Job Crafting in Changing Organizations: Antecedents and Implications for Exhaustion and Performance

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The present study addressed employee job crafting behaviors (i.e., seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands) in the context of organizational change. We examined predictors of job crafting both at the organizational level (i.e., perceived impact of the implemented changes on the working life of employees) and the individual level (i.e., employee willingness to follow the changes). Job crafting behaviors were expected to predict task performance and exhaustion. Two-wave longitudinal data from 580 police officers undergoing organizational changes were analyzed with structural equation modeling. Findings showed that the degree to which changes influence employees' daily work was linked to reducing demands and exhaustion, whereas employee willingness to change was linked to seeking resources and seeking challenges. Furthermore, while seeking resources and seeking challenges were associated with high task performance and low exhaustion respectively, reducing demands seemed to predict exhaustion positively. Our findings suggest that job crafting can act as a strategy of employees to respond to organizational change. While seeking resources and seeking challenges enhance employee adjustment and should be encouraged by managers, reducing demands seems to have unfavorable implications for employees.

Keywords: exhaustion, job crafting, organizational change, task performance

Organizational change is defined as a top-down process implemented by change agents and managers (van der Ven, 2011). Eventually, though, in order to realize change, organizations have to rely on employee behaviors (van Dam, Oreg, & Schyns, 2008). For example, proactive employee behaviors targeted at improving one's job, such as job crafting, are proposed as a way to survive a rapidly transforming work environment (Ghitulescu, 2013; van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2010). Our paper refers to two types of change, namely, the one implemented from above (i.e., organizational change), and the one introduced by employees (i.e., job crafting). So far, little is known about the way in which a changing work environment stimulates job crafting or the effects of job crafting on employee health and performance. During times of continuous and emotionally demanding organizational changes (Smollan, Sayers, & Matheny, 2010), the role of employee job crafting becomes theoretically and practically important.

The first aim of our paper is to gain insight into the factors that encourage job crafting as an employee strategy to deal with implemented change. On basis of Parker, Bindl, and Strauss's (2010) model of proactive motivation and an interactionist approach within organizational research (Schneider, 1983), we examine individual and organizational conditions that trigger job crafting: (a) the impact changes have on the daily activities of employees (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), and (b) employee willingness to follow implemented changes (Metselaar, 1997).

Our second aim is to address the link between job crafting and employee adjustment during organizational change over time. In line with existing frameworks of organizational change (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011; van den Heuvel et al., 2010), we conceptualize employee adjustment to change as comprising work-related consequences (i.e., task performance) and health-related consequences (e.g., well-being). We, thus, test if job crafters perform adequately their prescribed tasks (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007), and they protect themselves from exhaustion, a state of intensive physical, emotional, and cognitive strain (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). We also examine if the link between job crafting and exhaustion is reciprocal, namely, if exhausted employees craft their jobs so as to cope with strain.

In order to reach our goals, we conducted a two-wave study among police officers dealing with organizational change. Police officers face pressures to increase their productivity, therefore, they experience stress (Gerber, Hartmann, Brand, Holsboer-

Trachsler, & Pühse, 2010) and are often targets of organizational change implementation aiming at improving their performance (Juniper, White, & Bellamy, 2010). Our study contributes to the literature by addressing job crafting as a strategy to deal with organizational change, triggered by individual and contextual antecedents.

Conceptualizing Job Crafting

Employees are not passive recipients of organizational design, but they proactively modify their jobs (Bell & Staw, 1989) so that they fit their preferences. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) suggested that via *job crafting,* employees alter the task boundaries of their job (i.e., type or number of activities), the cognitive task boundaries of their job (i.e., how one sees the job), and the relational boundaries of their job (i.e., whom one interacts with at work). This job crafting conceptualization focuses on occasions when tasks, relationships, or cognitions of employees are altered. However, in many occasions, employees craft their jobs, for example, via skill development or by granting themselves more autonomy, without completely altering their tasks or relationships or their job overall. Moreover, employees may often alter not the type or number of activities but, for instance, the degree of difficulty. In the case of a policeman, he or she may choose for surveillance of a living area rather than the center of the city. Therefore, recent literature (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012) has used the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) to describe in a theoretically grounded way a wider list of specific job characteristics employees reshape when they engage in job crafting actions. The JD-R model distinguishes job characteristics into job demands (i.e., the demanding aspects of a job which require physical and psychological effort) and job resources (i.e., job aspects that are functional for achieving work goals and can eliminate the costs of the demands). While job resources primarily enhance employee work motivation, job demands impair employee health (Demerouti et al., 2001) or enhance employee motivation when perceived as challenges (e.g., Prieto, Soria, Martinez, & Schaufeli, 2008).

Following this stream of literature, we refer to job crafting as voluntary self-initiated employee behaviors targeted at seeking resources (i.e., asking manager or colleagues for advice), seeking challenges (i.e., asking more responsibilities), and reducing demands (i.e., eliminating emotionally, mentally, or physically demanding job aspects). This conceptualization describes specific job aspects employees reshape in order to improve their job conditions. Such actions are particularly important during organizational change because they help employees cope with the uncertainty that emerges (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). Similarly, organizational change results in altered job demands and resources (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). By conceptualizing crafting as regulating one's (new) demands and resources, we address specific changes employees introduce in their job so as to bring the new situation closer to their preferences. Furthermore, unlike other definitions that address job crafting as exceptional episodes reported by employees to occur 1 to 2 times per year (e.g., Lyons, 2008) or a couple of times within one's career (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010), the conceptualization that we use has been reported as a daily employee behavior during organizational

change (Petrou et al., 2012). Therefore, it is an appropriate way to capture the strategies employees use in order to deal with organizational changes that occur constantly in their daily lives. In the present paper, we assume that by enacting seeking resources and challenges or reducing demands behaviors, employees actually increase resources and challenges or reduce their demands. Indeed, Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2013) found that job crafting led to actually altered job demands and resources over time (i.e., optimal demands and sufficient resources).

The Role of Organizational Change

Organizational change can be viewed as an ambiguous situation, namely, a situation that does not provide strong cues for the appropriateness of particular responses to it. In such situations, job crafting becomes important because it flexibly enables new work roles to emerge that employees can use to deal with a relatively unknown situation (Berg et al., 2010; Griffin et al., 2007). In other words, by widening their repertoire of actions and strategies, job crafters are better able to respond to the demands of new situations. In the present paper, we assume that organizational change represents a major (and possibly stressful) event in a company's history (Zell, 2003), which triggers employees to craft their jobs (Grant & Parker, 2009). As such, while job crafting during quiet and predictable organizational times is more likely targeted at exploring as well as enhancing one's resources, during organizational change, it is particularly targeted at finding appropriate ways of responding to, dealing with, or coping with a new situation.

However, mere existence of organizational change is not enough to explain job crafting. Not all employees automatically respond to changes proactively. Situational factors shape human behavior together with individual characteristics (Bell & Staw, 1989). In their model of proactive motivation, Parker et al. (2010) propose that contextual factors (e.g., job stressors) and individual differences (e.g., openness to change or positive affect) shape employee motivation to be proactive. Consequently, we focus on two antecedents of job crafting. First, the impact of implemented organizational changes on employees' work (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) can be a trigger to craft a job in order to manage the demands of the change. Second, a positive employee orientation toward the implemented changes (Cunningham et al., 2002) may increase the chances that employees enact job crafting so as to function better and develop. In other words, we propose that a distinction emerges in terms of employees' tendency to "protect" versus "enhance" themselves (Schwartz, 2010; cf. Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003). Namely, while perceived impact of organizational change will activate their protective strategies, willingness to change and its associated readiness to explore will unlock their enhancement strategies.

Impact of Organizational Change

Organizational change disrupts work routines (Callan, 1993) and triggers feelings of uncertainty, distrust, and irritation (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). These reactions are more likely triggered by organizational changes of high impact. We define organizational changes of high impact as changes that are particularly visible and continuously confront employees in their daily working life (cf. Wanberg &

Banas, 2000). Such changes require employees to exert effort in order to respond to an uncertain and emotionally demanding situation. In fact, organizational changes with a visible impact on the working life of employees may exhaust their resources (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). According to the activation theory (Gardner & Cummings, 1988), job stress occurs when stimuli cause employees to experience activation levels other than their characteristic level of activation. Therefore, organizational changes overly increase the job scope of employees (Xie & Johns, 1995), leading to elevated job stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993) or even exhaustion (Bordia, Hunt, Paulsen, Tourish, & DiFonzo, 2004). We, thus, formulate:

Hypothesis 1: High impact of organizational changes at Time 1 is positively associated with exhaustion at Time 2.

Individuals adapt to challenges (e.g., work or home demands) by narrowing down their attention and focusing on what is important (Baltes & Heydens-Gahir, 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, & Leiter, 2014). In other words, disengaging from nonattainable goals or "giving-up" on tasks may reduce strain when environmental demands are excessive (Schmitt, Zacher, & Frese, 2012). Job crafting targeted at reducing the scope or scale of job tasks could be a way to deal with one's workload (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Therefore, certain forms of job crafting may be triggered by organizational changes of high impact. In such a state of elevated stress and perhaps helplessness, employees are likely to protect rather than enhance themselves. This can be clarified on the basis of approach versus avoidance coping styles. For example, it has been proposed that uncontrollable situations call for an avoidance coping strategy (e.g., reducing demands) as a means of anxiety reduction, while controllable situations call for an approach coping strategy (e.g., seeking resources and challenges) because they provide opportunities that can be exploited (Roth & Cohen, 1986). To the extent that impactful organizational change is uncontrollable, it is expected to lead employees to reduce their job demands as a way of coping with stress rather than to seek resources or challenges. Indeed, empirical research has reported several ways of eliminating one's workload as a means of coping with organizational change, for example, dropping activities (Patterson, Cook, & Render, 2002) or turning down new assignments (Kira, Balkin, & San, 2012). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: High impact of organizational changes at Time 1 is positively associated with reducing demands at Time 2.

Motivational Orientation Toward Organizational Change

People's intentions shape their actions (Ajzen, 1991), therefore, a positive motivational orientation toward organizational changes should lead to extrarole work behaviors benefiting the organization (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Metselaar, 1997). Furthermore, individuals who are open to change are not only willing to benefit their environment but also to express and benefit themselves. For example, when employees are ready to embrace new experiences, they express their change-related nature and values via proactive behaviors (Parker et al., 2010). Because openness to change is self-enhancing rather than self-protecting (Schwartz, 2010), it can stimulate approach behaviors that employees use to enhance them-

selves and their performance (i.e., seeking resources and challenges) rather than behaviors used to protect themselves (i.e., reducing demands). Similarly, employees who are willing to change are in control of the situation, therefore, they should display approach behaviors (e.g., seeking resources and challenges) rather than avoidance behaviors (e.g., reducing demands; Roth & Cohen, 1986).

Hypothesis 3: Willingness to change at Time 1 is positively associated with seeking resources (3a) and seeking challenges (3b) at Time 2.

The Effects of Job Crafting on Employee Adjustment During Change

The empirical links between job crafting and performance or exhaustion during organizational change remain largely unexamined. It has been proposed that by developing personal resources (e.g., knowledge, self-esteem), job crafters survive the dynamic postindustrial work environment (Kira, van Eijnatten, & Balkin, 2010) and can, therefore, cope effectively with the emerging demands during times of organizational change. But what effects exactly does job crafting have on employee well-being and job performance within changing organizations?

Seeking Resources

According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001), individuals are motivated to accumulate resources in order to protect and sustain their existing resources and, thus, attain desired outcomes. An adequate job resources pool has been found to relate positively to task performance (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004) and to protect employees from the experience of exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Similarly, seeking resources enhances employee task performance (Tims et al., 2012). In the context of organizational change, job resources are particularly helpful. First, by reducing employee feelings of uncertainty and providing them with a strong social support network (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005), seeking resources will reduce the risk for employee exhaustion. Second, by providing employees with the necessary information (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005) or instrumental task-related assistance (Terry & Jimmieson, 2003), seeking resources will help them perform their tasks adequately and adjust to the new situation. Hence, we formulate:

Hypothesis 4: Seeking resources at Time 1 is negatively associated with exhaustion (4a) and positively associated with task performance (4b) at Time 2.

Seeking Challenges

Classic stress theories (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Selye, 1987) propose that stressors are often interpreted positively as challenges and enhance employee motivation (Prieto et al., 2008). By enhancing positive attitudes and emotions, job challenges help employees to stay involved in their tasks, grow, and thrive (Podsakoff, Lepine, & Lepine, 2007). Challenges mobilize one's coping resources and result in "outstanding performance" (Lazarus, 1993, p. 5). A challenging job motivates employees to engage in active learning of new skills (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). First, via the accumu-

lation of new skills, this active approach empowers employees to achieve high performance and efficiency (Spence Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Almost, 2001; Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997). Second, by preparing employees against future stressors, it protects them from experiencing anxiety (Holman & Wall, 2002). This strategy eliminates feelings of incompetence that threaten employee adjustment during change (Terry & Jimmieson, 2003). All in all, we propose that seeking challenges provides employees with the skills necessary for high work achievement, and it is a resilient strategy against exhaustion. Therefore, we formulate:

Hypothesis 5: Seeking challenges at Time 1 is negatively associated with exhaustion (5a) and positively associated with task performance (5b) at Time 2.

Reducing Demands

Employees often decide to craft their jobs in order to deal with high levels of workload (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In that sense, reducing demands might function as a way to deal with job stress and protect one's well-being (Tims et al., 2012). However, it is the focus on opportunities within one's job environment rather than the focus on limitations (which characterizes reducing demands behaviors) that leads to outstanding job performance (Zacher, Heusner, Schmitz, Zwierzanska, & Frese, 2010). Therefore, when employees withdraw from their tasks, they often experience low levels of job satisfaction and performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Delaying or avoiding tasks may on the short-term relieve individuals but on the long-term is not functional (Van Eerde, 2000). The tasks that someone avoids do not disappear. Consecutively, workload accumulates and individuals keep worrying about their tasks. By triggering time pressure, avoidance behaviors lead on the long run to exhaustion (Salmela-Aro, Tolvanen, & Nurmi, 2009) and poor performance (Van Eerde, 2003). Delaying behaviors have been shown to impede performance (Steel, 2007) and to contribute to "self-handicapping," which is predictive of burnout (Akin, 2012). During organizational change, employee reactions like escaping, withdrawal, or avoidance are largely inefficient because of their disengaging nature (Amiot, Terry, Jimmieson, & Callan, 2006; Terry, Callan, & Sartori, 1996).

Reducing job demands as a form of job crafting has not been studied extensively and when it is, mixed findings generally occur. Any expectations around this job crafting dimension should, thus, be formed with caution. Reducing job demands has been found to be unrelated to burnout and performance (Tims et al., 2013) or to relate negatively to individual work engagement (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims, Bakker, Derks, & van Rhenen, 2013). Similarly, it has been found that when teams reduce their job demands, they report low team job performance (Tims et al., 2013). Although reducing demands may on the short term help employees survive extreme work pressure, we suggest that on the long term it contributes to accumulation of workload, and it should not allow employees to directly confront and successfully deal with the core demands of organizational change (Petrou et al., 2012). Therefore, we formulate:

Hypothesis 6: Reducing demands at Time 1 is positively associated with exhaustion (6a) and negatively associated with task performance (6b) at Time 2.

Do Exhausted Employees Craft Their Jobs?

Exhaustion is the clearest manifestation of burnout, a psychological syndrome in response to job stressors, which is characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Existing evidence suggests that it is particularly the exhaustion component of burnout that diminishes job performance by preventing employees from completing their core tasks (Taris, 2006). Exhausted employees display poor performance on their tasks because they are unable to regulate their energy successfully (Demerouti, Verbeke, & Bakker, 2005) or in order to adapt to their depleting resources (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004).

It, therefore, seems legitimate to expect that in their dysfunctional state of helplessness (Lee & Ashforth, 1993) and eroded self-image (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), exhausted employees will do anything they can to make their situation less overwhelming. Their cognitively and energetically depleted state will not permit them to recognize and focus on opportunities (e.g., resources and challenges), but it will lead them more to avoidance behaviors (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). In other words, while seeking resources and challenges will not be relevant since recognizing them requires effort, reducing demands will be considered as a more effective and immediate strategy to relieve stress. Thus, we formulate:

Hypothesis 7: Exhaustion at Time 1 is positively associated with reducing demands (7a) and negatively with task performance (7b) at Time 2.

Method

Study Design and Participants

The current 2-wave survey study was conducted among police officers from a police district in the Netherlands. During the interval of 1 year between the first and second time point, the organization planned to introduce organizational changes. Because of a delay in the research project, at measurement Time 1 (T1), implementation of changes had already begun. Therefore, we refer to T1 as the start and to T2 as the peak of the implementation. The changes included a new IT system and professionalization of the workforce via productivity trainings. Furthermore, to increase organizational efficiency, an organizational restructuring began resulting in merging of departments and relocations of police officers. No police officers were made redundant. Respondents indicated that they were dealing with new tasks (28% at T1 and 24% at T2), new work methods (46% at T1 and 47% at T2), new ways of working with colleagues/clients (37% at T1 and 41% at T2), new technologies (33% at T1 and 36% at T2), new products/services (14% at T1 and 18% at T2), new supervisor (29% at T1 and 40% at T2), new location (22% at T1 and 20% at T2), not having a fixed workspace anymore/ flexible working (10% at T1 and 12% at T2), or other types of change (23% at T1 and 19% at T2).

At T1, 1,780 e-mail invitations were sent to police officers for an online survey. Of them, 950 completed the survey (response rate = 53%). One year after, at T2, 1,854 invitations were sent, and 810 employees completed the survey (response rate = 44%). The

final sample comprised 580 police officers who completed both surveys. Of the respondents, 380 (66%) were men and 200 (34%) were women. Their mean age was 43 years old ($SD = 9.93$), and the mean tenure within the police force was 18 years ($SD = 11.63$). More than half of the respondents (58%) worked principally in executive patrol services, while 42% of the sample held principally administrative or support positions, and 88% held a nonsupervisory function.

Measures

Impact of changes was measured with a single item by Wanberg and Banas (2000) adapted to refer to the situation of the police officers ("To what extent do the changes affect your daily work?") and an answering scale ranging from 1 (*I hardly experience them*) to 10 (*I experience them daily*). T2 impact ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 3.20$) was significantly higher than T1 impact ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 3.16$); $t(367) = -5.29$, $p < .001$.

Willingness to change was measured with a 4-item scale developed by Metselaar (1997). Items were scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). An example item is "I'm willing to make time for the implementation of the changes in my department" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .90; alpha$_{T2}$ = .91).

Job crafting was measured with items by Petrou et al. (2012). Respondents were asked to indicate how often they engaged in several behaviors during the past 3 months using an answering scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Because of length constraints, we used a 4-item shortened version of the 6-item *seeking resources* subscale by excluding two items that in the original scale (Petrou et al., 2012) had a factor loading below .40. An example item is "I ask others for feedback on my job performance" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .70; alpha$_{T2}$ = .68). *Seeking challenges* included 3 items, such as "I ask for more tasks if I finish my work" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .75; alpha$_{T2}$ = .77). *Reducing demands* included 4 items, such as "I try to ensure that my work is emotionally less intense" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .78; alpha$_{T2}$ = .79).

Exhaustion was measured with the 6-item version (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003) of the exhaustion subscale from the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2001). A sample item is "During my work, I often feel emotionally drained" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .79; alpha$_{T2}$ = .77). Respondents rated the items using a scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 4 (*totally agree*).

Task performance was measured with the 3-item individual task proficiency scale validated by Griffin et al. (2007). A sample item is "I carry out the core parts of my job well" (Cronbach's alpha$_{T1}$ = .85; alpha$_{T2}$ = .88). Respondents rated each statement using a scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*).

Data Analysis

To test our hypotheses, we performed structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS. We reduced the complexity of our hypothesized model (i.e., the number of freely estimated parameters) without paying the price of losing information, by using manifest variables (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Synchronous correlations were specified as correlations between the errors of all

the constructs measured within the same time wave. Stability effects were specified by including paths from all T1 variables to all their respective T2 variables. Because employees are more positively oriented toward organizational changes when they are younger (Furst & Cable, 2008) or work at higher levels of the organization (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999), we included age and supervisory function as control variables exerting effects to all dependent variables. Both control variables were T1 variables, they were allowed to correlate with T1 study variables, and they exerted effects to T2 study variables (Demerouti, Le Blanc, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Hox, 2009). A number of models were fitted to the data in several steps.

First, Model 1 included only temporal stabilities, synchronous correlations, and paths from control variables to dependent variables. This stability model served as a reference model and was compared against four competing nested models:

> Model 2. This model introduced the hypothesized effects of the two organizational change variables. Therefore, it was identical to Model 1 but included in addition paths from T1 impact of organizational change to T2 exhaustion and reducing demands and from T1 willingness to change to T2 seeking resources and seeking challenges.

> Model 3. This model introduced the effects of job crafting to employee outcomes. It was identical to Model 2 but in addition included paths from T1 seeking resources, seeking challenges and reducing demands to T2 task performance and exhaustion.

> Model 4. This model introduced the effects of exhaustion. It was identical to Model 3 but in addition included the structural paths from T1 exhaustion to T2 reducing demands and task performance. This model represents our hypothesized model.

> Model 5. This model was identical to Model 4 but in addition included structural paths from T1 impact of change to T2 seeking resources and to T2 seeking challenges, from T1 willingness to change to T2 reducing demands and from T1 exhaustion to T2 seeking resources and seeking challenges. This model represents an alternative to the hypothesized model, which assumes that in addition to our hypothesized relationships, there are more ways in which organizational change and exhaustion can relate to job crafting.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations (including test–retest correlations) were computed for all study variables (see Table 1). Table 2 presents an overview of the model comparisons and the fit indices of all competing models. Model 4 included all our hypothesized paths and had the best fit to the data (see Figure 1; $\chi^2 = 76.50$, $df = 30$, $p = .000$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.92, GFI = .98, RMSEA = .05, RMR = .05). Model 5, the alternative model, did not have significantly better fit to the data than Model 4, and because the latter was more parsimonious, it was used to test our hypotheses. It should also be noted that none of the additional paths of Model 5 reached level of significance.

Table 1
Means, SDs, and Intercorrelations Between the Study Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Age (T1)	43.40	9.93	—														
2. Supervisory function (T1)	1.88	.32	-.18**	—													
3. Impact of changes (T1)	5.05	3.16	.19**	-.19**	—												
4. Willingness to change (T1)	3.88	1.07	.19**	-.31**	.11**	—											
5. Seeking resources (T1)	3.48	.54	-.14**	-.16**	-.03	.21**	—										
6. Seeking challenges (T1)	3.08	.79	-.18**	.05	.00	.05	.44**	—									
7. Reducing demands (T1)	2.07	.65	.10*	-.01	.08*	-.08	-.02	.04	—								
8. Exhaustion (T1)	2.12	.46	.07	-.02	.12**	-.17**	-.24**	-.15**	.29**	—							
9. Task performance (T1)	5.04	.53	.06	-.02	.02	.14**	.12**	.19**	-.23**	-.27**	—						
10. Impact of changes (T2)	5.71	3.20	.19**	-.19**	.55**	.00	.00	.03	.08	.16**	-.01	—					
11. Willingness to change (T2)	3.96	1.06	.13**	-.30**	.17**	.64**	.20**	.07	-.07	-.17**	.17**	.03	—				
12. Seeking resources (T2)	3.37	.55	-.18**	-.16**	.04	.19**	.58**	.28**	.00	-.15**	.03	.11*	.25**	—			
13. Seeking challenges (T2)	2.99	.81	-.25**	-.01	-.01	.09*	.34**	.54**	.03	-.13**	.11*	.03	.16**	.47**	—		
14. Reducing demands (T2)	2.07	.69	.17**	-.04	.15**	-.11*	-.08	-.08	.49**	.32**	-.20**	.13**	-.08	.04	.01	—	
15. Exhaustion (T2)	2.12	.43	.14**	.00	.17**	-.16**	-.23**	-.18**	.25**	.64**	-.28**	.22**	-.23**	-.20**	-.22**	.37**	—
16. Task performance (T2)	4.24	.60	-.02	-.01	-.07	.13**	.19**	.10*	-.10*	-.28**	.33**	-.05	.18**	.14**	.21**	-.21**	-.38**

Note. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2.
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Within Model 4, T1 impact of organizational change was positively associated with T2 exhaustion ($\beta = .09$, $p < .01$) and reducing demands ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$), providing support to Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, respectively. T1 willingness to change positively predicted T2 seeking resources ($\beta = .10$, $p < .01$) and T2 seeking challenges ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$), thus, fully supporting Hypothesis 3. Consequently, T1 seeking resources positively predicted T2 task performance ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$) but not T2 exhaustion ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .43$), providing support to Hypothesis 4b but not 4a. T1 seeking challenges negatively predicted T2 exhaustion ($\beta = -.07$, $p < .05$) but not task performance ($\beta = -.04$, $p = .43$), providing support to Hypothesis 5a but not 5b. T1 reducing demands positively predicted T2 exhaustion ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$) but not T2 task performance ($\beta = .01$, $p = .84$), supporting Hypothesis 6a but not 6b. Finally, T1 exhaustion positively predicted T2 reducing demands ($\beta = .18$, $p < .001$) and negatively predicted T2 task performance ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .001$), providing full support to Hypothesis 7.

Our findings imply a number of indirect effects. Testing indirect effects by multiplying two direct effects is a technique that underestimates indirect effects (Taris & Kompier, 2006) and cannot provide Bootstrap estimates. Therefore, we used Preacher and Hayes's (2008) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) macro to test indirect effects with mediators from the time wave of the independent or the dependent variable. We computed confidence intervals based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. Independent variables were measured at T1 and dependent variables at T2. For every indirect effect, we performed two analyses, one in which the mediator was measured at T1 and one in which the mediator was measured at T2. This resulted in 8 Bootstrap analyses. The indirect effect from impact of changes to exhaustion was marginally significant when the mediator was T1 reducing demands (estimate = .003, $SE = .001$, $p = .06$) and significant when the mediator was T2 reducing demands (estimate = .007, $SE = .002$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect from willingness to change to task performance was significant when the mediator was T1 seeking resources (estimate = .020, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$) and T2 seeking resources (estimate = .013, $SE = .005$, $p < .05$). Finally, the indirect effect from willingness to change to exhaustion was nonsignificant when the mediator was T1 seeking challenges (estimate = -.003, $SE = .003$, $p = .30$) and marginally significant when the mediator was T2 seeking challenges (estimate = -.007, $SE = .004$, $p = .052$).

Discussion

The present study aimed at examining antecedents of job crafting and its links with employee adjustment during organizational change. Results show that when employees perceived organizational changes of high impact, they reported high reducing demands and exhaustion over time, whereas when they were willing to change, they engaged in high seeking resources and challenges over time. Seeking resources was positively associated with task performance, and seeking challenges was negatively associated with exhaustion. Reducing demands had a positive reciprocal link with exhaustion, and exhaustion negatively predicted performance.

Depending on their perception of how large organizational changes are and their attitude toward these changes, employees apply different job crafting strategies. On the one hand, employees facing changes of high impact experience exhaustion and cope with their stress by

Table 2
Goodness of Fit Indices and Chi-Square Difference Tests of the Nested Structural Equation Models, N = 580

Model	χ^2	df	Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	RMSEA	RMR	TLI	GFI
Model 1 (Reference model)	159.94**	42				.95	.07	.06	.86	.97
Model 2	139.07**	38	M_1 vs. M_2	20.87**	4	.96	.07	.05	.87	.97
Model 3	114.63**	32	M_2 vs. M_3	24.44**	4	.97	.07	.05	.87	.98
Model 4 (Hypothesized model)	76.50**	30	M_3 vs. M_4	38.13**	2	.98	.05	.05	.92	.98
Model 5 (Alternative hypothesized model)	70.39**	25	M_4 vs. M_5	6.11	5	.98	.06	.05	.91	.99

** $p \leq .01$.

reducing their job demands. On the other hand, via seeking resources and challenges, they create and sustain a challenging, resourceful, and motivating environment that helps them not simply survive organizational change but make the most of it. A notable distinction emerges in terms of preference of employees to protect versus enhance themselves (Schwartz, 2010; cf. Ashford et al., 2003). While the threat of large-scale organizational change triggers the motivation of employees to protect themselves via reducing demands (but not via seeking resources or challenges), their willingness to change unleashes their motivation to enhance themselves via seeking resources and challenges (but not via reducing demands).

As expected, seeking resources enhanced performance. During change, employees do not only rely on existing job resources but also seek additional resources (Kira et al., 2012; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005) that improve their level of functioning. Performance, however, was unrelated to seeking challenges. While seeking resources provides employees with the structural means to perform core tasks (Tims et al., 2012), seeking challenges outside the formal tasks may have a more visible effect on extrarole behaviors that fall outside one's job description. Contrary with what one may expect, seeking challenges, an active approach of confronting demands, related to lower rather than higher strain. Indeed, an active problem-focused
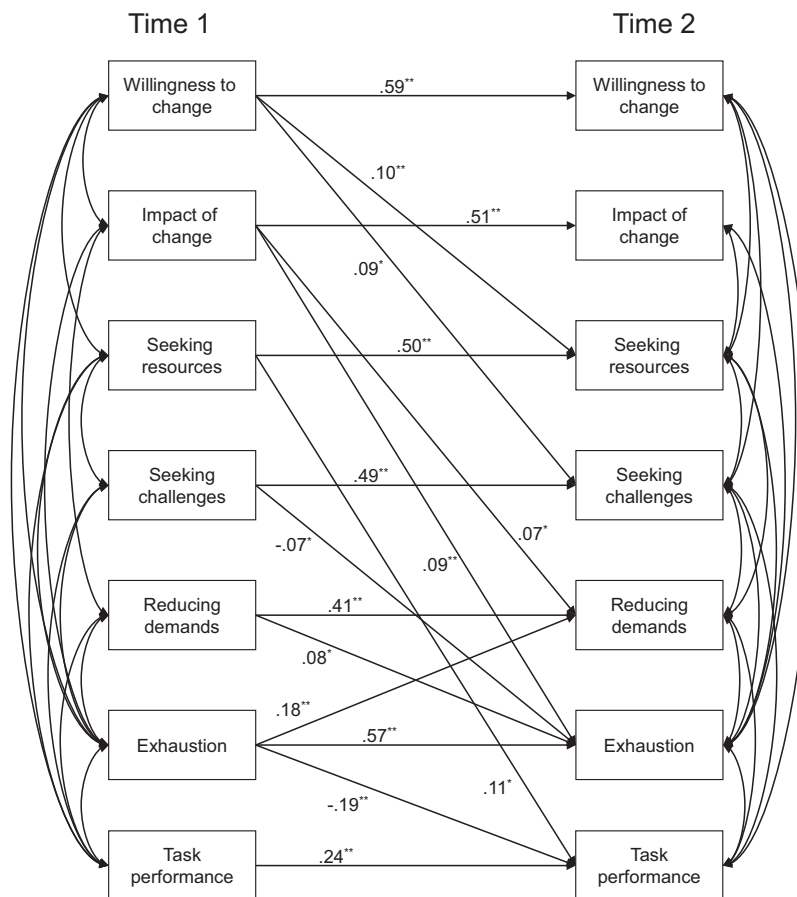

Figure 1. Tested SEM model. $\chi^2 = 74.10$, $df = 29$, $p = .000$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.92, GFI = .99, RMSEA = .05, RMR = .05; significant synchronous correlations are displayed without their coefficients for clarity purposes. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

approach to work is linked to employee adjustment during organizational change and low levels of exhaustion (Cunningham et al., 2002). Employees with such a proactive orientation are efficacious (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2004), resilient (Mallak, 1998), and protected from the adverse effects of a demanding job. It should be noted that seeking challenges (i.e., an intraindividual strategy) was more effective for preventing exhaustion than seeking resources (i.e., an often interpersonal strategy). A possible interpretation is that in order to survive the demanding context of organizational change, employees need to embrace challenge by themselves rather than to rely on others.

Employees who reduced their demands, reported higher exhaustion, which in its turn, was found to lead to more reducing demands. Exhaustion and reducing demands are, thus, reciprocally related over time and strengthen each other. Although one may expect that reducing demands is a successful strategy to reduce exhaustion, our findings show the opposite. This is in line with literature that describes vicious cycles where burned-out employees are entrapped (Singh, Goolsby, & Rhoads, 1994). Exhausted employees put less effort in their tasks (Banks, Whelpley, Oh, & Shin, 2012), therefore, they increase their workload (Van Eerde, 2000) and intensify their exhaustion.

Taken together, our findings reveal that while impact of organizational changes is connected with employee exhaustion (via reducing demands), willingness to change is connected with high task performance (via seeking resources) and with diminished exhaustion via seeking challenges. It seems, therefore, that within a change context, employees who adjust the most are those who adopt a proactive approach of seeking job resources and job challenges.

Contributions and Limitations

The present study contributes to the research area of job crafting by examining its role within the organizational change context. Job crafting is addressed as a multidimensional strategy initiated by employees to deal with organizational change. Based on their motivational orientation and their understanding of their changing situation, employees engage in job crafting behaviors sometimes with positive and sometimes with negative implications for their performance and health. Therefore, job crafting emerges as a meaningful employee behavior with the potential to explain variation not only in employee task performance, but also exhaustion, one of the most common costs of organizational change in terms of occupational health.

Our research is not without limitations. First, data relied on self-report, which is associated with common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This is not the most superior method to capture job performance, which is not the type of subjective construct for which self-report is appropriate (Conway & Lance, 2010). Furthermore, our study was based on a single occupation (i.e., police officers), which limits the generalizabilty of the findings to other working populations. In addition, the response rate was relatively low, which limits our ability to generalize the findings across the whole workforce of the studied police department. In addition, our two-wave design does not enable us to fully address mediating relationships because that would entail a three-wave design whereby every variable of the relationship is measured within a different wave. Furthermore, the use of a single-item measure for the impact of changes may have inflated the measurement error. Finally, the fact that the implementation of change had already started at T1

did not enable us to have a purely baseline or control measure of job crafting (i.e., "prechange") that employees engage in, irrespective of organizational change. It should, however, be noted that in organizational life, change is a continuous process, and apart from some clear occasions (such as relocations), it is not easy to determine when they start and when they finish.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

Our research addresses complex relationships between variables that change over time. Future research with such aims should address in a more precise way the frequency and the timing of the measurements based on the nature of the studied relationships (Mitchell & James, 2001). For example, future research could include more measurements with shorter intervals (e.g., a couple of months). In that way, there will be adequate time for the studied processes to set off, but the time will not be so long that they will wear off. In addition, our findings reveal that organizational change triggers two different employee reactions (i.e., seeking resources and challenges vs. reducing demands). Future research could examine how these two strategies relate to each other (e.g., how they develop over time) and which factors define which one of the two will prevail. Similarly, future studies could compare how the job crafting techniques that we have found during organizational changes compare and contrast to job crafting behaviors during times of organizational prosperity. Furthermore, next to the job crafting conceptualization that we have used, there are alternative job crafting conceptualizations (e.g., Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Future research could examine if such conceptualizations of crafting lead to similar results as the ones we found. Finally, future studies should address alternative conceptualizations of reducing demands behaviors, making a distinction between less productive ways to reduce one's demands (e.g., avoidance) and more productive ways to reduce one's demands (e.g., task optimization).

From a practical point of view, our results emphasize the role of job crafting behaviors for employees and managers who manage organizational change. Seeking resources and challenges seem to be positive ways in which employees deal with appealing organizational changes and could be enabled by managers via coaching or employee development plans. Because the role of reducing demands is currently not completely understood and literature generally reveals mixed findings, it would be better if managers empower employees to enact seeking challenges and resources in order to respond to the demands of organizational changes. Another possibility would be to only encourage reducing demands behaviors that are enacted in constructive and skillful ways (e.g., time management, responsible delegation, or optimization of work processes). By promoting positive and functional job crafting strategies, managers and organizations have the potential to foster employee health and performance, turning organizational change into a successful transformational experience.

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