is located in Sintra, in the city centre. In the main building there is a reception where all guests are welcomed, a common living room with TV and Vi's private rooms. All the rooms for guests have a separate entrance door. Breakfast is served every morning in each room, and there are several spaces in the garden for guests to enjoy.

**Motivation to start:** Vi's family home had some spare rooms, and in a conversation with a neighbour that owned a B&B, Vi decided to agree on receiving guests that the neighbour could not accommodate whenever his B&B was fully booked. She enjoyed the experience so much that she decided to transform her family home into a B&B, leaving her consultancy job. The business started with four (spare) rooms, and had slowly grown into 11 rooms at the time of the interview.

## CH24 – Aa and Ja (family business)



**Number of units:** 5 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2009 / **Number of years running:** 7

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** Aa and Ja are an American couple in their late fifties. Aa likes to cook and prepares breakfast every day with organic and locally produced products, as well as other vegetarian meals upon request, the rest of the tasks are shared between the couple.

**Space:** The property is located in Sintra and has three buildings - the main house and two little houses - and a large green area. In the main building's first floor is Aa & Ja's private area, whereas on the ground floor are all the shared facilities: kitchen, living room, dining area and a winter garden. Two of the five rooms are in the ground floor of the main building, with separate entrances, and the other three rooms are in the little houses. The couple is vegetarian and cultivate their own vegetables and fruits in an organic garden.

**Motivation to start:** Aa and Ja used to live in the north of New England in the USA, where the climate is quite cold. They had the dream of retiring to a temperate country and open a B&B to be close to nature and do one of their favourite hobbies: hiking. So Ja decided to go for an early retirement to make their dream come true.

## CH25 – Cr and Ba (Family business)



**Number of units:** 4 family rooms

**Opening year:** 2014 / **Number of years running:** 2

**Closing period:** November to February

**Owner(s):** Cr & Ba were born in Belgium and are in their late thirties. They left their previous jobs to open and manage the B&B.

**Space:** The property is in Algarve, in the natural park, and very close to the ocean. The house is surrounded by a large green area with different spaces that can be used by guests: a barbecue area, a swimming pool, an outside dining area, and stables where they have horses and donkeys. The house has four guest rooms, a shared living room, dining area, kitchen and balconies. Cr & Ba have their private room and share the rest of the house with guests.

**Motivation to start:** Cr used to work in the Belgium special forces, spending on average eight months per year in other countries, and his wife Ba used to work in a pharmacy. The time spent together by the couple was not much, and they felt that they should spend more time together. The couple shares a passion for travelling and enjoys staying in B&Bs and guest houses. This common passion made them decide to open a B&B in the south of Portugal. Cr left the special forces and spent one year arranging the property and transforming it into a B&B. One year later Ba left the pharmacy to join her husband.

## CH26 – TS (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2012 / **Number of years running:** 4

**Closing period:** November to February

**Owner(s):** TS is a Dutch psychologist, in his late fifties, married to a Portuguese teacher for students with special needs. TS still works in some projects with young people at risk and his wife took an earlier retirement to manage the business.

**Space:** The property is located in Monchique, Algarve. The couple has a private area in the house – bedroom and the kitchen – and the rest of the house is shared with the guests, namely the dining room, living room and the outside areas (barbecue, pizza oven, swimming pool, garden). The guest rooms are located on the ground floor, each with a separate entrance looking into the garden area.

**Motivation to start:** TS and his wife were tired of living in a flat, so they decided to buy a house in the countryside, and found a property they liked in Monchique mountain with a large house and a green area. The couple started welcoming friends in their new home and the idea of opening a B&B grew from there.



## CH27 – MT and TT (family business)



**Number of units:** 7 double rooms and 1 flat

**Opening year:** 2009 / **Number of years running:** 7

**Closing period:** October to April

**Owner(s):** MT and TT are a Dutch couple in their late thirties. They used to work as managers in a tourism complex in Spain and decided to quit their jobs to open and manage a B&B. They live on the premises and share all the tasks. They have different interests and like to create and develop new projects, which is the reason why they deliberately close the business 6 months per year.

**Space:** The house is located in Moncarapacho, Algarve, and is composed from a main building and a large green area that surrounds the house. MT and TT have their private area – a small room and living room – with a separate entrance from the main building. In the main building there is a shared living room, dining area, and seven rooms. The flat is in an annex, on the back of the house. Outside there are different spaces that guests can use like hammocks and tables and chairs. Every day the couple prepares a homemade breakfast for their guests, with some of the products from the organic garden.

**Motivation to start:** MT and TT realised that they were not happy with their jobs anymore, so they wanted to change their lifestyle. After some reflection, the couple decided to buy a property where they could have a B&B. MT and TT share the passion for helping others, thus they donate part of the rental value to a micro financing platform<sup>9</sup> (by December 2016 they had supported people with up to \$100,000 in loans).

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<sup>9</sup> An online platform that aims to provide access to financial services to unbanked people around the world. The aim is achieved through crowdfunded loans that unlock capital, and by doing so improve the quality and cost of financial services, and address some of the barriers to financial access around the world. Loans are used for different purposes: tuition fees payments, female entrepreneurship, emergency care, among others.



## CH28 - ML and VL (family business)



**Number of units:** 2 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2010 / **Number of years running:** 6

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** ML is an astrologer who works privately and in collaboration with some magazines and TV shows, his partner VL works occasionally as a PR. They are both Portuguese, in their late fifties. The couple lives on the premises and VL is more involved in managing the B&B, being responsible for the majority of the daily tasks.

**Space:** The B&B is a flat in a typical Portuguese building, located in a traditional neighbourhood, in the heart of the city. The house decoration reflects the owners' passion for antiques and Portuguese products. The flat has some areas that are shared with guests, namely the living room and a room where the breakfast is served, the rest of the house is private and separated by a set of doors.

**Motivation to start:** Following an accident that ML had, the couple decided to rent out the two extra rooms, to have an extra source of income, for the pleasure of sharing the Portuguese culture with guests, and as a vehicle to practice foreign languages.

### CH29 – PP and JP (family business)



**Number of units:** 8 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** January

**Owner(s):** PP and JP are Portuguese in their forties and they used to work in the banking sector. JP works from home in investment banking and helps PP whenever needed. PP is responsible for the majority of the daily tasks and for guest management.

**Space:** The manor house is very close to Sintra's city centre and was rebuilt, keeping its original architecture. The property has a spacious garden surrounding the house where different areas were created for guests. From the garden, there is a walking path that leads to the city centre. The couple shares the house with guests, with the exceptions of their private bedroom and kitchen.

**Motivation to start:** PP always had the dream of having a B&B, when JP was made redundant, the couple decided to invest the redundancy pay in a property suitable to transform into a B&B.

### CH30 – CC (family business)



**Number of units:** 2 studios

**Opening year:** 2001 / **Number of years running:** 15

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** CC was born in the UK and is in her fifties. She lives on the premises with her retired husband, and is responsible for the B&B management and daily tasks. CC enjoys meeting people and doing manual work, whether it is gardening or DIY, so she spends her days hosting and looking after the property and garden.

**Space:** The property is in the heart of Sintra, close to some of the main attractions. It is a traditional house with a large green area and an indoor swimming pool. CC transformed the ground floor into a studio, and some years later, she constructed a small house in the rear of the garden. The first floor of the house is CC's private area.

**Motivation to start:** CC wanted to have a B&B since she travelled around Scotland and stayed in some B&B's in her early twenties. When she moved to Portugal with her husband due to his work, they acquire a property suitable to transform into a B&B.

### CH31 – Ism and Co (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 double bedrooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** Ism is in her forties and was born in Brazil, Co, her husband, is in his fifties and was born in the UK where they met. Ism manages the business and is responsible for the majority of the daily tasks, Co helps her with the financial management and is working from home on his investment related business.

**Space:** The property is close to Sintra and has a green area surrounding the house. On the ground floor the couple has their private area (one bedroom, one office where Co works, and the kitchen), a dining room where breakfast is served, and a sitting room with TV. Outside there is a swimming pool and a barbecue area. The guest rooms are located on the first floor.

**Motivation to start:** Ism had the dream of having a B&B and when Co retired, they decided to migrate to Portugal and buy a house with some spare rooms to rent.

### CH32 – AP (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 studios

**Opening year:** 2011 / **Number of years running:** 5

**Closing period:** October to April

**Owner(s):** AP is in her sixties and was born in Holland. Her husband works abroad on an international engineering project, so she is responsible for all the tasks in the B&B.

**Space:** The property is in Leiria, isolated in the middle of the forest and a few kilometres away from the coast. The house was rebuilt according to the regional architecture. It is a ground level building with a front patio, terraces and a green area that surrounds the house. It has three studios (room, bathroom and kitchenette) with direct doors to the patio, a shared dining room, and AP's private space. Outside there is a dining area, a kitchen with barbecue, a wood oven and a swimming pool.

**Motivation to start:** AP was no longer satisfied with her workplace and wanted to have her own business. Her husband was relocated to Portugal by the company he worked for and they seized the opportunity to buy a property where AP could run a B&B.

### CH33 – MJ and BJ (family business)



**Number of units:** 2 studios and 2 tents

**Opening year:** 2011 / **Number of years running:** 5

**Closing period:** Open all year round, the tents are not available from October to April

**Owner(s):** MJ was an IT project manager and her husband BJ a HR manager in Holland where they were born. MJ and BJ are in their forties and they have two boys, one being 9 years old and the other 6 years old. The couple manages the business together, splitting the tasks. MJ also provides some martial arts training and workshops at the property.

**Space:** The house is in a large plot of land, where the couple built a swimming pool and a Japanese garden. They have two studios and two glamping tents (at the time of the interview, the couple was waiting for the arrival of the third glamping tent). The studios are on the ground floor of the main house and their private area on the top floor. The swimming pool, barbecue and sitting/living room are communal areas.

**Motivation to start:** The couple bought a house in the region of Leiria, Portugal, to spend their holidays and do some Qi Gong<sup>10</sup> (type of Chinese Yoga) courses delivered by MJ. Tired of their business life in Holland, they slowly recovered their holidays' house into an accommodation business and left their jobs in Holland as soon as the house was ready.

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<sup>10</sup> Qi Gong is often spelt Chi Kung and it is a type of Chinese health exercise. Its aim is to promote the movement of Qi (energy) in the body, achieved through relaxation and breathing techniques.

### CH34 – R (family business)



**Number of units:** 5 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2006 / **Number of years running:** 10

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** R and his wife are from the Netherlands and are in their sixties. They manage the B&B together, splitting all the tasks between them. R likes to garden and he takes care of all the flowers, plants and the organic garden where they pick fruits and vegetables daily.

**Space:** The property is located in Caldas da Rainha, Leiria district. The plot where the house was built is in a valley, so the main building has a ground floor and one floor below the ground floor. The owners' private area is on the ground floor, and so is the kitchen and the room where breakfast is served. In the lower floor there are the guest rooms, a library and a living room with a computer. Outside, guests can use a barbecue area with some dining space, a swimming pool, a garden, and an organic garden.

**Motivation to start:** The idea of starting a B&B in a more temperate country started to grow when R was made redundant. R and his wife decided to move to Portugal where they have been before on holidays, and find a suitable place to live and run a B&B.



### CH35 – YP and TP (family business)



**Number of units:** 3 double bedrooms

**Opening year:** 2015 / **Number of years running:** 1

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** YP worked in Paris in a finance consultancy firm and his partner TP was helping some friends by running a guest house in Amsterdam. They are both French in their middle forties.

**Space:** The flat is in the heart of Lisbon, in a typical building located in one of the most famous squares in downtown. YP and TP wanted to have some privacy within the flat, so they have guest rooms on one side of the corridor and their private area on the other side. They share the living room with guests and the dining area where they serve breakfast every day.

**Motivation to start:** YP was tired of his job and shared the dream of opening a B&B with TP. They looked for some properties in Paris, but they were too expensive. So, the couple started looking for alternative places. Based on the climate and cost of living, they decided to look in southern European countries and chose to buy a flat in Lisbon to start the accommodation business.



### CH36 – C (friends' partnership)



**Number of units:** 10 double rooms

**Opening year:** 2014 / **Number of years running:** 2

**Closing period:** Open all year round

**Owner(s):** C was born in Portugal. But when he was 5 years old, his parents migrated to France, where he lived until adulthood. C owns the business together with a friend, but he is the one responsible for the daily tasks in the B&B and for the daily management.

**Space:** The building is in Chiado, a historical part of Lisbon's old town, it has 10 rooms, a central patio with green areas and swimming pool. On the ground floor there is also a pub that opens to general public by night. C lives on the premises, in the only room located in the patio. The living room and dining room are shared with the guests.

**Motivation to start:** C was a telecommunications' engineer working for an international company in France when he decided to do an MBA. His final project on the MBA was a B&B for the gay community in Lisbon. And by the end of the MBA, he decided to leave his job in France and make that project come true.

# 5

## Exploring the surroundings - Findings -

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**O**ne of the main reasons for me to choose this B&B was its location and surroundings. After charging my batteries, I put my hiking equipment on and head out to the natural park. When I arrived, the owners gave me a map with all the trails in the park and there is a particular one that I want to explore. To be in contact with nature makes me exercise my senses and recharges me like nothing else. This is what I have been waiting for since I left home.

In the same way I decided to explore the surrounding areas, this chapter explores and analysis the collected data, making sense of the information through the construction of a conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs.

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## 5.1 Chapter introduction

The previous chapter introduced the reader to the characters that shared their personal stories with a focus on what life quality means to them. This chapter aims to unpick these stories and reveal the commonalities that emerged from the empirical data. In order to identify those commonalities a thorough analysis of the transcripts was conducted, following the steps mentioned in the methodology chapter. After the data analysis, it was time to decide how to tell the story of the research, representing the voices of the participants in a clear and structured way. The data does not speak for itself, it is the role of the researcher to give voice to the data through interpretation. In order to do so, throughout the chapter there will be a balance between participant's voice – using interview verbatim extracts – and its interpretation. I have decided to tell the story of the research through the use of participants' words (quotations extracted from the interview transcripts). As the story teller of this research, I decided to introduce every set of quotations with an explanatory paragraph that links participants' quotations with my interpretation of how they perceive QoL. Therefore, throughout this chapter the concept of QoL will be explained by the introductory paragraphs, that explain the link between the codes, themes and subthemes and the concept of QoL as perceived by the interviewed LsEs.

The chapter starts with a brief introduction to the concept of QoL, its definitions and how challenging it is to put into words its meaning. This is followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework that emerged from the data. Seven themes will be presented in the order of their relative importance to the concept of QoL, according to participants' voices. The first theme to be presented is self-realisation, followed by occupation, interpersonal relationships, finance, home, personal preferences, and location. The chapter ends with the introduction of a conceptual framework of QoL as an output.

## 5.2 Introducing QoL

The aim of the present research is to investigate the self-perceptions of QoL held by LsEs that own a home-based accommodation business. During the interviews the concept of quality of life, what it means to each interviewee, and what is accounted as important to their perception of QoL were discussed. Throughout the conversations with the participants the challenge of defining the concept of quality of life was evident:

*It is difficult to put it into words. It is definitely a feeling quality of life. It's not.. it's difficult to quantify. (TT, p. 1390-1392)*

*QoL has to be measured somehow, but it is always very subjective! (C, p. 1185)*

Participants also shared that different people may think about quality of life in different ways, as what is important to one person may not be important to another and vice versa.

*... if for me QoL is to be almost a home prisoner, to others QoL is to be able to live in a penthouse in a big city, in an European capital, with a nine to five job. (CF, p. 743-749)*

*Because there are several people with a great quality of life and very little resources and there are others with a lot of financial resources and poor quality of life, don't you think? It varies... (PP, p. 869-871)*

Additionally, some interviewees added that QoL has something to do with one's expectations and therefore is more dependent on how one sees the world than on external factors.

*I think that quality of life is related to the expectations that people have from their own life. (AV, p. 177-178)*

*I think that QoL depends a little bit on each of us. People tend to associate QoL to something external, but I believe that QoL is within us. Because if we are not satisfied, even if we have what in theory would bring us QoL... just because we live in a beautiful place... to live in a beautiful place is not enough if we are not well. So I think that QoL is not something that hangs outside, it is within each one of us. (Pe, p. 341-349)*

Not only may the definition of quality of life differ from person to person, as it can also assume new meanings in distinctive moments of one's life. Some participants mentioned that throughout their lifespan quality of life meant different things, portraying the idea that QoL is a concept that changes and evolves as one's life develops.

*When I was young I probably did not even know what QoL was... by then QoL was to be able have some drinks with my friends and go to a disco. And although it is still part*

*of it as well, because I like to have fun and be surrounded by friends... now it is much more than that (LM, p. 792-796)*

*I think that QoL... even when my girls were growing up, even then I had a good QoL because I had what I wanted by then! It changes... we can say that what is QoL changes in our lifespan. (Vi, p. 820-824)*

Quality of life was also described as something that one is always trying to achieve but never reaches. Almost as if it transforms into something else or something more when one is really close to reach it.

*Quality of life is very... it is very hard to find, isn't it? Because the more you have the more you want. We are never happy. I think that's what happens with every person. Quality of life has to do with the feeling of being satisfied every day despite having much or little. (VL, p. 1174-1179)*

*QoL... I do not know... I do not know because when I worked in the office I used to say that QoL was to live in Alentejo... now I am here in Alentejo and I do not really know... (CB, p. 590-592)*

The concept of QoL seems to be challenging to delimit. Reaching a definition agreed by all the participants is an herculean task as each participant expresses it differently. The words used to describe QoL, in turn, reflect participants' different socio-cultural background, life experience, knowledge and expectations. However, among the interpersonal distinctive discourses on QoL held by the LsEs interviewed, there is a set of common issues that seem to be equally important to them. Those common issues (themes), that emerged from the analysis of the interviews with the participants, are the ground for the conceptual framework that is going to be presented next.

### **5.3 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework is composed of seven themes: self-realisation, interpersonal relationships, occupation, finance, personal preferences, location and home (see Table 12 below). Each theme has three subthemes with the exception of interpersonal relationships and location, the former is composed of four subthemes and the latter of two (see Table 13 below). In the following section each theme will be reported, using participant quotes to illustrate and support the rationale of the conceptual framework.

*Table 12. Themes' definitions*

Themes	Definition
Self-realisation	The realisation or fulfilment of one's own potential, abilities or goals.
Occupation	Aspects related to owners' daily tasks and business management.
Interpersonal relationships	Interactions between strangers, friends and family that take place in the commercial home.
Finance	The managing of money matters.
Home	Host's private home, shared with guests for commercial purposes.
Personal preferences	Desire to be, do or have something based on what one favours.
Location	Place where the business is situated and its characteristics.

Table 13. Themes, subthemes and codes

Themes	Definition	Subthemes	Codes
<b>Self-realisation</b>	The realisation or fulfilment of one's own potential, abilities or goals.	<b>BiC</b> - Be in control	Change LS/ Need to change; Freedom/Independence; Flexibility/No fixed schedules; Own boss; Control
		<b>PA</b> - Personal aspirations	Dream come true; Fulfilment; Self-knowledge; Personal development; Do what I like; Be happy; Health/Lack of health
		<b>T</b> - Time	Own/personal time; Leisure/free time; Time management
<b>Occupation</b>	Aspects related to owners' daily tasks and business management.	<b>D2D</b> - Day to day	24/7; Intensive work; Demanding; Need a break; Concerns; Prison
		<b>EB</b> - Emotional business	Emotional Tourism; Nice business; Manage B&B based on what we like; Does not feel like work; Business as part of private life; We are the business
		<b>P</b> - Professionalization	Bureaucracy; Legislation & policies; Seasonality; Employees; Close the business
<b>Interpersonal relationships</b>	Interactions between strangers, friends and family that take place in the commercial home.	<b>S</b> - Sociability	Interest in people; Interact with people; Build up relationships; Mood management; Not comfortable with guests
		<b>H</b> - Hosting	Guests as priority; Welcome guests; Available for guests; Spend time with guests; Share lifestyle with guests; Improve guests QoL; Not able to make guests happy; Bad reviews
		<b>PR</b> - Personal relationships	Guests as friends; Guests as family; Creation of moments; Friendship; Little social life
		<b>WFB</b> - Work-family balance	Closer as family; Family time; Family space
<b>Finance</b>	The managing of money matters.	<b>BF</b> - Business finances	Investment; Expenses; Other sources of income; Second job; Salary; Financial challenges; Financial worries
		<b>Py</b> - Profitability	Profit is not the main goal; Profit needed to survive; Profit; No profit; Choice not to profit more
		<b>IoM</b> - Importance of money	Enough money to survive; Don't worry about money; Have money to do what I like
<b>Home</b>	Host's private home, shared with guests for commercial purposes.	<b>PH</b> - Private home	Home: a life project; No place like home; Use facilities; Private/personal space; Need privacy; Loneliness
		<b>SH</b> - Shared home	Guest's home; Space management; Intrusion; Restrictions (when having guests)
		<b>WH</b> - Work home	Home=work; B&B as way to keep the house
<b>Personal preferences</b>	Desire to be, do or have something based on what one favours.	<b>H</b> - Hobbies	Sports; Travel; Culture & arts; DIY; Pets
		<b>Pref</b> - Preferences	Food choices; Regional products; Commuting; Corporate environment; Dress code
		<b>V</b> - Values	Personal values; Social values; Environmental values
<b>Location</b>	Place where the business is situated and its characteristics.	<b>A</b> - Accessibility	Services/Proximity of services; Areas of interest; Restaurants; Life cost
		<b>E</b> - Environment	Nature; Isolation/Quietness; Climate; Safety & security; Nice place & people; Cultural differences

### 5.3.1. Self-realisation (SR)

Self-realisation emerged from the data analysis as the most important theme. When asked to define in their own words the concept of quality of life, all the participants in their own way, mentioned the importance of being in control of their lives, being able to achieve some personal goals and lifetime aspirations, and the relevance of having time and managing that time in accordance to their preferences (Table 14). In that light, SR was defined as the realisation or fulfilment of one's own potential, abilities or goals.

Table 14. Theme: Self-realisation

Theme	SR - Self-realisation		
Subthemes	BiC - Be in control	PA - Personal aspirations	T - Time
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Control</li> <li>- Flexibility/No fixed schedules</li> <li>- Freedom/Independence</li> <li>- Own boss</li> <li>- Change LS/ Need to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dream come true</li> <li>- Fulfilment</li> <li>- Self-knowledge</li> <li>- Personal development</li> <li>- Do what I like</li> <li>- Be happy</li> <li>- Health/Lack of health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Own/personal time</li> <li>- Leisure/free time</li> <li>- Time management</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.1.1. Be in control (BiC)

Within the self-realisation theme, the large majority of the participants mention that BiC was vital to the way they conceptualise their quality of life. The perception of be(ing) in control is related to: the idea of being able to **control** one's life and having the power to decide what to do; have the **flexibility** to do the activities and tasks whenever one wants to, without having to follow **fixed** and imposed **schedules**; the **freedom** of being able to manage one's personal and professional life according to what one feels like, in an **independent** way; be one's **own boss**, without having to follow instructions from a hierarchy or fear redundancy; and the urge to **change lifestyle** in order to achieve the desired QoL and at the same time realising that one has the possibility of initiating that change.

Being in **control** of their own lives, is valued by LsEs. To be able to have a form of control over their personal and professional lives' that gives them the sense of being in charge (MT and TT, and CC) and to have the power of making decisions (Vi) seems to have a positive impact on the LsEs self-perception of quality of life.

*And it's having also a form of control for us, we are very much in charge of what we do. That is nice. We have an idea in the morning, we talk about it, maybe get some*



*supplies to do it, and in the afternoon we are doing it. We are painting that wall, or we are... so there is a form of control. (TT, p. 1417-1422)*

*In the future I can say "it's ok, I have control over this". I can say that whenever I am too tired of doing this day after day after day, I am free to accept only bookings of five or more days, which means that I have less work to do (...) Well... I have the control. I do not have to say yes or no to other people. I can take control and I have the satisfaction of doing nice things to other people...(CC, p. 741-146; 816-821)*

*Quality of life is to have the power to decide what to do with my life, when and how to manage my life. If I want to... I am taking more than one week off in September because my youngest daughter has her graduation in Los Angeles, and I chose to go to LA. (Vi, p. 791-796)*

Associated with the notion of being in control is the idea of having **flexibility** and **no fixed schedules**, which gives LsEs the perception of being able to complete the daily tasks when they consider most suitable (LV) or when they feel like completing them (Is, Pa). This flexible lifestyle portrays the feeling of **freedom** and **independence**, mirrored in the idea of being able to do whatever one feels like doing (TS), inclusively being able to change the lifestyle again if one wants to (CF).

*It is part of my quality of life. I mean, I can do a certain task at 10am or 3pm, whenever I am available to do it and the fact of doing the task when I am available to it's amazing. It's not like I am finishing my job at 6pm, tired... A lot of people do not have this chance, they have fixed schedules to stick to... just a crazy life... I have that possibility. (LM, p. 817-823)*

*I do not stress and I am not running all over the place. I do not look at the watch and think to myself that it is time to go somewhere or do something, I live my life with no stresses, and to me that is quality of life. (Is, p. 668-672)*

*So there are a lot of things that are quality of life, I mean..., in my case I do not have fixed schedules. (Pa, p. 201-203)*

*The freedom to me in the sense... I have this freedom, being free to do whatever I want to do (TS, p. 620-621)*

*I have 50 years old and I do not want any more commitments, I love to do what I do, it gives me an exceptional quality of life, but if tomorrow I chose to do something different, I am free to do so. (CF, p. 887-890)*

Being one's **own boss** was also identified by the participants as something that is important to their perception of quality of life. According to LsEs having no boss improves their QoL because they do not have to report what they do to anyone (Pe); there is no need to maintain a relationship with someone they do not appreciate (Aa); one does not have to worry or fear about being made redundant (CB); and being one's own boss in the sense that one can do whatever they want to do (PR), also reinforces the idea of being in control.

*Yes, there are great things about having this business. We have no hierarchy to bother us, what we do depends solely on ourselves, exclusively on us. That is extremely positive, there is no such thing as "my boss is always after me...", we don't have that. (Pe, p. 373-377)*

*To be our own... how would you say? Boss? We can create our own rhythm. We don't have stupid people as bosses... (laughs) you know, which so many people have... (Aa, p. 1785-1987; 1833-1835)*

*I think that it is quality of life to be able to live here, hum... with no boss and without the worry of what will happen next time the company you are working for wants to fire 50 more employees. (CB, p. 600-602)*

*Yeah... So what else on lifestyle? Just... Oh! And be your own boss, definitely! (...)  
Well, you can, in God, do what please ourselves (PR, p. 756-757; 882-883)*

Some of the most intense quotes that illustrate the subtheme BiC were shared by participants that deliberately **changed** their **style of life** in order to achieve a better QoL. At some point they felt the **need to change** something in their lives, whether because they were no longer satisfied with what they were doing (MT and TT), because they wanted to improve their life (Cr), or because they wanted to do something different (SC). The change lead them to a more accomplished and realised self, it redirected them from the life they were surviving into the life they were aspiring to live.

*[TT] We lived in Spain and we ended up, after different jobs in a job that was very demanding and stressful. All of a sudden, we were... hummm... I was a facility manager at a huge tourism project and Michelle was services and communication manager (...) and we were in Spain for four years at that time and the question arose more and more frequently what are we doing? We went to Spain without plan, without idea, just getting in the car with few a few boxes and drive, that's how we got there. And four years after we were stressed, we were having a stressed job, and we thought this was not the plan, even though we didn't have a plan, this was not it.*

*[MT] We weren't happy at that time. (MT and TT, p. 15-28)*

*I worked in the Belgium special forces for 13 years, so I was more or less 8 months per year working in other countries, we were already married, so it was kind of complicated. Ba had her own pharmacy, she has a pharmaceutical degree. So she used to work 6 to 7 days a week from 8 o'clock to 19, without a lunch break, working nonstop. We used to travel often, we like to know different countries and cultures and at a certain point we wondered about opening a B&B sort of thing because we do not like hotels. We started talking about that, it sounded like a good way for us to spend more time together and improve our life. (Cr, p. 15-29)*

*I was in a troop dance in a dance company. I started to get a little bit older, kind of wondering about my career as a dancer and I kind of needed a break from teaching dance as well and I'd always loved horses, so at that point I had some training, went back to college and I did a one year part time course in horse management, cause I kind of wanted to get back into that (...) In that point in London, I was just thinking about moving out of London, and go to the south coast, find something where I could have some space, some land, and have animals, and that was kind of what I wanted to do. And I knew that to find that lifestyle I would need to do something to fund it. (SC, p. 17-30)*

#### 5.3.1.2. Personal aspirations (PA)

The accomplishment of one's aspirations was mentioned by participants as an aspect that contributes to their self-realisation. Personal aspirations are composed of the following codes: dream come true, fulfilment, self-knowledge, personal development, do what I like, be happy, and health/lack of health. When talking about quality of life, participants considered it important to retain some **self-knowledge** to be able to achieve a better version of themselves (**personal development**). An updated version of the self, aligned

with one's aspirations and **dreams**. A space where one can be oneself, **happy**, **healthier**, in peace, doing what one likes and enjoying life (**do what I like; fulfilment**).

Participants identified a relationship between the accomplishment of their aspirations and their perceived quality of life, the more they are able to accomplish their personal aspirations the higher QoL they consider to have (MT).

*Quality of life... Hmmm... That I am happy with what I do, and that I think that I... hmmm... it can mean something for somebody else... but also at the same time, fulfil my own dreams and goals. Maybe a bit like that. Yeah! (MT, p. 1100-1103)*

Some participants had the **dream** of having a business of their own, although not sure about what business or in which sector of activity (AR). Others always had the dream of having a business in the accommodation sector (PP). Starting a home based business in the accommodation sector was the vehicle to make that dream come true and by doing so increase their self-perception of QoL.

*Well, I did not have... I have never thought about the type of business that I would like to have in the future, but I always dreamt of being independent and since I remember I always wanted to have my own business. This was the opportunity I had to make the dream come true and I believe I will stick to it. (AR, p. 378-382)*

*I always had the dream of opening a guesthouse, even before I completed the post-graduation in Tourism (...) We were both working in the banking sector. He was the first one leaving the bank, he left with some money... and a few months afterwards I also left with some money... we started looking for a house to open a Guesthouse and found this one. It was awesome, we were very lucky! And... I chose to make my dream come true. This was my dream. (PP, p. 25-27; 37-42)*

To be able to think about one's life and have a sense of **fulfilment** is mentioned as a common QoL indicator by the lifestyle entrepreneurs interviewed. In their perspective, the fulfilment may be sensed through being able to work on something that one really enjoys (TS), or through the sensation of being able to be oneself. To faithful and sincerely be what one really is, without the need to be performing a role or using a mask (Vi).

*When we are hiking with guests, out on the mountains or on the beach, it is so peaceful and beautiful. And the best part is that hiking is also our job. This is the best work in the world, this is great! Everyone takes their lunches, we go to the beach, lay down to have lunch and then we keep on hiking. This is freedom. To me this is quality of life. (TS, p. 355-360)*

*It is that simplicity... to be able to take those belongings out of my life... quality of life is being able to be myself, without the need of performing a role that... that is not natural for me and becomes demanding and stressful. (Vi, p. 808-811)*

The initial findings show that it is important for participants' perception of QoL to be able to retain some **knowledge about themselves**. To know who they are, what are the values they use to guide their lives, what are their goals and wishes, and what they are willing to do in order to live in accordance (Pa). It might be looked at as a process of finding oneself through the messiness of the day-to-day life (Vi) to be able to focus on what is important. It can also encompass the idea of being conscious about own actions and the way daily moments are lived and felt, having the power of recognising different emotions and the wisdom to manage them accordingly (SV).

*When someone gets involved in the system, and I would say that with some exceptions, all of us get involved in the system, one way or the other, and it is difficult to disconnect oneself from that. One of the reasons is because we also have an ego, consequently we are also part of the system, and we feed the system with our own interests. Therefore to step down from a certain social standing, professional standing, and a significant economical income is not easy, and it requires some courage. Facing the idea of having a very good income in the last years and looking forward into the future I had the possibility of keep my income for the next 15 years until I retired. But I knew that if I chose that, I would live miserably, with very little quality of life for the next 15 years. The idea of rejecting the financial income for quality of life is probably the biggest obstacle to change the lifestyle (...) for some people the financial aspect is the most important, to others the professional recognition. Normally these two things are the main obstacles, they kind of fuddle one awareness on the life decisions. And the majority of the people end up living a life that was not the one they wanted in the first place. But they never had... it is hard for people to be aware and recognise that they live the life they chose to live. (Pa, p. 325 - 357)*

*And I found myself again, I found the tom boy I used to be, that likes different activities, that likes... I started doing paragliding, I started windsurfing, started doing all these sports that I used to do before. Before I was a professional consultant... then I stopped doing them, and now I found myself again, I was lost somewhere inside but now I am back. (Vi, p. 259-268)*

*I do not consider myself an unhappy person, usually I can find pleasure in doing things that for the majority of the people is not pleasant at all. At least I try to do it, and I believe it is very important on how someone defines own quality of life. It has to do with the way one feels about oneself and how one sees the world. If we look at the things with open arms and in a positive way, of course we will feel better than someone that is always complaining or that is never happy (SV, p. 536-545)*

Some interviewees use their self-knowledge as a springboard for **personal development**. Using what they know about themselves and focusing on what they want to accomplish, LsEs take advantage of the less busy moments - low season and periods of time in which the business is closed - to invest in personal growth (MT). Participants invest in their own development because they believe it is a way of improving themselves and indirectly their life quality.

*And then in winter maybe really to pick up a study, or a course, or to learn better Portuguese (...) So just to keep on challenging myself, to learn other things and also be a more interesting people to talk to in those 6 months when you do have guests and not to tell the same story over and over again. To also have something new to tell your guests, or each other, or your family (MT, p. 493-495; 499-504)*

Many of the interviewees agreed that part of feeling self-realised is being able to **do what one likes** to do (Is), even when what one likes to do is less common or might sound a bit peculiar to others (CC).

*Quality of life is to be able to do what one likes. Do what I like, so..., to be able to work with what I like. It is not to be... the majority of the people nowadays work because they need to earn money. Not everyone has the possibility of having a job that one really likes, doing what I like to do, I am lucky I have that. (Is, p. 654-660)*

*Yes, I have discovered that I like to build houses. This is my kind of thing... I like to have my hands dirty. And... I am a bit weird (laughs)... I am not the normal woman. (CC, p. 667-671)*

The findings indicate that the perception of quality of life held by LsEs overlaps and perhaps is even blurred with the concept of **be(ing) happy**. Almost as if happiness can be used as a tool to assess the level of quality of life: the happier one is, more quality of life one has (Ism). However, having quality of life also seems to give way to happiness (LM).

*I like to feel so at home here. So, in that aspect for me... compared to three years ago, my life is better now. And I was living with him, and had a fantastic house, and everything else, but... Yes! I wasn't happy on my own so, I am now with my business. I told you [looking at her partner] many times I feel quite happy here. (Ism, p. 1055-1061)*

*When we feel we have quality of life we are more open to everything, willing to be with others... to do everything. We are happy! If we have a lot of worries and stresses we cannot enjoy life. To be happy is already to have quality of life. (LM, p. 646-649)*

**Health** was identified as an important aspect to take into consideration on the quality of life equation. When asked about what were the factors that influence quality of life, proprietors tended to mention health as something that can have a positive impact on their quality of life. Several narratives reflect the **negative impact of health issues** on their quality of life, whether because the high season is too demanding (Is), because there is a big difference between the owners' lifestyle when the B&B is open and when it is closed (TT), or because in order to promptly solve an health issue, in the case of migrant participants, there was the need to travel to the country of origin (MJ and BJ).

*It is a job, as I was saying before, extremely demanding and tiring, oh yes it is! (Is, p. 128)*

*Cause we both felt that our backs, after 5 years of doing this, and the reason why last season we had a little help was because my back went out completely the year before. So I really had back problems and now we are trying to be, get a bit more healthy so that we are going to the season a bit stronger. Because the risk of winter is that we'll*

*do like living well and eating well. So in the winter we tend to grow a bit bigger and in the season we go ... [laughs] so this year we try to be a bit more fit before we open up. (TT, p. 1145-1153)*

*[BJ] Last year I had an inguinal hernia. I asked Dr Google and it said it was an inguinal hernia. I went to the family doctor and she confirmed. I went to the hospital for a scan, I had to wait for one month to have a simple scan. The scan confirmed it was the hernia so the doctor suggested surgery. I had to wait up to one year and a half for the surgery!! One and a half years??*

*[MJ] In the Netherlands we can schedule it in two weeks.*

*[BJ] Yes, two weeks... it is a very basic procedure! I said I would wait, but I started looking for private clinics here in Portugal to do the surgery. Prices were over 6000€. I initially thought that it would be more expensive in the Netherlands...*

*[MJ]... because of the flights, overnight stay...*

*[BJ] In the Netherlands it costs 2000€ with the modern surgery, not the old fashioned one they perform here. 6000€ versus 2000€ it is better to go to the Netherlands. But then the hospital called me saying*

*[MJ] Ah! We have a vacancy..*

*[BJ] We have a vacancy. I went because it was free of charge. So I went to the hospital, I stayed there seven hours on a bed. The men said that the man besides me would undergo a similar surgery first and I would be next. One hour, two hours, five hours... no one said a word to me. The lights were turned off and I thought to myself that they had completely forgotten me. I asked the nurse what was going on and she told me she did not know, she had no information from the surgery room and she asked me to wait for a bit. Wait for a bit?! (laughs) Two hours later the nurse comes into the room and tells me that I could not undertake surgery that day because someone died in the surgery room...*

*[MJ] ... and it could not be the day after neither...*

*[BJ] ... and then the nurse told me that the doctor would come into my room to talk to me. I waited one more hour and decided to go home. I was putting my shoes on when the doctor arrived to tell me that I could not go for the surgery the day after, on the following week he was on holiday, and the week after that there was no available anaesthesiologist. Bottom line he did not know when it would be possible to reschedule the surgery, and he said the hospital would contact me to let me know. Unbelievable!!!!*

*[MJ] I had a personal contact in Holland so we called right away and the surgery was scheduled two weeks after. (MJ and BJ, p. 888-936)*



#### 5.3.1.3. Time (T)

The third subtheme under self-realisation is time. All interviewees emphasised the importance of having time. It was evident from the analysis that lifestyle entrepreneurs consider the idea of having time as something crucial to define their quality of life. The possibility of having time to spend doing what one likes the most, whether it is having some alone time or leisure time, together with the perception of being able to manage the time the way they prefer, allows participants to juggle between work and non-work related tasks or activities. Having time, according to the LsEs interviewed, can be subdivided into three distinctive codes: having the opportunity to spend **time alone** or invest time in oneself, being able to enjoy some **free time** doing the favourite leisure activities, and have the possibility of **managing time** in accordance with their personal preferences.

When reflecting upon the concept of QoL, all the participants highlighted the importance of having **personal time**, having **own time** or **time alone**. Time for LsEs is a precious good (S), and a luxury (ML, and TT). Not surprisingly, if it is taken into consideration that having a home based accommodation business can be tiring, especially in the high season, when the host's house is permanently the guests' house as well.

*To me, to have quality of life means to have time, time is precious, it is precious I believe. (S, p. 209-210)*

*The higher luxury is to have time, to me the luxury is to be able to... well you also need money to do it, but it is to be able to say Thursday we are travelling somewhere, we are going here or there, and have the time to do so. To have time. (ML, p. 1504-1508)*

*But it is many things... the main thing is... and it is a big luxury I realise this all the time, that we have time. (TT, p. 1154-1155)*

To have **free time** or **leisure time** to do something else apart from the business related tasks, is agreed between participants to impact on their QoL. When the daily tasks and responsibilities demand hosts to spend more time focused on the business, and consequently the amount of personal time LsEs have decreases, it becomes even more important to be able to have time to do something different (MJ). It becomes important to use the small breaks and moments to recharge the energy level (MT and TT).

*We have, for example, once a week we have the Portuguese conversation lessons. For us it is the time to leave the B&B for a while. We have even said to each other that the Portuguese lessons day is going to be almost like a weekend day for us. Yes, cause we don't have weekends anymore... to us weekends are just like weekdays. (MJ, p. 450-459)*

*[MT] (...) usually there is a few hours, let's say in five days' time, in which you can leave here and do the groceries together for example and then have a coffee on the square in Olhão or Tavira, and then be the tourists for a couple of hours and then go back and pick it up again.*

*[TT] You need to enjoy small moments, so sometimes we do get to the beach. It does not happen a lot in August but we do reach it after a lunch. Two hours we fall asleep because we are tired and then enjoy it like it's a mini holiday. And then go back to the B&B, attend to the garden, light the candles, talk to the guests and do the check in. But those 2 hours can be a fully charged battery again. So you need to enjoy the small nuggets of free time. (MT and TT, p. 535-548)*

Being able to **manage time** can also have a significant impact on participants QoL. Not only the fact that it is possible throughout the days to have a couple of hours to do what one wants, as mentioned before, but having the possibility of deciding, within certain boundaries, what to do with time (JP). For example, being able to choose when to close the business (CN and NL) or knowing that in winter one will have more 'me' time (SC).

*What is quality of life in my perspective? Humm... it is, well, this may sound a bit.. but the first, first condition is to be able to decide what to do with my time! Well, it will never be possible to have the total freedom of deciding what to do with one's time, but.. at least being the one managing my own time. (JP, p. 844-849)*

*[CN] We have the huge advantage of being able to say, during winter time, that we are going to close for 4 months, and then return.*

*[NL] Of course, we work for ourselves, we have our own space, we are the owners of our own time, our own time. If I want to close the door, I can do it. (CN and NL, p. 1355-1356;1854-1857)*

*I think... more time in the winter, that is nice, that is kind of my time, and then in the summer, I think I have quite a strict routine, I always have 2 to 3 hours in the afternoon which are mine. Unless it is impossible. It does not always happen, but at least once or*

*twice a week it happens and then it is ok. As long as I get a couple of hours to myself, whether is going surfing or lying in the back of the pool, sunbathe for 2 hours, and then I feel fine! (SC, p. 322-330)*

### 5.3.2. Occupation (O)

Throughout the conversations held with LsEs, the topic of occupation and all the different aspects it encompasses were often mentioned (Table 15). Therefore, it became the second most important theme to take into consideration when conceiving participants' perception of QoL. The type of business participants chose to create and manage, occupies a vital place in their life, both personally and professionally. The theme occupation is composed of three subthemes: **day to day**, which as the name suggests, reflects the daily idiosyncrasies of managing a workplace that, at the same time, is home; **emotional business**, discloses the emotional attachment between the host and their working homes; and **professionalisation**, a subtheme related to business goals, management strategies, how they impact on hosts' QoL, and how the desired QoL level influences managerial decisions. Occupation was defined as the aspects related to owners' daily tasks and business management.

Table 15. Theme: Occupation

Theme	<b>O - Occupation</b>		
Subthemes	<b>D2D - Day to day</b>	<b>EB - Emotional business</b>	<b>P - Professionalisation</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 24/7</li> <li>- Intensive work</li> <li>- Demanding</li> <li>- Need a break</li> <li>- Concerns</li> <li>- Prison</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional Tourism</li> <li>- Nice business</li> <li>- Manage B&amp;B based on what we like</li> <li>- Does not feel like work</li> <li>- Business as part of private life</li> <li>- We are the business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bureaucracy</li> <li>- Legislation &amp; policies</li> <li>- Seasonality</li> <li>- Employees</li> <li>- Close the business</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.2.1. Day to day (D2D)

On a daily basis participants have to deal with the all the responsibilities related with running a home based accommodation service. In the majority of the cases they do it by themselves, without employees, or sharing the tasks with family members, namely their partner or children. Given the amount of time spent managing the business, it naturally is considered in participants' perception of QoL. The business that allows LsEs to have the desired lifestyle is a **24/7** job. It is an **intensive work**, very **demanding** both physically and psychologically. Occasionally, participants **need a break** from work and solutions to their **concerns**. Often the home-businesses that frees interviewees **imprisons** them.

Sometimes participants' have the feeling that all they do is work (AV), particularly when they were used to have weekly working hours in the previous job (CB). The majority of the interviewees seems to agree that having a small home-based accommodation business is a 24/7 job (CF). A job in which the phone does not stop ringing and the tasks just keep on piling (MM). A job where home and work overlap, a job that is so intrinsically connected with the owners that sometimes one needs to disconnect from it in order to benefit (SV).

*It is a little... it is weird because we are always working (AV, p. 190)*

*And in the begining it was a bit challenging to manage the time, because I was used to work 8 hours a day, or 10 hours a day. Here there are days in which we almost work 24 hours, and we work weekends, and... (CB, p. 156-160)*

*Where everything changes is... the challenge is that it is a 24/7 business. 24 hours a day. There is no day in which I do not have something to do, emails to answer, phone calls to do, answers to give, cards to pick up, clients to deal with... (CF, p. 170-175)*

*Sometimes I have like 40 calls per day, and I think to myself "Why haven't I given the phone to someone?!" My head explodes, always on the phone, answering calls, I hate it! Gives me the feeling that I cannot stop, I do not have a minute to breathe. Everyone has the possibility of turning off at a certain time of the day, after work they can turn off... and I can't. This phone does not let me turn off because every phone call represents something to sort, no matter how simple. (MM, p. 269-276)*

*It is important for people to disconnect from work, to go back to their personal lifes and return to work with a clear head. It is not good to anybody to have their heads in the work 24 hours a day. It has no advantage. No professional and no personal benefit. (SV, p. 472-477)*

Not only it is a 24/7 job (PR) as it is a very hard job in nature. There are several reasons for it to be considered as an intensive job by interviewees, and impact negatively on their perceived QoL. In first place dealing with guests' everyday can be exhausting, because it requires a high level of energy and attention (CM). Secondly, there are long periods of work without any breaks or holidays (Cr), and taking days off is not as easy as it seems (Jq). In third place, at any time of the day guests can require some type of support,

meaning that the hosts have to adjust their schedules in order to answer accordingly, and sometimes it means that meals and personal or family moments are interrupted (Is). Lastly, it influences the number of hours hosts sleep (Mf and LM). It may seem to others that it is an easy and enjoyable job, but it is a hard one (TS).

*And the thing about running B&B is, it, it's not a nine to five job, it's not a Monday to Friday job. It's seven days a week, and it's from the moment you get up and, and I mean, no it's not 'til the moment you go to bed, but... You know, it's, it is a busy time. (PR, p. 533-538)*

*No, because it is simply exhausting, it is very draining to have people in your house every single day and have to give them time and attention... by the end of the summer I am completely exhausted, because to deal with people is very demanding. (CM, p. 485-488)*

*During the first year we worked 224 days non stop, without one day break, nothing! (Cr, p. 78-79)*

*No because I was used to... in the old days... I never really had holidays... but if I needed, I could easily take off a long weekend, like 4 to 5 days. My life used to be like that, but not anymore. Now I can't even take weekends off! (Jq, p. 150-153)*

*Well, there is no lunch time, no dinner time, we can have it or not, but if suddenly..., no weekends, no holidays, because those are the times when we have more business. (Is, p. 176-179)*

*[Mf] And... During the summer how many hours do I sleep per night?*

*[LM] Don't know...*

*[Mf] 3 hours. It reaches the point of spending 3 months sleeping 3 hours. (Mf and LM, p. 718-722)*

*Our job is really hard, we work very much. Sometimes people envy us and say that our life is easy... but this is not easy, not easy at all and it is very tiring. (TS, p. 291-294)*

Sometimes participants secretly wish that days were longer, in order to do everything on their daily to-do list (CB). Some interviewees go to the extreme of witnessing body changes through the high season (Is). The high number and diversity of daily tasks (CF)

is not only extremely **demanding** as it is tiring (CC). Occasionally the job is so tiring that it is no longer enjoyable (AP).

*Somedays I do not even have time to think, there is always something else to do, and another thing after the first one. It seems like the days are not long enough to do everything that I need to do. When the end of the day arrives, everything is sorted... but sometimes I think to myself that I needed 48 hours per day. (CB, p. 544-552)*

*There are times in which... listen, when September comes, around September or October... me, with this tiny figure you see, I lose a lot of weight, I am always tired, I feel my head is about to explode (...) So it is hard work, and my body resents it. But I do it with pleasure because I enjoy what I am doing. (Is, p. 129-132; 198-201)*

*It is kind of funny, because it goes like this... the days are 24 hours, always with stuff to do. Always. Because if I am not preparing breakfast, I am getting things ready for the next day, or managing house work, or checking guests in or out, or managing bookings. So... I also have the shopping to do because in the meanwhile there is always something that ran out. It is literally non-stop all day. And there is the garden, and the chickens, and the dogs... I am the one doing everything. (CF, p. 694-701; 703-706)*

*I do not know. I am always tired (laughs). (CC, p. 659)*

*Yes, yes, because it was too much, yeah... It was too much... And then... Then I am only working and I cannot enjoy life here... (AP, p. 190-192)*

Quality of life of LsEs appears to be related to a certain balance between their business and having time to do whatever they feel like. Whenever there is an unbalance between these two aspects of participants' life, they feel like they **need a break** from the business so that they are able to recharge and return ready to face the daily challenges again. For some participants holidays are the kind of break they need (CB) to recharge, or having longer breaks to travel (C), for others finding time to do an activity they enjoy is enough (SC), some even consider to rent another house to be able to disconnect from the business (Vi).

*Not being with my head buried in the business, being able to disconnect. Because I can only disconnect from this when I am on holidays, two weeks holidays. And sometimes*

*I can't really disconnect... I will check my email daily for example. That's not good... (CB, p. 625-628)*

*To leave the business slowly... to be able to enjoy life in a different way. Be able to say that twice a year I will go on holidays for a month. During the low season because it is easier to manage. I will just go on holidays, travel around the world. It has always been one of my favorite things to do. (C, p. 1454-1459)*

*Although there is always something to do, whether is animal, or maintenance wise, always something breaking, something going wrong... (...) So I miss things like... I would probably go to Lisbon a bit more, I would like to do ... I miss dancing quite a lot, so I would like to go and do class, go and do yoga... but that is just being more organised and fit that into the schedule... (SC, p. 172-174; 234-238)*

*We are also in the phase of looking for another house to rent in the summer, so that I can actually have my breaks and holidays! Eight years of... bells ringing at night "sorry, we are leaving very early in the morning tomorrow, is it possible for us to do the payment now?" and I think to myself "yes of course, although I was already in bed!". And this kind of things we cannot avoid and being here we have to answer. (Vi, p. 365-373)*

From a psychological standpoint, there are also factors that contribute to participants' perception of QoL. One of them are the issues that **concern** LsEs. Usually those issues are related to the business and they tend to decrease their perception of QoL. Stress is pointed out by the participants as a code with some relevance to their QoL, high levels of stress are commonly associated with lower perception of QoL. Stress can be caused by daily challenges (SC) that urge the need to better organise the business (Mf).

*Stress! Stress! Either too much work, or too much to do and not being able to do it, or yeah (...) Yeah... stressful days, they are too busy, you try to have things done. It is a little bit remote here, it is quite hard to get things done, that need to be done, it takes time to find the people, to find the... like the carpenters or mechanics it is quite hard to find that (...) If something goes wrong with the animals it is quite stressful. (SC, p. 255-256; 259-263; 288)*

*I would like to be able to look at this like the clients do, as a paradise. I look at this place and immediately think about the crazy amount of things that I have to do (...)*

*yesterday I was sharing that with a friend. I want to be able to look at our business and feel at ease, have everything organised. But to be able to feel like that, I need to employ a person to help me out, we need someone here full-time, we need to have more bookings, we need to... this is a cycle. (Mf, p. 758-766)*

It seems that some participants have a love-hate kind of relationship with their businesses. The house that sets them free is also their **prison**. Given that not only it is very tiring when the house is fully booked, it also becomes a burden if there are no bookings (AR). The feeling of being locked inside one's home is familiar to several participants and the intensity of that feeling varies from feeling locked (YP), to house arrest (Jq) or living in a golden cage (El).

*Because this, it is a lot of work. But on the other hand, if you don't have any guests, this is just like having a rope around my neck (AR, p. 828-830)*

*I mean, that's all. If the dream of someone is to be able to travel the world, of course it's not the job to do, because you are locked here (laughter). In the city. Because you are really... locked, locked. (YP, p. 444-449)*

*And on the other side, I could be well, I could be well, have a good life... well I am retired, I could have a good life... I could pretty much go everywhere I wanted to, and yet here I am locked (...) Have a certain freedom and some money to do what I want, I always had that. Now... obviously... I am less free, I am a bit imprisoned here. Not a bit. This is a huge prison. It's house arrest. (Jq, p. 16-19; 472-476)*

*Humm... so I do everything, I manage, I keep fifty open eyes to make sure nothing goes wrong. Nothing, because we have a score of 10 regarding comfort and cleaning and we do not want to have less than that. Shopping, meals, breakfasts... we are recognized internationally for our breakfasts... The truth is that I have created my own cage. Because I am alone, so everything is concentrated on me and I do not have my own life anymore. If I want to go to the hairdresser, I can't (...) the corollary of what I was saying is this, I have created a cage at several levels. An amazing cage, a golden cage with an open door, but because of all the responsibilities I don't... (El, p. 346-358; 793-796)*



#### 5.3.2.2. Emotional business (EB)

The relationship that participants have with their businesses is quite strong and it involves an emotional layer. Some participants consider to offer a kind of **emotional tourism** related product. They consider it to be a **nice business** that can be **managed based on what they like**, based on their personal preferences. In turn, managing the business based on what they like makes them **feel like it is not work**. It almost seems like LsEs personify their business as something that lives and is **part of their private life**, they project themselves on the business and consider that **they are the business**.

Some participants look at their businesses as a way of expressing their own feelings and **emotions**, whether towards the way of doing business, creating a kind of emotional related product (El), or using it almost as a catharsis vehicle to express how they feel with guests (CM).

*So that was the concept that I have created, tourism of affections. And it is in fact a tourism of affections because sooner or later guests end up with me in the kitchen, which is the place where I welcome my friends. (El, p. 200-204)*

*Ah! Well... sometimes this is a mix of emotions. Because even when I am devastated I have to be in good mood to deal with guests. I must welcome them with a smile on my face and give them some positive energy. But sometimes it also happens that I end up unburdening with them...(CM, p. 396-400)*

The pleasure that participants take out of owning and managing an accommodation business is shared between all. LsEs consider it a very **nice business** (PR). To be passionate about what one does and let that passion be the drive seems to be important to them (MM). Participants feel personally satisfied with the life their businesses allow them to live (VL and ML). And they even recommend this type of business to people that want to have a different experience (Ism). Being able to make a living out of such a business gives them the perception of an increased QoL.

*You know, it's, it's a delightful business to be involved in, and... (PR, p. 595-596)*

*One can tell right away if you are doing something because you are passionate about it or not. I believe that to be the biggest difference in our business. The difference*

*between people that work for business sake and people that work for passion. Today there are lots of people with training in business, they know all the books but lack passion. (MM, p. 584-588)*

*[VL] So this is it. Quality of life. Yes, surely. What does this style of live brings me? A lot of satisfaction. That satisfaction...*

*[ML] Is more personal...*

*[VL] Yes, it is a personal satisfaction, it is not a financial satisfaction. (VL and ML, p. 1301-1315)*

*It's a nice business. I would recommend. If somebody wants to live abroad, if they want to work outside, if they want to work for themselves, this is a nice business. (Ism, p. 810-813)*

Following the previous discussion, not only LsEs consider their businesses as nice businesses as they have the advantage of **managing it based on what they like**. They use their personal experiences in order to create managing strategies (TR) and to provide suggestions to guests (VL). Participants feel that by doing so they are able to be more authentic, to show who they really are (CF).

*And a lot, a lot of what we've done, hmm, has been based on things that we like and dislike in... hotels and... Having to set an alarm clock to fit in with the breakfast time that they offer you, you know, and when you're on holiday or lag-jetting, the last thing you want is an alarm clock ahead (...) What things that, that we like and we go like this and it seems to work. (TR, p.229-234: 237-238)*

*And everything we recommend to our guests are places we regularly visit and enjoy (...) I do not suggest things that I do not like to guests. (VL, p. 141-142; 422-423)*

*Because I believe that what I do is more authentic, do you understand? No... the final results, if someone asks me about the results both personal and financial and even what guests are able to get out of their stays in my guest house it is always better, because it is my way. It's me, the authentic me. (CF, p. 1264-1269)*

It is common among participants to have the feeling that managing their business and completing the daily tasks **is not work**. This idea of working without feeling it as work seems to improve participants' self-perceptions of QoL. Some LsEs acknowledge that it

is work, although it does not feel like it (TP, CM), others recognise that it is a demanding job, but the pleasure they take out of it seems to attenuate its hardness (El), and some try to approach work in a different and more enjoyable way (Is).

*Does not feel like work, even if it's work. (TP, p. 201)*

*Yes, it is work, but at the same time it is not... (CM, p. 911)*

*It is demanding, it is demanding! But it's also a gigantic pleasure! A huge pleasure! (El, p. 863-865)*

*I do not consider it work. I mean, it is work, but it isn't. I see it more as... I do not know, a part of me, it is an adventure, it is... it is pleasure and fun. I try to look at it this way, in a different way. It is not work in the work sense, like "oh! Work..." do you understand? No. Even when I wake up very early, for example, I always wake up early, by 6:30 I am up. And I get out of bed happy, thinking that I have a bunch of breakfasts to serve, and I don't know how many oranges I must squeeze for the juice, but I think "I have a full house, and I love it!" (Is, p. 950-960)*

Some of the participants consider that one of the most challenging issues of having a home-based accommodation business is the fact that **business becomes part of their personal life**. This affects their perception of QoL in a less positive way. The business is a big mixture of personal and private life (CN). Some participants consider it demanding to have to be available at any time for guests (TT), making it hard to separate between personal and professional life (SV). It seems that one possible solution to minimize its negative impact on LsEs' QoL is to accept that the business is part of their personal life and embrace it (CF).

*And with all the clients, yup, we have a big mixture of our private and professional lives, they are mixed together. (CN, p. 1122-1124)*

*But for us one of the most demanding things of having our business and being open is that any moment in time, people know they can ask us something. So you are finally, at the evening, you think the candles are on, the bread for the next day has been baked and the orange juice for breakfast has been squeezed, you think you can let go, and then somebody barges into your house and ask something about his next day, or*

*something really unimportant that they could have asked at breakfast, and then you go again... and that's good but we need also time to not have that. So silence and a bit.... (TT, p. 1128-1138)*

*There is not a big division between personal life and professional life and that is not good. To me that is the most unfavourable thing about this work. (SV, p. 468-471)*

*(deep breath) Well, I think that the only way of being able to deal effectively with this [the intensity of the business], is to face your personal life as part of the Guest House and the Guest House as part of your personal life. You should just face it that way. (CF, p. 784-788)*

The business was created and is daily managed by its owner(s) and there is a strong connection between business and owner. The business is seen by participants as part of themselves, almost as if **they are the business**. One of the consequences of this personification is that any criticism is seen as a personal attack (PR). Although LsEs are aware that some distance should be given (YP), in reality it affects them personally (MT and TT). And they know that the business reflects their personality in a way that makes it hard to find someone to replace them in the job (C).

*It is hard to... To not take it personally, because, you know, this is us (laughs) If they criticise the place, they get to criticise us, really, so... (PR, p. 723-725)*

*Yeah, but here it's your place. It's where you live. So it is... and they talk also about you, like you are nice, or bla bla bla, or not nice, or ... But, so, the impact of the evaluation is more personal than with companies. So, you have to be ready to take some distance. (YP, p. 698-702)*

*[MT] Oh...I couldn't sleep!*

*[TT] Yeah it is the first comment that we've got that was really.... Sometimes we cannot or don't want to change something and if they comment on that part that is really difficult because it's a choice that we've made and they said "I think you should dig a pool and I won't come back unless you do". Ok. That's good, and we should think then, that's your choice you find another place and leave it with them. But somehow because this is our project, our little baby in a sense... Yeah, it's us! We still not good at separating that...*

*[MT] No, but we are getting better. Now I think for the next season if people don't like it, if that would happen, then I can honestly say, well this is it, this is us, if you don't like it feel free to go... (MT and TT, p. 1272-1288)*

*I am the problem, because whether I want it or not, I am probably one of the reasons why, not probably... I am not 100% the reason, but the fact that guests know through the comments they read on the website, that I am a good host, nice, and this and that, I am also part of guests' expectations when they arrive. And if I am not here... That means that on the day I chose to leave this place I will have to find someone that is better than me. (C, p. 1393-1400)*

#### 5.3.2.3. Professionalization (P)

Starting up the business, in some cases, was more stressful than anticipated by the participants, and their quality of life during that period was negatively affected by the **bureaucracy** required and all the **legislation and policies** that are in place in Portugal to start up and manage accommodation related businesses. When it comes to business management, and targeting the maintenance or increase of their life quality, participants have to make decisions regarding a set of issues, namely: how to deal with **seasonality**; if they want the business to **grow**; if they are willing to **employ** someone; and if and when to **close the business** for personal holidays.

Some participants agree that to start an accommodation related business in Portugal is demanding due to the amount of paperwork required (Ism). The **bureaucracy** delays the processes to start and manage the business, makes it frustrating and reduces the ability to work (PR and TR). At the same time that it reduces people's ability to work it increases the chances of having businesses that are not totally legal (Jq). Migrant participants seem to have a different sensibility to this issue and want to make sure everything they do business wise is legal (Cr).

*I think, one of the things as well that frustrates us is the amount of bureaucracy, although they made it easy to have the "alojamento local" [commercial home](...) once you start the whole process is... lots of bureaucracies to run the business. (Ism, p. 202-205; 209-210)*

*[TR] The bureaucracy of getting anything done.*

*[PR] Yeah.*

*[TR] It's difficult at times.*

*[PR] And everything just takes so long to get... you know, for anything to happen. And... you know, it's just frustrating.*

*(...)*

*[TR] You know, I was saying that those sort of things take your ability to work. More so to a lot of other people. You know, if they could, spend less time having to deal with bureaucracy and the silliness of the government public bodies, then they would be out there earning more. The government could get more taxes... (PR and TR, p. 1372-1377; 1414-1419)*

*Do you understand? One of the reasons why it is so hard to have a business in our country is because of all the bureaucracies that we have to follow. (...) I have seven rooms. Seven "official" rooms because I have three more. I have an additional three but they are not legal, and I am not willing to go to the town hall again. (Jq, p. 66-68; 312-314)*

*As someone from the north of Europe, when I arrived here [Portugal], I thought that the mentality was awful. And I am not talking about the neighbours or whatever. I am talking at the public institutions level, rules, bureaucracy, it was simply awful. I will give you an example. I participated in a Symposium regarding "Turismo Rural" [rural tourism] and "Alojamento Local" [commercial homes], like 8 or 9 months ago and they said that the number of beds in this area were only 800ish. I am almost certain that in this area there are close to 3000 or 4000 beds. But a lot of them are not legal, the owners are running from this and that (...) to me the risk of not doing things completely legal was far too high but it was very challenging. (Cr, p. 125-138)*

Besides the level of bureaucracy, there is a set of specific **legislation and policies** that home based accommodation businesses must follow in order to be compliant with the Portuguese law. According to participants these are too strict and it would be helpful to have a governmental body able to assist in the start up of such a business (Cr). Inspections from the authorities are frequent (C) and they forbid things such as use the herbs planted in the backyard (CB). The taxes that the government charges can sometimes cause some stress to LsEs, either because they do not consider it fair (DM), or because they are not correctly applied (TR and PR).

*This piece of land is a mixture of natural reserve, agricultural reserve, part of it belongs to the city council and the natural park is also involved because we are very close to it. Just to give you an example, I wanted to build a child's playground in the property, like that one that you can see there (pointing). In order to build that we needed to make a requirement with the help of an architect. So the architect did the drawing together with a topographer and just for that paper we need to pay 300€. Then you have to present that paper to all those entities that I have mentioned before and for each you pay 90€. Just to submit the project requirement. That means that the questions and answers are just about to start with the submission of the project, so letter sent, questions, answers and whatever else... and in Portugal you have 30 days to give an answer, so it takes ages and it is very expensive because for each reply that requires the expertise of the architect or the topographer you have to pay them more. This is only the infrastructure part. The other part that is awful are the obligations with the finance services (Financas), foreign service and borders (SEF), and the food safety and economic authority (ASAE). It is far too much. In my opinion it lacks a body that can answer the question what do I need to do in order to open a B&B. (Cr, p. 138-168)*

*The life in this simple... very simple activity is complicated. We have the food safety and economic authority (ASAE) visiting us for inspections very often. (CH, p. 427-429)*

*The bay... that bay laurel tree that you can see from the window. I have it there and I cannot use its leaves for the food I cook. I cannot pick it up to use. The garden, I cannot pick coriander from the garden to use it in my kitchen. (CB, p. 214-216)*

*It upsets me. It is revolting because I have to pay to the financas [finance services] part of the money I make with my business, however when I buy something like a TV or a fridge for my business I am not exempt from VAT. Just because I am under the designation of Alojamento Local [commercial home] I pay VAT like everyone else and I pay the property tax like everyone else pays. I pay all the taxes and that is very revolting. (DM, p. 49-55)*

*[TR] But Portugal is actually very anti-business... as a country. And... you know... there are things like... we set up a company to do the restauration work and to run the bed and breakfast. And... as part of the investment that we made here, you get part from the VAT, you're paying bills.*

*[PR] IVA [in portuguese].*

*[TR] So, in a hundred thousand of IVA and the government just decided not to pay us for... three years? Three or four years. Which is...*

*[PR] Yeah.*

*[TR] ...can bankrupt people. And...*

*[PR] We got it back in the end but we had to really fight for it. So it's things like that that... specially in small businesses like ours, that the regulations are really difficult.*

*(PR and TR, p. 1117-1131)*

Participants agree that **seasonality** is a relevant characteristic of their businesses. Although it might present some differences according to its location (S), LsEs recognise the importance of acknowledging the season rhythms in order to optimise their QoL (Ja), given that there is a considerable difference between high and low season (SV). Those season related differences are reflected on participants' QoL, it seems that LsEs' QoL is inversely proportional to the number of booked rooms (Cr).

*We have demand but the business is very seasonal. We have no chance regarding that. While in Lisbon B&Bs work 11 months in a row, here we have 5.5 months fully working. We work in the summer to be able to keep the business during the winter. Because the winter... since December (interview held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March) I had.. what, 5 rooms? (S, p. 23-28)*

*And you get used to it, you realize when you have your holidays, and your federal holidays, and how many...How much holiday time you have, and all of that, so that... the the big change coming from that type of, hmm, of a rhythm, to operating a Bed and Breakfast... where the rhythm is really the most important rhythm is the, the annual rhythm. So, what's your high season, what's your low season, what's your in between seasons... And then also, on, on the daily rhythm, it's, it's, how do you find your personal time, within the day, when you have five rooms of guests and you're doing the, a lot of the work, whether it's, we do the... (Ja, p. 1383-1394)*

*Yes the difference is massive, like from day to night. In the summer we are always fully booked, and now it is very unpredictable. In the summer the bookings are made in advance. Now... today for example we do not have a single booking but at any time a booking can be made for today or tomorrow. We have to be ready to welcome guests at any time, whether we are full or empty. (SV, p. 288-293)*



*That means that from a quality of life perspective during the high season we have a weak balance. But as soon as we close, we have all the space and infrastructure for ourselves. In a location very close to the sea, and even during winter time we have between 20 to 28 degrees, so we cannot complain at all. We know that the season takes 8 months and then we have 4 months for ourselves to enjoy and be at pleasure. (Cr, p. 104-110)*

During the **high season** business is very busy (PR and TR), it is so demanding that some participants agree that it would be very challenging to manage with a fully booked house all year through (AR). Although others seem to prefer a full house arguing that they already know what to count on (Vi). When the house is full, LsEs are mainly focused on the daily tasks and in running the business smoothly (SC). They become so focused on sorting the daily issues, that their quality of life slightly decreases (TS).

*[PR] No, no. Definitely not as big (laughs). I mean, looking back, I think... I think we would've... we should've gone for a smaller place. It is hard work in the summer.*

*[TR] Yeah.*

*[PR] It is very busy. (PR and TR, p. 1178-1182)*

*August. If every month was like August we would literally die here. I would die or I would have to hire someone to help me out. Otherwise I would collapse. Because it is terrible, we have a lot of people that stay one night only, they arrive, sleep, and leave. One night and leave. There are no clothes that can resist to that. The house is full, everything seems disorganised, it is complicated. (AR, p. 537-542)*

*It is much easier. It is easier. Because when we have the house full it is much simpler to programme and plan our life because we already know the guests that are arriving and leaving. The times they arrive and leave. When we still have rooms to rent... someone must be looking at the booking websites, trying to sell them and then plan welcoming the last minute guests. It is easier when the house is fully booked. (Vi, p. 1031-1038)*

*In the summer, the business, getting everything... looking nice and being nice, and kind of managing everyone's expectations and needs as well, juggling that a bit, 'cause they are all different. And actually sometimes when there are lot of people, juggling the animals with the amount of people can be difficult as well, yeah, so... I mean... both*

*things are so easy I think, but I enjoy it, they are the most important to me (SC, p. 273-280)*

*Summer is so different from winter (...) The main difference is that by the end of winter I can do whatever I want to do. I always wake up early in the morning, and it feels so good when you can stay 30 minutes longer in bed. Now I have to start at 7 otherwise breakfast will not be ready at 8. We serve breakfasts between 8 and 10. My quality of life goes a bit like this in the summer [pointing down]. I am tired, my head is full with guests stories, we need some time to digest all of it, especially in the summer when we have a lot of guests changing. It is hard work. We are more exhausted in the summer. But we also have the other side... I love the hot weather, I like to be outside at night chatting with guests. Hot weather, the flowers... everything is so beautiful here in the summer. (TS, p. 575-591)*

**Low season** seems to be the time of the year in which LsEs recharge their batteries (MT). Winter time tends to be quieter for the majority of participants (SC), and some use that time to do something that they don't really have the opportunity to do during high season (Ism). All participants seem to agree that low season is their preferred time to do maintenance related tasks (MJ). During low season periods LsEs' QoL tends to increase.

*I think because we love to work with people and when we are open we are fully committed to our guests. But we are not the kind of person that can build up a wall and be like ok I am the host and you are the guest. It's more like yeah you are in my home, in my house, so I'll be there for you. So we give our all and that sometimes we can't do otherwise maybe we would if we could but we can't. So it costs a lot of energy and we think we are people that also need time to learn or do something else. So this winter we had a vegetable garden project. We never had a vegetable garden! So the neighbours helped us, we have very good contact with the neighbours here next door, and they were very enthusiastic to teach us what we need to buy, what we need to do. So in that sense those 6 months can also be... (MT, p. 450-463)*

*In the winter is really quiet, which I really like, everyone just disappears, I do not know where do people go, but they just disappear... and then that's nice because you have got some time and space to yourself (SC, p. 180-184)*

*I don't go out as often as I used to be... I know November, a little of November, December, January is really dead so, if there's anything I want to do, I save for that time. (Ism, p. 893-895)*

*The tents are closed during the winter but the other rooms are open all year round because they have heating. They are very comfy any time of year and now we also have a fireplace. And we manage our time... to be honest I always feel a bit offended when guests say "oh! This is very pleasant in the summer but what do you do in the winter?". What do I do in the winter!? Maintenance! We have to do all the works in the winter. In November the bookings for the next summer start, sometimes even in September. So we have to update all the websites and we need to plan the new year. During the winter, and when we have less guests we like to hike and have a sort of more sporty rhythm because we cannot do it during the high season.. it is impossible to hike or to run twice a week! (MJ, p. 416-433)*

When it comes to managerial decisions, participants agree that one of the most relevant is the decision on whether to make the business **grow** or just invest in maintenance and renovation. Although most of the interviewed LsEs do not have intentions of business growth, some wish to develop the business and make it bigger. The former group, those LsEs who do not wish their businesses to grow, point different reasons to stay smaller: first, to grow implies to hire people and that in turn increases the bureaucracy (CC); secondly, to be able to spend time with guests (Is); also because participants do not want to leave their home in order to expand the business (YP); finally, because they want to keep their life simple (TS). Regarding the latter group, i.e. participants that want to expand the business, they consider the expansion as part of the process to achieve a higher QoL (MM), namely through the increment in business profitability (MJ).

*No! My husband is always telling me that we could buy the house next door, and that we could build some more and bla bla bla... But I do not want more. I am satisfied with what we currently have. I do not want to grow and have employees because that involves a lot of paperwork and stuff like that... and fiscalisation and I do not want any of those. I am very happy with the two units we have. (CC, p. 726-732)*

*Ah! No way! Can you imagine me having like 15 or 20 rooms. Do you think I would be able to sit here, cross my legs and chat with guests? I couldn't. I would not have time to listen to guests' stories. (Is, p. 1005-1009)*

*I mean, we don't want to make this place bigger. It doesn't make sense... it's too much work, it's already a lot of things to do, so I don't erhm... for me, it would not make sense to have like a, ... And we could not, actually, I don't see what we can make it bigger. We don't want to have another place, I know, it's fine... I mean, ... (YP, p. 626-631)*

*No. I do not want the business to grow. It is not really possible to make it grow here in this space... I have had other businesses with employees and that gives a lot of headaches. To me it is very important to understand the reasons for the business to grow. What will that growth bring? It will give us more money, but I am happy with what we have. Because to expand the business would bring more money but also more responsibilities, because we would have employees.. and with that more responsibilities and headaches. I prefer to have a simpler life and I do not want to grow. (TS, p. 373-381)*

*I see the business expansion as... more like an additional thing to improve our quality of life. If we grow bigger we are able to have more income. And that in turn will allow us to have more money to travel with our kids... to have the things more organised. Have some financial stability will allow us to have the business more organised and improve our quality of life. (MM, p. 508-514)*

*Yes. We are focusing our efforts in buying the land next to ours so that we can have one or two more tents. We want that to happen next year, so that the following year is financially sustainable and we can... ufffff... we can rest a bit more, take a deep breath... and that way we can accept the clients that we are currently rejecting in the summer because we do not have enough space. (MJ, p. 1045-1050)*

One of the solutions found by LsEs to minimize the impact of high season on their QoL, is to hire people so that the workload is relieved. This is not a consensual issue among participants: some prefer not to hire and to keep the tasks between family members; some hire seasonal **employees**; and other have full time employees. Although some LsEs chose to not employ people (Cr) the majority of them agree that they could use some help, particularly during the high season (Ism). The LsEs that decide to employ seasonally do it because they consider the workload to be too much (MJ and BJ), and having a part time employee gives them a break (PR and TR). Those that hire full time, agree that it enhances their quality of life (MM), also they feel good about being able to create job opportunities (IM).

*[Interviewer] Do you have any employees?*

*[Cr] No. Its just both of us. (Cr, p. 401-402)*

*I could do with a maid here. Sorry, no, maid... they don't say maid anymore. I could, I could do, (laughs) because the only maid here is me. Me is the only maid. I could do with a person helping here. (Ism, p. 236-240)*

*[BJ] In the summer we hire people to help cleaning.*

*[MJ] Ya. Ya.*

*[BJ] Because it is far too much for the two of us. (MJ and BJ, p. 301-303)*

*[PR] Yeah! And then again, we would have to be employing people, we just don't want to do that.*

*(...)*

*[TR] We, you know, we... We have a part time lady who comes in and out as... You know, during, the really busy times, but... Other than that, you know, we're*

*[PR] Yes!*

*[TR] ...alone most of the time.*

*[PR] We do that unofficially, so... (Laughs)*

*[TR] That's a couple of hours...a day.*

*[PR] Yeah...!*

*[TR] Five days a week.*

*[PR] Yeah, so... But, you know, I mean, it and it does give us a break because the summer is, it is full on. (PR and TR, p. 352-353; 523-533)*

*If we do not professionalise we lose a lot of quality of life. Because at a certain point... with all the rooms booked there are a lot of people and children on the premises. If we don't have everything organised, if we don't have employees... we are not able to have a good quality of life. (MM, p. 122-127)*

*We would like to hire more people because we are here... we have a lot of work. So we would like to hire more people. The ones we have are not enough. That way we could also create more jobs here... the problem is the margin, the financial margin... we cannot really employ more than 2 or 3 people. (IM, p. 692-702)*

Some participants have the business running all year round, managing their lives in accordance with the bookings rhythm (LV). Some take into consideration closing the business in the future to take a break (AV), or because some months represent financial loss (CM) and it is not worth it (SC). Others chose to **close the business** during a period of time in the low season (NL), so they can rest and recover for the next season (TS). While for some LsEs recovering means to leave their house for a few days so they can relax (MJ), to others it means to have more and more time home, without guests (TT).

*No, no, I never close the business, the house is always open. During the winter we have some days without bookings and we use those days to deep clean the space... we don't have any period in which we close. We don't have that need. (LV, p. 1079-1083)*

*We don't have holidays for 4 years! 4 years in a row without holidays. We might want to go somewhere, do something, or travel somewhere in the future but so far we have not missed it. (AV, p. 182-186)*

*The business is always open. But from now on I am going to start closing in the winter because it is not profitable. But I am still thinking about it, I have to mature that idea...(CM, p. 605-607)*

*I am not... I just decided, I haven't been officially closed apart from Christmas and new year, but now I have decided to close December, January and February, because over the years I've realised that very few people come. And also the weather is pretty awful and it is really hard to keep the house looking good and clean, because of the wind, and when it's raining it's just mud everywhere. It is just impossible, and when it is one only one or two people it is also not cost effective, because you have to either pay for cleaner or pay for things. The heating is really expensive, so you end up losing most of the money on... when it is only a few people or things like that, it is not really worth it. (SC, p. 113-125)*

*In the winter months we close down the business. It is closed from November to March to do the maintenance of the space, and to travel. (NL, p. 58-59)*

*We are open 8 months a year because we need the other 4 months to recover and to do my stuff, you know? To be able to travel... Because we work 24 hours, 7 days a week, it is far too much! (TS, p. 119-123)*

*We really have to leave our home to rest. People say that this is beautiful, very peaceful and relaxing but we are here always thinking about what need to be done. “Oh! I have to do this and that!”. To us it is different... (MJ, p. 571-574)*

*In the beginning we closed for 1.1/2 2 months, later we closed for 3.1/2, later for 5 and now we close for 6 months. (TT, p. 429-431)*

### 5.3.3. Interpersonal Relationships (IR)

The theme interpersonal relationships is an important indicator of quality of life based on participants' perspective on the concept. To be able to **socialize** with people on a daily basis, to **host** guests at home, to develop **personal relationships** with strangers and invest in friendships, and to find **work-family balance** seems to have a positive impact on the quality of life of lifestyle entrepreneurs (see Table 16 below). For the purpose of the present research, rooted in the subthemes and codes that compose the theme, interpersonal relationships were defined as interactions between strangers, friends and family that take place in the commercial home.

Table 16. Theme: Interpersonal relationships

Theme	<b>IR - Interpersonal relationships</b>	
Subthemes	<b>S - Sociability</b>	<b>Hs - Hosting</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interest in people</li> <li>- Interact with people</li> <li>- Build up relationships</li> <li>- Mood management</li> <li>- Not comfortable with guests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guests as priority</li> <li>- Welcome guests</li> <li>- Available for guests</li> <li>- Spend time with guests</li> <li>- Share lifestyle with guests</li> <li>- Improve guests QoL</li> <li>- Not able to make guests happy</li> <li>- Bad reviews</li> </ul>
Subthemes	<b>PR - Personal relationships</b>	<b>WFB - Work-family balance</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guests as friends</li> <li>- Guests as family</li> <li>- Creation of moments</li> <li>- Friendship</li> <li>- Little social life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Closer as family</li> <li>- Family time</li> <li>- Family space</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.3.1. Sociability (S)

Within the theme interpersonal relationships, participants identified several aspects related to the idea of socializing with others. Interviewees have a personal **interest in people**, reason that explains why socializing is accounted as meaningful for their QoL. In that sense, it becomes vital to **interact and meet people** and that in turn is used as a spring board to **build up relationships**. Although participants like to socialize, the

process of socializing appears to be entwined with the provision of a home-based service that operates 24 hours a day, and sometimes it is necessary to use some **mood management** skills in order to minimize the feeling of **not being comfortable with guests** while at home.

LsEs seem to have a common **interest in people** (MM). The feeling of having people around, someone to chat with, makes them feel good (YP). To be able to be surrounded by friendly and interesting people appears to have a positive influence on participants' mood and consequently on their QoL perception (SC). Some interviewees recognize that they are passionate about people and their personal stories (Is), and that people are one of the reasons for them to have a home business in the tourism sector (IM).

*Yes, being with guests is part of our life, we are always here, it is impossible not to see guests and we cannot pretend that we don't see them as well. But I believe that, without even realizing, we share an interest in people. (MM, p. 185-189)*

*It's nice to have people every day at home so we can speak and we can... talk to. (YP, p. 591-594)*

*But generally is quite fun, people very nice, it is very friendly, you get to chat to a lot of people and very interesting... so as long as you are open to that and you enjoy people then its fine... (SC, p. 71-74)*

*I am passionate about people, I really enjoy to chat, and I love to know people's stories. (Is, p. 49-51)*

*Well, to be honest... one of the main reasons to have this business... was my passion for people, welcome them at my house... passion for being with them, chat, and communicate! (IM, p. 69-71)*

LsEs' interest in people might predispose them to perceive interactions with guests as something relevant for their life quality. To **interact with people** has different effects on the owners: firstly it makes them feel sociable (Ism); secondly it appears to be connected with one's energy level (C); and lastly it also brings some physical comfort (CC). Relating with nice people is considered part of their quality of life (Aa) and it is regarded as more valuable than money (Cr).



*And you feel sociable, you feel like people come around, which I love it, so, it's very nice. (Ism, p. 813-815)*

*My energy level is deeply connected to the interactions that I have with other people, in particular with all my guests. (C, p. 508-510)*

*This couple stayed here a while ago, I only saw them briefly each day, but when I dropped them at the station, after taking the luggage off the car boot, the man told me "Thank you very much, it was amazing, I even feel like hugging you right now..." and I replied, "Then please hug me!" because this is one of my main motivations to do this job: I simply love hugs! (laughs). (CC, p. 567-573)*

*...hmm, we're very lucky that our clients, ninety-nine per cent of them or even more, ninety-nine point nine, are very nice! So, we feel that's really a quality of life! I mean, I couldn't be more grateful that we're here. (Aa, p. 1837-1840)*

*[to interact with people] is also considered quality of life, these little things... to be able to interact with other people is much more enriching than money, and even more here when compared to the north [of Europe]. (Cr, p. 522-525)*

In some cases, interaction with guests grows into a closer relationship. The large majority of the interviewees shared episodes of guests becoming more than simple guests, cases where host(s) ended **building up relationships with guests**. The utter importance of establishing a relationship with a guest when compared to the provision of a service (CF), and having the opportunity to establish a relationship with some depth (TS) were highlighted as important to hosts' QoL. In some cases, the importance of the relationship factor is so high that it somehow shapes the type of business provided and created (PR).

*Because in terms of... this [business] is all about human relationships, isn't it? Everything is focused on the same thing, regardless what you are trying to sell. At least this is what I believe in, and my work ethics as a sales person is based on that. We can never forget that on the other side we have a person. Someone with weaknesses, with own life experiences, with all of that... and much more important than the product you are selling is the relationship that you are able to create, or not. (CF, p. 603-611)*

*To have nice people around, to have some depth in the relationship with guests, because the things that we listen to, the life experience exchanged are important, and gives... to me this is quality of life. (TS, p. 345-349)*

*But we didn't want to have hoards and hoards of people so that we couldn't still have that personal relationship (...) And, and not as a sale, where you can lose the personal interaction with people. So that's kind of... Limited us as to... As to have gone big as we wanted to be. (PR, p. 269-271; 279-282)*

Having the opportunity to meet new people every day, and in some cases being able to deepen the relationship with guests seems to be very rewarding for participants, from a QoL perspective. Nevertheless, dealing with people every single day from a service provider angle, also has its downsides and sometimes requires **mood management** skills. Participants consider it challenging to quickly adapt to peoples energy when there is a high number of guests checking in and out daily (TS). Whenever guests are not in a good mood (C) or when they are more demanding (AP) hosts' QoL suffers a negative impact.

*In previous years, we accepted one night stays, and that is too demanding and tiring. People arrive and they are leaving the next day, and we always have to adapt to people's energy. It's not really to adapt, but we have to get used to it, and that is too tiring, it is definitely the hardest thing [about this job]. (TS, p. 320-324)*

*It is very challenging to deal with people in a bad mood. "Are you in a bad mood?" But... What do they want me to do? I am not... am not... I am not going to try to put them in a good mood, because that disturbs me personally. If the person does not... they ask for something, I do my best to answer appreciatively, then they say "I don't want that anymore!", and then they want something else, and then bla bla bla... "Hey, get lost! Just go away!" These things happen, but there is really nothing I can do... (C, p. 1331-1339)*

*There are not many people I don't like. But there are some people I don't like... I deal with it, but I can be sharp in the mouth (...) Yeah, one time I nearly was on the point of sending somebody away, but then he... He calmed down, he calmed down... (AP, p. 509-513)*

In some cases, hosts don't feel comfortable in their own home because of guests, consequently their QoL decreases. Whether because the guests are not as friendly as hosts were expecting them to be or because there was no click (YP). Whenever a situation like this happens, participants are **not comfortable with guests**, which means that for the duration of the guests' stay they will feel as if they are being invaded in their own home (VL) or even worst: tortured (TS).

*It can sometimes be... like you have some people who don't... are... I mean, there is no problem with them, but you don't feel them... like... too friendly or whatever. Their presence is a bit... at the end you just want them to leave. But well, people are here for three days or four days, so you don't have time to ... But that's not, it's not too bad... (YP, p. 681-686)*

*I do not know if it is about energy... probably not, but... that type of people that... just does not work. We feel it will never work. It is almost like an invasion. So I guess that is the other side. Not good things only. Roses have thorns... and although these situations are not thorns they are uncomfortable. (VL, p. 561-566)*

*Last year we had a couple here, but they were not well, a middle-aged Spanish couple, the woman was outside she did not even enter, the man just said "this is too far, Monchique is too far!" I told them that if they wanted they could stay somewhere else. He looked at me and asked "Can we?" I answered that I would put 'no show' in Booking.com and it would be sorted. I was thinking to myself "please go because to us it is a torture to have people here that do not want to stay here". People that are not well... this is... it is not pleasant at all. So I told him to go, that it was not an issue at all. This is part of the business I guess, it happens perhaps once or twice a year. (TS, p. 192-202)*

#### 5.3.3.2. Hosting (Hs)

QoL of LsEs is also achieved through the act of hosting, in line with the information gathered during the interviews. **Guests are a priority** for these group of hosts, who are very pleased to **welcome guests** in their home. Being **available to guests**, **spend time** and **sharing** the chosen **lifestyle** with them are part of the hosting rules – that above all aim to **improve guests' QoL**. Whenever hosts are **not able** to accomplish the goal **of making guests happy**, or when guests' feedback (**bad reviews**) is poor LsEs QoL seems to diminish.

In the previous subtheme, the importance that socialising and interacting with other people has on LsEs' QoL was reported. Following on that, **guests are considered a priority** for the participants, who focus on providing a high-quality stay for their guests (Ja). The focus on offering a remarkable stay is achieved either by spoiling guests and making them feel important (El), or by making sure that the way the business is structured allows spending quality time with guests (TT).

*Our, our total focus has always been, in a 90% on the... on guest accommodations and on quality for the guests. (Ja, p. 2018-2019)*

*As a matter of fact people that stay here feel my affection, they feel spoiled by me, and feel that they are important to me. And indeed they are!! When they enter the main gate they are the most important people in the whole world for me. (El, p. 145-148)*

*We like... we have 7 rooms and one small apartment, so 8 units, and that means that we have a maximum of 18 guests, and that's also our maximum in the sense that to give that attention and welcome to everybody you need to have time for them and if we would expand to five bungalows more and we would have 36 people staying here we would have to divide ourselves not over 18 people but over 36 people, so it gets diluted. We get diluted. Our attention gets diluted. (TT, p. 1000-1008)*

It is common among participants to enjoy **welcoming** guests in their home (AP) and to walk the extra mile to make guests feel welcomed (AR, LV). Hosts want guests to feel at home (CN), almost as if the 'at home' feeling is used as a barometer of a good service provision, one that boosts hosts and guests QoL.

*I love to welcome always people... (AP, p. 792)*

*For example, we had a group of young people that came with jet skis to do water sports. That day our way of welcoming them was... they were eight, they were four couples. When they arrived, me and my husband were waiting for them with eight cold bottles of beer. They were really happy and they have stayed with us more than once. (AR, p. 448-453)*

*I prefer to profit little and welcome guests and look after them. We like to look after them properly... everyday guests stay with us we offer them wood-fired bread (...) we*

*also offer a welcome basket with seasonal fruits, coffee, water, milk, beer, wine... everything is included... (LV, p. 186-192)*

*All I want is for guests to feel [ ] home in our home, I do not mind at all serving them breakfast and coffee... as long as they feel our place as theirs. (CN, p. 1847-1849)*

Participants believe that part of a good hostmanship is to be **available for guests** and to **spend time with guests**. These two things, according to them, have an indirect impact on both hosts' and guests' QoL, in the sense that hosts feel their QoL is higher when they can have a positive impact on guests QoL through their home-based business. To be available to guests encompasses: giving special attention to each guest (PP), look after guests (CC), making sure they are enjoying their stay (SC), and be helpful and available (AP).

*So, I have to give a special attention to each one of the guests, and they absolutely adore that. Whenever we have comments in online booking platforms guests say "PP is awesome" and things like that, just because I pay attention to them and am available! For example if I know that they went to visit Regaleira, I ask them if they enjoyed it, that kind of thing. And if I am not here to do this who will? (PP, p. 425-431)*

*I am always here... to look after them, to talk with them if they want to, to have time to chat with them is very important because they usually like to talk... in particular when they speak in English. They are out all day trying to understand Portuguese and then they can relax when they arrive home... whenever they meet me in the garden they enjoy talking about their day out... that is very important (CC, p. 118-131)*

*See them at breakfast and usually ask them how are they getting on, where have they been, ask if they need any recommendation... Try to help them planning their holidays. Most of the times is directions, I have maps and information there... and then yeah... just make sure they are ok, really. (SC, p. 299-234)*

*They feel like family, they say "AP this...", "What do you think of that", "Can I call you?", "Can you help me?", "Can I use your laundry... your er, machine?", "Can I do this?", "Where can I find that?", and I, I like to talk with everybody, and help them and stay with them, and sometimes I go with them, there are people who invite me to go have dinner with them... (AP, p. 586-591)*

In regards with **spend time with guests**, participants agree on how well they feel when they have the chance to spend some time with guests (Vi), because spending time with guests is also an opportunity to enjoy their home facilities (TR).

*There is a difference... something that I enjoy and makes me feel good... I serve an iced tea when it is too hot. Whenever the sun is too hot we just chat a bit and drink... not too much because I don't want guests to feel that it is too much, I want them to feel like they are home... (Vi, p. 145-148)*

*And, you know, for instance, during the summer we'll... You know, guests are in the pool and the, and the nicest time is five o'clock, half past five, when the sun is... Coming over the pool and, you know, take a couple of bottles of wine and some biscuits and just sat and chat with them, and, you know, it's... (TR, p. 770-775)*

When hosts share their house with guests, they are sharing more than just the space they live in and do their business, they are also **sharing their lifestyle**. The style of life is reflected on the house, its décor, facilities provided, the activities suggested, even the way hosts interact with guests. To share seems to be a source of QoL for hosts: to share Portuguese food (CF), to share the city less touristy places (ML), the veggies growing in biological gardens (Is), or simply to share who they are, what they have and what they know (M).

*Even the breakfast I serve... I serve a breakfast 100% Portuguese, I don't serve... no! Because in Portugal we do not eat scrambled eggs for breakfast, nor bacon or sausages. So, to me it makes no sense at all to serve it. I serve jams, home made jams, and I always try to have tomato jam because most of the guests never heard of it before and it is very typical here. I always bake a cake for breakfast. I try to present a typical Portuguese breakfast to my guests. (CF, p. 416-432)*

*I believe that a lot of people think of us as a weird couple given that we have opened the B&B because we wanted to share our city, share Lisbon. That's what we want to do and when we feel that there is no space to share Lisbon with the guests, we are not as happy, the joy is not the same. (ML, p. 2272-2276)*

*Every summer I have a biological garden where guests can... I just do not have fish, meat, potatoes and things like that. But I have everything else, I have lettuces, tomatoes, cucumbers... I have a lot of veggies in the garden. I usually tell guests to pick whatever they want and need, it is my way of sharing and help them... this way they can save up some money. (Is, p. 443-449)*

*It is funny the power of our posture. I think that for everything in life we need a certain plasticity, otherwise we would not be able to deal with so many different people... since we have that plasticity, lets use it to be ourselves and to practice our life philosophy, our way of living. We are not imposing anything to anyone, we are not selling anything, and we are simply being ourselves. We are saying "we are like this... this is our life". We are here and if you want to teach us something, we will learn. If you want to learn something, we are not here to teach but we share what we know. And a lot of people have stayed here and they were delighted... (M, p. 1098-1120)*

**Improve guests' QoL** is a common wish between participants. To make guests happy increases owners happiness and therefore their QoL. Participants want to have guests that can feel good and be happy in their home (TS). They wish to provide a stay that will make guests forget about their personal and professional problems, a place to recharge batteries and find the strength to continue as soon as the break is over (LV). Hosts' house as a healing sanctuary (AV), a place where only laughter and joy are allowed (MM).

*Even our website... it is not in Portuguese... it should be, but I honestly think that it is not worth it. The majority of the Portuguese guests are not happy here. (TS, p. 145-147)*

*If someone is staying here they have to leave completely recharged, they have to leave able to face the hard life that some of them have. Sometimes life is not easy, you know... And here, we try that their time is not a nightmare, we do not want guests to leave mad at something, or not happy because of little things that should not disturb them. So we always try to provide a good time, to give them some quality of life by staying at our home. And they are the ones saying that this is quality of life. (LV, p. 676-685)*

*People that stay here for a few nights, usually arrive stressed and not in a good mood, they seem fed up with everything. After some time you can sense the changes, they already have another facial expression, when they leave they are a different person, and that is very interesting and rewarding. (AV, p. 149-152)*

*But we have created this space, we have done this... our biggest joy is to see people enjoying the place (...) I like to see people happy and in good mood. (MM, p. 189-190; 449)*

In the same way making guests feel good increases the self-perception of QoL for hosts, whenever for some reason they are **not able to make guests happy** their perception of QoL is affected. Unsatisfied guests, or unhappy guests are one of the biggest sources of stress, according to interviewees (PR, TP).

*We, we try not to take it personally, but because, you know, this is our life, you know, we... You know, we try and do everything we can to please people and sometimes you just get people who just... Nothing, you know, just nothing in life that pleases them, and... And, yeah, and it does, it does... Does prove that one thing that causes the most stress is when we got somebody who isn't happy. (PR, p. 621-627)*

*One negative thing is if people are not satisfied. When their nature is very depressing and you can't make them happy. That, for me, is the most challenging part, to think what I can do to make them happy. But sometimes people are just this, and that's difficult. That's all. (TP, p. 687-691)*

All of the participants' businesses have a website and/or work in partnership with some online booking platforms. Another source of stress that can easily decrease the perception of hosts' QoL is a **bad review** in one of those online resources. A bad review tends to be felt by the participants as a personal critique. When hosts feel that guests are not fair and honest in their comments, they do not feel good (PR and TR). Some participants believe that their QoL is somehow dependent on hosts' reviews in the sense that bad reviews can ruin the business and therefore decrease their QoL (JP).

*[TR] But, again, you know, you get, we had, for instance, we had a Spanish guy, who was a restaurant...*

*[PR] Critic.*

*[TR] Critic!! And, he rated us as Poor.*

*[PR] Terrible.*

*[TR] Terrible.*

*[PR] Hmm, hmm, was the bottom.*



*[TR] And, he described our accommodation as Army Barracks. And he, he got hmm, coke and biscuits for breakfast, you know, it's... Isn't the truth! (PR and TR, p. 684-694)*

*No, and the quality of life, there is a... the quality of life of the... how do you call them? The owners... the people that welcome guests... it is a function, the inverse function of the booking review. I don't have any doubt regarding that. We could not hire someone to be here and welcome guests, because our score would decrease from 9 to 8 in three months! (...) this is a very challenging business, because of guests' reviews, those reviews can literally destroy your business! (JP, p. 685-691; 423-425)*

#### 5.3.3.3. Personal Relationships (PR)

The LsEs interviewed agree that some of the guests become more than that. What began as a commercial relationship, grows into much more than that, grows into a personal relationship. Guests are not guests anymore, they become **friends** and in some cases the feelings are so strong that they are considered as part of the **family**. In these cases the commercial boundaries are broken to give place to a much more intimate space, one that enables the **creation of moments** that can be remembered and revived. From participants' perspective, their QoL grows as the number of friends or family members' increases. Friends also assume an important role in how participants define QoL. Their chosen lifestyle privileges **friendship** and their quality of life is higher when friends are around. Nevertheless, managing a home-based business sometimes makes it more challenging to meet friends and make new ones, due to the 24/7 nature of the business there **is not much time left for social life**.

It is common among participants to be friendly with their guests. Firstly, it increases the possibility of improving guests QoL. Secondly, hosts perception of QoL increases whenever they feel that they were able to make guests happy. This friendliness may act as a catalyst to friendships between hosts and guests. Guests are welcomed as if they were friends (El). The interviewees agree that some **guests become friends** (AR) as they perform acts of friendship like invitations to go out or gifts (C).

*I am going to launch my own tourism concept: 'tourism of affection'. Because I have my own special way of welcoming guests. I welcome them as if they are going to be, in a very near future, my friends. (El, p. 119-122)*

*Above all this business has given me friends. Some of the guests leave as my friends, mine and my husband's. (AR, p. 222-223)*

*I cannot say that guests, especially those that stay with us longer... it is not a host-guest relationship anymore. We create something more than that (...) From my perspective it is pure pleasure, I have guests that know that I love to read, so they bring me a book when they return. Others offer me some chocolates... they are attentive, some have invited us to dine out. There is nothing better than this... (C, p. 581-589)*

There are special guests with whom the relationship becomes so close that it seems like they are part of the hosts' **family**. Guests temporarily live on the premises as if they were in their own houses, wandering about in slippers and using meal time to share the adventures of the day (CM). In some exceptional cases, host and guest have such a close relationship that no monetary transaction is made. Just as a family member stays in another family-related house, so do guest-friends stay without paying for the accommodation (Is).

*For example, not long ago a French couple stayed with us for 5 nights. It was amazing, because we shared each others life, we chatted, we exchanged life stories... to me that is the most interesting thing! Guests end up feeling like they are at their own home, they put their slippers on and wander about. That makes us all feel good. People that are interested in share lifestyles, living like the locals live, in their homes, eating the same food. Totally different from going to a five stars' hotel and stay there like a king. We become really close, my son participated in all the conversations and meals, we were living here as an extended family sharing everything that was happening throughout our days. (CM, p. 504-513)*

*I have lots of stories of guests that become 'family'. It does not happen with the majority of the guests, but every year there is always someone that becomes special... the majority of my clients are people that return. Thank God I have a hand full of little houses outside in the garden, otherwise I would not have my business (laughs)... because when for example the Spanish visit [Spanish guests that are now considered family], I cannot ask for money. I am not going to charge my family, right? If I did not have the little houses to enclose all of them (laughs) I would not have rooms to rent, I would not make money! And to me this is very funny! And I believe that these are the things that... that make me feel so good and make me a happy person. These kind of things are so valuable to me that having to leave the table by meal time, or not eating,*

*or not having a meal with my family, or eat the food when it is already cold, or when everyone else has already finished... to me that is not important at all! (Is, p. 390-407)*

Another thing that appears to be important to increase the perception of LsEs' QoL is the **creation of moments** with guest-friends. Moments that are part of the house history as well as the host and guest personal history. Moments that will be remembered by both parts for its significance, whether it is celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a guest (C), being part of guest's last wishes (Is), or meeting a best friend (El).

*This morning a guest turned 40, it was his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. We baked him a cake, opened a bottle of champagne, we were all celebrating and chatting... I mean, that kind of thing that you would never see in a traditional hotel. (C, p. 876-880)*

*I am going to share an episode with you... some time ago we had two kids from Switzerland staying with us. A little older... my son probably had 19 by then, he was in university, and the kids were a bit older than him, probably in their early 20s. They were super happy, very funny, one of them specially! He was so so funny, with a great sense of humour. His eyes were so alive, he was a source of life and happiness, amazing! We created a connection right away, also between them and my son, they got very close. They went together to Sintra to visit the palaces and they went surfing. They stayed for a week, approximately... it was a very good week, and we invited them to have lunch and dinner with us some times. We laughed so hard! Laughed and laughed and laughed... On the day they left, their flight was in the afternoon, so they spent the morning with us, I invited them for lunch, and then they wanted to... I have a guest book, guests that want to sign it or leave a message are more than welcome to do it. So they were writing in the book, just right before they left, I honestly think he did it on purpose. As they were leaving, he gave me a big hug, a very strong hug, and told me his story in a couple of minutes. He had cancer in a terminal stage, he left the chemotherapy treatments, left the hospital against his parents wish, against everyone's wish, family, doctors... he grabbed his best friend and said "No. I am going to enjoy the rest of the days I have, I wanna enjoy them until the last second. I want to be happy." I was speechless, as you can imagine... and he kept on going "I am so glad I stayed in this house and met you, because you will never believe how happy I was throughout this week!". I was speechless, no words, totally emotional and moved, and the only thing I was able to say was "Let's not say goodbye, let's say see you soon..." (Is, p. 225-261)*

*One of my best friends, I met her here, two months after I opened the business! She was staying only one night during low season, in January. And before she arrived I was thinking... for her to spend one night here she sent me 11 emails, and I was thinking to myself that she should be a difficult person to deal with. 11 emails to spend one night... When she arrived, I thought that she would be staying with her boyfriend, partner, husband, something... Alone! I greeted her, she entered the Vanilla room, which is her room now, absent minded, weird... We served her... we always offer a little something to guests upon arrival. So we served her that and she went to her room. After a while she knocked at the kitchen's door and informed me that she was going to have dinner with some friends. I said ok, and went up to my room. Like 40 minutes later the girl that helps me knocked on my door and told me "the lady is back and she asks if she can have something to eat". I told her that I would be down in a minute and that we could prepare something and eat together in the kitchen. I had already noticed something about her, I do not really know what, but something was not right... well, summing up the story, we were talking until 3 am, we drank two bottles of wine, we went out to smoke, she used to smoke by then... And she told me that she was staying with us because one week before she had a trip planned, one week holiday in which she expected to be asked for marriage. She was dating this man for 7 years, they were living together for a bunch of years. 7 years. The day before they went on holiday he arrives home and tells her "I am leaving. I am in love with someone else." Two days after, she arrives home from work, she is an engineer in a pharmaceutical company, opens the door, and the flat is completely empty. She was devastated, so she booked one night here, and ended up staying two. (El, p. 867-912)*

LsEs seem to believe that in order to have a good QoL one needs to have **friends** (Vi), and that juggling hosts and friends is the best way to keep the relationships healthy and the business going (AR).

*To have quality of life is to have friends. I do not have many, but the ones I have are really good. (Vi, p. 812-813)*

*Friends are very important! Tomorrow for example, we have friends here for dinner. Since we do not have much work (laughs)... tomorrow the house is full, full of guests and friends. But that's the way I like it! (AR, p. 334-338)*

At the same time LsEs' are aware that the type of business that they run **limits their availability to spend time with friends**: whether because they are too busy with daily tasks (CC); because living in the countryside does not offer as many possibilities to engage with friends as the city (CN); because the old friends are physically distant and the chosen lifestyle made them grow apart (TT); or because the language can be a barrier (TR).

*It may happen that I am... I don't have friends because they are tired of waiting for me, and I do not go out. I am always here, in my world (laughs). (CC, p. 717-719)*

*No, I believe it is more... I miss having friends and family around, to have a more active social life (...) to have a social life in the countryside is hard, I cannot go to the gym and meet my friends like I did in the city, here is harder. (CN, p. 954-955; 962-964)*

*It's difficult because.... Now, at the end of this year it will be 10 years that we are in Spain and Portugal so that's a long time. So we changed a bit, but definitely influenced by Andalusia and the Algarve and the people that we love and know have changed as well, they've gone more into the deutsche rhythm of things so we have grown, in that sense, a bit apart but without losing each other of course. But we are different than our friends and family in Holland. We have friends and family, not family, friends here as well but it's different... those are your old friends and family. (TT, p. 811-820)*

*We're living in a country where... our Portuguese isn't great, so..., we don't, it's not so easy to go out and meet people and to get to know other people and... so... that's a bit of a challenge for us. You know, we miss not... we don't have as many friends here in Portugal, so I don't know. But we do have some friends... Not as many, not as much of a social life. (TR, p. 1717-1723)*

#### 5.3.3.4. Work-family balance (WFB)

Work-family balance is held by participants as very important to their QoL. Findings suggest that this equilibrium is deemed as so important to LsEs' QoL, that the possibility of balancing the personal and professional spheres ended up being one of the main reasons to start an accommodation home-based business. The reasons for that being: the possibility of being **closer as a family**, given that for the majority of the participants they work and live together; enjoy **family time** as the family lives on the premises; and preserve the **family space**.

Participants value their families and consider them as a source of QoL. The possibility of **growing closer** as a family is something that increases their perception of QoL (TS), although sometimes spending 24 hours together might be demanding (Cr). The support that participants have from their partners (PR) and children (LV; Pe) is also recognised as something that positively impacts their perception of QoL, knowing they will be available to support and give them a hand if needed works almost as a safety net.

*This is much more intense because it is literally 24 hours a day. But we are very good together and that is important to us. I believe we look after each other's quality of life. I know that to her it is important to go out, that is the reason why she is hiking now, but she also like to go to the swimming pool because she has her friends there. So we try to arrange things in a way that we can both do what we like. And we are good at that. (TS, p. 547-555)*

*As a couple we are much much better now. Sometimes I have to run away because it is too intense (laughs). We are always together. (Cr, p. 561-563)*

*(Laughs) Yeah, we, I mean, we support each other, we, we laugh about it, we have to, really and, we've got to move on (...) we work together, we're a good team! And... (PR, p. 735-737; 757-758)*

*Sometimes in the summer... our daughters give us a hand. Everything is done by family members. (LV, p. 573-575)*

*We also have our boys, they both speak more than one language so they give us a hand when needed. (Pe, p. 115-116)*

**Spending time** together, as a family, also influences participants' perception of QoL in a positive way. LsEs try their best to create family moments (BJ) and find time to meet extended family (TR), although those moments are not as often as they would like them to be (CB). The idea of not having that time because of work is something that disturbs LsEs (SV).

*Normally we have the movie night. (BJ, p. 1127)*

*What we had a family reunion a few weeks ago, up in Peniche (...) probably three times a month or something, we go to a restaurant. (TR, p. 1521-1522; 1726-1727)*

*Regarding my private life, meeting with my extended family is very rare. I wanted to do a Sunday lunch, the guests had their breakfast, and when they left... I had my dad and sisters here with us and there was no problem, we used this space [meals room together with living room]. Usually guests only use this space at breakfast time, they tend to use their room more... (CB, p. 496-500)*

*To have a busy schedule that goes against my principles... the principle of spending time with my family. Not being able to spend time with my family because of the business would have a nefarious effect on my personal life... (SV, p. 84-88)*

The choice of opening their houses to people they do not know and make a business out of that trade is something that can jeopardize the **family space**, and participants are aware of the implications that may have in their QoL and in the QoL of their family members. In some cases it was necessary to explain the concept and what it encompasses (El) before the family was on board. Something that seems common to some participants is the awareness of the family space (Is) and the attention given to not cross the private boundary.

*When I was designing our home my husband did not really understand what I wanted. I wanted to draw our home taking into consideration that we would be receiving guests. My husband thought that I was crazy! (...) “You lost it! I don’t know what you mean by that, but I think that you are crazy. Do you want me to welcome people that I have never seen before in my home?” he said (laughs). (El, p. 52-56; 58-62)*

*I love this business but I cannot... I can’t in any way force my family, although they like it as well, I can’t impose this. This is my job! So I cannot force my children to be with people that they do not want to be with... so I do not invite anyone to my family table without speaking with them first, if they are ok with it cool, if not no problem at all, I will invite the guests when my kids are not home... (Is, p. 757-766)*

#### 5.3.4. Finance (F)

Based on the initial findings, finance emerged as a relevant theme for participants’ self-perception of QoL (Table 17). Although for most of the interviewed LsEs money is not the main drive to start the business, all of them recognise the importance of the financial

aspect in their lives. Given that the home-based accommodation business is their chosen vehicle to achieve the desired QoL, participants agree that **business finances** and **profitability** are issues that they should pay attention to. Nevertheless, LsEs are conscious of the **importance of money** in their own lives and its relationship with life quality. In the context of the present investigation, finance was defined as the managing of money matters.

Table 17. Theme: Finance

Theme	<b>F - Finance</b>		
Subthemes	<b>BF - Business finances</b>	<b>Py - Profitability</b>	<b>IoM - Importance of money</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investment</li> <li>- Expenses</li> <li>- Other sources of income</li> <li>- Second job</li> <li>- Salary</li> <li>- Financial challenges</li> <li>- Financial worries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profit is not the main goal</li> <li>- Profit needed to survive</li> <li>- Profit</li> <li>- No profit</li> <li>- Choice not to profit more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enough money to survive</li> <li>- Don't worry about money</li> <li>- Have money to do what I like</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.4.1. Business finances (BF)

The financial aspect of LsEs' business is relevant to their perception of QoL, according to the information gathered during the interviews. In some cases, the financial efforts done to start up the business still have a negative impact on their lifestyle. The initial **investment** made, either through own capital, funds or mortgages together with the monthly **expenses** occasionally dictates the need for **other source(s) of income** such as a **second job** or. Participants agree that there is a significant difference between having a monthly **salary**, or an unsteady income. The latter tends to be accompanied by **financial challenges** and **worries** that decrease their QoL.

To start the desired accommodation business, participants had to invest capital in either rebuilding their house or acquiring one that was suitable for the home-based accommodation business. The relationship between the level of **investment** made and the financial resources that were used to invest is considered by participants as relevant to their self-perception of QoL. Some of the participants that did not have own capital to invest, consider that the investment was very big (SV) and question some of the decisions made, namely the number of rooms to rent. Others, that used their own capital, had to find ways to balance the finances as a solution to have a quicker return on investment, such as: accepting shorter stays (CC); reducing costs (CF); and using the business revenue to slowly rebuild the house (MjF).



*We invested a large amount of money, it was a big investment considering the return we have. This is a very seasonal kind of business and we do not have enough rooms to be able to quickly repay the investment done. (SV, p. 117-120)*

*We spent three years and a lot of money to build the “casinha” [name of the studio], so we must get back that money as soon as possible. That’s the reason why I accepted everything last year, even one and two night stays, to recover the money we spent. (CC, p. 734-737)*

*No, I am super happy, and the business is completely viable. It is not easy but I have the advantage of having the main structure. So, from now on things will get easier. The first 3 years were not easy at all, I have done a lot. I have had a lot of work, a lot of labour from the mason to the carpenter, the decorator, and all the rest, but I had to minimise the costs as much as I could. (CF, p. 304-312)*

*To us this business represents a huge investment, it is not a big investment in absolute terms, but it is for us... Let me put it this way, if we had to take into consideration the money we spent and the one we have gained, we would not be able to have this space. We don’t owe money to anyone, the money that we make with the business is ours. But we do the renovations in the house when we have money to do so. It is a slow process, and I am the one doing all the renovation jobs. From a personal point of view, I prefer to earn less and don’t [en]debt myself. (MjF, p. 615-633)*

When starting the business, along with the initial investment (Pa) participants must face the monthly **expenses**. During the initial stage, it is important for their QoL to start earning money as soon as possible (PR). When the business is running, participants agree that finances should be managed very carefully, so that they have enough money to cover the expenses all year round (DM). Water, gas and electricity bills tend to be high (AP), consequently in the slower months sometimes it is necessary to ask for a mortgage to cover some expenses (MM). To manage expenses more efficiently, some participants consider closing the business for a couple of months in the lower season (AV) given that seasonality also influences the monthly expenses.

*Regarding the business itself, it is a very challenging business because it has a lot of associated costs. If we take into consideration the initial investment in the property, it is obviously not viable. I mean, it is not [financially] sustainable to buy a property with the purpose of creating a business like this. (Pa, p. 149-153)*

*Yeah, a property is expensive...in Portugal. So, yeah, we still have a mortgage and... But we also, we'd had our place in America which, hmm, which we sold, so, that, that went towards us, so, hmm, but, you know, you're always thinking, you know, we have to get this work done because we, we need, yeah, we do need to start having money coming in. (PR, p. 972-978)*

*We have to pay the bills every single month. We have to save some money from the summer months to cover the winter ones. I already know the business. I just have to keep that in mind. In April we have to pay the council tax, we also have to pay all the other taxes... we have to! (DM, p. 153-158)*

*If we have a bill for one hundred fifty euros of water, we pay one hundred fifty euros plus tax... so we nearly pay two hundred ninety euros... it's ridiculously expensive. (AP, p. 693-695)*

*This month [March] we had to ask some money in our bank to pay employees' salaries but we know this is a temporary situation. The winter is very difficult, it is hard on us, but it is worth it. We must look ahead, spring is starting. (MM, p. 526-530)*

*Probably we will start closing the business at least during January and February because these two months are very... it is not worth it. It is low season so our prices are lower but the expenses are the same. In fact the expenses are higher because we have to heat the house. When we have guests arriving and leaving it is easier to maintain the house. When we have calm periods we have to clean the windows again... we end up having more work and more expenses during the low season. (AV, p. 62-72)*

Another way LsEs use to overcome the initial investment/expenses issue is to use **other sources of income** to release the financial pressure, also as a way to increase their QoL. Some use the house to provide more services (MJ) and have an additional income. Some sold other properties that they had to decrease the mortgage instalments (SV) and others used unexpected money they earnt (CF).

*Here we have the rooms to rent, Chi Kung which is a kind of martial art that I practice and I give some classes and workshops. I want that part of the business to grow more and be become a larger part of our life. (MJ, p. 198-201)*

*It has been challenging... we sold some other properties to be able to pay the instalments because the interest the bank is charging us is very high. It destroys any business... the occupancy rate has been increasing since the beginning without any doubt, but we have this mortgage to pay and it weighs a lot... (SV, p. 628-639)*

*To start up the business I had another source of income... namely an indemnity for my son's death that I used as a springboard to launch the business. I would have preferred that none of that had happened but such is life... All the investments I made were not solely based on my earnings from the business, that would be impossible! I must have spent around 100.000€. I have not asked for any mortgage because I am in my fifties and I do not want any long term bond, I just don't feel like it. I don't want to leave any burden for my children, if they want to continue with the business I will be very happy, if they don't I will be happy still. (CF, p. 259-286)*

One of the solutions found by LsEs to face the expenses is to have a **second job** (AR). Although it is more demanding and the level of QoL decreases, it is a way of keeping the business running (CM). When the business is owned by a couple, in some cases one of them has a full-time job (LV) or is self-employed in another area of activity (JP).

*[I work] Every day during the morning. Not working would relieve me 4 hours. I could do this in a calm way because my days are very busy since early morning. I wake up, have to prepare breakfasts and give it to the kids, taking care of them, get them ready to school, then getting myself ready. After that I put them in the car and leave them in school. I am lucky 'cause everything is close by. So I leave them in school and I arrive to work at 8:50. Start working and leave by 1pm. Go home, I prepare lunch for me and my husband, and then is house work till 5 or 6 pm. If I did not have to go to the supermarket it would be easier. I would drop the kids at school and do the house work right away... my afternoon would be much more relaxed. (AR, p. 655-667)*

*When the financial crises started, I had to find another job, it was not manageable. And all the years after that I have been doing the second job, which is complicated because... throughout the week I am working every single day and then by the end of the days sometimes I have guests. Weekends and holidays I always have guests in. So I do not have weekends, nor holidays, nothing! Not to mention that physically it is very tiring. (...) It was complicated but I was lucky because my dad help me out, he said he believed in me and in my project and he help me financially. If it wasn't him it would have been very very hard. And then I was lucky again because I was able to find a job,*

*by the end of the month I had my fixed salary. Some people in the village asked me “are you working there?!”. I was working in a construction site in the village, I worked in a shipping container surrounded by papers. People asked “oh! Are you working there!?” and I replied “Yes I am, and with pleasure!” (laughs). And that was my salvation because that salary allows me to balance my accounts. But from that moment on it was clear to me that I would always have to have another job. Tourism and another job. (CM, p. 187-195; 351-366)*

*No, if my wife could she would do just this. My wife has a spirit similar to mine. She loves it here, she loves to interact with clients and to cook for them. She is a really good cook. When it comes to cleaning she always leaves her special touch. The female touch is something extraordinaire (...) she works for the government. She is working during the day but is here during the afternoon and night. (LV, p. 1151-1156; 1183-1185)*

*I can combine our business with my own business, because I can help in our business, which is the place where we live, our project, and at the same time I can develop my financial activity. I use my professional know-how with total freedom. I develop it according to my will. (JP, p. 1711-1716)*

Participants that used to have a fixed **salary** before they started the business agree that it gives a stability and safety (S) that they do not have with the business income and that leaves them uncomfortable (TR). The level of life needs to be adjusted to the new financial reality (JP) and that is challenging.

*I think I do not regret the decision of leaving my job yet. I think... (laughs). The only thing is the salary. Every month I knew the money I would get and now I don't. And that is a problem. That's the only thing that makes me wonder if I have done the right choice. Mainly because of my daughter. I have to live with the money I get from here and that's it (...) the only thing I miss from my previous job is the tranquillity and safety I had because of my salary, and I don't have it anymore. (S, p. 127-132; 255-257)*

*It was quite scary, you know, we'd spent all our lives having, you know, well, pretty well, paid jobs and having money coming in, and we'd never really had to... We were never extravagant, we never really had to think "Oh, you know, we can't do that 'cause we can't afford it!". We'd always, you know, we'd live within our means, but we'd always been comfortable. And all of the sudden, we had no money coming in and lots of money going out. It was all go "Hugh! Oh my God" (TR, p. 978-986)*

*It was not an easy change, not at all... We are three years in, next will be the fourth and the first year was very hard! I was used to a level of life, in particular a level of financial freedom that is completely different from what I have today. It is not even comparable! By the end of the month I knew what I could count on... To be an entrepreneur is amazing, but do you know what is the golden rule? The money you thought would last three years, lasts one and a half. That's the golden rule. (JP, p. 1317-1322; 1406-1409)*

**Financial challenges** have tinted the life of some LsEs since they started their businesses. These have impacted on the way they feel and consequently their perception of QoL. The challenge of making profit seems to be the most common challenge (Ism and Co). When the profit is not enough to face the expenses LsEs find themselves in a difficult situation, sometimes they struggle to make money (LM and Mf) and there was even an extreme case in which a participant had goods pawned by the bank (CM).

*[Ism] Most of the people, I would say ninety-nine point nine percent, they book through booking.com. Through this site. You pay this site fifteen percent of the room value, and then you pay six percent to the government. Sum it up... and that little machine [pointing to the card payment machine], if is visa card, one point six five percent I pay and two point twenty-five percent if it's a Mastercard. If is from America is even more. So sum it up: fifteen plus six plus two point two five, twenty (...)*

*[Co] ...on your gross cost. Before you had ... either your rental or your mortgage payments, your phone bill, your electricity bill, your water bill, your other utility costs... so... you know, most businesses don't make a profit. (Ism and Co, p. 301-316)*

*[LM] The financial part weights a lot. Particularly when we don't profit. But my wife is the one that usually deals with that...*

*[Mf] Yes. I am the one paying the bills and... it is... it is complicated.*

*[LM] When I have to find a way to get more money, I don't even know where to look for... Presently I don't even use my bank card, I don't even want to look at the bank accounts. (LM and Mf, p. 1756-1763)*

*Well... I said "ok. Let's continue, whatever will be will be". It was not easy at all. There was a time when the crisis started that... I did not sell the house just because it was not meant to be. There was a family meeting, a very serious one, and if my dad did not put in 10.000€... I would have closed the business. Because they took my car... I*

*can tell you. You don't really know me, but they took my car. I was unemployed, I had my son to look after and I simply couldn't afford to pay the mortgage instalments... so... this is a very little village, it is not easy to find a job. From one moment to the other the phone stopped ringing, no bookings, where could I get money from? And the bills are there, every single month to be paid. And the bank... if you don't pay the instalment, they knock on your door to get the money... it was very complicated! This story of being an entrepreneur is very fashionable and very trendy but if there are no customers, if nobody buys your product, what do we do? It is very easy for those that have a safety net. Those that have own capital to start the business because if something goes wrong they have money, or they have their dad, or uncle or granddad. But for those that start with nothing is very risky! (CM, p. 314-341)*

In the **financial** sphere, it is common between participants to **worry** about their business financial situation and the impacts that it has on both management practices and life quality. Some business owners have not increased the room price for several seasons due to competition (SC), implying that other strategies must take place to keep the business running. Seasons vary in rhythm and that is also a worry for LsEs (TT) who try to find alternative ways to increase their visibility and have more guests. Little changes on the business profile at online booking platforms, like a change in the address, can have a massive implication to its visibility and therefore to its financial situation (EI). Owners try their best to overcome this worries, using their knowledge, network, and life experience to minimize the impact of those anxieties (AP).

*Prices have not increased in 6 years, because we have more and more competition... which is fine, but you just have to be aware of different things... (SC, p. 109-111)*

*Last year was the bookings. We had a slow beginning of the season and that stressed us out a bit. Made us question what are we doing wrong, or do we need to be in booking.com and pay those higher commissions, and... what do we need to do? And then we let it go a bit, like let's see how the season grows, and decide in October. And that was stressful and it stressed us out a bit, and we were very fortunate that for us it was the best August and September ever. So its balance... and this year again is starting out a bit slowly, it is maybe our new rhythm, and we try to not let it stress us out. But it is difficult, it is a mental effort to... because it can creep in. If you don't wanna think about the pink elephant you tend to think about it so... it is there and we try not to worry about it, but we need to talk about it, because if you push it away it will only*

*come back stronger, the worries. So worries could be for me stressful, but realising that worries don't help for me is important. Worrying will never help the situation. But is it difficult in the sense that I am only human, and I can say it, but it does not work always. (TT, p. 1606-1627)*

*TripAdvisor and Booking have done something really mean, something that you shouldn't do to your worst enemy. They took the word Sintra out of my address, which is illegal. My address, national and internationally includes Sintra, Portugal. Someone in Sintra made a complaint to TripAdvisor, probably because I was always in first place, ok? And they must have told them "That lady, the one that owns that property is not in Sintra, she is in the middle of nowhere!". And I have never hidden anything, because the designation Country House, the address, the coordinates they are all the same. So I have never hidden that from TripAdvisor and Booking. But they took the word Sintra out of my address and of course that means they took me out of the Sintra list. As a consequence, I lost 54% of visibility. In the two most visible platforms worldwide. It was a very bad situation to be at... it was a punch in my stomach. It was very complicated. And I had to deal with it all by myself. (El, p. 651-667)*

*And that... some financial problems sometimes we have. That is... that is sometimes... I am old enough to think... when I was young I was worried about everything, I am not.. I am over it... but sometimes it is... difficult... (AP, p. 1011-1014)*

#### 5.3.4.2. Profitability (Py)

It is generally agreed by LsEs that **profit is not the main goal** of their businesses, although they **need profit to survive**. Their quality of life is somehow related to the profitability their businesses generate, in the sense that when the business **profits** they can use the extra money in activities that they enjoy, enhancing their perceived QoL. On the contrary, when there is **no profit**, financial concerns may decrease their perception of QoL. Some participants **chose not to profit more** than they possibly could while creating the business and its vision.

Most of the participants agree that **profit is not the main goal** of their businesses. Money is necessary to live (LM), however it is not the goal (YP and TP). It is important for LsEs to learn how to live happy with what they have (MT and TT) as they do not consider themselves "gold diggers" (AP). Some participants agree that the focus of the business should not be profit but live well and freely (TS).

*We cannot live without money, but we should not give it too much importance. (LM, p. 906-907)*

*[YP] That's why we don't have ...*

*[TP] It's not for money.*

*[YP] Normal life is, I am not looking for... the idea to be rich or something famous. Normal! (YP and TP, p. 415-416; 436-437)*

*[MT] We think you should also be happy with what you have. Not more...*

*[TT] ...more and more...*

*[MT] More is better, bigger is better... it can be harder to be satisfied with what you have and what you get. Maybe that's the... yeah like a fine line, in our life, of balance that we would like to have. To be happy with what you have and not always to think ahead with all the plans that you have, but also enjoy the moment with what you have and what you've reached (MT and TT, p. 745-755)*

*I don't want to... to... I am not gold digger. (AP, p. 798)*

*From a financial perspective, the business is healthy... but to be honest that does not really matter to me because I have always lived freely and that is the reason why I am here now. If I need to sell this place tomorrow, it would break my heart, but I would do it, do you understand? So... we profit, we can live well, we do not have financial concerns, and that is the most important to me. Because if I start thinking in break-evens and... that is simply not for me. (TS, p. 218-223)*

Although for most of the interviewed LsEs profit is not the main goal, they seem to agree that **profit is needed to survive**. In particular when starting up the businesses, given that a considerable initial investment was made, the concern of making profit is present (Aa and Ja) and it influenced the way the business was idealised and created (MT and TT) so that LsEs could achieve the desired QoL.

*[Aa] We used all our money up and then, the house was in such bad shape, that after we bought it, the little bit we had aside, that we thought we could use for making it nice, hmm, we had to do the electric, and the...*

*[Ja] And the water lines...*

*[Aa] ... the septic...And the water, so...*

*[Ja] There were many, many...*



*[Aa] We didn't...*

*[Ja] ...the infrastructures...*

*[Aa] We... When we started out, we didn't...We, we, at the first year, I really was nervous that we were going to be able to, the first six months, to...*

*[Ja] To sustain a business!*

*[Aa] If we were even gonna be able to stay here, I thought "Oh, gonna have to sell again!" (Aa and Ja, p. 495-509)*

*[MT] Yes, we started with eight, because we thought we have to make money to really...*

*[TT] Survive*

*[MT] Survive and also to pay back the renovation costs, of course (...)*

*[TT] A quick renovation is like a band aid in a sense it hurts a bit but its fast. And for us also the ... doing this in a few years would also mean a few years without income. And we couldn't afford that. So we had to spend a bit more on the speed and immediately open our doors. And we were lucky enough to have a good first season immediately. So that we could start a.. paying back some of those huge costs.. (MT and TT, p. 273-277; 306-313)*

Following the rationale that LsEs need profit to survive, **profit** becomes a relevant code for their self-perception of QoL, although it may vary regarding how much profit is considered enough. For some participants profit is needed to maintain and to support the expansion of the business (C); some want to use the extra money to travel and give it to their children (CC); others just want to make profit in return of the effort they do managing the business (PP); and others believe that a good salary helps improving their QoL (AR).

*We are going to finance part of the expansion works with... with the business cashflow. We are very happy with what we have achieved so far. We have an annual budget and in January we were able to profit more than we estimated, in February as well. March is a bit lower... (C, p. 1513-1523)*

*Aaahh... but since I added the other house there is a big difference. I am always checking all the bills I have to pay. And the difference is that now I have some extra money to travel, to help my kids out... It is the first time in my life that I have money to do so. It makes me really happy! (CC, p. 802-806)*

*The B&B cannot be smaller than what we have otherwise it is not profitable. If I only had 5 rooms... I don't know how people with 5 rooms manage. I minimised the costs as much as I could and if I had less rooms I would not profit. (PP, p. 218-222)*

*In good months, I can take a good salary. (AR, p. 860-861)*

On the opposite way, **not profiting** seems to have a negative impact on participants' QoL. Some participants agree that having a home-based accommodation business is an activity that will not make someone rich (CH), it is challenging to make some money out of it (Co). Others go a bit further saying that the business is not sustainable without other sources of income (CM).

*This is a type of activity that will never make you rich. (CH, p. 742-743)*

*It doesn't make any money. You work, the business doesn't make any money, it just allows us to live in this house (...) We don't... If you take into account all the bills, and if you take into account of, if you're drawing a salary, and taxes and everything, it never makes, it doesn't make any money. And next year, if this other tax comes in, we'll make a loss. (Co, p. 1075-1077; 1079-1083)*

*Regarding the financial aspect, this business is not sustainable by itself, so one has always to have a second job, and that is a problem. (CM, p. 180-182)*

Some LsEs deliberately **chose not to profit more** to stay tuned with their main motivation to start an accommodation business: being able to live their life the way they envisioned it, with higher QoL. The choice not to profit more was made by choosing to have less but bigger rooms (TR), by deciding that the B&B would be closed for more time during the low season or by not wanting to expand the business although they have the means to (TT).

*There's lots of things that we, we could have done and could do differently that would give us more income, but we choose not to. I remember when designing the barn, the architect and the ministry of...Economics, they both said "Oh, you know, you could fit more than six suites in, in here because that's so big! You could, you know, you could make them smaller and fit more in and get more, have more people!" But we didn't*

*want to have... I mean, we can actually accommodate 46 people here, altogether... (TR, p. 258-267)*

*Yeah. We close from half October to half April. And it is really difficult to explain to, especially northern Europeans, cause they are thinking growth... and we'll show you, we have almost an hectare of land, beautiful flat, we have some nice spots created, we'll show you. But everyone asks for expansion. When will you put the Mongolian tents or the tepees, or the bungalows, or... and we try to look at the 4 year to see what we need and try to achieve it in that short amount of time. And not mess around in the slower months. And so in revenue its I think... net has been going down, but we earn it in a smaller amount of time. So per day that we are open we are doing better, but we open less. So if you put it underneath the line and you calculate it we have earnt less in the last few years. It's a choice. (TT, p. 433-446)*

#### 5.3.4.3. Importance of Money (IoM)

Although, for the majority of the participants' money appears not to be the most important aspect of their businesses, they seem to agree that it is important to a certain extent to the QoL they want to achieve. The degree to which money is important varies from having **enough money to survive**, to have enough money **not to worry about it**. Somewhere in between these two poles is having **enough money to do what I like**.

Having **enough money to survive**, for some participants means having money to pay the bills and manage the daily life (R). As long as they can make enough money to face the expenses (Ism), they are happy (AV).

*Of, of course! [the financial aspect is the main feature of the business] I didn't have any job! So I had to earn money! So, how do we earn money? We can do that, we can do that, we can do that, we can do... As I told you at the beginning, I had to choose. So, we picked one! Where we can earn money! Not, not... The, not the same money I earned in Holland, but we can earn money! To live! To, to make the basic! To live daily, so, then we have no problem! (R, p. 1395-1409)*

*Although I knew this was a business that you cannot make money from... but, as long as I could be self-sufficient, you know, I was happy. (Ism, p. 1046-1048)*

*Quality of life to us is not having lots of money. We don't make much money here. As long as we can manage our life we are happy. (AV, p. 179-181)*

Behind the code **don't worry about money** there are two different conceptions: firstly, have enough money not to worry about it (TR and PR) and to be able to enjoy life without the financial worries (SV); secondly not wanting to focus too much on the money aspect (IS).

*[TR] Being in a position where we don't really have to worry about money, cash flow, because there is a steady income.*

*[PR] Having enough money to do the things I want to do. But... not... I don't expect to have masses of wealth...*

*[TR] We have a strange attitude, I suppose. To quite a lot of people. In some much that... to us, money isn't important unless you don't have enough to live on. And once you get past that stage, it's nice to have money to do some the things you want... But... if you got absolutely hundreds and hundreds and thousands of euros in the bank and... Ok, it's nice to say you've got it. But if you don't have no real need for it, then that should be you're drive out... your driver should be more focused on other things, so... (PR and TR, p. 1364-1366; 1572-1283)*

*It is important to reach the end of the month and don't have to worry about money, money to eat or pay the expenses. From a financial perspective that's the biggest worry. I do not need to have lots of money to be happy, but of course... to feel that I have a better quality of life I need money to pay all the bills (...) and to be able to enjoy quality time with my family. (SV, p. 579-580; 582-585)*

*I do not care! I don't care and I do not worry about that. I mean I know I don't lose money. I don't lose money, I pay all the expenses and I still have some (...) so the financial side of the business, I think... sometimes if I start doing all the maths, expenses and income and whatever else, I start to scare myself. If I don't do all those calculations, the money stretches, I can always do something else with it... this is how I live my life... it's the spirit with which I face it. (Is, p. 576-582; 646-652)*

Some participants consider that they need to **have money to do what they like** the most, because doing what they like is one of the things that enhances their QoL. Money can bring some comfort (Jq) given that it allows LsEs to live in a more pleasant way (Pa). Although having money to live a pleasant life is relevant for their QoL, participants agree

that they do not want to have the money for the sake of having money (Vi). They want to be able to live happily with what they have without the constant need of having more and more (LV).

*To have money, as long as it is not to spend it like crazy... to have money to do whatever I feel like doing. (Jq, p. 190-191)*

*The minimum, obviously, that satisfies my basic needs like eat, dress, pay the bills, to travel a bit when I feel like, and that allows me to buy some things that make my days more pleasant. Well, doing what I like. If I like to listen to some music, have money to buy some albums and CD's, this type of a thing. But no more than that. I believe that people do not realise that they don't need as much money as they think they do to have a good life, with a good quality of life. (Pa, p. 442-452)*

*Quality of life is having enough money to do these little things that I like to do... I do not need to accumulate money! (Vi, p. 796-798)*

*When we get to the end of the month and we are able to pay our bills it feels so good! To have some extra to go somewhere, to have more knowledge about something, to travel more, that's seems all right to me. But have money to upgrade the car every month, change furniture, change whatever... those people are not able to appreciate what they have! That's why I don't think that having money equals having a high quality of life (...) the importance of the money is very little to me. If someone insured me that I would have all my bills payed by the end of the month, I would not touch money. Honestly. (...) Money is the source of all this evil because money dazzles people, people can't live without it. All arguments are about money... (LV, p. 770-778; 889-892; 895-989)*

#### 5.3.5. Home (H)

The interviewed LsEs' chose to open a home-based accommodation business, therefore they chose to work from home and open the doors of their homes to guests. Their home is simultaneously home, workplace, and home for the people that stay overnight. Home is **private**, home is **work**, and home is **shared** with guests (Table 18). This theme reflects all the idiosyncrasies that are born in the intersection of these three characteristics and it was defined as the host's private home, shared with guests for commercial purposes.

Table 18. Theme: Home

Theme	<b>H - Home</b>		
Subthemes	<b>PH - Private home</b>	<b>SH - Shared home</b>	<b>WH - Work home</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home: a life project</li> <li>- No place like home</li> <li>- Use facilities</li> <li>- Private/personal space</li> <li>- Need privacy</li> <li>- Loneliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guest's home</li> <li>- Space management</li> <li>- Intrusion</li> <li>- Restrictions (when having guests)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home=work</li> <li>- B&amp;B as way to keep the house</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.5.1. Private Home (PH)

The subtheme PH encompasses the feelings that participants' have towards their home. According to the initial findings it is common for LsEs to look at their houses as a **life project**, in the sense that it started with an idea that was developed and continually adjusted to what they have today. Besides, they seem to agree that there is **no other place like home**. Home is where LsEs feel good, and where they enjoy taking advantage of the **facilities**. Nevertheless sharing a home with strangers also has its pitfalls and sometimes participants need to spend some time in their **private area** of the house, within their **personal space**. This need for privacy is bigger when they have guests that make them feel like their house is being **invaded**. Another common aspect shared by LsEs is that being home with unknown people is not always a recipe for not feeling **lonely**.

One of the things that enhances participants' QoL is the relationship they have with their home. To live in a place that felt good since the first day they visit it (MT and TT), to have a house that was entirely built by them (LM), where every single tree in the garden was planted by them (CN and NL) and where all the little spaces tell the story of the family. LsEs' **home is a life project**, that they conceived, developed and nurture.

*[TT] When we walked into this house it did not look like this, it was dark, dank, smelly and everything. Needing a lot of renovation...*

*[MT] But it felt good.*

*[TT] But it felt good, immediately. We looked at each other and really said oh oh (MT and TT, p. 252-257)*

*What I love to do is to be here, to cook here, to spend my full day here with the birds. I am doing something and then I get tired of it and start a new task, and then return to the previous. This project is done by me from head to toe. 100% handmade by me.*

*Everything! Every little bit (...) Quality of life is to be here and don't have to go anywhere else. (LM, p. 23-28; 786-787)*

*[NL] We created all of this out of nothing. None of the things that you see here today was here.*

*[CN] This is almost our third child.*

*[NL] Yeah, it is a life project (...) Everything here was done by us; every single tree was planted by us. (CN and NL, p. 987-992; 1717-1719)*

As a continuation of the code mentioned before, participants' QoL is also influenced by the way they feel when they are home. Home is the place where they feel good (CF), the place where they always want to return to (NL), and the place they don't want to leave (IM). To participants it is true that there is **no place like home**.

*Quality of life is this in my opinion: is being able to be in my house which is something that I love to do, I love living here. (CF, p. 750-752)*

*I like to be here. Don't take me wrong, I also like to travel... but the return feels always better. There is nothing like returning home. (NL, p. 1027-1029)*

*This house is the place where I feel good and where I can have a good life. I usually don't like to leave home because I feel good here. The days go by and I do not even realize, it seems to me that the day has just started and it is already late afternoon. (IM, p. 1126-1129)*

LsEs' work from home, and they seem to agree that one of the advantages of working home is **using the facilities**, whether it is the surrounding nature (AP) or the swimming pool and bar (C). Although certain participants have the feeling of being on holidays all year through (CC), others feel like they cannot enjoy the house and its facilities properly because of the associated responsibility of managing the business (CB).

*But when we arrived here, that same week, the stress fell out of our heads. It was so relaxing, and the house was built on such a beautiful spot, this is surround by nature... (AP, p. 95-98)*

*B&B facilities, that I also benefit from. Because having a good bar for example, I can also take advantage of that. Although I am not a big drinker, I enjoy having a good time in the bar with our guests (...) Sometimes I jump into the swimming pool and I enjoy it for a while, I mean even if it is 1am or 2 am, sometimes I feel like swimming a bit. I do not sleep much... Sometimes when we arrive from somewhere I go for a swim before going to bed. To me that is part of a good quality of life. It adds value to my quality of life. (C, p. 861-864; 1224-1231)*

*Because I can say that I am on holidays all year long. I have a swimming pool, I have an amazing view, I have sun... I have everything. (CC, p. 434-435)*

*Oh well, I really like this [the house], I spend the majority of my time here but I don't really take advantage of the space. I do not enjoy the sea view and the trees. But that's the way it is (laughs). (CB, p. 43-45)*

Participants concur that having a **private area** in the house is fundamental for their QoL. A space where normally guests are not welcomed. The owners' space, their sanctuary. The place they use to recharge batteries and have their personal life. Having a private area in the house was something that concerned LsEs since the beginning of the business: when they bought a house (TT, Ism), adapted the family house (Pe), or planned and designed the house (El) to do the business.

*Yeah we are lucky that the house let us. Cause when we started looking for houses, and that did not take us a long time but we had a mini wish list and one of the things was to have a tiny space for yourself. Even if it was as big as here [pointing to the space in which the table we were seated at was]. Just something. And we are lucky that it is a very nice house. (TT, p. 1351-1357)*

*We wanted to find a house that would provide us some privacy, and the guests some privacy, with all of us staying in the same place (...) To find a house like this was difficult, you find all sorts of house, but specific like this, with lots of privacy, individually, was quite difficult (Ism, p. 77-79; 85-88)*

*Because we have the advantage of having the rooms that we currently rent independent from our house, there is no overlapping. (Pe, p. 77-80)*



*This is a family house in which we can have seven guests. The top floor is private and don't have a single sign saying it is private. No one knows, but when guests arrive I explain the space, what is private and what is service related (...) The house was planned and thought, it is organised (...) the house flows in that sense [pointing] until you arrive to the little house, where the other space exists. There [pointing] is the rooms corridor with a closed door, so the house flows that way. Guests assume naturally that the top floor is private, the underground floor is services, and the rest of the space is shared. (El, p. 168-174; 182-183; 184-191)*

Having guests year through can be demanding for participants, and they agree that at some point in time, they need to be in their **personal space**, without guests, in their bubble. When the house is full with guests, LsEs feel the need to spend some time in their space (NL), to be with a family member (Is), or to create some type of rules that allows them some personal space (SC).

*We live here, but when the house is completely full we go to that room [pointing], we close the door, and we stay in for a while. (NL, p. 732-733)*

*Oh! The number of times I sat in that sofa with my mummy saying "Mum, it feels so good to be here alone with you!" (laughs). (Is, p. 875-877)*

*Hmmm that's the only bit that can be a little bit difficult because this is all open, as you can see in the kitchen. With the guests... I've leant over the years is to, have , kind of have a few morals, so the kitchen is not, I don't allow guests to use the kitchen, so the kitchen is private, and this space is generally open but is restricted, so... for example, is opened during the day and closed at night or vice versa in the winter, so ... yeah... this is kind of an open plan house, there is nowhere to go, basically apart from my own bedroom where there are no guests, because the guests come into this doors, and walk through.. I gave them keys to the front door and they have keys for the gate there... so generally it works very well with guests that really do just want a B&B and they go out each day, and they are happy with that. (SC, p. 54-68)*

It was common to hear participants saying that they **need some privacy**, in particular during the high season periods. Sometimes, it seems that having a separate private area is not enough for them to be able to spend some moments in their personal space. Some are

creative in finding solutions (MT and TT), others just adopt management strategies like not renting all the rooms (PR and TR).

*[MT] Yeah [they both laugh]. We bought a bell, like ring ring ring, and we've put it here [pointing at the stair near the door of their private space] on a little stool with a note "please ring". Oh no! In the beginning not... [making a correction]*

*[TT] ...just the bell...*

*[MT] Just the bell. Because our bathroom is also downstairs so... we can't walk there... We have an open door normally so that can be awkward... for them as well [laughs] so we buy a nice bell and we put it outside on a little stool. And then the first time a guest came and he just walked by... and I thought I must put a note with a bell, so "please ring".*

*[TT] Still didn't happen*

*[MT] Next guest just passed it, just walked passed the bell, and we thought well it must be there [pointing a bit further away] at the beginning of the terrace*

*[TT] So that they had to really stumble on it*

*[MT] Just a word... nobody used the bell*

*[TT] In the whole season, nobody used the bell. So that is the fun part*

*[MT] They all went past it*

*[TT] The positive thing I try to find out of this is that they all feel. I hope, so welcome that they must think...*

*[MT] ... it must be for new guests!*

*[TT] The bell isn't for regular guests I know MT and TT already, I'll go past... That's of course, me trying to be positive towards the guests but in a way I think they think the bell does not apply to them and they walk past the bell and walk inside or knock. And that sometimes is really... that you go... (MT and TT, p. 1308-1341)*

*[PR] Yes! But the... The two upstairs, we choose to only use them in the summer time. Because we live upstairs and we have... C [daughter] is still with us... that's her home. And... You know, this is a life style, tourists are there... we don't want the intrusion of having people, in the house.*

*(...)*

*[TR] So, we just decided that during the... the, well...*

*[PR] Half the year...*

*[TR]... half the year round! But in the winter we don't... We don't get full like we do in the summer, so... in the winter we'll just... Use the rooms in the, in the barn [to rent to*

*guests]. The heating is much stronger in there and you get the isolation for the guests.  
(PR and TR, p. 288-292; 314-321)*

The boundary between private space and public space seems hard to establish. It is a very fine line that divides what is guests' space from space not allowed to guests. The line is so tenuous that it creates the space for hosts to feel **lonely** in a house full of guests. Participants feel lonely because they are not as close to family members as they wanted to be (El), because they spend most of the time alone (CC), or because they miss working with other colleagues (PR and TR).

*Ok! Having this business is comforting but then I go up to my room and I feel alone... it is like I am in the middle of a Rock in Rio concert feeling the loneliest person. Just because I am alone, I love my husband and he cannot be here with me, because he is fighting for his companies, and I have a good product and need to keep on moving on.  
(El, p. 758-763)*

*Hmm, negative impact... well there is the danger of ending here alone. It is a bit weird, because I am here alone, I work alone, I have people that come here every now and then, but... My husband usually is not in. I am alone. I do a lot of things alone... I am always talking to myself inside my head. (CC, p. 687-695)*

*[PR] I think... Something we both miss, I think is the interaction, camaraderie you get in an office environment, you working as part of a team...  
[TR] For sure. (PR and TR, p. 1701-1704)*

#### 5.3.5.2. Shared Home (SH)

Participants' home is not just theirs. LsEs chose to share home with guests, and part of welcoming those strangers is to make them feel like they are home as well. Hosts QoL is improved when guests feel at home. Despite the good will of LsEs in making their guests feel at home, bringing together these two worlds causes some friction. Some issues regarding **space management** were pointed out by participants as setbacks to their perception of QoL. They agree on the importance of managing the space to avoid **intrusion** and minimize the **restrictions** they have when guests share the house with them.

Participants share their home with guests daily and they want guests to feel as if they were in their home. Hosts' home is at the same time **guests' home**. Some participants consider that sharing their home with guests is like travelling without leaving home (CF). Hosts feel good knowing that guests' feel at home (LV), and that their home is a place where guests can meet other guests (S). In some cases, hosts run the extra mile to make guests feel home (Is).

*To be able to share this space with people, with people that I have never met before... I think that it is very interesting. It is a very interesting challenge because I end up travelling a lot without leaving my home. To me that's quality of life. (CF, p. 752-758)*

*What we want is that people feel at home here and when we have someone telling us that they feel home, that is a victory to us! (LV, p. 191-194)*

*I try my best for people to feel home and relaxed, because the ambiance we want is not an hotel one, this is a place where people can walk around with towels on their heads. My guests... we have a relaxed environment here, and they end up talking and knowing each other. It is very nice to see people that never met before interacting and making friendships here. It's very nice the relaxed atmosphere works almost as an ice breaker and guests like their stay here. (S, p. 179-189)*

*I have a good episode to share. One night someone knocked on the door and asked me if I had a room available. I said yes. It was a young couple from Israel, they were here on their honeymoon. I had available rooms so I showed them the rooms that I had and we started talking. She told me that they could not have any of our food because they were very religious, orthodox. I said ok, that it was not a problem. They did not know how many nights they were going to stay, but they just kept on staying night after night. Every day she went to the beach to surf, she had the surf suit and on top she would put... she had a lovely hair, only me and my mum saw her hair. She usually was all covered. Every day around 5 or 6 am they would go to the balcony to do their prayers, they woke everyone up with it and I never told them not to do it. I had to get them fish cutlery because they would not eat with the cutlery that had touched meat, even if properly washed. The way they kill animals is different from the way we kill animals, apparently! So I remembered that in Portugal we have fish cutlery that is used only to eat fish and they were happy with that. My daughter gave them a ride to El Corte Ingles, to buy some food for them to cook. One day she approached me saying that the Shabbat was a couple of days away and that she needed to cook all food on Friday because she*

*could not do anything that implied using electricity on Saturday. I said that it was not a problem at all, and that they could turn off the light in the bedroom. But she was worried because she had to store the food in the refrigerator and when the refrigerator door opens there was a light. I decided to put some tape on the little button so that the light would not turn on when the door was opened. All of us using the refrigerator without light (laughs). My son said to me "Oh Mum! Only you... You are the only person on earth that has the patience to deal with crazy people!". It was a very calm and serene week, I have done a lot of questions regarding their religion as they did about mine. They asked my permission to use the living room and light some candles on the Shabbat night, and after talking with the other guests I told them that they could use it. That night they invited everyone to join them, the table was amazing with candles, books, and food. She cooked a lot of food. Everyone tasted it, and they invited us to join the prayer. She sang, what an amazing voice she had! None of us was understanding a word of what they were singing and saying but it was a perfect moment. Before they left she thanked and told me that if they were somewhere else they wouldn't have had the Shabbat. (Is, p. 271-339)*

Since participants' house is constantly shared with guests, they need to **manage the space** to accommodate both their personal lives and guests' lives. If sometimes guests are welcomed into the private area of the house (AV), other times they are nicely told not to disturb (VL). This balance, according to participants is crucial to keep their QoL.

*We live up here, in the first floor of this building, so we are always here. And depending on the clients, we have a few that go up with us to our home to watch some TV and chat (laughs). (AV, p. 107-110)*

*We have had situation in which he [partner] arranged a dinner with friends, because life does not stop, right? He invited friends to have dinner with us and one of the guests entered this room where we were having the meal, and was looking for a place to seat. So my partner had to tell him to leave, explaining the situation. When we invite someone to our place we want to be with them, right? If there is someone we don't know at the table with us, the conversations are not going to be the same, it is different. And guests have to have that sensibility as well. If they don't have that sensibility it interferes with hosts life and it is not pleasant at all. (VL, p. 603-614)*

Despite the strategies created and applied to keep some privacy, there are situations in which participants feel like they are being **invaded** in their homes, decreasing their

perception of QoL. Some say that it is hard to live surrounded by guests every day (MM), some feel they have little privacy with guests entering in their private area (MJ and BJ), and others consider it intrusive (PR).

*We live here, and after all these years as you can imagine, there are some moments in which we are just too tired. In fact, I believe that our private life is missing because when we are having breakfast, lunch or whatever, we are always surrounded by guests. (MM, p. 162-167)*

*[MJ] The children just come in, they do not pay attention to closed doors.*

*[BJ] Last year I was here, and the guests outside in the pool felt a weird silence that is not usual when you have kids. Well... when they knocked on the door to check, there were seven boys on this sofa. Seven boys here!*

*[MJ] Playing games and Ipad!*

*[BJ] It is invasion of privacy. (MJ and BJ, p. 681-690)*

*Especially when you have lot of guests and we do get people, you know, wanting things, coming up to the house or needing things and, you know, nearly all of that is absolutely justifiable and it's fine, it's just you find... it can be quite intrusive on your life, you know, you get to the end of the day and you just want to sit down and put your feet up because you've been on the go all day... Yeah, another glass of wine. And, you know.... there is a knock on the door and you think "Oh! What now?!".. (PR, p. 1640-1648)*

Some participants agree that having guests might bring some **restrictions** to the way they behave in their own home, and that in turn may have a negative impact on their QoL. Those restrictions when guests are around may be little things like not walking around wearing pyjamas (MM), being more restrictive about having social events at their home (YP), or it might impact on the personal rhythm and levels of stress (Aa and Ja).

*We do not have breakfast with our pyjamas. These little moments... we don't have moments in which we put our feet on the chairs. There is a lot of little things that we don't do anymore. (...) Here at home, I can only relax if I go to the swimming pool and no one is there. (MM, p. 170-173; 412-413)*

*I mean, we won't use this place to have a big party. We have some customers sleeping next door, so (laughs) (YP, p. 482-483)*

*[Aa] Make, finding a rhythm for myself, going to bed earlier, so I don't, you know, stress out and...*

*[Ja] That's, that's where the, the next work is, project working and also, hmm, affects our... Quality of life. We don't have a big enough personal space within the grounds here (...) our, our total focus has always been, in a 90% on the...on guest accommodations and on quality for the guests. Now we need to, improve the quality for ourselves... (Aa and Ja, p. 2009-2021)*

#### 5.3.5.3. Work Home (WH)

Home for LsEs is simultaneously their work place, and guests' home. Matching **home with work** was a solution found by LsEs to **keep and/or maintain their house** and achieve an increased QoL. Nonetheless, on their daily lives they struggle to understand where the fine line that separates home from work is.

Using **home as the workplace** seems to divide participants regarding its implications to QoL. Some LsEs consider working at home a privilege (JP), somethings that enhances their QoL. However, other LsEs do not consider it the ideal situation and believe it is a hindrance to their life quality: whether because they associate the feeling of being home with the feeling of working and the distinction between life and work is tenuous (MM); because living in the same place they work does not allow them to disconnect from work (SV); or because the boundary between work time and family time is hard to define (MJ).

*I think that one of the most important things, that probably should have been mentioned before, is the fact that we can work and live in the same space. That's a huge advantage, isn't it? Because you are imprisoned, but you are imprisoned in your own home and not in an office. (JP, p. 1284-1288)*

*I am here and I am restless. Deep inside is like I am working all the time. I am in my home and I am working. That's the part that puzzles me a bit, it is not ideal. (...) One of the things that me and my husband stopped doing was to talk about work when we are in our bedroom and at the table. At a certain point we were literally always talking about work. Because for us there is no distinction between life and work... and our kids sometimes would just call our attention to that, completely fed up with the topic... (MM, p. 399-402; 454-459)*

*I simply cannot disconnect from work, I am always thinking about work, my thoughts are here all the time. (SV, p. 464-465)*

*When I am working here I am not paying attention to my children. It is true that we are together, but it is always a fight for me to have to divide the time into working time and time to do something nice with the children. (MJ, p. 1098-1101)*

For some participants starting an accommodation business in their own house was driven by the possibility of **keeping and/or maintaining the house**. Having the possibility of living in a big home (Pe, CF), or maintaining some family heritage (C) influences LsEs' perception of QoL.

*I think having this business is a personal interest. But as I mentioned before, it won't make much sense for me and my wife to keep this big house just for ourselves without doing anything with it, but I guess that is personal too. (Pe, p. 397-400)*

*If I kept the house just for myself it would be far too big (...) so I have chosen to start the business essentially to be able to keep the house and myself. (CF, p. 36-37; 298)*

*My goal is... the only thing that I take from this... I do not have a salary, I don't get any money... the income I get is enough for the maintenance expenses. If we need to fix the roofs the house has to make enough income to have it fixed. Tourism has to be enough to maintain it. This house is family patrimony, and I have adapted to welcome people that want to stay here and as a way of maintaining the house. (CH, p. 182-190; 531-532)*

#### 5.3.6. Personal Preferences (PP)

When it comes to the definition of QoL, participants seem to agree that being able to live according to their personal preferences is something that gives them the impression of a better life quality. In the conversations held during primary research, not being happy with their lives was a common place for participants to be, before they engaged with a tourism related entrepreneurial activity. According to participants one of the main reasons for not being satisfied with their previous lifestyle was the misalignment between the style of life they were living and their personal preferences. Being able to dedicate time to their **hobbies**, and having the opportunity of living their daily lives aligned with their **preferences** and **values** is cherished by LsEs (Table 19). Participants feel they are tuned



with their inner self, which in turn allows them to be authentic. Personal preferences were defined as the desire to be, do, or have something that is aligned with the inner self.

Table 19. Theme: Personal preferences

Theme	<b>PP - Personal preferences</b>		
Subthemes	<b>H - Hobbies</b>	<b>Pref - Preferences</b>	<b>V - Values</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Travel</li> <li>- Culture &amp; arts</li> <li>- DIY</li> <li>- Pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food choices</li> <li>- Regional products</li> <li>- Commuting</li> <li>- Corporate environment</li> <li>- Dress code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal values</li> <li>- Social values</li> <li>- Environmental values</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.6.1. Hobbies (Hb)

Dedicating some time to a hobby has a positive impact on participants' QoL. Among the interviewed LsEs one of the most common hobbies was **sports**. A large variety of sports, from surfing to hunting (IM) give the participants the opportunity of balance their days and keep fit and healthier.

*I have a hobby. It's hunting. And it usually works as an excuse to meet some friends. Hunting for the act of hunting. Several times I gather my friends and with the hunting excuse we get together and end up having a meal with whatever we got. It was my passion for hunting that led me to the rebuilding of this place [accommodation business]. (IM, p. 17-23)*

The possibility of **travel** and embrace new cultures and ways of life (TS) was also a frequent hobby between participants.

*We just arrived from Morocco, we drove and brought [sic] a lot of things. The colour of our house is from Morocco, the colour of the soil, the colour of our travelling. It is magical. Morocco is very touristy but magical. I really enjoy going there, we end up knowing some locals, Abdul, Abdel... we always buy some spices to bring home. Actually I am cooking a tagine now, it's on the stove. We have some tables outside with the mosaics. They have a pottery place there with artisans, and I have ordered those tables there. Our son was one week with us in Marrakech and it was fantastic. Next winter we want to go to Myanmar because it is still not very touristy so it is not spoiled yet. (TS, p. 599-610)*

Being passionate about **culture** (C) and **arts** (MM) moves some participants, although it is common for them to miss the opportunity of enjoying some cultural life without having to travel (IM).

*To be able to be here [esplanade near the swimming pool], completely relaxed and read some books. Reading is what I love to do. Just to read... (C, p. 491-493)*

*My husband loves arts and crafts. We want to be able to build a big atelier for him on the premises. He was the artist behind all these paintings and collages here [pointing to the walls]. He is an artist! He likes sewing, recently he bought a huge cutting machine, so he wants to do some fabric patchwork now. He can pretty much do anything and he loves it. (MM, p. 426-432)*

*I would like to have a good theatre and a good cinema close by. But whenever we are in the mood to do that, we drive to the closest city... we have that possibility. (IM, p. 1041-1044)*

The possibility of doing some **DIY**, whether it relates more to restore or rebuild something inside the house (M), or taking care of the garden outside (CC).

*I always had a passion for old places. I love to buy old houses and rebuild them. And that's what we are still doing here. (M, p. 66-68)*

*It is lovely to be in the garden, without any interruptions when you are gardening. I also like to be creative, particularly in this time of the year [Spring]. (CC, p. 667-669)*

Finally, to be able to have **pets** is considered as relevant for LsEs' QoL, namely to have a space to raise chickens (LV) or to walk with dogs (Vi).

*To be able to look after all the animals. We have chickens, turkeys (...) essentially because of the eggs. But also because the kids that stay here are not used to have these animals around, so they like to see the chickens and pick the eggs, and we show them that. (LV, p. 283-290)*

*I always had Great Danes, while I was back in Finland, and this dog of mine, Pandora, has a lot of energy which is not very common in this breed. She does agility! (...) And*

*I always enjoyed to exercise, in particular to hike, I usually go early morning and Sintra is just beautiful for that. I started hiking with Pandora when ... she is 6 years now... when she had 6 months and was not able to spend all her energy. I started hiking so that she could visit different places... where she could run freely without the leash. (Vi, p. 718-721; 729-738)*

#### 5.3.6.2. Preferences (Pref)

According to participants it is a luxury to have the possibility of living their lives aligned with some of their preferences. That fine tune is only possible because of the choice they made to open an accommodation business, but that choice was influenced by their preferences, verbalized in a negative way through the things they know they do not like and therefore they consider them to have a harmful effect on their QoL. On the positive side, participants mentioned the valued possibilities of being more careful with **food choices** and acquisition of **regional and organic products**. From the less positive perspective, LsEs clearly shared their dislike of **commuting**, the **corporate environment** and **dress code**.

LsEs are proud of the choices they make regarding the type of **food** they consume. Preferably they agree on using organic food (LV) and follow the slow food ideal (El). The places where they buy their food related products is also important, as participants prefer to buy locally (Aa and Ja).

*I notice that food is a very important factor for my quality of life. When we eat biological products, products that do not suffer transformations... For example, the strawberries, I only eat strawberries when it is time for it. And the small fruit, sometimes the fruit with bugs, they are the best! Like those massive cabbages that they sell, here we have smaller cabbages because they are completely natural, no addition of chemicals, only with animal manure. Nowadays people that can eat what they plant are very lucky. That alone gives you a huge quality of life! (LV, p. 650-662)*

*Because here at our home we always preferred to... in our family we adopted the slow food concept. Food is bought daily and consumed that same day. (El, p. 236-238)*

*[Ja] Food is a very important thing, we can buy local...*

*[Aa] Organic or local...*

*[Ja]...organic or local producers within a five-kilometre radius, there's all sorts of small little guys who set up a... a booth at the farmers' market, hmm, the weekend, hmm, hmm...*

*[Aa] Yeah, we have the Cooperative...*

*[Ja]...a farmers' market. Hmm, we have, yes, a natural food coop in Banzão, Colares, which we've been a member of even before we moved here. (Aa and Ja, p. 1803-1814)*

To have a better QoL, participants agree that some things should be avoided as much as possible. Spending time **commuting** from home to the workplace (JP) and facing hours of **traffic** (CF) are two of them.

*Oh! just the fact that I do not have to commute to Lisbon anymore, after doing it for 30 years. For 30 years, I spent hours daily in traffic jams... (JP, p. 388-391)*

*For example, not spending... I do not lose time here. I mean, I know a lot of people that live here and work in Lisbon. Every single day they lose 3 hours in traffic jams. They lose 3 hours in a car, listening to the radio, or making phone calls. That to me is not quality of life, not at all. (CF, p. 758-764)*

Another thing that is common for participants that used to work in the **corporate environment**, are all the pressures that they had to face in their jobs (Pa), and that according to them decreased their life quality.

*When you work in a multinational company and... whether you have responsibility or not, because after a certain career level, there is this constant pressure related to the company's financial goals, with the relations you have with the people inside the organisation, and managing a team of 40 or 50. The quality of the relationship we have with the person we report to, if we report to someone. Sometimes those people are, how should I put this... they are not very nice, that's the truth they are not very nice. A company can have a good environment or a bad one, right? And we have to deal with all those pressures (...) When we have to deal with people that are not nice, above us, adding to that all the people that report to us... sometimes we are asked to do omelettes with no eggs. There is a set of things that are... that reduce our quality of life. Having to work 10 to 12 hours a day, work weekends, and after all the effort we were not able to achieve the results... all that situation, all that pressure is against our nature. That is not part of the relationship between man and their lives. (Pa, p. 257-281)*

Associated with the corporate environment is the **dress code**. Participants shared that using informal clothes makes them happier (Vi), and increases comfort (Aa and Ja).

*I am much happier now... I am doing what I like to do. Don't take me wrong, I used to like training, but I am not a suit person. I am not a master of ceremonies, I don't like the suit and formal clothes... (Vi, p. 300-303)*

*[Ja] Yeah. It's, it's six years now we've been here.*

*[Aa] Yeah.*

*[Ja] I have not wear a tie even once!*

*[Aa] Yeah... (Laughs)*

*[Ja] And I had to wear...*

*[Aa] He wears his old shirts that are falling apart!*

*[Ja] ...one every day when I went to work. I can... I would say ninety... Ninety-five per cent of the time, I'm just wearing blue jeans. So much more comfortable! (Aa and Ja, p. 1841-1850)*

#### 5.3.6.3. Values (V)

The third subtheme under personal preferences is values. LsEs seem to agree that being able to express the values they believe in and live their personal and professional lives in accordance to them is a source of QoL. Moments in their lives in which they had to act against the values they believe in where moments of discomfort for the participants, with less life quality. Based on the findings, the subtheme values is composed of three aspects: a set of values that are of personal concern, more related to one's character - **personal values**; a set of values associated with the way one relates to others - **social values**; and **environmental values**, which as the name suggests, are values that reflect participants' concerns with the environment.

To be honest (LV), humble, simple (IM), to trust others (TT), to respect them (C), and to be just (AR) are some of the values LsEs are proud of being. They believe that behaving in accordance to those **personal values** facilitates their life and the life of people, that for some reason, get in touch with them.

*We don't sell what we do not have. When guests arrive here, they say that the place is even better than they thought it would be. (LV, p. 533-535)*

*People from Alentejo are like this, very simple and humble. (IM, p. 174-175)*

*We work completely out of principle without down payments. Nobody pays us before they arrive. And they book in January for two weeks in August and they are very surprised that they don't have to send us 50% of the money or 60%. We think if somebody, in this case it's us, giving trust you receive it back, that's the philosophy. (TT, p. 654-659)*

*We have a very transparent policy. We never discriminate anyone, we respect differences. If we have a straight couple that books a room we usually make sure they have understood that we have a male gay policy, [which includes] things like having a naked area near the pool during summer. But they are free to make their decision, if they say that they don't mind, they are welcomed, if they say that they prefer not to come we understand. (C, p. 1620-1627)*

*In my perspective, if someone makes a reservation and does not check in, something must have happened and they were not able to call and cancel it. They did not check in today, but they might do it any other day. I do not like to charge money when that happens, charge for what if they have not used anything? (AR, p. 142-146)*

Some participants consider important to improve other peoples' life through what they do (MT and TT) and who they are (TS). They do it anchored on the **social values** they believe in and defend.

*[TT] So why would you rent out rooms to people? Is that everything, we just want to rent out rooms to people? We just want to rent out rooms and earn money, or do we want to do something on the social side as well, and so the ball started rolling then in our minds.*

*[MT] We didn't want to rent out a couple of rooms and make money, of course you need the money also to have a life and to do nice things and travel and whatever, but we also thought that we wanted to do something for somebody else. So, we... it took a while but we found we already donated money to Kiva (...)*

*[TT] It's a micro financing platform, so people like you and me and us loan money to other people in the world that need it for small businesses. So people in Mongolia for their shop needs \$500 they will never get a loan from a regular bank, so they go through micro-financing, in this case Kiva, and it's like an intermediate (...) Because we use a percentage of every room that we rent out and not a percentage of profit but a*

*percentage of turnover. So that goes fast, it's like literally few euros from every room, from every night, from all the time that we rent out. And we are all throwing kiva micro financing loans and the 99.9% of the cases this money returns to us and we lend it out again. So it's like a big washing machine and it gets bigger and bigger, so last December we topped the \$100,000 in loans that we supported. So that gives an extra sense of...*

*[MT] ... not doing it just for yourself, but doing something for somebody else as well (MT and TT, p. 77-89; 92-101; 115-126)*

*Sometimes we can see that our guests are not at ease with their lives (...) and after a day or two they change, they are more comfortable and more open. And this is exactly what we want. It is a very big word, but it is so good, that's the reason for the name of this B&B. This place asks from its guests to relax and open, to relax emotionally... (TS, p. 401-407)*

The last code in values subtheme is **environmental values**. Most of the participants seem to share a concern with the environment. Running the business in the most ecological way possible (AP), having an organic garden where both host(s) and guest(s) can pick up some fruits and vegetables (LV) are examples of the strategies used to minimise the ecological footprint of the business.

*We have now six solar panels... and we have a... a heat pump, and we try to... to do as ecological as possible... (AP, p. 685-687)*

*We do have a biological garden, with all the season products that we use for ourselves and share with guests (LV, p. 195-197)*

#### 5.3.7. Location (L)

The location of the business was identified by LsEs as a factor that contributes in a positive manner to their QoL. Some participants chose the location purposively, based on its accessibility and the surrounding environment (Table 20). Location was defined as the place where the business is situated and its characteristics.

Table 20. Theme: Location

Theme	<b>L - Location</b>	
Subthemes	<b>A - Accessibility</b>	<b>E - Environment</b>
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Services/Proximity of services</li> <li>- Areas of interest</li> <li>- Restaurants</li> <li>- Life cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature</li> <li>- Isolation/Quietness</li> <li>- Climate</li> <li>- Safety &amp; security</li> <li>- Nice place &amp; people</li> <li>- Cultural differences</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.7.1. Accessibility (A)

LsEs consider that part of having a good QoL is to have easy access to all the services they need, to good restaurants, and to live in an affordable area.

Participants mentioned in their interviews that living in an area with easy access to all types of services, like for example schools (AR) and hospitals (CM), improves their QoL. They added that being able to sort all their issues with governmental services without having to face long queues (M) was also something very positive.

*To me quality of life is taking me two minutes to reach my kids' school, without traffic lights and without crazy drivers honking. (AR, p. 592-594)*

*To have easy access to a good hospital, a good school for my kid, and access to a good cultural offer is also important. (CM, p. 568-570)*

*I am talking about things like, paying the water services and do not have to face a queue to pay it, go to the bank and don't need to wait for hours to be attended, being able to park the car freely without the worry of using the parking meter (M, p. 782-788)*

To have their home and businesses in a location that is somehow stimulating, is considered by participants to be a bonus to their QoL. Whether it is stimulating because of the **areas of interest** and the cultural offer (Aa and Ja), or because it is relatively easy to participate in the location development (CM).

*[Ja] On, either on the road or... Hmm, in the woods! You, hmm, we have three wonderful villages that have character and haven't been corrupted by tourism or*



*development, really. Hmm, hmm, you have Penedo... Which is magnificent, we have our own Almoçageme, which...*

*[Aa] Has all the shops...*

*[Ja] Which is bigger, but it has, yeah, it has five cafés, three mini-markets...*

*[Aa] Restaurant...*

*[Ja]...a weekend, a, the weekend farmers market, fantastic! Every other year! And then, hmm, Ulgueira, which one can walk through... It's not a lot, it's just quite a nice place to be (...) Nonetheless, this is a very high culture area. Down, four hundred down, metres down the hill, where the bus stop is, we have Flores de Cabo and Françoise Baudry, both are high end gallery, gift shops, once a month in Flores de Cabo, they have a live concert, in their wonderful gallery space, which has fantastic acoustics...! Hmm, hmm, and they have once a month a...a New gallery exhibit with an art opening, hmm, and, a, both in Cascais, hmm, in Estoril, and Sintra, you have live concerts whether it's blues, or jazz, or, hmm, Fado, we have some rest... Local restaurants with live Fado...! Hmm, once a week, hmm... (Aa and Ja, p. 578-592; 1869-1882)*

*Here in Mértola there are plenty of things still to be done, and that is one of the reasons why it is so interesting to live here. Because it is like a diamond in the rough, that's the interesting part of living in a location where we can be part of its development. (CM, p. 439-443)*

Living in a location with good **restaurants** was also considered advantageous. Participants agreed that good food at an accessible price is something that weights on their QoL definition (PR). Since hosts suggest their favourite restaurants to their guests, indirectly, it also has a positive impact on guests QoL (Cr).

*Hmm, but the, the local restaurants are so good and so cheap, as well, hmm... (PR, p. 341-342)*

*We have two restaurants very close, and we usually suggest them to our guests. When me and my wife go there for a meal, even if we ask for the owner not to do it, we are treated like kings and when they give us the bill we can hardly believe how cheap it is. This is also quality of life, these little things. (Cr, p. 517-522)*

Having the possibility of having a drink (TR) and eating out (Ism) without **spending a considerable amount of money**, is deemed as relevant for participants QoL.

*You get a glass of wine there for fifty cents. You could buy five litres of wine for six euros! (...) So inexpensive (laughing)... beer and coffee are one of the values that you judge countries by... (TR, p. 1155-1156; 1344-1345)*

*All the fish that you can eat here with little money... seabass... my goodness, go to a restaurant in England and try to have seabass, it's so expensive! (Ism, p. 860-862)*

#### 5.3.7.2 Environment (E)

The environment surrounding participants home-business and what it offers, is accounted as very important to their life quality. To be able to live in close contact with **nature**, in a **quiet** area with a good **climate** increases their perception of QoL. The feeling of living in a **nice place** with **nice people** increases their feelings of **safety** and **security**, despite the **cultural differences** that migrant participants encounter.

Participants agreed that to live in a location with privileged contact with **nature**, where the senses can be stimulated by natural landscapes (Ja), birds and other animals (FV), and flowers (AP) makes them feel good.

*What appealed to us and what appeals to many people is, this a very mature landscape here. So, so, that was, obviously, part of the appeal of this place, and then, the location was even better than we imagined (...) we came from a, a place where winter was very long and very harsh. Hmm, and to escape that, to come to a place where, plants and flowers are in its green year round. (Ja, p. 448-452; 1793-1795)*

*The quality of life that we are talking about is what we can enjoy here, with all the natural conditions that surround us... the peace of mind that we can get from all this green, plants, trees, birds and animals (FV, p. 778-782)*

*When the sun shines and everything is clear and flowering, it is a paradise here, really a paradise, and that is what I like to show to people (AP, p. 213-216)*

Some of the participants that live in closer contact with nature, appreciate the **quietness** (Is) and peacefulness (SC) that the location transmits. Although for some LsEs silence and calm works almost as an antidote to stress, others miss the agitation of the city and feel quite **isolated** (CN), as, sometimes, do guests (TS).

*I have a quiet and restful life. I live in a beautiful place (Is, p. 202-203)*

*It is a beautiful place to live, it is peaceful place to live, it's calm, and peaceful. (SC, p. 174-175)*

*[this place] is far from everything, so it is hard... I cannot go out for a coffee with friends at night (CN, p. 960; 962)*

*I believe some of the guests would prefer more entertainment, to them it is more important, and we don't have that here. If they want to go to a pub or a restaurant they have to go to Monchique. The food is great there. Here it is too calm... (TS, p. 149-152)*

**Climate** was one of the main reasons why participants, in particular migrants, chose to open a business in Portugal. The climate in the location they lived before starting the B&B, had a negative impact on their QoL (Aa and Ja, Co).

*[Ja] Ok, I'll, I'll start, hmm... We... We...Lived in a... A harsh winter climate in the United States. In... Northern New England... about an hour and a half from Boston.*

*[Aa] I mean is cold, it's three months Siberia.*

*[Ja] (...) we were looking for... A way out! Of winter! More my wife than me, but... (Aa and Ja, p. 29-33; 41-43)*

*Well, I had a very successful business in the U.K. ... and... I had decided that I didn't want to live there anymore ... many reasons...one of them was that it was just too cold and too wet and... (Co, p. 12-14)*

Some participants agree that living in a location that makes them feel **secure** (Co) improves their perception of QoL, since they do not feel afraid of unexpected attacks. To feel **safe** at any time when you are out on the streets (TR) is also accounted as important for one's QoL.

*Quality of life is peace. Peace, waking up in the morning, knowing you're not gonna be... attacked, or blown up, as many people fear in London and in France and in Belgium at the moment. (Co, p. 631-634)*

*Portugal is such a safe country! (...) Hmm, but, you know, and Rio de Mouro, up there on the hill, you know, hmm... I've been up there one o'clock in the morning looking for guests who got lost and... You, you don't... You don't feel oppressed, and you don't feel threatened. (TR, p. 428-429; 435-439)*

Feeling good in the location one chose to live and do business is important for LsEs' QoL. To live in a **place** that makes one happy (Ism), in a country that one loves (C), and where the **people** are nice (Aa and Ja) enhances their QoL.

*I'm quite happy here. I love Portugal. I love Portugal, honest. I love the history, I love the buildings, I love everything. (Ism, p. 666-668)*

*Quality of life... here I have the quality of life that I was continually searching for before, which is to be in a country, a city, and with people that I love, I always had. And these, the country, the city and the people are a big slice of the cake. (C, p. 1201-1204)*

*[Aa] ...you know, where you get a lot of that. So, hmm, I just think on the whole, I think people here are really nice.*

*[Ja] Yeah, I, I...*

*[Aa] And that really enhances the quality of life.*

*[Ja] Yeah, Yeah. I, when people, I pick up people at the airport, we drive along the coast and we talk, and we talk, and I always say one of the greatest assets of Portugal, is the people! You can't find people as...*

*[Aa] Nicer people anywhere.*

*[Ja] ...as nicest people here are, anywhere else that we know of in Europe. (Aa and Ja, p. 1924-1932)*

The participants that migrated from other countries also mentioned the impact of the **cultural differences** on their QoL. From the small differences like driving (PR and TR), that do not have a big impact on QoL, to the bigger differences like what some participants named "Portuguese mentality". Some participants, namely migrants from Holland and Belgium, agree that the strong hierarchy and bureaucracy (TS), together with some disorganization and inefficiency (Cr) impact in a negative way on their QoL.

*[PR]So, in a... we have to sort of trying to explain to guests how Portugal is. And how lovely the people, and how that changes when they get in their cars.*

*[TR] How they drive... furiously fast! (PR and TR, p. 447-454)*

*Portuguese have a different mentality, they think in a different way. Almost opposite to the Dutch mentality. You have a very strong bureaucracy, and inside that bureaucracy a hierarchy... In Holland we call the people by their names, here we have to know all the titles. (TS, p. 72-76)*

*There are a lot of things [in Portuguese culture] that makes life complicated. But does that mean that my QoL is lower? No! In the first year of business, I would say so, my quality of life was worst. For someone with a north European mentality this seemed to be the worst place in the world. But once you have your business set and running in the Portuguese way, I am saying Portuguese but it could be Spanish or Italian, once you understand this mentality... it is child's play. But in the beginning, to my Belgian mentality, it was completely unacceptable. If you go to a public institution, like the Ministry of Agriculture, no one can answer your questions. We pay taxes and people work 35 hours a week, this to someone from the north of Europe is... But now I know how it works. They open by 9 am but start working by 10 am... (Cr, p. 295-308)*

#### **5.4. Findings summary**

This chapter analyses the personal narratives of the LsEs that participated in the research, making use of their interview transcripts in order to foster an understanding of their self-definitions of QoL. Extracts from the interviews are used to illustrate the codes considered important to their perception of QoL.

The conceptual framework of QoL that emerged from the data is summarised by Figure 7 (see p.205). QoL is composed of three layers: *desiderata*; *modus operandi*; and *modus vivendi*. *Modus vivendi* is the layer with higher relative importance to LsEs perception of QoL, *modus operandi* follows, and finally *desiderata* which is the least important. The themes home, personal preferences and location, compose the layer *desiderata*. *Modus operandi* is composed of interpersonal relationships and finance. Finally, *Modus vivendi* includes self-realisation and occupation, which are the two most important elements of the conceptual framework and the ones that have a bigger impact on LsEs' perceived QoL. A further explanation of the conceptual framework in relation to current literature is provided in the following chapter.

# 6

## **Time to rest** **- Discussion -**

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**T**he section of the trail I chose to do was spectacular! I was exhilarated by the dazzling view as I round the headland. I could feel the salty spray and boom of waves. It was just what I needed to clear my mind and give me energy to cope with the rest of the trimester. It is late in the evening and I am laying on the bed, still feeling the scent of the sea. My body is tired, my feet hurt but I am refreshed. My mind just keeps on thinking about everything I saw and felt during the trail.

As I was thinking about the trail I have completed, this chapter is a reflection of the research findings. It highlights the most relevant findings in relation to the literature review.

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## 6.1. Introduction

This chapter intends to further discuss the findings, presented in the previous chapter, in connection with relevant academic resources and theories. The comparing and contrasting exercise between the findings and relevant literature serves to convey additional comprehensibility to the topic under research in terms of knowledge creation, and its impacts from a critical hospitality lens on knowledge development.

The chapter is written adhering to the structure of the conceptual framework (Fig. 7 below) built in the findings chapter (Chapter 5) with the intention of facilitating the reading journey by its familiar structure. The arguments presented in this chapter will follow the order of the layers that compose the conceptual framework. It will start with the bottom layer – *desiderata* – and the discussion will be built up to the top and most important layer – *modus vivendi*. Hence, the discussion is built across four sections, one per layer that makes up the conceptual framework and one other to discuss the label ‘LsE’.

The two themes that compose *modus vivendi* – self-realisation and occupation – are the most important ones when it comes to their relative importance to QoL, as perceived by LsEs. SR and O are composed of key elements that cross the remaining themes and therefore have a direct and indirect impact on the other two layers that compose the conceptual framework. For that reason, both are discussed as overarching themes that on the one hand connect and bind all the themes together, and on the other, consolidate the discussion and shed new light in the concept of LsE. For that reason, throughout the discussion it is common to find cross-references between the themes that compose the different layers of the conceptual framework.

For each section, the most relevant findings will be addressed and the key elements compared and contrasted with relevant theoretical debates discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2). During this discussion, I attempt to distil the most interesting findings so that opportunities and challenges for the conceptualisation of LsEs QoL are identified in correspondence with issues that are emerging on the Entrepreneurship and Tourism and Hospitality literature. This approach aims to clarify and define the contribution of the present research to current knowledge and theoretical debates.

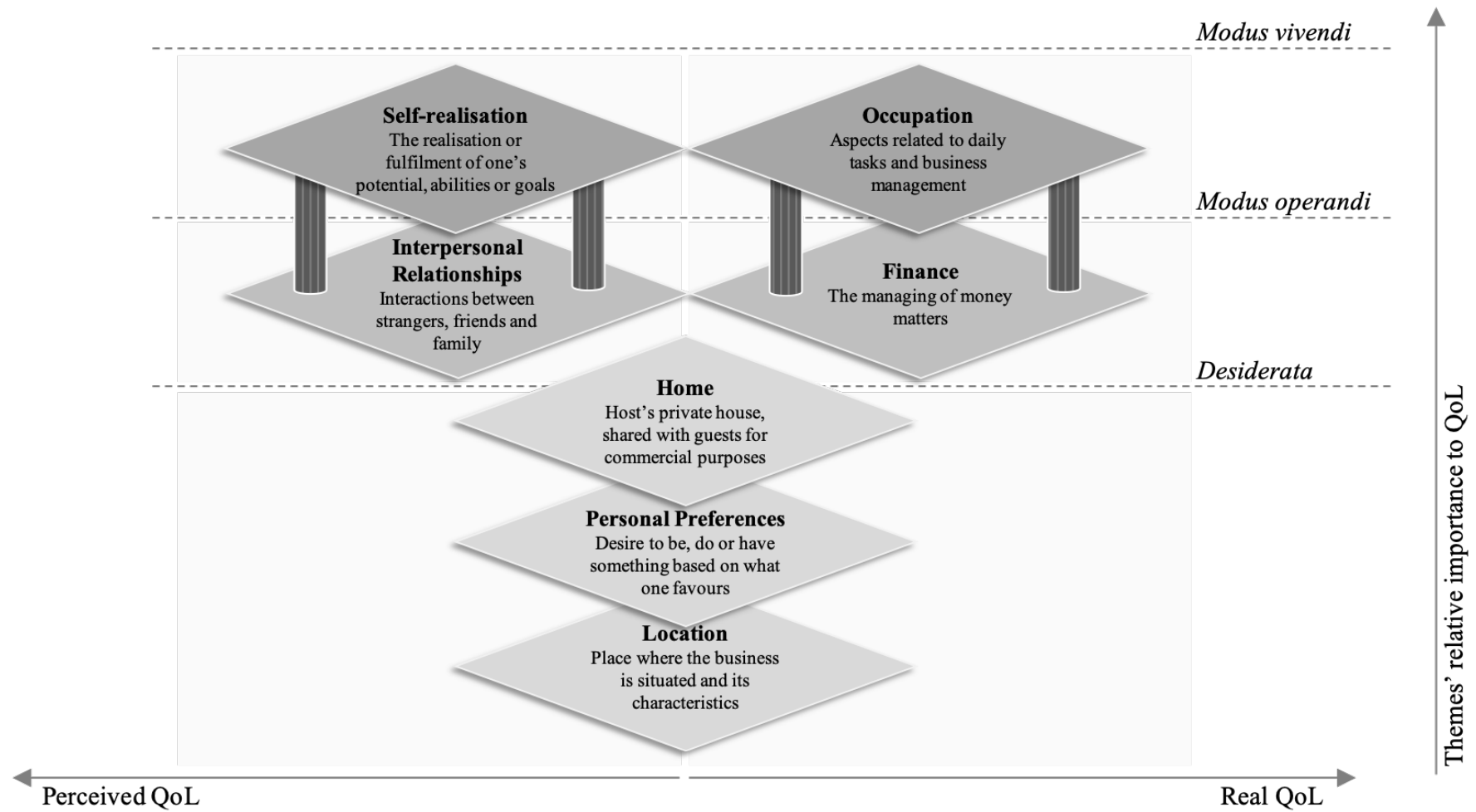


Figure 7. Conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs



## 6.2. QoL of LsEs | *Desiderata* – L, PP and H

The bottom layer that constitutes the conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs is composed of three themes – L, PP and H – and comparative to the other layers has less impact on their life quality. The meaning of each theme and its relative importance to QoL will be explained in the following paragraphs.

**Location** is the place chosen by LsEs to live, work and share their home with (paying) visitors and was defined as the place where the business is situated. To be considered a good location, findings suggest that the area must have good accessibility, which is described as being close to services, areas of interest, restaurants and pubs and within an area where the life cost is considered affordable by business owners. The environment that surrounds the home-business is the other matter taken into consideration when choosing the location. In what concerns the environment, climate and being close to nature seem to increase LsEs perception of QoL, possibly due to the calm and relaxed mood that it transports them into, away from the disadvantages of the big cities. Feeling safe and secure is also important and reinforced by the quietness of the place and welcoming and friendly locals.

Location has been identified in the tourism literature as a motive for LsEs to pursue their lifestyle entrepreneurial project. For example, Peters, Frehse, and Buhalis (2009) agree that often the main motivation for small tourism entrepreneurial activity is an attractive region. The region may be eye-catching to LsEs because they are aesthetically attracted to a specific geographic location, as highlighted by Morrison (2006), due to its pleasant surroundings (Szivas, 2001) or based on the desire to live in a particular place like the wish to ‘come to Cornwall’ found in Williams, Shaw, and Greenwood (1989, p. 1648) study. Conversely, location can also be chosen based on business reasons such as the area’s popularity among different kinds of people and how busy it can get (Mottiar, 2007). The former motivations support the idea of LsEs as lifestyle seekers, whereas the latter portrays an image of LsEs as entrepreneurs that take into consideration the economic nature of their businesses. This apparent ambiguity deserves more attention due to its impact on the label LsE and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter in the light of the present research’s findings.

In terms of L, it is commonly argued that lifestyle-oriented tourism entrepreneurs prefer choosing rural areas to start their businesses (Getz & Carlsen, 2000), perhaps because rural areas are believed to offer a sense of going back in time, the opportunity to get in touch with the land or living a simpler life (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). Additionally, the narratives of entrepreneurs that started their tourism related businesses in the countryside emphasise the strong relationship that they have with the surrounding nature (see for example Benson, 2007; Holland & Martin, 2015) and their sense of responsibility towards the environment (Dewhurst & Thomas, 2003). They also reflect a social phenomenon, fluxes of people moving from one place to another, leaving the big city and searching for a place closer to the ocean, in a 'sea-change' movement (Burnley & Murphy, 2004), or the counterpart 'tree-change' where people search for a rural area (Salt, 2006). This tree-change sea-change phenomenon has been identified in the commercial home literature, for example in King and White's (2009) chapter about the diversification of commercial homes in Australia. Findings of this study are in line with the literature, the majority of the participants (32 out of 36) opened their business in a rural area, where the close contact with nature and the sunny climate significantly determined their location choice (see Fig. 8). When asked, LsEs consider that their QoL is better when they can have the daily perks of living close to nature. Moreover, findings go a step further, identifying that location, in the life quality equation, also involves other aspects that have a direct impact on the quality of LsEs life, such as: the proximity of the business to services like schools and hospitals, easy access routes and transports, areas of interest where the cultural and social needs can be met, good restaurants and pubs, and the cost of living. These apparently basic and simple aspects, have the capability of positively transforming their life, through the reduction of stress levels introduced by tasks such as dropping off kids at school, facing queues when using local services or having the opportunity of going out for a coffee or a cultural event without having to travel too far.

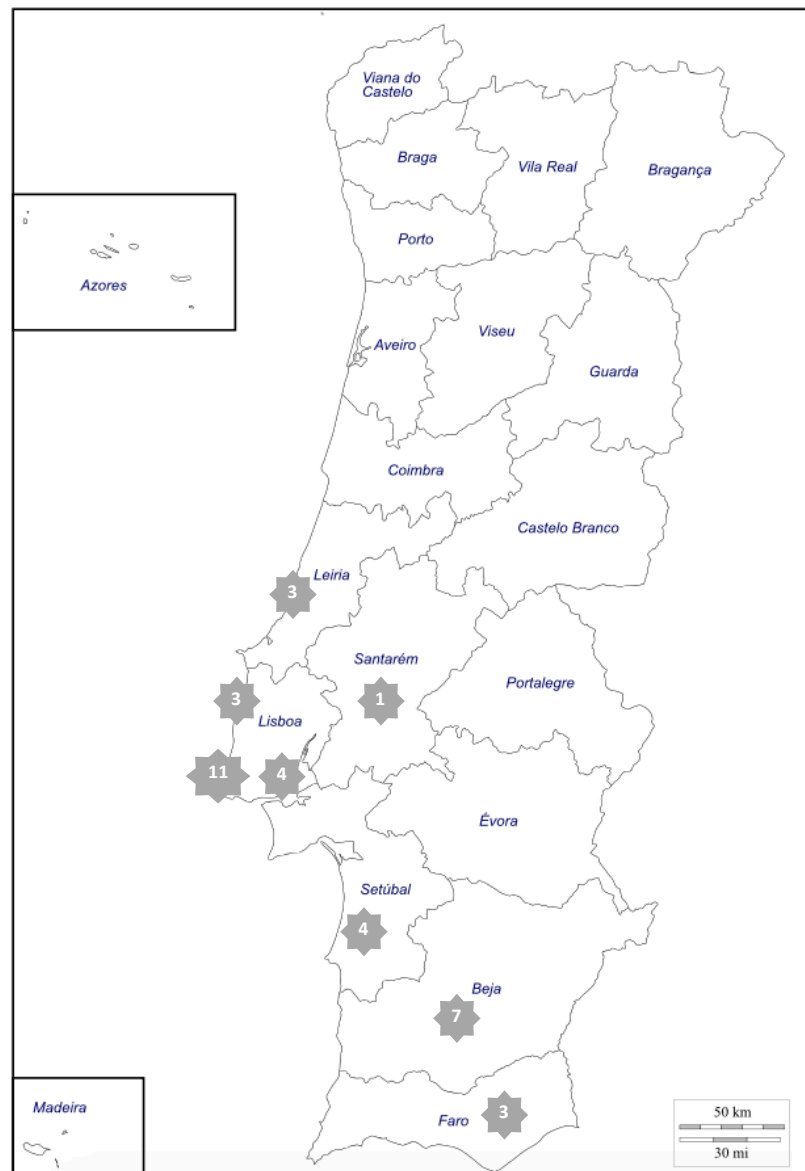


Figure 8. Interviews' geographical distribution

The findings uphold the preference for rural areas held by LsEs to open their businesses. However, they also hint at the possible presence of a new trend, that of home-based accommodation businesses that are opened in the heart of big cities (4 out of 36 properties were located in Lisbon city centre). Based on the study sample, there are two types of LsEs that open such businesses. Firstly, LsEs that privilege an easy access to cultural and social events and want to be able to enjoy the city life, and secondly, locals that have extra rooms in their homes and take advantage of the fact to register their home as *Alojamento Local*<sup>11</sup> and start the business of welcoming guests into their own homes. Although the

<sup>11</sup> *Alojamento local* is a legal entity created by the law n. 39/2008 on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

second group may be problematic concerning their fit into the LsE label, it is certainly noteworthy to be further discussed in future studies.

In the particular case of **migrants**, lifestyle migrants in the language of Benson and O'Reilly (2009) – fairly affluent people that relocate to places that enhance their life quality – the choice of the location for their home-business has a more prominent role and a larger impact on their life quality, due to the bigger change in life style. Climate seems to assume a higher relevance in the case of migrant owners, that choose to relocate to Portugal, because the weather in their country of origin was something that had a negative effect on their life quality as shared by participants Aa and Ja who chose to escape the Northern New England cold winter<sup>12</sup>.

The second element of this layer is **personal preferences** and is defined as the desire to be, do or have something based on what one favours, including: hobbies, preferences, and values. PP and L are intertwined, in the sense that the choice of the place to live and work is commonly associated with LsEs PP. This connection has been identified in previous studies, for example, Marchant and Mottiar's (2011) study in Ireland emphasises location as a main driving factor for LsEs to start surf tourism business. This study add the importance of past experiences of travel, or hobbies as named in the present study. Allardyce (2015) further narrows this connection, discussing in her thesis the importance of place attachment and how intricate location choice and LsEs preferences are. Findings of the present study re-affirm such a line of argument, in the sense that in many cases owners' hobbies determine the location of the businesses. LsEs shared during our conversations that they enjoy spending their leisure time doing some of their favourite activities, like doing sports, travelling, taking care of their pets or taking part in cultural events. Having the possibility of doing enjoyable activities with some frequency makes LsEs feel a higher QoL, especially in comparison with their previous life, where it was not easy to find the time and space to do some of their favourite activities. For example, Participant IM's hobby – hunting – was one of the reasons for him to start the business in its actual location, somewhere close enough to areas where he can go hunting with friends and at the same time with enough space and infrastructures for the after-hunt ritual of preparing the animals, cooking, and enjoying the meal.

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<sup>12</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 200

In the literature, preferences were identified as a motivator to start business as discussed before, but also as something that determines the type of product offered, considering that the tourism product from a socio-cultural lens is a manifestation of social, cultural and personal processes (GarciaRosell, Haanpaa, Kylanen, & Markuksela, 2007). This insight seems especially significant in the context of lifestyle entrepreneurship, since on the one hand LsEs integrate their preferences to the style of life they have, and on the other, they deliberately share those preferences with guests. From food preferences like buying local or serving only vegetarian food, or dress code, to an avoidance at anything that would give them a glimpse of the corporate environment. By doing so, LsEs are living their product, it is in their tourism product that LsEs “live, perform and communicate their way of life choices (...) entrepreneurs’ skills, hobbies and personal preferences determine the product as such” (Bohn, 2013, pp. 69). One could argue that this conscious sharing of preferences, effected through product construction and host/guest interaction, works as a sieve towards the type of guests that are attracted to the B&B. Almost as if it is a guest recruitment tool used by hosts to minimise encounters with people that do not enjoy the same kind of things as they do, and by doing so, they are protecting their life quality from non-desired interactions with strangers who do not share the same preferences, and ultimately the same lifestyle. The encounter with participant C illustrates and corroborates the idea of the tourism product as a reflection of the owners’ own preferences. In C’s case his sexual preference determined the type of business he chose to start, as he decided to open a home-based accommodation business with a male gay policy.

In the same way, personal, social and environmental values also profile the way LsEs tailor their home-based businesses. These are reflected in their own character, in the way they relate with guests, integrate into the local community and care about the surrounding environment. For example, participants MT and TT did not want to open a business that would not be beneficial to someone else, so they decided to partner with Kiva, a microfinancing platform, donating a percentage of each rented room<sup>13</sup>. By the time of the interview T&M had supported \$100,000 in loans and they were very proud of such an achievement, saying that it certainly makes their life worth living, affecting how satisfied they are with their life quality. It seems that being able to live a life aligned with personal values impacts LsEs’ perception of QoL. The more aligned life is with their values the

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<sup>13</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 195-196

higher the perception of QoL. These findings are in line with Perry and Felce's (1995, p. 2) definition of QoL as an “interaction between the circumstances or mode of a person’s life, their satisfaction with its various facets, and their personal goals and values”.

It is interesting to highlight how relevant is the fine tuning between the life LsEs live and their hobbies, preferences and values: the more tuned, the higher the QoL. This harmony between LsEs PP's and their lifestyle is vital to their perception of QoL, and it is intertwined with the idea of being able to be themselves, be authentic, and feel self-realised. The relevance of this alignment is crucial to LsEs' QoL. The congruence between what they consider important in their lives and its presence or absence, existence or non-existence, is what affects their perception of QoL the most, and will be thoroughly explained later in this chapter, when discussing the first layer.

The third element that composes the layer *Desiderata* is **Home**, described as the hosts' private home, shared with guests for commercial purposes. Home, in this sense, has the following facets: private home, shared home and work(ing) home. It is noteworthy to mention that there are some resemblances between the component H that emerged from the data, and the concept of commercial home as defined by Lynch (2005, p. 534), i.e. “‘Commercial home’ refers to types of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared.”. Firstly, Lynch’s definition accentuates the owners’ private home, the space where they live, that becomes shared to a certain degree when used by paying guests, just as the tripartite H is composed of private home, shared home and work home. Secondly, both blend the commercial, social and private domains of hospitality proposed by Lashley (2000, p.5). The commercial domain encompasses the ideas of exchanging services for profit, the market/product/producer limitations, and is defined as ‘the provision of hospitality as an economic activity’ resembling the work(ing) home, the place that is simultaneously home and work – hospitality provision. The social domain embraces the concepts of dealing with strangers, mutuality, status and is described as ‘the social settings in which hospitality and acts of hospitableness take place together with the impacts of social forces on the production and consumption of food/drink/ and accommodation’ overlapping the shared home, the owners’ home that hospitably welcomes the strangers. Finally, the private domain is more associated with the hosts and their needs, taking into account ‘the

range of issues associated with both the provision of the ‘trinity’ in the home as well as considering the impact of host and guest relationships’ reflecting the private home and how commercial activities can fulfil host’s physiological and psychological needs through the influence of the nuclear family (Seymour, 2015). This tripartite H matters to LsEs QoL, in that it is the background of their daily lives, it is where they spend most of their time, it is their sanctuary and their trap, their life quality booster and detractor.

Home as private mirrors the feelings that participants have towards their own home. Home is commonly seen by its owners as a place like no other, a sanctuary where they feel safe, at ease, and have their privacy. Participant LM, as an illustration, shared how much he loves to be at home, the home that was entirely built by him, and in his opinion embodies the concept of QoL<sup>14</sup>. These findings concur with the traditional notion of home as a place of rest, a private shelter from the outside world, a safe and secure space, a haven (Rybczynski, 1988; Wardhaugh, 1999). Private home is also a life project, a product that is carefully conceived, developed, and nurtured by its owners. Participants CN and NL, while looking at the garden with a football pitch and a swimming pool, shared that they have created their business out of nothing, adding that it is a life-project, almost as a child<sup>15</sup>. Private home conceptualised as a life project allows two distinctive considerations: firstly, private home as a reflection of the self; and secondly, just like its owners, private home as a constantly evolving and changing matter. The first idea concurs with the concept of sociological expressionism proposed by Sweeney, Docherty-Hughes, and Lynch (2018, p. 96) ‘to refer to the host’s expression of self, communicated through the presentation and display of home and self’ in the sense that not only the private home is a vehicle to express LsEs’ self, but it also is a project, a product, a production conducted by owners to portray their lifestyle. This brings us to the second idea of perpetual (re)construction of the self. These two ideas are entangled in the sense that LsEs, in line with one of the key emergent findings of this research, consider paramount to their life quality the process of self-realisation. Self-realisation, in their perspective, as will be thoroughly discussed later in this chapter, is a cycle that is constantly resuming and encompasses different phases: self-knowledge; self-identity; empowerment; and self-actualisation. Being private H a reflection of the self, and taking into consideration that LsEs’ self is eager for a constant update, it is necessarily in constant change. Therefore,

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<sup>14</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 179-180

<sup>15</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 180

findings push the concept of sociological expressionism into another one, an explicit, more vulnerable, mutable, fluid, chameleonic form of sociological expressionism, into a liquid sociological expressionism defined as the presentation of home and self as an expression of the host's continuous self (re)construction. This definition makes explicit the notion of continuous change and improvement in LsEs self, home and consequently their life quality. Furthermore, it locates the hosts in the present moment, the postmodern, globalizing, liquid society that calls for a rising self-reflexivity (Bauman, 2000, 2004; Plummer, 2005).

Earlier studies argue that one of the motivations to start a tourism related home-based business is the possibility of having a bigger house, a home that otherwise would not be affordable. Di Domenico (2003) suggests that LsEs tend to enjoy properties that are outside of their income range. Hosts can therefore be pulled into commercial home-based businesses attracted by the idea of owning a property that would be difficult without paying guests (Sweeney, 2008). The present findings go a bit further, revealing that being able to enjoy the facilities available for guests is something that increases LsEs perception of QoL. What impacts most their quality of life is not the size of the property, but foremost having easy access to some relaxing activities such as sunbathing, swimming or reading a book on the hammock. It is noteworthy to recall participant's CC feeling of being on holidays all year round because she can access the facilities anytime<sup>16</sup>. This example shows that there is a strong link between the possibility of enjoying the facilities and hosts' choice of L and PP, showing that the three elements of *desiderata* are connected and have blurred boundaries.

In the moment the doors of the private home are open to welcome guests, it becomes a shared home. Hosts are producing and consuming their home product (Williams et al., 1989). It is a home where hosts are aware that the house is no longer solely theirs. It is also the guests' home for the duration of their stay. The private home, then, becomes a place where owners manage space by giving some restrictions to guests to safeguard the privacy and wellbeing of the household. Or in Derrida's (2000) words, home as the threshold of inclusion and exclusion where guests must follow hosts' control processes. To have a set of rules that separates the private from the public areas is relevant in the context of the commercial home, and Lynch's (1999) study with host families identified

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<sup>16</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 181



rule setting as the topic that caused the most diversity of answers among participants. Despite not being a research goal in this study, most participants made reference to the importance of having separate host-guest areas and communicate them to guests. Some do it formally, with explicit rules, whilst welcoming guests and showing the property, to protect their home, their castle (McIntosh et al., 2010). Others do it in an informal way, like participant EI who believes the house flows in a way that makes it intuitive for guests to understand which are the areas where they are not welcomed<sup>17</sup>. She prefers to trust guests' common sense to identify what is private and public (Sweeney, 2008).

The findings suggest that welcoming guests is an important aspect to LSEs quality of life. It is common among participants to feel the enhanced life quality obtained from guests' presence and satisfaction. For some hosts, having guests is *per se* a reason to feel better. Others feel rewarded and happy whenever guests feel at home. In both cases, those feelings augment their perception of life quality. A good example is the story shared by participant IS about the couple from Israel on their honeymoon, in which she walked the extra mile for them to feel at home despite the cultural and religious differences<sup>18</sup>. This topic is associated with the theme IR, included in the second layer of the conceptual framework, and will be further discussed in a later section.

Despite the happiness felt by hosts when sharing their home with guests, sometimes they feel their home as an inhospitable place. They feel homeless-at-home (Wardhaugh, 1999) due to the deprivation of privacy and loss of family identity imposed by the presence of guests. To illustrate the former it is worthwhile to recall the story shared by participants MT and TT where they bought a bell and put it on a stool, close to their private area of the house, with a 'please ring' note for guests that was totally ignored<sup>19</sup>. This example illustrates how inhospitable home can be, when it is shared with guests who disrespect hosts' privacy and invade their personal space, probably because they feel too comfortable in the hosts' home. The latter can be exemplified with participant MM's comment on how restricted family life can be by the presence of guests. She mentioned that simple things that families do like having breakfast in their pyjamas or putting their feet up on chairs, they are not able to do<sup>20</sup>. In both cases, it can be argued that there is a

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<sup>17</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 182

<sup>18</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 185-186

<sup>19</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 183

<sup>20</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 187

tyranny of the guests, in the same way Douglas (1991) reflects on the tyranny of the home when discussing the type of space home offers. Tyranny of the guests is reflected in the inhibition of certain behaviours and feelings whenever guests are present. In these cases, home is no longer a haven, instead, it is a ‘place of violence and pain’ (Sweeney & Lynch, 2009, p. 164).

Finally, work home is the blurred place where home and work co-exist, where home is work and work is home and where rarely home is home and work is work. This work(ing) home, on the one hand, is the business that sustains financially the (private) home and somehow its *raison d’etre*, but on the other hand it also is a confusing element that causes some frictions and discomfort. Participants are divided concerning the implications of work home to their QoL: some consider it a privilege to work and live in the same place; others believe that it is an hindrance to their life quality. For example participant JP thinks that to be able to live and work in the same place is a huge advantage, arguing that it is much better to be home than locked in an office<sup>21</sup>. However, participant MM complains about work and home being one and the same thing, arguing that she feels like she is working all the time, that there is no difference between work and private life<sup>22</sup>. These findings reinforce the idea that work-life balance is one of the biggest challenges faced by B&B owners because of the lack of boundaries between home and work, as identified by Li, Miao, Zhao, and Lehto (2013). The work(ing) home is inevitably associated with the business and how LsEs manage their day to day activities. It reflects both the implications of living and working in the same place, and the juxtaposition of home and work that will be further discussed on the first layer.

In summary, the third layer is composed of three elements: location, personal preferences, and home. Firstly, having good accessibility and enjoyable surrounding environment is what matters the most regarding the choice of the location for their home-business. Secondly, LsEs privilege the fine tuning between their hobbies, preferences and values, and the style of life they are living: the more tuned the higher the perception of QoL. Lastly, home as a tripartite is the background where LsEs lives’ happen, it is work, home, and guests’ home, with all the implications those three facets convey. Given the significance of L, PP and H in previous research, it was somehow expected that they

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<sup>21</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 188

<sup>22</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 188

would be mentioned by LsEs as part of their conceptualization of QoL. Less expected was the relative importance of these three elements to their level of QoL. Particularly, considering the relevance it assumes in the literature when it comes to LsEs motivation to start the business. An explanation for these elements to have less impact on LsEs QoL is the fact that the location where the home-business is set, is a prerequisite to the start-up, a condition that has to be met beforehand. Personal preferences such as hobbies, preferences and values, are also taken into consideration while starting and developing the home-product, and home is an image of all of those. L, PP and H are the fundamentals that have to be met before starting the business operation. Just as the bottom layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs – physiological needs – that must be satisfied to a certain degree so that the next level can be reached. In the case of the interviewed LsEs, the need of having a home in a certain location and in line with their personal preferences is satisfied from the very beginning of the entrepreneurial process, with the location choice, and therefore this need may be undervalued (Maslow, 1943). Besides, in affluent societies it is usual to take the satisfaction of basic needs for granted, which may well hinder its perceived significance to understanding QoL (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2012). In other words, LsEs might value location less when expressing their perception of QoL because irrespective of the importance that location has in their QoL, it is something that is taken-for-granted and therefore they are no longer concerned about it. Precisely because L, PP and H are the aspects that LsEs want in order to start their home-based businesses, this layer was named *Desiderata*.

### 6.3. QoL of LsEs | *Modus operandi* – IR and F

The middle layer is called *modus operandi* and is composed of two themes – interpersonal relationships and finance. In participants' perspective, this layer is more important to QoL than *desiderata* and less important than the layer *modus vivendi*. The relationships hosts foster with guests, guests-strangers, guests-friends, guests-almost-family, and family are a fundamental part of their life. Almost as important, are the financial aspects of the business and hosts' relationship with money matters. IR and F, their meaning and contribution to LsEs perceived level of QoL are discussed in depth in the following sections.

**Interpersonal relationships**, in the context of this research, are defined as interactions between strangers, friends, and family that take place in the commercial home. Being able

to meet new people, to host, to progress personal relationships into friendships, and to find the right balance between family and work are key ingredients to a better life quality in LsEs' opinion. Findings emphasise the importance of people in LsEs' lives and how it enriches their perception of QoL. Thus, the following discussion will focus mainly on the host-guest encounter, taking into consideration the context in which it happens, the personal geographies of each participant, and the role of emotions: the thread that links all these elements together.

Within the tourism entrepreneurship literature there is a line of argument that characterises LsEs as people with a personal interest in people. For example, Lynch (1999) examined the attitudes of hosts towards guests in the homestay context, where hosts' answers suggest a 'genuine interest in the guest and genuine enjoyment gained by the host from their stay' (p. 130-131). The findings of this study strengthen the conceptual perception of commercial home hosts as people-people. All the participants mentioned how significant it is to share their lives with others, and how passionate they are about people. Participant Is, for example, shared that she is passionate about people and really enjoys chatting and knowing peoples' stories<sup>23</sup>. Besides, this passion for people was also identified as one of the motivations to start the home accommodation business, as referred to by participant IM<sup>24</sup>. Interest in people as a motivation for the entrepreneurial start-up was previously identified, for instance, in Getz and Petersen's (2005) study on the profit orientation of family business owners in the resort areas of Canada and Denmark.

Socializing, meeting new people, and hosting is something LsEs are looking forward to, it adds meaning to their lives and increases their perception of QoL. It is noteworthy to highlight that the encounters seem to be more powerful when there are some commonalities between host and guest, when they share some preferences, principles or beliefs. The importance of sharing communalities with guests has been underlined in the study conducted by McIntosh, Lynch, and Sweeney (2010), where results suggest that LsEs want to connect with like-minded people (p. 514) and hosting serves as the replacement for previous social networks, mainly career related ones. The present study corroborates the importance of a connection with like-minded people, or in other words, the existence of an overlap between hosts' and guests' self-image. Findings revealed that

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<sup>23</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 149

<sup>24</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 149

when those similarities exist, when there is an overlap between host and guest identities, the connection they establish is deemed as meaningful. A meaningful connection, in turn, can be conceptualized as a sanctum where guests' stories become hosts' second-hand experiences. A place where hosts blossom through the relationship they establish with like-minded guests by transforming the second-hand experiences into brand new knowledge about the world and themselves. The encounter with the other, then, becomes a special place where hosts' personal desires and beliefs find the conditions to prosper. A place where the impression of self-realisation feels augmented. Relationships defined as a strong connection with like-minded others that transport hosts into a place where they can (re)think about themselves. These encounters can be interpreted as epiphanies, conceptualised as 'an interactional moment that creates change and transformation in self-identity' (Wearing, McDonald, & Ankor, 2016, p. 157). Assuming that meaningful encounters are epiphanies, each epiphany allows hosts to reach a sense of increased self-knowledge, personal achievement and self-realisation. The possibility of having an epiphany, the moment in which hosts are a purer version of themselves, distilled by the presence of guests, is one of the aspects that most influences LsEs perception of QoL. Therefore, LsEs' passion for people and need to establish meaningful connections (IR) are a foundational block of their businesses. Relationships, then, become an end in themselves (Saxena, 2015).

Despite the key significance of such type of relationships to LsEs' QoL, not all host-guest encounters are epiphanies. In reality, the vast majority are not: guests that are not friendly, or that for some reason are not in a good mood; one night guests that arrive late and depart early, leaving little time for the connection to take place; occasional guests that do not really fancy such a type of accommodation but need a place to spend the night; encounters with guests who have little in common with hosts; or those extreme cases in which there are no commonalities at all. Such encounters are challenging for hosts in the sense that they have to control their natural aptitude and will to create an emotional connection with the other. Participant C's quote<sup>25</sup> about how he feels when dealing with guests in a bad mood, illustrates the frustration of such encounters and the negative effect they have on hosts. Sometimes the discomfort is so big – "a torture" in participant TS's words<sup>26</sup> – that hosts just want guests to leave, as participant YP<sup>27</sup> shared. These type of *rendezvous*

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<sup>25</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 151

<sup>26</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 152

<sup>27</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 152

remind LsEs that not all guests are friends (Lashley & Morrison, 2003) or soon-to-be-friends as participant El foresees her guests<sup>28</sup>. Some of them are just customers, and in some cases it is necessary to instil rules and demarcate the separation between private and shared spaces in the home (Brandth & Haugen, 2012). These encounters force the emergence of the service provider-customer paradigm, where all visitors should be welcomed in a friendly manner, and hosts are performing their host roles, detached from their conscious, relationship-seeker self. By the presence of such customers, hosts are reminded of the tyranny of the guests.

Although the most part of host-guest encounters do not result in an epiphany, when considering QoL – the aim of this study – one of the things LsEs aim for, is to have those special encounters with others that facilitate the process of looking inside of themselves. These findings are in agreement with Ikonen's (2017) study and strengthen the idea that it is a challenge for LsEs to avoid emotional bonding and draw emotional boundaries. At the same time, the findings provide a possible explanation for such behaviour: LsEs see relationships as an end, they choose to invest in the encounter with a stranger-guest in the search for meaningful connections that will eventually bring them closer to their own self-realisation. Every relationship established with the other has the potential to shape LsEs' self-perception, and it would seem that that is one of the reasons why interpersonal relationships are so important to them. Relationships allow them to constantly look at themselves through an emotional lens, and continually work towards a better self.

Besides the emotional relationship between host and guest, Bohn (2013) claims that there is also an emotional relationship between LsEs and their businesses, portraying the commercial home as a stage where LsEs live and share their lifestyle choices and identities. The author argues that the value of the tourism product offered by LsEs in Finnish Lapland lies in the social interactions, in the connection between host and guests, as the business is coloured by hosts' social skills. Results from the present research go a bit further, suggesting on the one hand, that the private-shared-home, is also the platform for LsEs development and self-realisation. Home, is more than a stage where LsEs live and share their lifestyle, it is also, and mainly, the place where hosts continually (re)construct themselves through the connections established with like-guests. Commercial homes act as a space of self-production and self-consumption. On the other

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<sup>28</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 158

hand, the type of relationships that hosts ideally want to establish with guests, shapes the tourism product they offer. The social interactions between host and guest are part of the product LsEs have to offer, as Bohn (2013) suggests, but they are more than that, relationships also shape the business. For example, participant TR shared their decision not to increase the number of beds because they did not want it to affect the personal relationship with guests<sup>29</sup>. From this perspective, and recalling that for LsEs relationships are an end in themselves, the value does not lie in the host-guest connection itself, but on what hosts (and eventually guests) gain from that connection on a personal perspective. Additionally, the impact of such types of encounter reinforce the importance of host-guest matching in the context of commercial homes service provision (Tucker & Lynch, 2004).

Hence, interpersonal relationships can be interpreted as a non-monetary exchange, as a valuable intangible, or an immaterial production of the accommodation service provision on LsEs home premises. By opening the door of their private home to guests, LsEs are opening themselves to others. Using Ikonen's (2017) words, the act of opening oneself to welcome the stranger-guest is 'very affective by nature' (p. 276) and emotions play a vital role in such encounters. Participant El's quotation encapsulates this idea very well: "*the concept that I have created, tourism of affections. And it is in fact a tourism of affections because sooner or later guests end up with me in the kitchen, which is the place where I welcome my friends.*" (El, p. 200-204). The commercial home portrayed as a place for tourism of affections presupposes two things: firstly, the host recognises the importance of emotions in an hospitality act; and secondly, the host is willing to use their own emotions and feelings as an instrument to connect and welcome the other, and by doing so acknowledge the other's emotions and feelings too.

The vital role that emotions play in host-guest connections are a significant finding of the present research, corroborating Buda, d'Hauterres, and Johnston's (2014) assertion that emotions play a vital role in tourism encounters. Besides, the present findings shed some light into the importance of emotions from the service provider angle. Whereas Buda et al.'s (2014) study explored the emotions of tourists and tour guides embodied in danger-zones and dark-tourism places, the present research highlights the relevance of emotional connections between LsEs and their guests, from the entrepreneur's perspective.

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<sup>29</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p.175-176

Moreover, and in line with the research aim, it emphasises the role of emotions in LsEs perception of QoL.

Regarding this matter, it is pertinent to mention that the emotional connection between LsEs and guests is intentional, given that the possibility of starting a relationship with like-others is one of the desired business outcomes – relationships as an end. LsEs use themselves, i.e. their feelings and emotions, attitudes, values, preferences, personality, strengths and fragilities, and their home to achieve these connections. Bridging this intentionality with Davidson and Milligan's (2004) introduction to emotional geographies, one can contend that by deliberately using emotions, LsEs recognise their own bodies as the central site of emotional expression. The host's skin serves as a physical border that has the ability to feel, and where others can leave their impressions, as Ahmed (2004) suggests. Encounters with the other affect that physical border: if host and guest feelings are incongruent, the border becomes thicker, less penetrable, and the perception of that impression is not as positive; on the other hand, if there is congruency between host and guest emotions, the border becomes thinner, permeable, and the impression left by the encounter with the other is likely enjoyable. The thinner the border, the more significant the connection, as that is the place "where histories are made" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 39). As findings underline, it was common among participants to refer how important to their QoL is the creation of special moments with guests. For example, participant Is' story<sup>30</sup> about the connection that her and her son established with two close friends from Switzerland, who shared with her that one of them had cancer in a terminal stage when they were about to leave, reflects how these histories made by hosts and guests leave an impression in both of them. These stories, that can be told by the impression left by guests on hosts, and vice versa, on the one hand depict emotions as a connective border that links personal geographies and places, and on the other hand strengthens the significance of interpersonal relationships to LsEs' life quality.

In the commercial home owners' case, the choice to open their home to strangers, adds to the recognition of home as a place of emotional expression, emotions are "spatially mediated" by the home (Davidson & Milligan, 2004, p. 523). Host-guest encounters are embedded on the premises of host's home that stems host's preferences and sets the tone for the relationship to start. From this angle, the shared-home affects the relationship

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<sup>30</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 160



between host and guest. However, home is also affected by the encounter, making it a different place every time. The shared-home is shaped by the emotions of host and guest, and just like host and guest have a skin that feels and adjusts to the congruency or incongruency of each other's emotions, also does the home. When there is an alignment between host and guest emotions, the different spaces of the home are more permeable to guests, there are less restrictions, less rules, and in extreme cases, the private spaces become shared, strangers become family, and the service once payed is now traded by the added value of the relationship. Participant Is' quote about guests becoming friends entirely illustrates this argument: *"because when for example the Spanish visit [Spanish guests that are now considered family], I cannot ask for money. I am not going to charge my family, right?"* (Is, p. 398-401). When that alignment is not present, the distinction between private-home and shared-home is made clear by the host, that is at the same time making himself and his home less likely to be impressed by the guest. Home as a mutable place that reacts to host and guest emotions, consolidates the idea of the commercial home as a stage for LsEs' development and self-realisation.

Emotions, consequently, are not seen as a private matter, but as a response to the act of hospitality towards the other on the home premises. Emotions serve as the element that outlines the personal geographies of the participants involved in the relationship. Or in Ahmed's (2004) words, emotions act as the mediator between the individual and the collective, given that what aligns us with the collective is the way we feel about others. It is the emotional impression left by others that allows us to filter "feelings-in-common" (Ahmed, 2004, p.27) and by exclusion, to identify mismatched feelings. Emotions serve as what links people to people and people to places, hosts to guests and encounters to commercial homes.

The discussion above suggests that emotions work as a barometer of QoL for LsEs. The perception of life quality seems to be deeply linked with how they feel at a given moment in time. The impression left by people and places on LsEs' emotional skin, and how LsEs react to that impression from a personal perspective, seem to be a reliable indicator of the perceived life quality. Participant C, for example, refers to these impressions left by others as energy<sup>31</sup>. He believes that his own level of energy is profoundly associated with the interactions he has with others. Stimulating encounters radiate positive energy whereas

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<sup>31</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 150

problematic encounters emanate negative energy. This energy that stems from the host-guest encounters has a direct impact on his life quality.

Interpersonal relationships as the interactions with others, whether they are family and friends or strangers and friends-to-be, are a particular way for LsEs to achieve their desired QoL, IR as a *modus operandi*.

**Finance** is the other element of the *modus operandi* layer and is defined as the managing of money matters. Based on the findings, the commercial home owners do not consider profit the main reason to have a home-based accommodation business. Still, all of them recognise the importance of the financial matters in their lives. Not surprisingly, taking into consideration that for the majority of the businesses (26 out of 38) the commercial home is the main source of family income. This implies that, for about two thirds of the businesses, both the monthly business bills and personal expenses are dependent on the income that it generates. Finance matters are necessarily a concern for LsEs, the business has to profit enough for them to be able to face those expenses and live the desired lifestyle. Profitability is something that assumes a significant concern on business management, and consequently on the personal life management as well. However the concern is only to a certain extent, as LsEs' perceived importance of money may vary from having enough money not to worry about it, to simply have money to survive.

A considerable part of the small businesses and tourism literature that studies LsEs, focus on their motivations to start such businesses. Authors seem to agree that non-financial motives are dominant in the start-up process and consequently money matters are not very important (Getz & Petersen, 2005). The desire to live a certain lifestyle and to be one's own boss seem to be the two predominant reasons to become a LsE. According to that same literature, the fact that LsEs mostly have non-financial motives somehow implies that their will to grow the business and make profit out of it is limited (Gray, 1986; Williams et al., 1989; Thomas et al., 1997) (for a further discussion on the topic see Chapter 2). These implications might be grounded in the capitalist driven society or might have been biased by an economical entrepreneurial view, that considers company growth and profit to be the measures of business success. Despite the fact that the present study did not focus on LsEs' motivations to open their businesses, findings bring a new

light into this topic, given that LsEs consider finance matters to be important to their life quality.

Financial issues as an important aspect of LsEs' perceived QoL indicate that it is something that they consciously think through and work with. LsEs concerns about finances begin even before the business start-up, as the weight of the initial investment can become a burden. Based on the findings, it seems that when entrepreneurs buy a house with the purpose of starting the business it tends to be a bigger financial burden, given the considerable initial investment. However, this financial burden is apparently felt whether the initial investment was made with own capital or through a loan. Participant CC illustrates the former, by mentioning that she spent a considerable amount of her personal money to add another unit to the business and that it was critical to get the money back as soon as possible. She added that that was the reason why she accepted one and two-night stays during the previous year, which she does not enjoy because of the increased amount of housework but considered it necessary to recover the money invested<sup>32</sup>. In other words, she accepted to trade quality of life for a quicker financial recovery. Participant SV, illustrates the latter, sharing that the big initial investment made through a loan combined with the seasonality of the business makes it challenging to repay the investment quickly<sup>33</sup>. In this particular case, she believes that if the business had more beds it would be quicker to pay back the loan to the bank, and she is considering increasing the number of beds. In both cases, the worries caused by the investment made are noticeable, and they appear to decrease participants' perception of QoL. These findings reinforce Peters, Frehse, and Buhalis (2009) argument on the expected decrease of QoL due to workload increase during the initial start-up phase.

Based on the collected data, it seems like LsEs take their financial responsibilities seriously and therefore consider business profitability as necessary to achieve the desired life quality. These findings are dissonant with the stream of authors who define LsEs as non-financially driven entrepreneurs (see for example Beaver, 2002; Dewhurst & Thomas, 2003). The findings are discordant with the idea of LsEs as entrepreneurs who found businesses based on personal and family concerns and therefore have no growth expectations or profit maximization goals (Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Maritz & Beaver, 2006;

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<sup>32</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 166

<sup>33</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 166

Morrison & Teixeira, 2004). Although LsEs might not enjoy the financial side of business as much as they enjoy the relational part of it, profitability is definitely something they keep in mind while daily managing their businesses.

One of their major concerns is to guarantee that they have sufficient income to face the overall monthly expenses, and they adopt different strategies to do so: (1) some participants decide to take advantage of the house premises to offer more services; (2) some decide to ensure a member of the family has a job that provides a steady income; (3) closing the business during low season is used as a strategy to minimise maintenance costs; (4) and lastly, some participants decide to grow the business.

(1) With the idea of getting additional income in mind, some participants use the commercial home and its surrounding space to sell other type of services. Participants MJ and BJ, for instance, combine MJ's expertise in a martial art – Chi Kung – with the space the home provides to give courses and workshops. Participant AV is planning on using the fruits and vegetables from the garden to produce organic jams that she intends to sell. Participant TS combines his love of hiking and offers hiking experiences to guests. These are some examples of supplementary services that LsEs create in order to overcome the financial challenges raised mainly by the seasonality of the business.

(2) Some participants, in particular those with the experience of full-time jobs, recognize the difference between having a steady income, and an unsteady one. The business income fluctuation brings some instability and consequently some financial challenges that impact negatively on their perceived life quality. Participant AR, combines the commercial home management with a part-time job in a local supermarket. She wants to manage the business full-time, however she is not willing to leave the supermarket job until she can reassure that the income generated by the business is enough to cover the business expenses and provide her sufficient funds to live a good life. On a slightly different note, it is interesting to recall participants' PP and JP experience, in particular JP's. He used to be a bank administrator and he shared that it was challenging to change from a high and stable income to an unstable one, adding *"I was used to a level of life, in particular a level of financial freedom that is completely different from what I have today. It is not even comparable!"* (JP, p: 1317-1322). The story of participant CM is an extreme example of the financial challenges LsEs may face and its consequences on their life quality: she gave up her job to fulfil her dream of having a home-based accommodation business. During the first couple of years the financial income was enough to face the

expenses and make a living for her and her son. However, in the third year the number of guests decreased, and the financial challenges started. She had no choice but to look for a full-time job that would provide her a steady income. Up until the interview date, participant CM has been working full time and managing the commercial home.

(3) Participant AV is considering the strategy of closing the business during the months of January and February to decrease the expenses<sup>34</sup>. Due to the low number of guests during those two months, it becomes more expensive to maintain the house. She argues that not only the electricity bills are much higher due to the heating system, as the amount of house work also increases because when it rains the house needs cleaning more often. The strategy adopted by Participant AV reveals the importance of managing the income generated taking into consideration the expenses in the way LsEs manage their businesses.

(4) Participant MM and her husband, in 1997, bought land with ruins with some money they unexpectedly inherited. As they started renovating the ruins into their family home, they decided to make their dream of having an accommodation business come true using the three spare rooms to rent out. Both MM and her husband lived from the income those rooms provided, and soon they realised that they had to expand the business in order to sustain the house, the business and the growing family. Almost twenty years have passed since they welcomed their first guest, and the business keeps on expanding every year not only in number of rooms but also with additional services like meals, yoga classes, horse riding among others. Participants NL and CN have a similar story, they decided to leave their jobs in the Netherlands to start an accommodation business in Alentejo. Initially they just had a couple of rooms to rent out but in order to be able to make a living out of the business they decided to slowly increase the number of bedrooms. In the last year they expanded the business with the acquisition of nearby land where they built four separate small houses to rent. These two examples suggest that under particular circumstances, related to both personal and financial aspects, LsEs may want their businesses to grow in order to achieve a better QoL. Namely, when the income is not enough for LsEs to make a living from it, business growth appears to be a possible solution.

Thus, an important finding of the present study is the relative importance of financial issues to LsEs' perception of QoL. Although profit is not the main goal for the majority

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<sup>34</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p.167

of the participants, it definitely is something important to them, something that they worry about and are confronted with on a daily basis. Particularly when faced with financial challenges which tend to decrease their perception of QoL. Considering that being able to achieve the desired QoL is one of their biggest ambitions, those challenges push them to think of alternative ways to increase business profit and in some cases it ends up being one of the causes for product diversification and growth. LsEs take profitability into consideration while managing their businesses and try to maximise those earnings in order to be able to live the desired lifestyle. However, they do not wish to profit just to have more money. They do not want to focus solely on profit because in their view having money is not what increases their self-perception of QoL. Furthermore, LsEs are not willing to sacrifice their QoL over profit maximisation (Peters & Schuckert, 2014). Money is a means not an end, or using Getz and Carlsen's (2000) words, it is important for business owners to achieve a level of financial independence through their businesses. Financial capital is something that is needed to keep the business and the lifestyle, so how much LsEs want to profit from the business depends on the style of life they want to live. How LsEs feel about themselves, their values, the way they live and what they have accomplished from a personal stand point is far more important than having a big savings account. Participants MT & TT's story is good to show the importance of personal accomplishment in regard to business profitability. They deliberately choose to open the business from mid-October to mid-April every year, rejecting booking requests and expansion suggestions from guests. They work hard half of the year to make sure they have enough funds to support the house and their lifestyle when the business is closed, but they do it by choice. They do it because they get the sense of self-realisation from travelling, visiting family, enjoying each other's company in the different spaces they have created on the house premises, and from developing personal projects, which they do during the six months the business is closed. In MT's words: *"(...) just to keep on challenging myself, to learn other things, and also be a more interesting person to talk to in those six months when you do have guests and not to tell the same story over and over again."* (MT, p. 398-400).

Findings also suggest the existence of growth potential and product diversification in these small businesses. The evidence indicates that in some cases product diversification is the chosen way to deal with financial trials. It is somehow expected that some LsEs, at a given point along their entrepreneurial journey, choose that path and for example

combine their hobbies with new additional services for their guests as hinted by the given examples.

This brings the discussion to the relative importance of money for LsEs. The degree to which the money is important varies, and as previously suggested by Lynch (1999) it should not be underestimated. Grounded in the findings a typology of LsEs was identified based on the relative importance they attribute to money. This typology is broken into three categories: survival, gratification, and abundance. Survival applies to LsEs that need money to survive, i.e. they want to profit enough to keep the business running and face the daily expenses. As long as survival is guaranteed from a financial perspective, the non-material benefits of having a commercial home are enough for them to have a high perception of QoL. Gratification describes those LsEs that want to have some extra money that allows them to do things they enjoy, such as travelling, dining and buying things related to their hobbies. For this group of entrepreneurs being able to do some activities that gives them pleasure enhances their perception of QoL. Therefore, it is important for them to profit enough to have the extra money that allows them to do what they like. Abundance defines the group of LsEs that want to profit enough not to worry about money. They want to have a steady income that frees them from all the financial worries and allows them to do what they like without financial restrictions. These entrepreneurs see money as a source of QoL. The two last categories, gratification and abundance, include the LsEs that are more likely to want their businesses to expand and diversify.

In summary, the *modus operandi* layer is composed of the themes IR and F and is more pragmatic in essence. IR and F are the tools used by LsEs to achieve their *modus vivendi* (top layer). They use IR as a mean to achieve their self-realisation, and F as a tool to keep the business running. *Modus operandi* is then composed of the instruments used by LsEs to ascend to *modus vivendi*. IR reflects the relational nature of LsEs, corroborating the idea of LsEs as people with a real interest in people. Relationships are an end in themselves, as LsEs want to establish meaningful connections with like-minded others. In order to establish such connections, they use themselves and their home as vehicles to express their feelings and emotions. The encounter with the other makes them reflect upon themselves, given that every encounter leaves a different impression on them, changing whom they perceive themselves to be. This reflexive journey based on

encounters with guests leads LsEs to their self-realisation as will be discussed in the next section. F is related to the management of money matters and encompasses LsEs' views on profitability and the importance of money. Financial matters appear to be a common concern for LsEs from early stages of the start-up creation, affecting their perception of QoL. Profitability assumes a relevant part in the way commercial homes are managed, and subsequently on how LsEs manage their personal lives. Additionally, the perceived importance of money may affect the level of profitability required by LsEs to maintain the preferred style of life, and consequently their wish to diversify the product or expand the business in order to meet the desired profit.

#### 6.4. QoL of LsEs | Top layer: *Modus vivendi* – SR and O

As discussed in the previous sections, LsEs perceive QoL as a mixture of different elements, the two most relevant ones are self-realisation and occupation. Findings highlight their importance and suggest that QoL relies heavily on how fulfilled LsEs are with their personal and professional lives. SR and O sum up the way of living LsEs want to achieve, hence the choice of *modus vivendi* to name this layer of the conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs.

SR is conceptualised as a desire to reach a space where LsEs feel good in their own skin, where they assume control over their lives, reach their personal aspirations, and manage the time according to their preferences. O reflects the connection between LsEs and their home accommodation businesses in a more pragmatic way. It folds into a more practical perspective that includes how the daily tasks and managerial decisions impact on LsEs life quality, and the emotional bonding between the owner and the business. The following paragraphs will clarify the conceptual definitions for self-realisation and occupation as well as their significance for LsEs QoL, and further explain the link between them.

Primary research findings suggest that **SR**, defined as the realisation of one's own potential, abilities or goals, is the most important theme contributing towards LsEs' QoL. LsEs notion of SR comprises different elements: the first one is the level of control over the personal and professional spheres, LsEs like to be in control of their lives; the second element is related to the projection and accomplishment of LsEs personal aspirations; and the last one is the notion of time and the importance of managing it in accordance with personal preferences. Findings suggest that these three elements are connected to one and



other. To be in control of one's life, comprises the recognition of one's own self and the belief that one's actions and choices provide the power to "master own fate"<sup>35</sup>. To achieve an updated version of the self, it seems necessary to engage in a reflexive journey that is guided by the knowledge one has about oneself. Who LsEs perceive themselves to be is pushed towards what they want to become through the knowledge they possess about themselves. That self-knowledge is gathered in every encounter<sup>36</sup>, every situation they are faced with, and continually feeds their reflexive journey. The notion of time and how time is managed by LsEs is the last element of SR. Time appears to be flexible based on LsEs perception. Some hours seem to last longer than others and some days appear to have more than 24 hours. Time tends to be in tune with LsEs feelings and moods, it sets the *tempo* for the symphony of self-realisation.

To **be in control** of one's own life is regarded by LsEs as a springboard to achieve a better life quality. From their perspective, to be the master of one's own fate presumes control over both the professional and personal domains. The importance of the professional occupation in LsEs' lives is significant for three main reasons. Firstly, because it is part of their self-realisation aim, it is part of the life style they chose, LsEs wish to have a professional occupation that they really enjoy, something that empowers them in achieving a sense of fulfilment. Secondly, because how they feel about their occupation directly affects their personal realm. The line that separates what is personal and what is professional seems to be very tenuous, even more flimsy when considering how feelings and emotions trespass on the professional and personal realms. Lastly, and likely the most obvious and practical reason, is the need of having a financial income to live the life they aspire to.

Primary data informs that the possibility of controlling the professional sphere is one of the main reasons for participants to open an accommodation home-based business and change lifestyle. LsEs believe that to have control over their professional life gives them a set of privileges, namely: being one's own boss; having the power to make decisions; be free; be independent; and have a flexible schedule, among others. These elements were previously acknowledged in the tourism literature as non-profit oriented motivations to start-up small businesses (see for example Ahmad, Jabeen, & Khan, 2014; Carree &

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<sup>35</sup> From the Victorian poem *Invictus* written by William Ernest Henley

<sup>36</sup> Through the imprints left by the presence of others, discussed in p. 236

Verheul, 2012; Feldman & Bolino, 2000). Being one's own boss and being independent, for instance, have been identified as amongst the major reasons for entrepreneurs to start up a venture, regardless of the industry (Bredvold & Skålen, 2016). Getz and Carlsen (2000) found that independence is among the main start-up goals for small tourism businesses in Western Australia. Authors believe that the feeling of independence is composed of the following elements: financial independence, prestige, and the possibility of being one's own boss. In a later study conducted in Denmark and Canada, Getz and Petersen (2005) reinforced the importance of autonomy-related goals, such as being one's own boss and financial independence, amongst owners' motivations to start a tourism related business. Furthermore, Peters and Schuckert (2014) in their exploratory study on tourism entrepreneurs' life quality, highlighted the connection established by participants between the ideas of entrepreneurship and freedom. According to the authors, the results suggest that participants perceive entrepreneurship as freedom to make decisions, be creative, and have flexibility.

Based on the literature and on the research findings, it appears that from the LsEs viewpoint having a business and being one's own boss increases their perception of autonomy. That increased sense of being autonomous, in turn, makes them feel like they are independent and have the power to make decisions. It is the combination of these feelings that generates the idea of freedom. Freedom perceived as the possibility of doing what LsEs prefer to do, of choosing what they consider more appropriate to the style of life they envision, of working in tune with their own values and preferences. LsEs concept of freedom appears to be defined in great measure by the increased level of control over the personal and, in particular, the professional life. These findings add a layer of understanding to the current LsE literature concerning the relevance of being one's own boss, making decisions and flexibility. They are more than a motivation to start the business, they are what gives LsEs the sense of freedom. Feeling free and having the control over one's life are what opens the path for self-realisation, creating the conditions for LsEs to live the life they aspire to.

During the conversations held with LsEs regarding the definition of QoL, the relevance that aspects related to their professional sphere have on their perceived life quality was very noticeable. In particular issues that do not please them, like having to do what they are told, having to do things that they do not agree with, dealing with a manager that

personally they do not like, the nine-to-five fixed schedule, having to work more hours, or the dress code. Additionally, it is noteworthy to emphasise that the aspects they value the most in regard to how they conceive QoL, such as freedom, autonomy, flexibility, and being one's own boss can be seen as being diametrically opposed to what did not please them when they were working for someone else. For example, they did not like to do what they were told versus valuing making decisions, or not enjoying the fixed nine-to-five schedule versus appreciating flexibility. It seems that changing from being an employee in an organisation to have a home-based accommodation business transforms the things that made LsEs feel dissatisfied with into privileges. These set of privileges seem to be less accessible when working for others in the contemporary capitalist-driven society, they tend to be put on a dormant mode by the frantic daily work routine and workplace politics. In that chaotic environment LsEs tend to lose sight of themselves, they struggle to recognise who they are, there seems to be a gap between who they are and what the work makes them do.

It is relevant to reflect on the emphasis given by participants to aspects related to their professional sphere, when discussing how life quality is perceived. One possible explanation for such is the nefarious impact that the professional realm can have on LsEs' perceived life quality, almost as if the unhappiness and dissatisfaction felt at the workplace contaminated their personal life. Another justification might be the conviction of control over the personal realm. Whereas the control over the personal domain is believed to be taken for granted, taking into consideration that it is mainly dependent on oneself, that is not the case when it comes to the professional sphere, particularly when one works for someone else. In such cases, control over professional issues is limited to one's scope of action and bounded by an organisation's goals and a manager's behavioural approach. Indeed, workplace politics are part of the organisational life (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981) and are accepted as an instrument to achieve work-related goals (Kurchner-Hawkins & Miller, 2006; Liu, Liu, & Wu, 2010). Attaining those goals, in some cases, becomes a political process requiring the use of power and influence (Judge & Bretz, 1994; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Workplace politics may pose several implications to employees, namely: poor well-being (Webster, Adams, Maranto, & Beehr, 2018); occupational stress (Vigoda, 2002); anxiety (Ferris et al., 1996; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson, & Anthony, 1999); fatigue, tension and even burnout (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997). One of the sources of employees' poor

well-being is their perception of political behaviours as immoral or as an attempt to protect self-interests (Ferris & Treadway, 2012). This perception seems to be a common ground for the interviewed LsEs who left their work to start the business. Work politics had had a negative impact on their perception of life quality because as employees, they felt they were somehow obliged to act in a way that goes against their beliefs, principles, values and aspirations, as mentioned by participant CF:

*When you work in a big company there are several rules that you have to follow as an employee, despite not agreeing with it, right? And there was something in the company I was working for that caused me discomfort... it was almost as if we were forgetting the clients that helped the company to grow (...) this disloyalty has nothing to do with me and it disturbed me. (CF, p. 1105-1115)*

As CF insinuates, the dissonance between what they were asked to do as employees and their self-image had an undeniable and overwhelming effect on their perceived level of life quality. It was common among the conversations held with participants to listen to the negative impact of the previous job on their personal lives, and how it contributed to a lower perception of QoL. Being someone else's employee was affecting how they were feeling, mostly an unhappy and unfulfilled sensation, as expressed by participant MT:

*I couldn't do all the tasks in one week, and then you feel that you are getting behind all the work (...) and the work gets more and more, and more and more hours, and more tasks and then it doesn't... it didn't fulfil me so to say. So I wasn't happy with what I was doing (...) I think when you choose a job and you are happy doing that, it fulfils you and you go back home with a good feeling, and you get energy out of that (...) it's not always happy time at work but at least you have to have the overall feeling you are learning something and that you are getting better at what you do, and you go home not only tired but also with a good feeling. And I did not have that anymore. I was just so stressed (...) I couldn't handle the stress any more when my phone went off, I was going off too [laugh]. It was like aaaaah what do I do? (MT, p. 28-41)*

Like a domino effect, the negative impact of the job bounces on themselves, their family and close relationships. It appears to affect not only LsEs' life quality but also how they perceive themselves, their self-identity. They do not feel good with the life they are living. There appears to be a feeling of disconnection between the person they aspire to be and the person they are forced to be by the employer. Almost as if they are being dishonest

towards their own self, because despite knowing the source of unhappiness they persist with the daily routine that does not bring them closer to who they want to be. Participant Pa's reference to how hard it is to disconnect from the "system" one is involved with<sup>37</sup>, elucidates this point soundly.

LsEs constantly battle to become what they consider a better version of themselves. When work politics set them away from whom they want to be, they struggle to set themselves free from the tempting recognition offered by the "system", whether in the form of status, financial rewards or others. Indeed, findings suggest that one of the reasons for LsEs to change their lifestyle and abandon the nine-to-five job is the clash between personal values and work politics. The gap between who they are and who they want to be appears to force participants to question what they are doing with their lives, pushing them to find solutions that will bring them closer to who they aspire to be. This questioning, in turn, forces LsEs to reflect upon their lives and what they want to achieve and become, which in the suggested conceptual framework is the link between being in control and personal aspirations.

To be able to define and accomplish one's **personal aspirations** appears to be what guides LsE choices. Following that line of argument, it can be claimed that personal aspirations are the compass to self-realisation. Being able to set goals and achieve them gives LsEs the feeling of fulfilment and the will to set new ambitions. Participants believe that it is crucial to know themselves in order to achieve their aspirations and become an updated version of what they are. It seems to be a cyclic endeavour that starts with the recognition of what they are and have, followed by the definition of what they want to personally and professionally achieve, and then by the efforts made in order to accomplish the outlined goals. Once the objectives are completed, it is time to restart the cycle, recognise what they are capable of achieving and setting new goals. To keep the cycle running, LsEs use the knowledge about themselves and the accommodation business they started. This is in line with the argument made by Morrison, Rimmington, and Williams (1999) regarding the use of economic activities by entrepreneurs to achieve favourable circumstances for personal fulfilment. The findings reinforce this idea, as the interviewed LsEs use the accommodation business they started on their home premises in order to achieve their personal goals and increase their feeling of self-realisation and as a

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<sup>37</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 122

consequence their perception of life quality. Home is the space where LsEs can live the life they chose. Home is the workplace. The job is part of the lifestyle. In this sense, home unifies the personal and professional spheres, transforming LsEs' life experience into one that feels less compartmented and more authentic. This feeling of authenticity arrives from the unity they are able to reach in their lives. By choosing to pair home and work, the personal and the professional realms, LsEs faded the boundaries that separated them. What once was fragmented becomes united by LsEs commitment to living an honest and whole life centred on the self.

Holland and Martin (2015) in their study on work choices of high skilled migrants living and working in Chamonix, found that migrants tangle work and lifestyle in such a way that it becomes a reflection of the self. The focus seems to be on attaining a meaningful role, and in order to achieve it, migrants break the boundaries between work and non-work. The present research findings are similar to those of Holland and Martin (2015) in the importance given to the sense of fulfilment by participants and their will to dissolve the barriers between work and life. Albeit, the present research findings add to the work of the authors, in the sense that for the interviewed LsEs the main goal is not to have a meaningful job or to balance work and life, but to have a meaningful life. The ambition is to feel accomplished with every aspect of one's life, including the professional. That fulfilling life cannot be reached if the job is not meaningful because all the other aspects of their life are contaminated by the negative influences of a non-fulfilling job. With the intention of maximising the chances of having a whole and harmonious life, guided by personal values and preferences, LsEs chose to open a home-based accommodation business.

The interviewed entrepreneurs seem to be self-reflective people, on a personal reflexive journey. The journey starts at the very heart of the entrepreneur – at whom they perceive themselves to be – and is guided by their own feelings, emotions, values and aspirations. The start of this reflexive journey, in the case of participants that chose to leave behind their previous professional life to invest in a fulfilled and happier self, was incited by the cumulation of events in which the self was shredded between its essence and what the job was forcing them to be. It was the “feeling blue” mood after a working-day that ignited the reflexive process that led them to change. The catalysts for the continuous (re)shaping of the self are the most powerful encounters with others and moments they live, as

discussed before (see section 5.3. – interpersonal relationships), and the chosen setting is the premises of their own home-businesses.

With reference to SR, the most important encounter seems to be the one with the self. The moment(s) in which LsEs reflect upon the impression left by some encounters or situations on themselves. That imprint makes them look deeper into themselves, gain a consolidated perception of who they are, and cogitate on who they want to become. These findings can be considered through Giddens theory presented in the book *Modernity and Self-identity*. In Giddens (1991) conception of self-identity in late modernity “the self is not a passive entity, determined by external references” (p. 2). On the contrary, the self is continually shaped through reflexivity. Self-identity is “the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography” (p. 53). The reflexive journey aims to maintain a coherent self-narrative, that is permanently adjusted by the choices one makes. The continuous work on oneself is the engine of the “reflexive project of the self” (p. 5). Looking at the findings through Giddens’ self-identity theory lens, LsEs enthusiasm for achieving a better life quality can be regarded as a product of the self-reflexive journey. LsEs deliberately chose to work on themselves as a way of achieving the desired QoL. Metaphorically, even the fact that they chose to work from home strengthens this idea, considering that by opening their house to strangers they are also opening themselves to others. And by doing so, they are increasing the possibilities of meaningful encounters that keeps them on track in their reflexive journey. The chosen lifestyle empowers them to achieve an updated version of themselves. Their lifestyle is a self-determining choice used to rewrite their self-narratives<sup>38</sup>.

The notion of time and how it is managed is crucial for LsEs’ sense of self-realisation and quality of life. Being able to manage time according to their preferences, is seen an extension of having a flexible schedule and controlling their life. It is considered a benefit of the chosen lifestyle. LsEs feel that they have time, recognising the luxury it represents to be able to manage their own time with less external pressures, such as working for someone else, daily traffic jams and so forth. In the current society metrics prevail in almost every aspect of one’s life, and time is no exception. People are forced to fit their lives into 24 daily hours. Every single aspect of one’s life has to be squeezed into the available time: work, family, hobbies, sleep, nutrition, among others. Life seems to be

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<sup>38</sup> For a deeper discussion on this topic see section 2.6

reduced to a mathematical equation, and everyone is trying to determine how to balance that equation. Even more challenging, irrespective of the number and importance of the features one wants to add to the equation, it must equal the inflexible and unaccommodating 24 daily hours. Spending five more minutes with one activity, necessarily means that there are five minutes less with the others. Time is used in the manner of legendary *Chronos*, the Greek god of time that represents the destructive ravages of time, consuming all things. The findings suggest that participants challenge this quantitative, metric and inflexible notion of time. In their perspective time is measured in a subjective way, deeply linked with the quality of the moment. A few minutes can feel like much more than that. For example, with a fully booked home, a couple of hours resting feel like mini holidays, as mentioned by participant TT:

*Two hours we fall asleep because we are tired and then enjoy it like it's a mini holiday  
(...) those 2 hours can be a fully charged battery again. (TT, pp. 432-33;435)*

From the participants' view, to be able to control time by spending it on what they want to do, adds to the feeling of freedom. Time is a precious resource and having a home-based accommodation business gives them the possibility of spending that time the way they prefer to. Leaving dormant the pressure of a structured and minutely scheduled working environment. It is agreed among participants that being able to decide what to do with their time, being the owner of time, is invaluable. Time assumes a different form, one that is more flexible and more subjectively biased by how LsEs feel. It seems to be the weight of the choice that empowers LsEs. They chose to have a CHE and they appear to feel less constrained with some work-related schedules that they follow on a daily basis, such as checking-out guests or serving breakfast. Those programmed activities are perceived as necessary to a greater good: have a sense of self-realisation.

In summary, for the group of interviewed LsEs, the concept of **self-realisation** is the element that has a bigger impact on their perception of QoL. It also is the component that brings all the elements together, location, home, personal preferences, interpersonal relationships and finance are what LsEs need and the tools they use to achieve a sense of fulfilment. SR seems to be built upon the ideals of freedom and independence. It is the increased level of control over their lives that allows them to embark on a journey from their actual self to an updated version of the self. That SR journey (see Fig. 9) starts with how LsEs perceive themselves (self-identity) and the knowledge they possess about who



they are (self-knowledge). The self-knowledge combined with a home-based business that gives them the perception of control over their life, empowers them (self-empowerment) to become what they aspire to be (self-actualisation). This journey is cyclical, every time there is an actualisation it is followed by a new perception of who they became, and the SR cycle starts again.

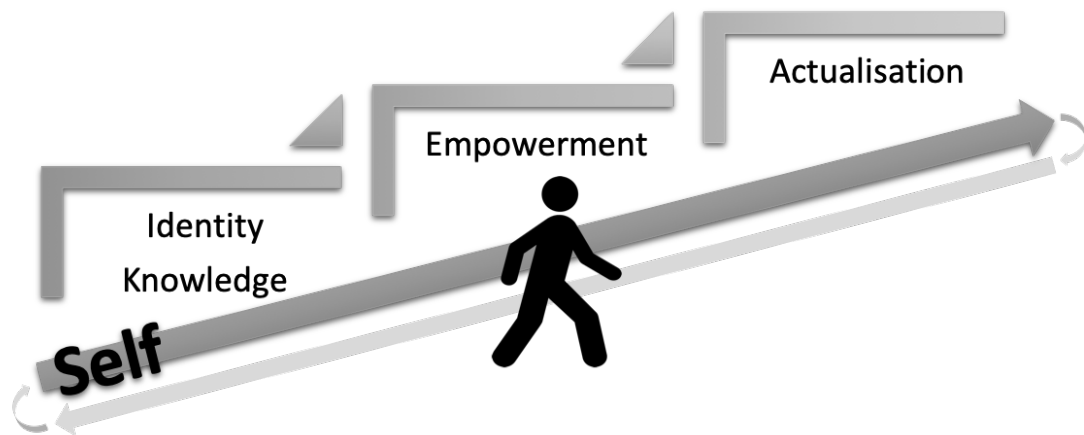


Figure 9. SR journey

In the proposed QoL conceptual framework, **occupation** is part of the *modus vivendi* layer and it is defined as the aspects related to owners' daily tasks and business management. As discussed before, LsEs purposefully break down the barriers between their personal and professional life to increase their sense of SR. Furthermore, findings suggest that how LsEs manage their CHE on a daily basis, the emotional relationship they have with the business and their future commercial plans also have a significant impact on their life quality. These themes and their relation to LsEs perception of QoL will be discussed in detail throughout this section. Before discussing the themes, it is noteworthy to mention that literature on tourism entrepreneurs tends not to focus on the relationship between the owners and their businesses. Studies that prompt an understanding of LsEs daily life, work load, the impact of managing a CHE on their lives, and other topics as such are very scarce. It is also relevant to add that O is inseparable from SR, because from the LsE view point SR includes all the aspects of one's life and they aim to live a holistic life, as discussed previously. The reason for O to be part of the *modus vivendi* layer, side by side with SR, is the impact of the practical managerial aspects of the business on LsEs' life quality, for better and for worst.

For the interviewed LsEs, their commercial home is not merely their professional occupation. The relationship between the owners and their businesses is strong and quite significant as it involves an emotional tie. The owner-business emotional attachment does not emerge as a surprise taking into consideration the following points. Firstly, to start a home accommodation business was a deliberate choice that incorporated and propelled the owners' desire to change their way of living, and in the majority of the cases to improve life quality. Secondly, the business is part of both their private and professional lives; home is work and work is home; leisure is work and work is leisure. As previously discussed, CHE owners tend to prefer living a holistic life, decreasing the boundaries between the different spheres of their lives. Lastly, LsEs are inclined to manage the business according to their preferences and beliefs. The product they offer to guests is a reflection of their own self. For all these reasons, owners feel emotionally attached to their home-business, and more than that, they see themselves as the business.

LsEs are the business and the business is an extension of who they are. Private and public, personal and professional are blended. It is hard for hosts to separate them in their daily lives, as mentioned for example by participant CF when she said that her solution to deal with the intensity of the business is to consider the personal life as part of the business and vice-versa<sup>39</sup>. The business is felt as part of themselves, hence criticisms and complements to the commercial home are also towards them and they take it personally. Using participant PR's words the business is her and her husband and to criticise the business is to criticise them<sup>40</sup>. LsEs use the business they created to express themselves, to expose who they are (their selves) and how they feel (their emotions), as discussed in the previous section.

The business being an extension of themselves can be partially explained by the agency of liquid sociological expressionism<sup>41</sup>. Additionally, the sociological expressionism is part of how LsEs construct their self-narrative. The business, therefore, is an element of their autobiographical narrative. It is at the same time the way they make sense of their own journey and a communication vehicle to tell their story to others. The business is both the context of the story in which they are the central character with a personal

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<sup>39</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 137

<sup>40</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 137

<sup>41</sup> See definition (p. 213)

mission: searching for a fulfilled life through constantly revising the self, and the tool LsEs use to achieve SR.

This feeling of continuity between the private and the professional dimensions, together with LsEs' expectation of living a fulfilled life appears to influence the way LsEs perceive work. Indeed, it seems to be one of the reasons why they tend to associate work with pleasure. Participant TP<sup>42</sup> for example recognises that despite being work, managing the B&B does not feel like work. Participant EI<sup>43</sup> adds that even though it is very demanding it is also an immense pleasure. Participant Is<sup>44</sup> goes a bit further sharing that she chooses to look at her daily work from a different angle, focusing on what makes her happy. It seems like LsEs deliberately associate work with pleasure. It appears to be a conscious choice to help them achieving the desired life quality.

Through the lens of the paradox of choice, proposed by Schwartz (2005), the more choices available, the further resources are needed to deal with the decision making process, the higher the likelihood of regretting the choice made, and the less full appreciation for what one has. Applying this concept to LsEs' reality, one can argue that by choosing to open a business using the premises of their home, they have reduced the available choices. Moreover, by choosing to associate work with pleasure they are further reducing their choices. The alternative is to manage the business and complete the daily tasks, ensuring the business runs smoothly, and at the same time, they are enjoying their work. LsEs recognize and assume that their lives are a mixture of professional and personal, as summarised by participant CN<sup>45</sup>. It appears to be a thoughtful choice, and apparently the solution of breaking down the barriers between private and professional works well for them, as they seem to perceive having a better QoL since they are their own bosses.

The assumption of thinner or non-existent barriers between the professional and personal spheres makes one question if it really works from a pragmatic perspective. Based on the gathered data, a lot of times it does not work at all. Participant SV, for example, considers the fluidity between personal and professional life the most damaging thing about her

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<sup>42</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 136

<sup>43</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 136

<sup>44</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 136

<sup>45</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 136

work<sup>46</sup>. There are various occasions in which work overtakes LsEs' personal life. Not surprisingly, if one considers that to manage a home-based accommodation business, without employees like the majority of the interviewed participants, requires the owners to work from dusk till dawn.

The focus of the conversations with participants was the topic of QoL, in particular how they define the concept and what it encompasses<sup>47</sup>. During the conversations some conflicting opinions were noted regarding the idea of "work as pleasure". Although LsEs talked about the business as an instrument to reach the desired life quality due to the control and freedom they can get from it, when describing the day to day activities the tone changed substantially. It appears that the business that gives LsEs the possibility of reaching the desired QoL, is at the same time, what consumes and imprisons them. Sometimes the workload is just too much, other times it feels like they do not have full control after all:

*In all honesty the only thing that... the only reason why I can't tell you that my quality of life is spot on is because I work 24/7 (CF, 773-776)*

*(...) the thing I find difficult is that it's, you know, it's not Monday to Friday, it's not nine to five, and again neither of our jobs were that either but, you know, you can't leave the office and come home and be at home, you know, and, especially when you have lot of guests and we do get people, you know, wanting things coming up to the house or needing things and, you know, nearly all of that is absolutely justifiable and it's fine, it's just you find... it can be quite intrusive on your life, you know, you get to the end of the day and you just want to sit down and put your feet up because you've been on the go all day... Yeah, another glass of wine. And, you know.... there is a knock on the door and you think "Oh! What now?!" (...) (PR and TR, 1344-1353)*

From the previous quotes it becomes clear that having a home accommodation business has its downsides. It is hard work. When the house is full of guests the owners have little time for themselves and for what they enjoy doing, and even during what they believe to be their personal or family time, they can be interrupted. The total control over their lives,

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<sup>46</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 137

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed discussion on the theme, see section 3.6.1

on some occasions, appears to escape between all the tasks they have to accomplish in a day. What they believed to be freedom turns into captivity:

*(...) this [the business] is a huge prison (...) what jeopardises my quality of life is being locked here. (Jq, 472; 516)*

*(...) I cannot leave home because there is always someone arriving (...) I am in prison, in my own home, but imprisoned. (PP, 998;1287)*

Important to note that despite knowing that managing a CHE is hard work, and notwithstanding the feelings of imprisonment, LsEs seem to prefer their current life as owners of a home-based accommodation business in comparison to the life they had before. They believe they have more life quality as owner-managers because they consider themselves to be in control. However, they deal with the tyranny of the guest, they work 24/7, they are prisoners in their own home, they are forced to postpone their preferred activities to periods in which they close down the business, and so forth. It seems, then, that LsEs trick themselves with the promise of days to come in which they can do whatever they want. They work 24/7 while their homes are open to guests knowing that after the high-season they will have their home to themselves again, and 24 daily hours to spend according to their preferences. LsEs know that after the hard work they will be rewarded with full control over their lives again. The certainty of being able to be free and in total control of their lives when the business is closed, seems to be one of the things that keeps them motivated through the hardships of the high-season:

*We are open eight months per year because we really need the other four months to recover and do our own things like go on holidays. Because we work 24 hours per day almost. Seven days a week. It is too much, you know? (TS, p. 119-123)*

*We need to have time for us. A lot of people say that closing the business for four months is a very long holiday, but if you sum up all the weekends, days off work... if you sum it all up you have almost four months. (Cr, p. 115-118)*

*In the beginning we closed for one and a half or two months, later we closed for three and a half, later for five and now we close for six months (...) when we are open, you give it your all but then need to be a time for us. For some people not, but for us there needs to be a time to switch off. (TT, p. 429-431; 514-516)*

LsEs believe that they can, for example, close the business whenever they want to, because they are the ones in control. However, when the moment comes, they have to face the hard reality of being the ones responsible for the business. Having guests makes them postpone dinners with friends, sport sessions, and miss important family events like the one reported by participant TR:

*For instance, last year... my mother (...) was visiting her daughter and she fell down the stairs and broke her neck (...) She ended up being in a nursing home (...) she was 95 and she died in the nursing home, but I had to come back before the funeral. Simply because of my commitment here. You can't walk away from it, you can't say no (...) that's isn't an option. You have responsibilities to your guests. (TR, 1278-1287)*

It is interesting to mention that the issues related to the intensity of the job, such as the need for a break, need additional help, choice of closing the business longer periods, and the feeling of being under house arrest emerged almost camouflaged by all the perceived benefits of having a commercial home. In other words, despite acknowledging the fact that managing a CHE implies high dedication to work, participants tend to rationalize it with the advantages of having such a business, in particular with the perception of being free and having control over the business. A possible explanation for such is LsEs' unwillingness to construct their autobiographical narrative based on the things that they least enjoy. Contrarily, they want to immerse their lives with fulfilment, they want to be better and happier than they already are. It might also be because they want to portray an image of a happy and accomplished self, even in the days in which the commercial home feels like a prison. By doing so, LsEs are at the same time protecting the self from the feeling of disenchantment or failure and portraying to others an image of fulfilment and self-realisation. That image adds consistency to their autobiographic narrative and possibly reinforces the self-confidence they need to keep searching for a better version of themselves.

A possible explanation for such is the concept of spillover, developed within the context of work and leisure literature, in which the satisfactions of work overflow into leisure (Adler & Adler, 1999). In the case of LsEs, the relationships they establish with guests, working from home and being their own bosses, spills over to their leisure time, making them perceive their life in a more favourable way. It compensates their inaccurate idea of the business as the best solution to achieve the desired life quality. Another possible

justification is the self-fulfilling prophecy as defined by Merton in 1968. According to the author “The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour, which makes the originally false conception true.” (Merton, 1968, p. 477). In other words, Merton noted that in some cases believing in something brings about results that make the reality match the belief. The self-fulfilling prophecy appears to be an adequate explanation for LsEs’ perception of QoL: LsEs believe that having a home-based accommodation business allows them to feel free and be in control of their lives, that belief in turn makes them look at work intensity in a more positive way and as a consequence LsEs perceive having a better life quality.

The literature perpetuates the idea that LsEs chose to increase their life quality by decreasing the amount of work, arguing that work is used to fund the lifestyle (Chen & Elston, 2013; Holland & Martin, 2015). However, the conversations with participants allowed this other view on their daily lives, one where work seems to take over all their lives, depriving them from doing their favourite activities. One in which the workload is very intense, so intense that LsEs feel like prisoners in their own home and miss important family moments. This other side of LsEs’ lives is probably one of the most relevant findings of the present research, allowing one to look at LsE life choices beyond the shininess of the lifestyle label and outside the limits of LsEs motivations to start-up the business.

In summary, SR and O form the first and most important layer of the conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs: *modus vivendi*. SR is defined as the realisation of one’s own potential, abilities or goals and it encompasses the ideas of being in control of own life, achieving personal aspirations and a different notion of time. O is defined as the aspects related to owners’ daily tasks and business management and reflects the fluidity between LsEs’ personal and professional lives. *Modus vivendi* reflects LsEs’ need to feel satisfied with their personal and professional lives at any given moment in time. The relationship between what they want to become (SR) and the vehicle to achieve it (O) is complex and intricate: a hologram of self. It mirrors the continuous and perpetual actualisation journey from the present self to an updated version of the self, where self-knowledge feeds the reflexive expedition into a somehow sincerer existence and therefore a higher perception of QoL. O is at the same time the means to achieve an updated version of the self, and the trap that slows down LsEs’ journey. O represents the sociological imperative of having

to make money to be able to survive in the liquid modernity and its consequences. It embodies reality challenging LsEs' ideology.

## 6.5 Chapter summary

It is challenging to put in to words the meaning of QoL, as participant TT<sup>48</sup> said. Not only because of the challenge it represents trying to define it with words, but also because it signifies different things to different people. Furthermore, it can assume diverse meanings in distinctive moments of one's life. QoL appears to be an intangible concept that LsEs make tangible through the commercialisation of their home. In the present research I have systematised the common issues mentioned by participants when defining QoL. Identifying the similarities among the interpersonal distinctive discourses of the interviewees, allowed me to create and develop a conceptual framework of what QoL is from the LsEs' perspective. That conceptual framework was presented in detail in this chapter, and the following lines will summarize it.

In the LsEs' perspective, QoL is a mixture of different elements: location, personal preferences, home, interpersonal relationships, finance, self-realisation and occupation. The first three components form the *desiderata* layer. L, PP and H are LsEs' prerequisites to start their home-based accommodation businesses. By the time the business starts running, these three preconditions have been met, which is the apparent reason for their relative lesser importance to QoL. L illustrates the importance of having good accessibility and surrounding environment. PP reflects the relevance of the alignment between LsEs' hobbies, preferences and values. And H mirrors the tripartite concept in which LsEs' life happens, i.e. home as home, home as work, and home as guests' home. *Modus operandi* is the second layer, and is composed of IR and F. These themes are more important to LsEs' life quality than the ones in *desiderata* as they are the tools used by CHE owners to achieve *modus vivendi*. In other words, LsEs use IR as a mean to achieve self-realisation, and F as a tool to keep the business running. IR reflects the relational nature of LsEs, who want to establish meaningful connections with like-others, using themselves and their homes as vehicles to express their feelings and emotions. F is associated with the management of money matters and includes LsEs' opinions about profitability and the importance of money. Financial matters are a concern for LsEs from early stages of the start-up creation, and it affects their perception of QoL.

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<sup>48</sup> Quote in findings chapter, p. 112



*Modus vivendi* sums up the way of living LsEs want to achieve, and includes the two themes that have a bigger impact on LsEs' perception of QoL: SR and O. This layer explores the relationship between what LsEs want to become (SR) and the means to achieve it (O), using the idea of an uninterrupted actualisation journey from the present self to an updated version of the self. SR is defined as the realisation of one's own potential, abilities or goals. O encompasses the aspects related to owners' daily tasks and business management.

Based on the previous discussion, QoL of LsEs is defined as "one's perceived satisfaction with the realisation self, in relation to personal aspirations, and contextualised in one's culture and value system". The perceived level of satisfaction with the self is achieved through a self-reflexive journey and takes place on the premises of the commercial home.

## 6.6 Reflections on the label LsE

Albeit the focus of the present study is on LsEs' self-perceptions of QoL, the conducted research facilitates the elaboration of some considerations regarding the label "lifestyle entrepreneur". Those thoughts will be supported by some of the most relevant findings of the present research.

Morrison, Carlsen, and Weber (2010) called researchers' attention to the complexity of the small business profiles, arguing that many of its facets have not yet been researched and remain under "a convenient but superficial, generalised label" (p. 742). The same applies to the term LsE. In the current tourism and hospitality literature the label remains a contested concept in which the variety of definitions tend to reflect the different disciplines of the researchers. It appears to be used with little precision and with the assumption that the readers understand the concept through the familiarity of the words that compose it (Sweeney et al., 2018). In light of these, the present study replies to the comment of poor conceptualisation and content narrowness (Carlsen et al., 2008), contributing to a broader and more complete understanding of the label LsE.

Among the several discourses surrounding the concept of LsE, two appear to have more supporters<sup>49</sup>. The first one seems to be associated with LsEs' poor economic performance, the small dimension of the operations, no growth propensity, and the pejorative weight

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<sup>49</sup> For a detailed discussion on the theme, see section 2.6

of the lifestyle label that portrays an image of LsEs as people that are not able to cope with the everyday pressure imposed by work and society in general. The supporters of such discourse gravitate towards the disciplines of economics and business. The second one, celebrates the rejection of the post-modern lifestyle, reflecting the changing nature of work practice, life and social values. It is a discourse that supports the idea of LsEs as individuals that pursue their lifestyle preferences and assume control over the work-life balance equation. LsEs as entrepreneurs motivated by intrinsic lifestyle issues and psychic rewards that live outside of the conventional economic paradigm. Scholars with a social sciences related orientation, tend to be the supporters of this discourse.

Existing research tends to refer to tourism entrepreneurs as “lifestyle entrepreneurs” (Morrison, 2006; Shaw & Williams, 2004; Thomas, Shaw, & Page, 2011). LsEs are described with an emphasis on the style of life they want to achieve while running their businesses (Lashley & Rowson, 2010; Skokic & Morrison, 2011). The lifestyle label is often related to a desire to open a small business where its owner can take into consideration aspects like family, lifestyle and commercial concerns (Saxena, 2015). The label is also associated with the possibility of blending lifestyle and work as if they are one and the same (Holland & Martin, 2015), and to an ambition of achieving a certain QoL aligned with personal preferences and values (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000).

Despite the importance of the lifestyle, and quality of life for LsEs, highlighted in the mentioned studies, research on these concepts from the LsEs’ perspective is very scarce. Moscardo (2012) adds that although the concept of QoL is implicit in many tourism studies, it tends to be explored through the “social representations that academics hold of tourism” (p. 159), contesting that a more explicit discussion of the concept can be helpful towards a critical analysis of the impacts of tourism. This research replies to these comments, explicitly studying the concept of QoL from the LsEs’ perspective and by doing so it adds another facet of knowledge about LsEs. The most relevant findings will be summarised in the next paragraphs, and a reflection on the impacts of those findings in the concept of LsE will follow.

All participants were asked to place themselves on a scale from one to seven regarding their life quality in two different moments of their lives: at the time of the interview, and before they started the home-based accommodation business. Interestingly, none of them

considered themselves to have less QoL at the time of the interview. Indeed, the majority of participants (27/36) considered they had a better QoL after opening the business.

In the conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs, the *desiderata* layer is composed of location, personal preferences and home. The concept of a liquid sociological expressionism<sup>50</sup> emerged from this layer. It is defined as the presentation of home and self as an expression of the host's continuous self (re)construction. Making explicit the notion of continuous change and improvement in LsEs' self and emphasising its importance to LsEs' perception of QoL. In this perpetual (re)construction the fine tuning between LsEs' way of life and their personal preferences and values is crucial: the more tuned, the higher the perception of QoL.

The *modus operandi* layer is composed of interpersonal relationships and finance. In regard to the former it is noteworthy to highlight the relevance of meaningful connections with others – epiphanies – which enhance hosts possibilities of augmenting their self-knowledge and boost their self-realisation journey. IR is interpreted as an immaterial product of the tourism of affections; relationships as a trade of emotions; emotions as an expression of the self, a product of the act of hospitality. Regarding the latter, business profitability emerged as an important issue to all participants, although the importance given to money may vary. Furthermore, participants adopt different business strategies in order to achieve the profit considered needed to support the preferred lifestyle.

The *modus vivendi* layer is composed of the themes of self-realisation and occupation. SR is defined as a self-reflexive journey from the present self into an updated version of the self, using IR and F as tools to achieve a sense of fulfilment. Occupation is defined as the daily tasks and managerial decisions made by LsEs but felt as an extension of whom LsEs are. In all its complexity, on the one hand this layer reflects the holistic lifestyle that LsEs want to live, where there is no distinction between who they are and what they do. On the other hand, there is the disparity between what they perceive their quality of life to be and the life quality their day-to-day activities allows them to achieve.

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<sup>50</sup> See definition (p. 213)

Based on the findings, the label LsE seems not to be about the trendy, glittery and superfluous lifestyle perpetuated in the current literature by the ideas of LsEs as non-profit oriented people, that focus more on the style of life they want to live.

As mentioned before, all participants recognise the importance of the financial aspect of business management. This is also reinforced by their practical and obvious need for profit to survive. In this sense, their occupation is not secondary, business profitability is crucial for LsEs, as it is one of the vehicles to a better version of themselves. Apparently, QoL is not just a matter of balance between the personal and professional spheres, as LsEs' sense of fulfilment is considerably dependent on both. Instead, QoL appears to be the synergy between the two domains that is assumed and embodied by LsEs in such a way that personal and professional become one and inseparable.

Furthermore, the fast paced rhythm of LsEs' lives and the long working hours confirm that it is not true that LsEs are not able to cope with the liquid society demands, instead it seems that LsEs are not able to cope with a fragmented self and a cynical performance (Goffman, 1959). LsEs are interested in the transformation of their life experience into one that feels more authentic. LsEs aim to live a sincerer life: a life focused on what is important to each one of them, free from pretence.

Bauman (2008) calls the attention of the reader to the fallacy of the correlation between economic growth and happiness, proclaimed by political leaders. The author argues that goods that are crucial for one's happiness are not sold in stores and that "earning enough money to afford those goods that can only be had through the shops is a heavy tax on the time and energy available to obtain and enjoy non-commercial and non-marketable goods" (p. 5). Perhaps LsEs have recognised that what increases their life quality are those things that money cannot buy. LsEs might have realised that they do not want to waste time making money if that implies losing those valuable things in life. And that might be the reason for them to start up a small tourism related business, not looking for maximum profitability but working for maximum self-realisation.

Following this line of argument, I question the appropriateness of the label LsE as defined in the current literature. The concept lifestyle entrepreneur is loaded with preconceived ideas. In particular, it tends to be associated with an incompatibility between profitability and lifestyle, portraying LsEs as people that are not able to cope with modern society's

demands. This perspective seems not to be the case, in the light of the current research. Ultimately, labelling these group of entrepreneurs as lifestyle entrepreneurs is diminishing what they represent in the contemporary society. Perhaps LsEs should be looked at as a minority that is trying to overcome the downfalls of modernity, trying to keep focus on what is important to them and setting themselves apart from the sociological imperative of money making and consumption.

Given the significance of LsEs in tourism and hospitality research, both for the high number of small businesses in the sector and for the opportunity they represent in terms of added knowledge to the current society, I suggest the use of a less loaded term to identify these tourism entrepreneurs. One that minimises the stereotyping and is more appropriate to this particular group of people that deliberately choose to start up a small tourism-related business. I would suggest calling them selfpreneurs. Selfpreneurs because participants open a small business with the intention of improving their own selves. The business is used as a financial resource, given that it provides them what they consider to be enough money to achieve a sense of fulfilment. However, at the same time, it is also used as a self-realisation enabler, in the sense that it is the place where their self-realisation journey happens. It is about a deep reflexive journey from their self into a better version of it, with a “living on ethos” motto. It is almost the undressing of the superfluous that allows these entrepreneurs to have what they deem as a meaningful life. A life that is in fine tune with their values and beliefs, one in which they can truly be themselves and focus on what matters to them.

# 7

## Checking-out - Beyond the data -

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**T**he short stay at the B&B is ending. I just had an amazing full breakfast prepared by the owners while chatting with other guests. Everyone seemed to be very happy, chatting vividly about the activities in the natural park and asking for tips and suggestions. I engage in the conversation. After breakfast it is time to pack my stuff, and check-out. While driving back home, I am thinking about the time I have spent at the B&B, the people I have met, the trail I have completed. It was so refreshing that the question pops in my mind: “Where am I going next?”

In the same way checking out of the B&B and driving back home dictates the end of my short but invigorating break, this chapter concludes the present thesis. It summarises the research, its key findings and contributions to knowledge. The chapter ends with the presentation of the research’s limitations and suggestions for future studies.

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## **7.1. Introduction**

This study sets out to provide an understanding of the concept of QoL as perceived by LsEs, owners of small accommodation businesses in Portugal, and how engaging with such a lifestyle influences their perception of life quality. The key objectives of this research included: a critical examination of previous literature pertaining to the QoL of LsEs who own a commercial home; gathering data to provide a richer understanding of QoL as defined by LsEs; explore the social, emotional and economic implications of such a lifestyle for LsEs personal life and for the way they manage their businesses; and finally, discuss the theoretical and practical insights this research brings.

The present chapter closes this thesis and its main goal is to consolidate the key findings of this research. To do so, it starts with a brief synopsis of each chapter. It then progresses into the discussion of the key findings. To facilitate that discussion, it will follow the structure of the conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs, and I will elaborate upon the most interesting issues that emerged from the discussion (Chapter 6). Afterwards, it presents the research's contributions to knowledge, from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The chapter ends with research limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **7.2 Revisiting the previous chapters**

This thesis is introduced to the reader using an analogy with an overnight stay at a B&B. The journey starts with my [the researcher's] motivations to have a break and choose a particular B&B. In the same way the thesis started with a contextualisation of the study's background, introduction and justification for this research. Just like the owners of the B&B welcomed me when I arrived at their home and informed me about the surroundings, the literature review provided relevant information about the current literature on the topic of QoL of LsEs. After the informal presentations, the owners showed me my room, the rest of the B&B area and the rules of the house. Likewise, the methodology chapter informed about the philosophical stance and the methodological issues that underpin this research. While resting from the journey, I decided to go to the garden where I ended up meeting some of the other guests. In resemblance, the overview of the CHE introduced the study participants and their commercial homes. After resting a bit, I decided to explore the surrounding area and complete a section of a nearby trail near the sea. Similarly, the findings chapter explored and analysed the collected data.

When I returned to the B&B, feeling tired, I decided to have a relaxing shower. Laying on the bed, I started thinking about everything I have experienced during the hike. Analogously, the discussion is a reflection of the research findings contextualised within the relevant literature. By the end of my stay, I had an amazing breakfast, checked-out and started driving back home. In the same way checking out dictated the end of my stay at the B&B this chapter concludes the thesis, summarising the research project and its findings.

### **7.3 Key findings**

The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of QoL held by LsEs who own a commercial home in Portugal. The qualitative approach applied to this research sought to gain an understanding of the concept of life quality for this particular group of tourism entrepreneurs, and it demonstrates the valuable insights that such approaches provide in enhancing knowledge.

The study begins with a revision of the relevant literature from different research fields, namely: tourism and hospitality, and small businesses and entrepreneurship. A body of literature pertaining to psychology was also taken into account, particularly in respect to the concept of quality of life. The review has two main objectives: firstly, to understand the existing theory; and secondly, to identify important issues and gaps of knowledge that need further research. Reviewing the literature relating to the QoL of LsEs, emphasised the existence of two distinct discourses portrayed by academics from distinctive backgrounds. From the areas of entrepreneurship, business and economics emerges a discourse tainted by the poor economical results, lack of desire to make the business grow and prosper, and small size of operations. This view portrays a less positive image of LsEs. They are labelled as entrepreneurs not focused on the profitability of the business but on lifestyle related issues, giving the impression that LsEs are not able to cope with the pressures imposed by society's norms and expectations. From the disciplines of tourism, psychology and sociology surfaces a discourse in which LsEs are interpreted as people that pursue their lifestyle preferences and assume control over the work-life balance, in what can be understood as a rejection of the post-modern lifestyle. Both perspectives agree on the importance of life quality for tourism entrepreneurs. However, research on the topic is very scarce, given that LsEs related research tends to focus on their motivations to start the business.



A thorough analysis of the conversations held with participants revealed multiple factors that are related to LsEs' perception of life quality. A conceptual framework of QoL emerged from the data, with three distinctive layers: *desiderata*; *modus operandi*; and *modus vivendi*. *Desiderata*, as the name suggests, is what LsEs consider the necessary conditions to change their lives and start a home-based accommodation business, and it is composed of location, personal preferences, and home. *Modus operandi* represents the tools used by LsEs in order to achieve what is most important to their life quality – represented in the conceptual framework by the layer *modus vivendi*. It is composed of interpersonal relationships and finance, and it is more important to LsEs perception of QoL than *Desiderata*. Lastly, *modus operandi* represents the way of life LsEs want to achieve through their businesses. It is composed of self-realisation and occupation, and it epitomises LsEs will to have a life in which who they are and what they do are one and the same.

Within *desiderata*, it was found that the location of the commercial home and owner's personal preferences such as hobbies and values, have a determinant weight on their decision to start the business, which are in line with the current literature. However, the present study adds that the importance of these factors on LsEs' life quality is not as significant as the other elements of the conceptual framework. A possible justification is that the location and some personal preferences are met once the business is set-up, which gives LsEs the feeling of accomplishment towards these two items. This feeling of accomplishment in turn, makes them focus on other aspects that they consider relevant to enhance their life quality. In relation to location, this study also suggests that LsEs consider having a better QoL when their commercial home: is in the proximity of services like schools and hospitals; has easy access routes and transportation; is close to areas of interest where the cultural and social needs can be met; has good restaurants and pubs in the proximities; and preferably in areas with low cost of living. These criteria identified by the participants gives them the feeling of increased life quality. Also, the current literature suggests the preponderance of CHE in rural areas, due to owner's preferences of being close to nature. However, findings from this study point to the existence of a new trend, that of CHEs in the heart of big cities. This topic was not greatly explored in this study and needs further investigation. Regarding personal preferences, this research shows that hosts consciously share their preferences with guests through their interaction with guests and through the way they construct their product. The act of sharing their

personal preferences seems to work as a sieve towards the type of guests that are attracted to the B&B. In other words, those shared preferences seem to work as a guest recruitment tool, minimising encounters with guests that do not share the same worldview. By decreasing unwanted interactions, LsEs are increasing their perception of life quality. Moreover, this study clarifies that the fine-tuning between the life LsEs live and their hobbies, preferences and values, increases their perception of QoL. This seems to be interlinked with the ideal of being able to be themselves and be authentic. Home, has been identified as a tripartite: private home, work(ing) home, and shared home. Home is the place where LsEs live and work, it is the background of their daily lives and it is also their sanctuary and their trap, their life quality booster and detractor. Home as private, mirrors the feelings participants' have towards their home: a place like no other, where they feel safe and have their privacy; and a life project that evolves as LsEs evolve, as a reflection of whom they are. It is in this context that the concept of liquid sociological expressionism emerges, defined as the presentation of home and self as an expression of the host's continuous self (re)construction. This definition pushes the concept of sociological expressionism (Sweeney et al., 2018) into an explicit, more vulnerable, mutable, fluid, and chameleonic idea influenced by liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000, 2004). The shared home brings mixed feelings to LsEs. As soon as guests arrive, home is no longer private, it becomes shared, it also becomes the guests' home for the duration of their stay. Sometimes, guests make hosts feel their home as an inhospitable place, whether because the host's family is no longer allowed to do familiar routines like having breakfast in their pyjamas, or because they feel that a guest's behaviours invade their privacy. Both cases uncover a form of guests' tyranny, reflected in hosts inhibition of certain behaviours and feelings whenever guests are present.

*Modus operandi* is the middle layer, and it represents the tools used by LsEs to achieve their *modus vivendi*. It includes interpersonal relationships and finance as vehicles to achieve an enhanced perception of life quality. The most significant finding within interpersonal relationships is the vital role that emotions play in host-guest connections. The emotional connection between host and guest is intentional, as relationships are used by LsEs as an end – continually becoming an updated version of themselves. The possibility of starting a relationship with like-minded others is one of the desired business outcomes, as these meaningful connections are places of reflexivity where guests' second-hand stories become hosts' brand new knowledge. The encounter with a like-

minded other is a place of personal growth and development for LsEs. In this sense, interpersonal relationships can be interpreted as a non-monetary exchange, as a valuable intangible, or an immaterial production of the accommodation service provision on LsEs home premises. Thus, the commercial home is distinguished in this study as a place of emotional expression. In regards to finance, business profitability is identified as something important to LsEs perception of QoL, and LsEs seem to adopt different management strategies to achieve the desired level of profitability. Despite not enjoying the financial side of their businesses as much as they enjoy the relational part of it, LsEs worry about the profitability of their businesses. Indeed, an important finding of the present study is the relative importance of financial issues to LsEs' perception of QoL. Moreover, ensuring sufficient income to face the monthly expenses, makes them adopt different business management strategies, such as: close the business during the low season to decrease maintenance related expenses; ensure a steady monthly income provided by a job held by a family member; offer more services in the commercial home, like for example, serving other meals; or grow the business, by increasing the number of rooms. Growing the business and diversifying the product in order to increase the business' profitability is seen by some LsEs as relevant to their life quality, and the case of CH12 illustrates this argument. The owners of commercial homes CH9, CH15, CH27 and CH36 also expressed their will to be more profitable, and have been continually working on growing the business.

The most important layer is *modus vivendi*, composed of self-realisation and occupation. *Modus vivendi* expresses LsEs' will to align who they are with what they do and to continually update themselves. A layer of understanding to the current LsEs literature is added by the present study concerning the relevance of being one's own boss, making decisions and flexibility. These aspects are more than motivations to start an entrepreneurial venture. Feeling free and having control over one's life are what opens the path for self-realisation, creating the conditions for LsEs to live the life they aspire. This study identifies the clash between personal values and work politics<sup>51</sup> as one of the reasons for LsEs to change their lifestyle and start a commercial home business. It seems that what their job requires them to do and the expectations their managers and employers have are not aligned with LsEs' personal values. They feel forced to be what they are not, to do some things they do not agree with. This gap between whom they are and what their

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<sup>51</sup> See detailed discussion on p. 133

job is forcing them to be appears to make them question what they are doing with their lives. This reflexive process pushes LsEs to find solutions that will bring them closer to whom they aspire to be. In their perspective, their job should be part of the lifestyle because their main ambition is to feel accomplished with every aspect of their life. Having a non-fulfilling job contaminates all the other aspects of their life, not allowing them to live the desired fulfilling life. With the purpose of maximising the chances of having a whole and harmonious life, guided by one's own preferences, LsEs decide to open a home-based accommodation business. Home unifies the professional and personal spheres, transforming LsEs' life into one that feels less compartmented. This feeling of completeness gives LsEs the perception of living an authentic life, i.e. a life where they can be themselves [without external pressures that force them to be what they are not]. Occupation is related to LsEs' daily tasks and managerial decisions and it is felt as an extension of whom they are. LsEs use their business to express themselves, to reveal to others who they are and how they feel. The existing literature (see section 2.2.2) perpetuates the idea that LsEs choose to increase their life quality by decreasing the amount of work and focus on lifestyle issues. Yet, the conversations with participants reveal that managing the commercial home takes over all their lives. The workload is so intense that LsEs do not have time to do their favourite activities, miss important family moments, and feel like prisoners in their own home. This other side of LsEs' lives is probably one of the most relevant findings of the present research, allowing to look at LsEs life choices beyond the shininess and glamour of the lifestyle label and outside the limits of LsEs motivations to start-up the business. Managing a CHE is hard work; it is extremely demanding and turns them into prisoners of the chosen lifestyle, still, LsEs prefer their current life to the one they previously had. When questioned about the apparent contradiction regarding their higher perception of quality of life while being hostages of their commercial home, LsEs justify the higher QoL with the pleasure and perception of self-realisation. LsEs rationalise it with the advantages of having such a business, even if those advantages only exist hypothetically. Possible explanations for such are: LsEs unwillingness to admit that their QoL is not improved by the choice of having an accommodation business; the concept of spillover (Adler & Adler, 1999), meaning that whatever they value the most, like the relationships LsEs establish with guests and being their own bosses, spills over to their leisure time, making them perceive their life in a more favourable way; and the self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1968), in the sense that LsEs believe that having a home-based accommodation business allows

them to feel free and be in control of their lives, and that belief makes them look at work intensity in a more positive way, giving them the perception of a better life quality. In all its complexity, *modus vivendi* reflects the holistic style of life that LsEs want to achieve with no distinction between who they are and what they do. Yet it also reflects the disparity between what LsEs perceive quality of life to be and the life quality their day-to-day activities allow them to achieve.

Current research (Marcketti et al., 2006; Peters & Kallmuenzer, 2015; Peters et al., 2018; Peters & Schuckert, 2014) on the life quality of LsEs is little and the existing research does not offer the depth of analysis and information presented in this study. The conceptual framework of QoL that emerged from the data is helpful in assisting researchers to better understand how LsEs perceive the concept of life quality, and how it affects the way they manage their businesses. Also, the present study proposes a definition of QoL from LsEs' perspective: "Quality of life is defined as one's perceived satisfaction with the realisation of the self, in relation to personal aspirations, and contextualised in one's culture and value system", where the perceived level of satisfaction with the self is achieved through a self-reflexive journey and takes place on the premises of the commercial home.

Lastly, this study contributes to a richer understanding of the label LsE, advancing the concept further. Participants of this research chose to open a CHE with the main goal of improving their own selves. The tripartite home is the place where LsEs' self-realisation journey happens. The business is used simultaneously as a financial resource and as a self-realisation enabler. The self-realisation journey is about a deep reflexive excursion from the entrepreneur's self into an updated version of it. The self-realisation journey can be seen as the process of leaving behind everything that is not important to preserve only what is meaningful in their lives. For these reasons, I suggest calling this group of tourism entrepreneurs selfpreneurs. The concept selfpreneur brings to light what these tourism entrepreneurs consider meaningful in their lives, and what they aim to accomplish: an improved version of who they are.

## 7.4 Contributions to knowledge

### 7.4.1 *Theoretical contributions*

Taking into consideration the key findings, this research contributes to knowledge in different ways. Firstly, this study replies to the comments of Carlsen et al. (2008) regarding the poor conceptualisation of the LsEs label, contributing to its understanding and advancing the concept further with the suggestion of replacing LsE with the concept of selfpreneur. At the same time it also addresses the lack of knowledge regarding the QoL of LsEs highlighted by Peters, Kallmuenzer, and Buhalis (2018). This study identifies what composes QoL, describing the relationship between each element and LsEs' perception of QoL, and how those elements influence management practices. These findings can be used in research to develop current theories and advance knowledge further. To be able to conceptualise the life quality of LsEs, this study integrates literature from the disciplines of tourism and hospitality, entrepreneurship and small businesses, and psychology. Therefore, at the same time it reinforces the need for further research on the topic, it recognises and emphasises the benefits of adopting a multidisciplinary approach. Tourism and hospitality are used in this research as a lens through which the life quality of LsEs is explored. Participants' narratives of the choices made to attain a sense of self-realisation are a reflection of the contemporary society, and shape who we are and the knowledge we have about the world. Hence, tourism and hospitality are more than a lens that allows a deeper understanding of LsEs' QoL, tourism and hospitality are also a lens that enables a closer look into the liquid nature of society. Furthermore, findings suggest that profitability is of relevance for LsEs and some business owners want to grow their businesses as long as they can keep on living their lives aligned with their personal values and beliefs. Discussion on LsEs in the literature tend to focus on their motivations to have the small tourism related business. The will to have a more flexible lifestyle, be one's own boss and be autonomous are pointed out as the most relevant drivers. This research extends the literature revealing the importance of the self in the entrepreneurial journey, as findings suggest that the entrepreneurial journey's destination is an improved version of the self.

### 7.4.2 *Practical contributions*

This study provides some practical insights to practitioners and policymakers, academics, LsEs who own a CHE, and people that are considering to open such a business.

The conceptual framework of QoL that emerged from the data is helpful in providing information about what is important to LsEs' QoL. Policymakers and practitioners can use this information to promote better business conditions for small tourism entrepreneurs and support them with business management guidelines that can be beneficial for them and for the destination. Such understanding can also be used to foster and enhance the relationship between public and private tourism related bodies and the small tourism entrepreneurs, that tend to be problematic due to the lack of understanding from the industry. Additionally, the importance of LsEs occupation in their perception of QoL together with the relevance of their business financial aspects, can be helpful in informing policymakers on how to provide a better support, particularly during the start-up phase, when important decisions about funding and business planning need to be made. This is even more important, considering that funding initiatives within the tourism policies tend to target profit orientation, which in the light of the proposed conceptual framework and in line with Peters and Schuckert (2014) argument, might not be the most adequate growth measure for these entrepreneurs.

The conceptual framework of QoL can be used to further develop an assessment tool to evaluate the life quality of owners of small tourism related businesses. This QoL assessment tool, in turn, can be used by academics to develop the knowledge further, and by practitioners to improve business conditions and the support given to small tourism entrepreneurs.

LsEs who own a CHE can use the findings of this research to improve some managerial related decisions, such as host-guest matching, finding alternative ways to deal with the challenges of the low season, and consider different solutions to cope with the extremely demanding work throughout the high season.

Finally, people who are considering to open a small tourism related business, can use the conceptual framework and the key findings of this research, that voice the perceptions of CHE owners, as guidelines to open their own businesses.

## **7.5 Research limitations**

This dissertation is the output of my PhD journey; it summarises what I have done and learnt along the process. Despite the enormous effort put into this research and how critical I am towards myself and my work, it has some limitations. My personal journey from a positivist researcher into an interpretivist can be seen as a limitation, in the sense that if I had started the research project adopting an interpretative framework from the

outset, the journey would have been less messy. The sample size can be considered a limitation, to have expanded the data collection period and cover more geographic areas of Portugal to provide a more holistic sample would have been ideal. However, due to funding and time limitations it was not possible. A further limitation is the western centric perspective provided by this research, the conceptual framework presented needs to be tested in other locations in order to develop a broader perspective of QoL of LsEs. As with any other qualitative research, it can be argued that the non-probability sampling technique is convenient, and that the data analysis process is not clear. However, this research is qualitative and exploratory in nature, so it is clear for the researcher that the findings cannot be generalised beyond the context in which the study was developed. It is important to mention, though, that this research provides detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under study that can be used by other researchers to develop theory further.

## **7.6 Future research**

This research provides a useful starting point for future research, particularly regarding the QoL of small tourism accommodation owners and the label LsE. I suggest that greater attention should be given to the definition of QoL by tourism entrepreneurs, as it provides valuable insights for business management and policy-making. Also, further research could be carried out to gain a deeper understanding of Selfpreneurs, particularly regarding the centrality of the self and its implications on business management. The way LsEs recognise and use emotions in tourism encounters that take place on the premises of their home, allied with the idea that the relationships established are an end in themselves, reveal the emergence of an affective hospitality ethos. This affective hospitality ethos needs a new understanding. The emotional geographies of our lives are dynamic, emotions have the power to transform and shape the way we see the world. In T&H literature, emotions are tendentially disregarded and not acknowledged, yet this study shows that emotions are crucial for Selfpreneurs. Hence, I suggest further investigations on the relationship between owners' emotions and the way they manage their businesses, relate to guest, and self-control their emotions. Lastly, this research raises some suspicions about possible conceptual dissonances between the British and Portuguese definition of B&B, this topic was beyond the research scope and for that reason was not explored. However, it is interesting to understand these eventual conceptual divergences. Moreover, the categorisation of LsEs based on the importance of money can be explored by policymakers and tourism bodies and used as a tool to support business owners. In the



same way, the conceptual framework of QoL can be used to develop a quantitative survey to assess the QoL of tourism entrepreneurs, identifying what is most relevant for them and consequently for business success. Lastly, this study encourages the use of T&H as a lens to understand the current society and how it shapes the way we see the world.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1 – Definitions of Happiness

HAPPINESS	
Definition	Author(s)
Happiness is a state of being that people experience as a result of action by oneself or others	Jeremy Bentham (1789; 1969)
People who experience pleasure from seeing others being happy become happy too	Russell (1930/1975)
Happiness to most philosophers is not simply a psychological matter; it is an evaluative matter. It concerns the conditions of leading a good and moral life. Therefore, it is not a psychological phenomenon but a phenomenon of ethics.	Haybron (2000)
Happiness as living in a manner that actively expresses excellence of character or virtue. Thus, one can be happy by expressing excellence of character (the essence of the good and moral life), not by being cheerful and serene (feeling happy).	Aristotle (1986)
All men seek happiness. There are no exceptions. However, different the means they may employ, they all strive towards this goal. The reason why some go to war and some do not is the same desire in both, but interpreted in two different ways. They will never take the least step except to that end. This is the motive of every act of every man, including those who go and hang themselves.	Pascal (1995)
William James, the father of modern psychology, once said: How to keep, how to gain, how to recover happiness is ... for most men at all times the secret motive for all they do.	James (1902)
Bentham viewed human welfare in terms of hedonic utility: the greater good is to maximize pleasure for the greatest number of people.	Bentham (1969)
Seligman made the distinction among the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life	Seligman (2002)
David Phillips, a philosopher of happiness, clearly distinguishes between two approaches to happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic. He argues that the hedonic tradition highlights the individual and assumes that the individual is motivated to enhance personal freedom, self-preservation, and self-enhancement. The hedonic tradition is based on the philosophical tradition expounded by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Thus, the focus is on the integrity of the individual and his own judgment about what makes him happy. In contrast, the eudaimonic tradition derives from the Aristotelian conception of the good life, prudence, reason, and justice. The goal is to have people flourish or to function to meet their full potential, to contribute to society, and to achieve the highest standards of morality. This tradition is consistent with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and the moral imperatives extrapolated from Confucianism.	Phillips (2006)
Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Laureate and a leading scholar in the psychology of QOL research, has conceptualized happiness as sensations that are associated with real-time feelings of happiness. This type of happiness is called “objective happiness.”	Kahneman (1999)
“I see no particularly tight connection between anything we would ordinarily call ‘happiness’ and this concept of objective happiness. Nor do I see any justification for thinking that nations should craft their policies so as to increase levels of objective happiness among citizens. To put it bluntly: objective happiness seems different in important ways from happiness; it seems unconnected to welfare” (p. 49). Feldman rejects this view of happiness as a sensory hedonism by asserting that to be happy in life is not the same as experiencing high levels of pleasure and low levels of pain.	Feldman (2010), p. 49)
Warburton (1996) uses the biological/physiological concept of happiness to argue for a utilitarian conception of happiness. In other words, people maximize their happiness by making decisions and engaging in behaviours that would increase their happiness.	Warburton (1996)



<p>Hayborn (2001) argues against the view of happiness that does not take into account the person's disposition toward happiness. In other words, for a person to be happy, he or she has to be disposed to react happily to positive stimuli and to carry these feelings into the future. Hedonistic happiness is "backward looking"; true happiness has to be "forward looking."</p> <p>Hayborn (2008) argues against the sensory hedonism view of happiness because this theory of happiness counts all sorts of pleasures toward happiness—those that are meaningful and intense and those that are shallow and fleeting.</p>	Hayborn (2001; 2008)
<p>According to Seligman (2002) has 3 components: pleasant life, good life and meaningful life.</p> <p>Pleasant life maximises pleasurable and positive experiences</p> <p>Good life results when people develop their virtues and strengths in activities that they are passionate about.</p> <p>Meaningful life results when individuals apply their strengths in activities that contribute to the greater good, such as parenting, developing friendships or servicing the community.</p>	Seligman (2002)
Csikszentmihalyi, has argued repeatedly that a happy life is an excellent life. To lead an excellent life is to engage in activities that help us grow and fulfil our potential.	Csikszentmihalyi (1975; 1982; 1990; 1997)
Waterman (1993) asserts that subjective well-being is significantly enhanced when the individual's life activities are most congruent with his deeply held values and personal identity	Waterman (1993)
The author argues that happiness is essentially "a lasting state of affairs in which the most favourable ratio of satisfied desires to desires is realized" (p. 5).	McGill (1967)
Perfectionist happiness refers to a life that is good in all respects, including a moral life. It is a life that is desirable without qualification, both enviable and admirable. Perfectionist happiness is achieved when a person achieves a state of well-being plus leading a moral life	Haybron (2000)
Based on humanistic psychology, perfectionist happiness can be construed as the kind of need satisfaction related to the full spectrum of human development needs. One popular humanistic approach is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954 /1970). The idea here is that true happiness is experienced when the individual experiences satisfaction with basic needs (e.g., biological needs, safety needs, and economic needs) as well as growth needs (e.g., social, esteem, self-actualization, knowledge, and aesthetic needs).	Sirgy and Wu (2009)

## Appendix 2 – Definitions of QoL

QUALITY OF LIFE	
Definition	Reference
QoL is related to the degree to which a person's life is desirable versus undesirable	Sirgy (2012)
QoL is an umbrella concept that refers to all aspects of a person's life including physical health, psychological well-being, and social well being	Dolnicar, Lazarevski and Yanamandram (2012)
The World Health Organisation Quality of Life Group defined QOL as “‘individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of their culture and value system and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, and their relationships to salient features of their environment.” (p.1)	WHO (2019)
QOL usually means a person's sense of well-being, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life, or happiness or unhappiness	Dalkey and Rourke (1973)
“QoL research aims to understand how these impacts are internalized and influence an individual's overall life satisfaction” (p. 114)	Andereck et al. (2007)
“QoL can be defined as “the notion of human welfare (well-being) measured by social indicators rather than by quantitative measures of income and production” (p. 1)	OECD (2005)
“(.)mainstream psychology's definition of QOL as a “conscious cognitive judgment of satisfaction with one's life” — operationalized either unidimensionally or multi-dimensionally in terms of overall life satisfaction, or specific domains considered separately” (p.23)	Rajeski and Mihalko (2001)
Other authors assume overall life satisfaction functionally relates to happiness within many individual life domains (e.g., Lee & Sirgy, 1995).” (p.725)	Lee and Sirgy (1995)
QoL can be defined as an evaluative judgment based on objective and/or subjective indicators of one's social life in various contexts	Costanza et al. (2008)
QoL as “a feeling of overall life satisfaction, as determined by the mentally alert individual whose life is being evaluated.” (p.37)	Meeberg (1993)
QoL refers to evaluating the general well being of individuals and societies	Derek, Ron and Geraldine (2009)

*Appendix 3 – List of TURIHAB's associates*

CH	Location	District
CH1	VALENÇA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH2	CABRAÇÃO	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH3	ESTORÇOS PTL	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH4	ARCOS PTL	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH5	GEMIEIRA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH6	CABRELA	ÉVORA
CH7	BEIRAL DO LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH8	SÃO ROQUE DO PICO	ILHA DA MADEIRA
CH9	CALHETAS	ILHA DE SÃO MIGUEL
CH10	AZINHAGA	SANTARÉM
CH11	FACHA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH12	OLIVEIRA MSF	VILA REAL
CH13	LOURO	BRAGA
CH14	TRAVASSOS	BRAGA
CH15	CANEDO DE BASTO	BRAGA
CH16	CASTELO DE VIDE	PORTALEGRE
CH17	CALHEIROS	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH18	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH19	FONTÃO	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH20	MOGOFORES	AVEIRO
CH21	CASTELO DO NEIVA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH22	MONÇÃO	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH23	BRITIANDE	VISEU
CH24	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH25	DURRÃES	BRAGA
CH26	ALPENDURADA E MATOS	PORTO
CH27	VILARINHO DE SÃO ROMÃO	VILA REAL
CH28	VIANA DO CASTELO	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH29	FORNELOS PTL	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH30	MOLARES	BRAGA
CH31	FERREL	LEIRIA
CH32	ALDEIA NOVA DO CABO	CASTELO BRANCO
CH33	SÃO FÉLIX	VISEU
CH34	BRAVAES	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH35	RIO MAIOR	SANTARÉM
CH36	CRATO	PORTALEGRE
CH37	ABADE DE NEIVA	BRAGA
CH38	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH39	BRITO	BRAGA
CH40	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH41	BORBA	ÉVORA
CH42	QUINTIÃES	BRAGA
CH43	CAMBRES	VISEU
CH44	MÉRTOLA	BEJA
CH45	BEJA	BEJA
CH46	ESTORÇOS PTL	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH47	PINHAL NOVO	SETÚBAL
CH48	CALHEIROS	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH49	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH50	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO

CH	Location	District
CH51	MELGAÇO	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH52	ÁGUA LONGA	PORTO
CH53	ALCOCHETE	SETÚBAL
CH54	PAÇO VEDRO DE MAGALHÃES	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH55	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH56	COVAS DO DOURO	VILA REAL
CH57	CALVOS GMR	BRAGA
CH58	PRADO (SANTA MARIA)	BRAGA
CH59	VISEU	VISEU
CH60	SÃO LOURENÇO DO BAIRRO	AVEIRO
CH61	PONTE DE LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH62	SÁ MNC	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH63	ALCÁÇOVAS	ÉVORA
CH64	CHARNECA DA CAPARICA	SETÚBAL
CH65	CINFÃES	VISEU
CH66	NESPERAL	CASTELO BRANCO
CH67	MÉRTOLA	BEJA
CH68	FACHA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH69	BARCELOS	BRAGA
CH70	ESTORÃOS PTL	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH71	RIO MAIOR	SANTARÉM
CH72	ALVITO (SÃO PEDRO)	BRAGA
CH73	RABAÇAL MDA	GUARDA
CH74	ARCAS	BRAGANÇA
CH75	SÃO TEOTÓNIO	BEJA
CH76	LUSO	AVEIRO
CH77	ALCÁÇOVAS	ÉVORA
CH78	ATIÃES	BRAGA
CH79	ALENQUER	LISBOA
CH80	SÃO ROMÃO SEI	GUARDA
CH81	BARREIROS AMR	BRAGA
CH82	CUBA	BEJA
CH83	CALHEIROS	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH84	SÃO MARCOS DA ATABOEIRA	BEJA
CH85	VILA NOVA DE CACELA	FARO
CH86	ALVADOS	LEIRIA
CH87	BROTAS	ÉVORA
CH88	VILA NOVA DE MILFONTES	BEJA
CH89	VILA DO BISPO	FARO
CH90	SÃO VICENTE	ILHA DA MADEIRA
CH91	CERCAL DO ALENTEJO	SETÚBAL
CH92	MONTEMOR-O-NOVO	ÉVORA
CH93	SINTRA	LISBOA
CH94	PARADELA DE GUIÃES	VILA REAL
CH95	ROLIÇA	LEIRIA
CH96	REFÓIOS DO LIMA	VIANA DO CASTELO
CH97	Sampriz	VIANA DO CASTELO

Appendix 4 – List of B&Bs selected from [www.bedandbreakfast.eu](http://www.bedandbreakfast.eu)

B&B	Region		B&B	Region
B&B1	Alentejo		B&B43	Caldas da Rainha
B&B2	Algarve		B&B44	Algarve
B&B3	Lisboa		B&B45	Algarve
B&B4	Ericeira		B&B46	Sintra
B&B5	Ericeira		B&B47	Sintra
B&B6	Ericeira		B&B48	Sintra
B&B7	Ericeira		B&B49	Sintra
B&B8	Ericeira		B&B50	Sintra
B&B9	Batalha		B&B51	Sintra
B&B10	Cascais		B&B52	Algarve
B&B11	Sesimbra		B&B53	Lisboa
B&B12	Sintra		B&B54	Lisboa
B&B13	Algarve		B&B55	Lisboa
B&B14	Sintra		B&B56	Lisboa
B&B15	Algarve		B&B57	Lisboa
B&B16	Sintra		B&B58	Sintra
B&B17	Sintra		B&B59	Sintra
B&B18	Sintra		B&B60	Sintra
B&B19	Sintra		B&B61	Sintra
B&B20	Sintra		B&B62	Sintra
B&B21	Sintra		B&B63	Sintra
B&B22	Sintra		B&B64	Sintra
B&B23	Sintra		B&B65	Sintra
B&B24	Algarve		B&B66	Sintra
B&B25	Algarve		B&B67	Sintra
B&B26	Algarve		B&B68	Sintra
B&B27	Algarve		B&B69	Ericeira
B&B28	Algarve		B&B70	Ericeira
B&B29	Algarve		B&B71	Ericeira
B&B30	Algarve		B&B72	Ericeira
B&B31	Algarve		B&B73	Ericeira
B&B32	Algarve		B&B74	Ericeira
B&B33	Alentejo		B&B75	Sines
B&B34	Algarve		B&B76	Sines
B&B35	Algarve		B&B77	Sines
B&B36	Alcobaça		B&B78	Sines
B&B37	Caldas da Rainha		B&B79	Zambujeira
B&B38	Óbidos		B&B80	Zambujeira
B&B39	Sintra		B&B81	Zambujeira
B&B40	Algarve		B&B82	Zambujeira
B&B41	Caldas da Rainha		B&B83	Portalegre
B&B42	Alentejo		B&B84	Evora

## **Interview protocol**

### **1. Obtain recorded verbal consent**

2. The in-depth, unstructured interview aims to discuss two topics: participants' perceptions of QoL and business impacts on the perceived life quality. In order to keep the interview as flexible as possible, so that relevant information emerges from the conversation, only two questions are made to prompt the discussion around the relevant topics:

**- How do you define quality of life?**

**- What is the impact of your business in your quality of life?**

Based on participants answers, additional questions should be made in order to clarify and understand their perception of QoL and the impact of having a CHE in their perceived QoL.

*Appendix 6 – Extract of Portuguese transcript*

...

[Pa] Há 4 anos. Há 4 anos desliguei-me completamente do trabalho que tinha. Mudei completamente de vida e pronto. E depois tive um ano em que tive a reorganizar a minha vida e as coisas foram-se, as ideias foram se formando na cabeça e isto surgiu de uma forma muito natural, quer dizer, não foi uma coisa planeada. Foi uma ideia que se foi desenvolvendo e que se tornou uma realidade e naquilo que é agora.

[Maria] Nesse tempo, andando para trás secalhar não 4 anos porque foi a altura em que tudo aconteceu, mas andando 5 anos, se estivesse lá atrás e eu fizesse exactamente a mesma pergunta: numa escala de 1 a 7 qual a qualidade de vida, o que me teria respondido?

[Pa] 1 ou 2

[Maria] o que é que fez impulsionar tanto esse valor na sua qualidade de vida, do 1 ou 2 para o 5.

[Pa] O que é que me fez impulsionar, como?

[Maria] O que é que o fez ter uma percepção de qualidade de vida, nesta escala de 1 a 7, tão diferente?

[Pa] Quando se trabalha numa empresa multinacional e se tem... quer se tenha responsabilidade ou não porque há sempre responsabilidade a partir de um certo nível, há uma pressão constante que tem a ver com os objectivos financeiros, com a relação com as pessoas, o gerir uma equipa de 40 ou 50 pessoas. A relação com as pessoas a quem nós reportamos, se reportamos. Às vezes essas pessoas são, enfim, pouco como é que eu hei de dizer... pouco agradáveis, quer dizer, a verdade é pouco agradáveis, porque pode-se criar uma empresa... uma empresa pode ter um bom ambiente ou um mau ambiente não é. E portanto essas pressões todas se existirem dentro de um bom ambiente, eu secalhar em vez de 1 ou 2 eu tinha lhe dito 3 ou 4. Agora quando temos que levar com as pessoas desagradáveis em cima de nós, mas quer dizer não é só isso obviamente, há a relação com os nossos, com as pessoas que reportam a nós, a relação, às vezes temos que fazer omeletes sem ovos, portanto há um conjunto de situações que quer dizer, que são.. que reduzem a qualidade de vida no fundo. Uma pessoa ter que trabalhar 10 ou 12 horas por dia, às vezes ter que trabalhar aos fins de semana, depois de apesar de tudo isso o ano correu mal, ou não correu tão bem, chegou ao final do ano não atingiu os objectivos... quer dizer essa situação toda, essa pressão toda é contra natura. Isso não faz parte da

relação do homem com a sua vida. Acho que o que as pessoas deveriam ter uma relação muito mais estreita com a natureza e mais em harmonia com a natureza do que aquilo que se consegue viver numa cidade. Vivendo num ambiente competitivo como esse, porque depois há todo... a vida nessas organizações é uma coisa... terrível. Porque vive-se completamente subjugado ao ego das pessoas, ao ego das organizações que no fundo as organizações depois acabam por criar um ego próprio desenvolvido pela relação e pelas próprias pessoas que as dominam e a certa altura uma pessoa vê-se envolvido num sistema em que todos os anos é mais do que no ano anterior, e é mais e mais, e às vezes perguntamos porque é que é mais e não conseguimos encontrar uma resposta. É porque tem que ser, é para ganharmos mais, é para nos reformarmos mais depressa, é para termos mais dinheiro. E isso tudo a uma certa altura deixa de fazer sentido porque o benefício que se tira disso não compensa todo o esforço e portanto entra-se numa vida sem sentido. E é um bocado isso que retira a qualidade à vida.

[Maria] E o Paulo ao longo da sua vida sempre teve essa consciência e sempre se sentiu esse...

[Pa] Não. Quando terminei o curso estava muito entusiasmado com a ideia de trabalhar numa organização, de ter uma carreira profissional, de ter um reconhecimento profissional e social, ter dinheiro para poder realizar um conjunto de ambições que faziam parte da minha vida nessa altura e portanto uma pessoa quando é jovem tem uma visão um pouco deturpada da realidade, acha que as coisas são de uma maneira e normalmente tem a tendência para considerar que a vida é mais bela e justa do que aquilo que é na realidade. E depois à medida que uma pessoa se vai envolvendo no próprio sistema, vai percebendo que o sistema leva a que se viva num mundo canalha. Em que às vezes as pessoas têm que empenhar a sua própria integridade, a sua própria ética para atingir determinados objectivos que são os objectivos da sociedade e das pessoas que lideram a sociedade não é, e uma pessoa a certa altura desencanta-se. Eu diria que me comecei a desencantar por volta dos 30 anos e depois na verdade, foi se desenvolvendo em mim uma ideia de abandonar esse mundo que levou cerca de 18 anos a concretizar

[Maria] E olhando agora para trás, seguramente já reflectiu sobre isso, pela maneira como está a partilhar a informação comigo. O que é que acha que foram 18 anos necessários para conseguir...

[Pa] Porque uma pessoa quando se envolve num sistema, e eu diria que à excepção de alguns, quase todos nos envolvemos no sistema, de uma maneira ou de outra, às vezes é um bocado difícil desligar-se dessa própria relação. Por um lado porque nós também



temos ego, e portanto também estamos, também fazemos parte do sistema e alimentamos o sistema com os nossos próprios interesses e portanto uma pessoa abdicar de uma posição social, de uma posição profissional, de um rendimento económico significativo é uma coisa que não é fácil e requer, na verdade, requer alguma coragem porque dizer que “bom eu tenho ganho muito bem nos últimos anos, ganho muito bem agora” e na verdade se olhar para a frente faltam-se 15 anos para me reformar e posso continuar a ganhar muito bem nos próximos 15 anos e aí o que pesa é “eu para poder continuar a ganhar bem nos próximos 15 anos vou ter que continuar a viver muito mal, com muito pouca qualidade durante 15 anos”. E a ideia de abdicar desse rendimento financeiro em prole da qualidade de vida eu diria que é talvez o maior entrave a essa mudança de vida. E não em mim, não só em mim, em mim foi de facto, mas também na maior parte das pessoas com quem eu falo e que sentem a mesma coisa, e que se vêm limitadas por essa situação. É claro que às vezes para umas pessoas aquilo que... ou conta mais o aspecto financeiro, para outras conta mais o reconhecimento profissional, ou uma coisa ou outra, normalmente são os grandes entraves. Normalmente as duas juntas são os grandes entraves para uma pessoa, que dificultam a tomada de consciência das pessoas relativamente às decisões que têm que tomar na sua vida. E a verdade é que a maior parte das pessoas depois acaba por viver uma vida que não foi exactamente a que ela quis. Mas nunca teve... sempre as pessoas, dificilmente reconhecem e têm consciência de que vivem a vida que querem. São livres de tomarem o caminho que entenderem, não é, e portanto muitas vezes culpam tudo menos a si próprias em relação às escolhas que fizeram, ou porque acham que foram obrigados a fazer, ou porque não tinham outra alternativa, etc, etc. Mas há outras alternativas, tem consequências, umas boas e outras más, mas na verdade eu acho que as pessoas muitas vezes não têm consciência, ou não querem ter consciência do que é que têm que... no fundo para analisar os prós e os contras, os aspectos positivos e negativos da tomada de algumas decisões.

...

*Appendix 7 – Extract of English transcript*

...

[MT] Hmmm. That I am happy with what I do, and that I think that I... hmmm... can mean something for somebody else, but also at the same time, fulfil my own dreams and goals. Maybe a bit like that. Yeah!

[TT] It is difficult to put it into words. It is definitely a feeling quality of life. It's not.. it's difficult to quantify, and that's difficult for you I think as well for what you are doing. It's how to put a measure on quality of life. You, I hope to realise in the moment when you have it. There are moments here when I, all of a sudden stand still and realise wow! Look at where I am living even though maybe it was a rough day or a busy day, but you stand outside, and you look up and see the stars, and you think wow! So realising that you have quality of life is the quality of life for me. So I would hate to think that in ten years time, maybe we don't leave here anymore, you then realize... ooo...

[MT] This was the best

[TT] I had a beautiful time and a beautiful life and I didn't realize it in 2016. But you realize in 2026 that you had it. So for me it's an important thing to hope and to realize when you have it. And at the moment there is many of such moments. That I realize that we are lucky in the sense that we are happy that we are healthy and realize it.

[Maria] Happy, healthy, you already mention as well coming out, where we are, the sky, what else makes you realize that you have quality of life?

[MT] Hmmm that might be the guests, when I see them enjoy, like really having a lazy day here, just hanging in the hammock with a book and enjoying themselves, then I think "ok now I am lucky because they are feeling so good".

[TT] And for it's having also a form of control for us, we are very much in charge of what we do. That is nice. We have an idea in the morning, we talk about it, maybe get some supplies to do it, and then in the afternoon we are doing it. We are painting that wall, or we are ... so there is a form of control and what I thought of which I really like is that there is no, not a lot of time rush, of course I need to go to the bank maybe once or twice every month in the season, for a deposit, or anything, but I can choose to do it anytime I want. I can say let's do it now, or I think that tomorrow morning will be quiet. And there is never me running to the car, cursing to myself that I have to go to the bank now and I am annoyed that the line is taking a long time, there is a huge luxury that I don't feel time stress, and that is definitely for me a quality that we have. Here.

[Maria] Is time measured in a different way? If you compare your life now with the life you were living in Ayamonte or back in Holland? It time measured in a different way?

[MT] Yeah

[TT] It's measured less. You measure it less, that's the thing.

[MT] Yeah, I don't have a watch anymore

[we all looked at my wrist and started laughing]

[TT] And of course I have my phone and I can see what time it is, cause people can do bookings and everything, so we are aware of the time, but less, I think.

[MT] Because it is your own time, it's not like you have to hmm tell your boss what you did and what you accomplished that day or that week. It's...

[TT] People asks us... well I get the question a lot, I do not know if they ask you the same thing [looking at Michelle], they ask me "at what time do you do the candles?" and that is very strange question to us. Because, I always look a bit surprised with this question still I think, and I say, when it gets dark... "and at what time does it get dark?", now!... and it is so strange because we don't measure it it time. We look outside and we think, it is time for the candles.

[MT] Time for the candles [at the same time as Theo]

[TT] and sometimes we think, "Oh it was time for the candles!", and then we run out and do the candles quick because it was dark and then we thought. So it is measured less, I think, the time. That is maybe the best answer for me. It's less important.

[MT] Yeah also because you can, if you have a day with no arrivals and no checkouts that is a quiet day for us, so that's usually a day in which we can go to the beach or do something for ourselves. And then when you do that, that feels like [Michelle speaks in deutsche with Theo]

[TT] A treat

[MT] Yeah! A treat to yourself. It's like you can go out for coffee and... yay! Well done! During the day everybody is in their office now.

[TT] Or do a nap.

[MT] Yeah.

[TT] We lived in Spain so we do like our little siestas, sometimes.. it does not happen a lot to be honest, but there is a moment in the season when you are tired it's Tuesday afternoon, you think oh the next guests are coming only at 7 o'clock, so we have plenty of time, and you fall asleep, in Michelle's case. Or I have to really go and lay down, but Michelle can...is a multisleeper

[MT] I can sleep anywhere! [laughs]

[TT] I need to go and lay down, and then having that realisation, well it's Tuesday afternoon and I am choosing to have a nap.. that is a luxury. That is a spoiled moment. That's freedom, and that means that there is no time rush.

[Maria] Well it is hard to quantify quality of life, but let me try to ask you, imagine a scale from 1 to 7, being 1 the lowest, right now, today, where would you put yourselves in this scale, regarding quality of life.

[TT] And it goes to 7?

[Maria] Yes, 1 to 7. Where would each of you locate in this scale?

[MT] Difficult!

[TT] I would...

[MT] You would say seven [laughs]

[TT] I will be tempted to say seven because I feel... very lucky as well. And that is maybe the up bring as well, that you always think like oh! The demanding part as well, that I am lucky already, so it should be a 7. But definitely in my case I would say at least a 6.

[MT] Yeah, me too.

[Maria] So, let me do the question: what is missing to go from the 6 to the 7?

[MT] For me that would be, like what we've said, not explaining too much. Like if I can accomplish that in the next season and be more confident with the choices I've made, and not feeling the urge of explaining all the time... also in the direction of my parents, then it would be a 7 for me...

[Maria] And for you [looking at TT]

[TT] for me it would be... moving past some decisions that we are facing at the moment, because we are 36 turning 37, Michelle's 35 and maybe what we want to do with our own family, and we are in very much in doubt, so... that is in the back of our minds a lot of times, and whichever way that takes us it would be nice to be out of that indecision. I like decisions. And we don't know. And that's sometimes difficult.

[MT] Yeah. For you maybe more than for me.

[Theo] Yeah.

...

## Appendix 8 – Detailed explanation of data analysis process

These paragraphs will detail the thematic analysis process I followed of collected research material, i.e. the transcripts of the 36 conducted interviews.

To analyse my primary data, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis (see section 3.7 for detailed information). The first stage is **familiarisation**. I began data analysis with data transcription, and throughout this process, due to the large amount of hours spent transcribing (see section 3.6.2 for detailed information) and the number of times I (re)heard the interviews, I began to have thoughts on analysis, comparisons and had already begun making research notes and markings with some initial thoughts of possible codes.

Familiarising with the data through the transcription of the interviews took me to the second phase: **generation of initial codes**. I used MAXQDA 12 (see section 3.7.1 for detailed information) to code the interview transcripts. In the coding process I used a line-by-line approach, i.e. reading the transcripts one line at the time, I identified interesting issues and labelled them with codes (see excerpt in figure below). I followed this process in an iterative way for each transcript, re-reading the transcripts and refining the codes.



As the coding progressed, some codes were added, others were renamed into keywords that were more accurate providing greater descriptive power, and some were discarded for not being as relevant as initially thought. These changes were more often during the coding of the initial transcripts, as coding advanced, the changes decreased and in the last transcripts no code changes were required. The fact that the changes decreased along the coding process gave me some assurance and confidence in that the coding system was getting more robust and stable.

The next phase was the **search for themes**. After coding all the interviews, I grouped the codes with similar features into groups (sub-themes). In order to do so, I printed each code on a separate piece of paper and based on similarity of the codes I organised them into groups. This stage is also iterative, and somehow similar to the coding stage, in that changes and exclusions to the sub-themes occur throughout the process. Braun and Clarke (2006) name this phase **reviewing themes**.

Sub-themes were then grouped into themes making sure that they fit well together and provided the grounds to tell the story about the data. Names were given to each theme and definitions were created (phase five: **name themes**). Phases three, four and five were initially done by hand, and then I transferred the connections between the codes into a mind map (see diagram below) using the software *simplemind*. Using a mind map tool was very helpful in aiding me to refine the themes and understand how the data story could be told.



A final analysis of the clearly defined themes allowed the emergence of a conceptual framework of QoL of LsEs (see p.116), which in turn was the base for this thesis' findings and discussion (phase six: report).