The contribution of job crafting to the experienced meaningfulness of work

A qualitative study on how job crafting is used to contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service of the Radboudumc

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Abstract

The aim of this master thesis is to gain an empirical and in-depth insight in how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (in Dutch: AMD) of the Radboudumc, by means of looking at how these job crafting processes take place by employees at the AMD, by means of qualitative research methods. The research question of this study is defined as "How does job crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?". According to literature, employees can craft their jobs, through which changes can be made in the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their work, which in turn will shape the characteristics of the job and the social environment (relationships and interactions with others) at work, which will influence the experienced meaningfulness of work (Berg et al., 2013). In this master thesis a single case study is conducted at one department of an organisation, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (AMD) of the Radboudumc. Theory-oriented research is conducted in a qualitative and deductive way. Nine in-depth interviews are conducted with employees of the AMD as a means of data gathering. The interviews are recorded on audiotape and transcribed afterwards. The resulting data is analysed by means of a template analysis. The results of this study show that employees of the AMD experience their work as meaningful (although in different ways) and (feel the freedom and ability to) engage in job crafting to make their work even more meaningful. All nine job crafting techniques looked at in this study are used by employees of the AMD, although in different degrees, and employees craft their jobs in different and personal ways. The job crafting activities contribute in certain ways to the experienced meaningfulness of work, however, in some cases employees craft their jobs because they experience it as necessary in their jobs, and not primarily to provide their jobs with more meaningfulness. Job crafting sometimes seems to be an inherent part of the jobs of employees of the AMD, which could be caused by the fact that employees working at the AMD are foremost independently operating and highly educated professionals with complex and rich jobs. Finally, the way in which jobs are designed and the culture at the AMD seem to support the job crafting activities of employees.

Table of contents

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction research topic

Most people want their work to mean something, and therefore desire a job that is meaningful to them (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012). Therefore, work should be more than just a way to earn a salary or to pass time. When looking at the growing number of seminars, books, and websites, in which help is provided to people to find meaning in their work, it could be concluded that people are more interested than ever before in doing work that actually matters to them (Steger et al., 2012). Furthermore, employees working in a more modern work context have higher expectations with regard to the meaningfulness they would like to derive from their work and career (Twenge, 2006).

Research has shown that work that is experienced as meaningful has potential benefits to people as well as to organisations (e.g. Berg, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2010b; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Steger et al., 2012). The potential benefits of work that is meaningful to people are related to positive well-being and positive work-related outcomes. People who experience their work as meaningful and serving some greater social or communal good will be better in their psychological adjustment, and at the same time possess qualities that organisations desire (Steger et al., 2012). These people report greater job satisfaction (Kamdron, 2005) and well-being (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway & McKee, 2007), place higher value on work (Nord, Brief, Atieh & Doherty, 1990), and view their work as more central and important (Harpaz & Fu, 2002). Furthermore, people who experience their work as serving a higher (social) purpose will experience more work unit cohesion and job satisfaction (Sparks & Schenk, 2001). On the other hand, according to Aktouf (1992), the absence of meaningfulness in work can result in alienation or disengagement from work. In a similar vein, people will be more likely to absent themselves from work and have more withdrawal intentions when their work holds no meaning to them (Steger et al., 2012).

Steger et al. (2012, p. 2) define the experienced meaningfulness of work as "not simply whatever work means to people (meaning), but as work that is both significant and positive in valence (meaningfulness)". In conceptualising meaningful work, Steger et al. (2012) identify three key facets of the experienced meaningfulness of work, which are: (1) experiencing positive meaning in work, (2) sensing that work is a key avenue for making meaning, and (3) perceiving work to benefit some greater good.

There are many sources that are able to contribute to the meaning people experience in work and one of these sources is the work context (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010). More specifically, within this work context, this study will look at the influence of the 'design of job tasks' on the experienced meaningfulness of work. The 'design of job tasks' can be sub-divided into two categories, 'job design' and 'job crafting' (Rosso et al., 2010), and in this study job crafting will be looked at. Job design and

job crafting both influence the job characteristics of work. These job characteristics are related to certain job dimensions that are able to influence the meaningfulness of work, which include: (1) skill variety, (2) task identity, and (3) task significance (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2013; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Furthermore, through job crafting the relationships and interactions with other employees at work are influenced, which can also influence the meaningfulness that is experienced in work.

The design of jobs influences the psychological experiences of work of employees (Wrzesniewski, Berg & Dutton, 2010). According to Berg et al. (2013, p. 110), job design is the "manager-initiated structure that shapes employees' experience of meaningfulness through task identity, variety and significance". This job design can be described as a top-down and one-size-fits-all approach, which means that management designs certain jobs that are not adapted to employees' personal motives, preferences, or needs (Berg et al., 2013; Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer & Weigl, 2010). So, within job design research, the assumption is held that managers design jobs top-down, and therefore employees have a relatively passive role of "being the recipients of the jobs they hold" (Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton & Berg, 2013, p. 281).

Besides job design, the characteristics of a job can also be influenced by the practice of job crafting (Berg et al., 2013). In this master thesis job crafting is defined as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179), and in practice is an "employee-initiated process that shapes one's own experience of meaningfulness through proactive changes to the tasks, relationships, and perceptions associated with the job" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 110). This means that employees are able to create meaning in their work by means of proactively designing and redesigning the tasks and relational boundaries of their jobs. Job crafting is a highly individualised and bottom-up approach with regard to the shaping of job characteristics and the social environment of work, which is able to lead to more meaningfulness experienced in work. Berg et al. (2013) identify three different ways in which employees are able to craft their jobs, which are: (1) job crafting through changing tasks (task crafting), (2) job crafting through changing relationships (relational crafting), and (3) job crafting through changing perceptions (cognitive crafting).

In sum, employees are able to craft their jobs, through which they can make changes in the task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their work, which will shape the characteristics of the job and the social environment (relationships and interactions with other people) at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). So, the changes in the task and relational boundaries of the work will influence the design and social environment of the work respectively. These changes in job characteristics and the social environment at work are able to influence the experienced meaningfulness of work (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

1.1.1 Theoretical relevance

The way in which the elements (tasks and relationships) present in a particular job design constitute the experience of a job is something scholars have long been interested in (Griffin, 1987; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Hackman and Oldham (1976) were among the first researchers who identified the link between the design of job tasks, certain job characteristics (job dimensions), and the 'psychological state' of experienced meaningfulness of work. Hereafter this relationship has been studied in more research (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

Research and literature on the concept of job crafting is relatively new, although the body of research has rapidly expanded in the past few years (Berg et al., 2013). Theories about job crafting expand the perspectives of job design, because the theoretical approach with regard to job crafting states that employees are able to proactively make changes in the design of their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). So, the elements of jobs that once seemed fixed (in job design research) are now viewed as dynamic and more complex (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The first job crafting model was introduced in 2001 by Wrzesniewski and Dutton, and hereafter empirical studies have looked at topics such as the role job crafting plays in the work lives of employees and how job crafting impacts organisations (Ko, 2012; Wrzesieuwski et al., 2013). Most research so far has focused on how job crafting influences the performance of employees, for instance, empirical research of Ghitulescu (2006) has looked at the relationship between job crafting and individual job attitudes and performance. However, little empirical research has looked at the direct influence of job crafting on work meaning and identity (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Wrzesniewski and colleagues (2013, p. 287) argue about the research on job crafting so far that "While these empirical studies have built important knowledge on some of the key antecedents and outcomes of job crafting for employees and their organisations, little theory or research has directly examined job crafting as a mechanism for employees to cultivate a positive sense of meaning and identity in work over time". Yet, a positive sense of meaning and identity in work may be very important reasons (outcomes) why employees craft their jobs and why this job crafting is beneficial for employees (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

Berg et al. (2013) provide a theoretical overview of the different ways or techniques in which employees are able to craft their jobs, and how this job crafting can foster the experienced meaningfulness of work. The authors indicate several possible ways in which employees are able to use job crafting in the workplace, which are inspired by existing theory and research. However, only some of these job crafting techniques have been studied in detail in practice (Berg et al., 2013). Therefore, this study will empirically look at the relationships between (the different ways of) job crafting and the experienced meaningfulness of work. In this way more insight will be gained in if and how job crafting influences and contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work and how these (job crafting) processes actually take place in practice.

1.2 Framing of problem

As outlined above, work that is experienced as meaningful can lead to several potential positive outcomes for employees and organisations. However, a lack of meaningfulness in work can lead to several negative consequences (Steger et al., 2012). When it is known that the design of jobs and job crafting influence the experienced meaningfulness of work, it seems important to design jobs in such a way and enable employees to engage in job crafting, so that employees are able to experience their work as meaningful.

As previously mentioned, the concept of job crafting has emerged as a theoretical approach (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and some empirical research has been conducted, specifically with regard to the influence of job crafting on the performance of employees and organisations (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). However, there is a lack of empirical research on how job crafting influences the positive sense of meaning in work. Therefore, this study will look at how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work in practice and how these processes take place. Moreover, this study will shed light on several motives of employees to engage in job crafting.

1.3 Objective and research question

1.3.1 Objective

The design of jobs, job crafting, and the resulting job characteristics and social environment at work seem to have a significant impact on the extent to which work is experienced as meaningful (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The relationship between job crafting and the experienced meaningfulness of work has resulted in the objective and research question of this study. To provide an answer to this objective and research question, one department of an organisation, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (in Dutch: Arbo- en Milieudienst (AMD)) of the Radboud university medical center (Radboudumc), has been approached to conduct empirical research at.

The objective of this study is: “To gain an empirical and more in-depth insight in how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of the AMD of the Radboudumc, by means of looking at how these job crafting processes take place by employees at the AMD, by means of qualitative research methods”.

1.3.2 Research question

The research question of this study is defined as “How does job crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?”. Three sub-questions are distinguished, based on the three different job crafting techniques described by Berg et al. (2013), which are: (1) “How does task crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?”, (2) “How does relational crafting by

employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?", and (3) "How does cognitive crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?".

1.3.3 Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service

For this study research is conducted at the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (AMD) of the Radboud university medical center. The Radboudumc is one of the largest and leading hospitals in the Netherlands, currently employing over 10.000 employees, and has more than 950 beds for patients available. The Radboudumc is a teaching hospital located in Nijmegen (eastern-central part of the Netherlands) that intensively collaborates with the Radboud University Nijmegen. Together, these two organisations form an academic health science center. Furthermore, the medical center offers educational services to medical, medical bioscience, dentistry, and molecular mechanisms of disease students (Radboud University, 2016).

The AMD supports employees working at the Radboudumc and Radboud University with regard to several issues and obligations in the field of working conditions, absenteeism for health reasons, employee well-being, and the environment. For instance, employees who experience health issues with regard to their work or working conditions are able to make an appointment with the AMD (Radboud University, 2016).

So, the AMD is responsible for health issues with regard to work of employees working at the Radboudumc and Radboud University. According to Blustein (2008), the content of people's work is an important factor that influences people's psychological health. Moreover, as described earlier, work that is experienced as meaningful has many well-being benefits to employees. The AMD highly values the health of its employees and how its employees experience their work. For instance, certain topics that are paid attention to at the department are work engagement (in Dutch: bevlogenheid) and the sustainable employability of employees. Because the department finds it important to pay attention to how its employees experience their work, it seemed to be a suitable department to conduct this study related to meaningful work at. Moreover, after reading the research proposal of this study, the contact person of the department was open to conducting the research at this department. One reason for this could be that at the AMD, concepts such as meaningfulness of work are valued.

1.4 Research approach

In order to provide answers to the previously mentioned research questions, theory-oriented research is conducted, in which a contribution to existing literature will be made. The study is conducted in a qualitative and deductive way. Qualitative research can be useful in theory exploring, because it enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena, and the richness of an experience can be captured (Labuschagne, 2003). Capturing this richness is needed to gain an in-depth insight in how job crafting takes place and how job crafting influences the way in which

employees experience their work as meaningful. In this master thesis a single case study is conducted, because data is gathered at one single (department of an) organisation, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (AMD) of the Radboudumc. Existing literature of job design, job crafting, job characteristics, and meaningful work is used as starting point of this study and has led to the previously mentioned objective and research questions of the study. Moreover, the literature review of these topics is used to develop an interview guide for the semi-structured interviews that are conducted as a means of data gathering in this study.

1.4.1 Theoretical contribution

As stated earlier, the 'problem' that is addressed in this study is that there is little theory and empirical research done with regard to job crafting as a mechanism for employees to cultivate a positive sense of meaning in their work. Therefore, if and in which way job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work is the central question that will be looked at in this study, by means of qualitative research methods (conducting semi-structured interviews). In this way, qualitative insights will be gained in how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work in one concrete single case (if and how these job crafting processes (indicated by Berg et al. (2013) take place by employees working at the AMD). So, insight will be gained in whether job crafting processes evolve in this department in the same way as indicated in literature, and whether this link between job crafting and meaningful work is present.

Moreover, insight will be gained in whether this qualitative research approach is a suitable method with regard to this research question, and whether appropriate insights will be gained through this research method. This knowledge can be valuable with regard to future research on job crafting as a mechanism to contribute to the meaningfulness of work. Furthermore, it will become clear throughout the study that the meaningfulness people experience in their work and job crafting are both relatively difficult concepts to investigate, because the concepts can still be a bit vague. However, the difficulties with regard to investigating these concepts that show up in this study (and maybe certain solutions to deal with these difficulties), may be 'practical knowledge' in future research, because these insights can enable others to anticipate on these difficulties. Furthermore, this study can provide insight in what related topics and issues should be paid attention to in future research.

1.5 Practical relevance

Looking at how perceptions of work that is meaningful influence well being and work-related variables has become more relevant to researchers, (managers of) organisations, and people who desire to increase their satisfaction with regard to their work (Steger et al., 2012). Because of the potential benefits of the presence of meaning in work and the potential disadvantages of absence of meaning in work, meaningful work is important to people and organisations, and therefore is something that

should be pursued. Therefore, a reason why looking at the experienced meaningfulness of work matters, is that meaningful work is associated with many potential benefits for people as well as for organisations (Steger et al., 2012). When employees experience their work as meaningful, this will lead to certain potential positive effects, such as higher levels of job commitment (Steger et al., 2012) and employee well-being (Arnold et al., 2007). Because of these positive work-related effects, it is beneficial for organisations when their employees experience their work as meaningful.

Therefore, insight in the dynamics underlying the experienced meaningfulness of work, and more specifically, in-depth research on the influence of job crafting on the meaningfulness that is derived from jobs, can be beneficial to organisations. When an organisation (in this case (one department of) the Radboudumc) has a better understanding of how job crafting influences job characteristics and the social environment at work, and therefore the experienced meaningfulness of work, it could take these specific aspects into account and try to design jobs and foster job crafting in such a way that the experienced meaningfulness of work in the organisation can be improved.

Moreover, Berg et al. (2013) argue that the increasing body of research on job crafting has made job crafting a concept that practitioners can use as tool to help employees to foster the meaningfulness they experience in their work. In this study, several different forms of using job crafting at work are looked at, which "are inspired by existing theory and research, but only some of which have been tested in practice" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 89). Berg et al. (2013, p. 89) explain that they "see numerous promising opportunities for practitioners to experiment with new methods of using job crafting that have not yet been extensively tested". So, insight in and awareness of which job crafting activities really contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work could be beneficial to employees, for instance in such a way that they could start using these job crafting activities to improve the meaningfulness they derive from their work.

1.6 Outline of thesis

In the next chapter the theoretical backgrounds with regard to meaningful work, job characteristics, job design and job crafting will be provided. Existing literature on these topics will be discussed and eventually the conceptual model of this study will be presented. In chapter three the method of this study will be elaborated on. The method section provides insight in how the empirical study of this master thesis is conducted. In the following chapter the results of the study will be presented and discussed. Moreover, in this fourth chapter answers will be provided to the established research sub-questions. The final chapter, chapter five, includes the conclusion and discussion of the study. In the conclusion an answer will be provided to the main research question of the study. Finally, in the discussion section, the methodological reflection, theoretical contribution of the study, recommendations for future research, the practical contribution of the study, and recommendations for practice, will be looked at.

Chapter 2 Theoretical background

In this second chapter the theoretical background of the study will be presented. First, the distinction between meaning and meaningfulness will be elaborated on. Hereafter, the concept of meaningful work and its related facets will be looked at. Next, theory with regard to job characteristics (theory), job (re)design, and (the three main ways of) job crafting will be presented. Finally, following from the presented literature, the conceptual model of this study will be presented.

2.1 Meaning and meaningfulness

Rosso et al. (2010) tap into the distinction between 'meaning' and 'meaningfulness' that is identified in the meaning of work literature. In the organisational behaviour literature, the terms meaning and meaningfulness are often used interchangeably, however, although these constructs are related to each other, they mean something different (Rosso et al., 2010). Pratt and Ashforth (2003) make this distinction clear by stating that the 'type' of meaning employees experience in their work is called meaning and meaningfulness is the 'amount of significance' employees attach to their work.

According to Pratt and Ashforth (2003), meaning is the interpretation of individuals of what work means to them and the role work plays in the context of life, so meaning is related to how employees make sense of their work. These perceptions of work are held by individuals, but can be influenced by the social context and the environment (Wrzesniewski, Dutton & Debebe, 2003). On the other hand, meaningfulness is related to the amount of significance something holds for an individual (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). The perceived significance of something can be different for different individuals. For instance, one individual can experience (aspects of) particular work as meaningful, while another does not. The meaningfulness construct has gained a positive valence in literature, which means that an experience is seen as more positive when it is experienced as more meaningful (Rosso et al., 2010).

2.2 Meaningful work

According to Steger et al. (2012, p. 1), meaningful work can be defined as a "subjectively meaningful experience consisting of experiencing positive meaning in work, sensing that work is a key avenue for making meaning, and perceiving one's work to benefit some greater good". Steger et al. (2012, p. 2) describe meaningful work in the same way as Wrzesniewski et al. (2010), namely "not as simply whatever work means to people (meaning), but as work that is both significant and positive in valence (meaningfulness)". So, in line with the reasoning of the previous paragraph, meaningful work has a positive meaning to individuals and is experienced to a certain extent as significant (Rosso et al., 2010). Human beings search for meaning in their lives, and work is an important factor that is able to contribute to this meaning. Most adults spend a large part of the day at their work, which results in work being their main source of identity, purpose, and belongingness (Rosso et al., 2010). Moreover, according to Cascio (2003), meaningful work is identified as one of the most important aspects that

employees seek in a job, and it is valued as more important than for instance income, job security, promotions, and working hours.

Scholars have been interested in the concept of meaningful work because of the breadth of personal and organisational consequences of meaning and meaningfulness in work (Rosso et al., 2010). Research has shown that when work is experienced as meaningful, this influences many personal and organisational variables, such as personal fulfillment (Kahn, 2007), career development (Dik & Duffy, 2009), work behaviour (Berg et al., 2010b), organisational commitment (Cardaror, Dane & Pratt, 2011; Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006), job performance (Grant, 2008), organisational citizenship behavior (Purvanova, Bono & Dzieweczynski, 2006), occupational identification (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), and stress (Elangovan, Pinder & McLean, 2010). So, it can be concluded that work that is experienced as meaningful influences many important individual and organisational outcomes (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

2.2.1 Facets of meaningful work

Steger et al. (2012) conceptualise meaningful work as a multidimensional psychological construct that consists of three core dimensions or primary facets, which are: (1) experiencing positive meaning in work (positive meaning in work), (2) sensing that work is a key avenue for making meaning (meaning making through work), and (3) perceiving one's work to benefit some greater good (greater good motivations).

The first facet of meaningful work, 'positive meaning in work', reflects the idea of psychological meaningfulness, which has been a part of the work psychology literature since Hackman and Oldham (1976) introduced their job characteristics theory. Related to this facet, meaningful work is foremost a subjective experience in which someone experiences what he or she is doing as having personal significance (Rosso et al., 2010). This facet of meaningful work captures the sense in which people judge their work to the extent that it matters and is meaningful to them (Steger et al., 2012). When this is the case, employees mostly have found a meaningful career and know what makes their jobs meaningful. Moreover, employees will view their work as having a satisfying purpose (Steger et al., 2012).

'Meaning making through work' is the second facet of meaningful work, and is related to the fact that from empirical research it can be concluded that for most people work is an important source of meaning in life as a whole (Steger & Dik, 2010). Related to this statement, Steger and Dik (2010) argue that work being meaningful without leading people to build meaning in their lives as a whole does not make sense. So, meaning making through work is related to the way in which meaningful work is beneficial for people's meaning in life. Steger and Dik (2010) for instance state that, according to the meaning in life literature, meaningful work can be helpful to people to gain a better and deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them, and this deeper understanding is able to

facilitate personal growth and development. In sum, this second facet of meaningful work, meaning making through work, "captures the broader life context of people's work" (Steger et al., 2012, p. 4).

The third facet of meaningful work, 'greater good motivations', is related to the desire of people to make a positive impact on the 'greater good' through their work (Steger et al., 2012). When this is the case, employees experience that their work makes a positive difference in the world and is serving a greater purpose (Steger et al., 2012). Therefore, greater good motivations are related to other-directed actions in meaningful work (Rosso et al., 2010). In sum, this facet is related to the fact that employees will experience their work as more meaningful when their work has a broader impact on other people (Steger et al., 2012).

So in sum, according to Steger et al. (2012), there exist three underlying principal facets of the construct of meaningful work, positive meaning in work, work as a means of making meaning, and the desire to positively contribute to the greater good. In their research, Steger and colleagues (2012) developed a theoretically driven psychological measure of meaningful work in which all three previously mentioned facets are captured, the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). The subscale related to the first facet, positive meaning in work, correlates the most with several identified outcome variables, such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, the authors state that "the positive meaning of work is, in many ways, the 'flagship' indicator of the overall construct of meaningful work" (Steger et al., 2012, p. 12). However, the authors also indicate that to capture the whole concept of meaningful work, all three facets are of importance. So, when looking at whether employees experience their work as meaningful, it is necessary to pay attention to all three facets.

2.3 Job characteristics

According to Piccolo and Colquitt (2006), individuals perceive their job to a certain extent as meaningful, and this partly depends on the characteristics of a job. These job characteristics are influenced by the design of jobs (mainly executed by management) and by job crafting (executed by employees themselves). So, besides the formal design of jobs, employees are also able to proactively design the tasks and relational boundaries of their jobs, through which they are able to create more meaningfulness in their work (Berg et al., 2010b). Next, the concepts of job characteristics, job design and job crafting will be discussed.

Hackman and Oldham (1976) were the first scholars who made an explicit link between job design and the meaningfulness of work. The authors introduced the job characteristics theory, in which the link between specific characteristics of a job and the experienced meaningfulness of that job is made clear. More specifically, Hackman and Oldham (1976) state that jobs that possess higher levels of skill variety, task identity, and task significance will lead to more meaningful work.

2.3.1 Job characteristics theory

The job characteristics theory of Hackman and Oldham (1976) provides insight in the relationship between certain job characteristics and individual responses to work. This theory describes a set of important job qualities that are proposed to lead to certain valuable personal and work outcomes. Hackman and Oldham (1976) state that there are five job characteristics (feedback, autonomy task identity, task significance, and skill variety) that influence three critical psychological states. These three psychological states are 'having knowledge of the actual results of the work activities', 'experiencing responsibility for outcomes of the work', and 'experiencing meaningfulness of the work'. These three psychological states, in turn, influence certain work-related outcome variables (i.e., overall job satisfaction, work effectiveness, internal work motivation, and absenteeism) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Essentially, the job characteristics theory explains that complex or enriched jobs (which possess higher levels of autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance, and skill variety) are related to increased levels of these work-related outcomes.

Of the five identified job characteristics by Hackman and Oldham (1967), one characteristic (feedback) contributes to the psychological state of having knowledge of the actual results of work activities, one characteristic (autonomy) contributes to the psychological state of experiencing responsibility for outcomes work, and three characteristics (task identity, task significance, and skill variety) contribute to the psychological state of experiencing meaningfulness of work. So, in the job characteristics theory, experiencing work as meaningful is seen as "an important psychological state that mediates between the job characteristics and the outcomes" (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Steger et al., 2012, p. 4), and researchers have recognised this psychological condition of experiencing meaningfulness as an important condition or psychological state at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Hackman and Oldham (1976, p. 162) define the experienced meaningfulness of work as "the degree to which the employee experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile".

2.3.2 Skill variety, task identity, and task significance

In sum, three job characteristics defined in the job characteristics theory contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work, which are skill variety, task identity, and task significance. Traditional job design theory states that tasks will be more meaningful to employees when they consist of more task variety and more task identity (Berg et al., 2013; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Moreover, in relational job design perspectives work is seen as more meaningful when employees experience more task significance in their job (Berg et al., 2013; Grant, 2008).

According to Oldham and Hackman (2010, p. 3), skill variety is "the degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of a number of different skills and talents of the person". The authors state that an individual will perceive a task as more meaningful when this task requires to engage in activities that challenge or stretch certain skills and

abilities. An individual will find a job of more personal meaning when several skills are needed to execute the job, and this can even be the case when the job is not of great significance or importance in any absolute sense (Hackman & Oldham, 1967).

The authors define the job characteristic task identity as "the degree to which the job requires completion of a 'whole' and identifiable piece of work; that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome" (Hackman & Oldham, 1967, p. 257). Employees will find their work more meaningful when they are responsible for assembling a complete product or providing a complete unit of service than if they are responsible for only a small part of the whole job (in case all other job characteristics, such as skill variety, are kept equal).

The third job characteristic, task significance, is defined by Hackman and Oldham (2010, p. 3) as "the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are in the immediate organisation or the world at large". People will experience their work as more meaningful when they know that the results or outcomes of their work will have a significant positive effect on the well-being of other people. So, two jobs that are comparable with regard to their required skill levels (and other job characteristics) can be perceived different with regard to their meaningfulness because they differ in task significance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

2.4 Job design

The design of jobs describes "how jobs, tasks, and roles are structured, enacted, and modified, as well as the impact of these structures, enactments, and modifications on individual, group, and organisational outcomes" (Grant & Parker, 2009, p. 319). Job design can be described as a top-down and one-size-fits-all approach, which means that management designs certain jobs and forms conditions under which employees execute their jobs, that are not adapted to employees' personal motives, preferences, or needs (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014; Hornung et al., 2010). This assumption of job design as a top-down approach has dominated traditional research, and in this approach employees are placed in a "relatively passive role of being the recipients of the jobs they hold" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013, p. 281). In a similar vein, Hackman and Oldham (2010) state that their initial approach to job design was top-down, in which consultants and managers were viewed as the ones that were responsible for the assessment of the content of jobs and the introduction of certain changes to these jobs, which should for instance enhance the psychological well-being and internal motivation of employees.

The design of jobs is an important factor that influences psychological experiences of employees at their work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). More specifically, the way employees experience the meaningfulness of their jobs can be significantly influenced by the design of these jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Grant, 2007). Berg et al. (2013, p. 110) define job design as the "manager-initiated structure that shapes employees' experience of meaningfulness through task identity, variety and

significance". According to Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1992), the design of a job consists of certain tasks and relationships between these tasks that are appointed to a person within the organisation. In this way, tasks are the most basic building blocks with regard to the relationship between the employee and the organisation, and can be defined as "the set of prescribed work activities a person normally performs during a typical work period" (Griffin, 1987, p. 94). So, the elements of which a certain job consists are important with regard to the experience of this job.

The initial job design is mostly communicated to employees by means of a written job description. This job description typically contains a static list in which the tasks, responsibilities and reporting relationships are displayed (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Employees who perform the same job will be provided with the same list of tasks. So, in this way job designs can be used as a means of "top-down standardization and control" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013, p. 287). According to Rosso et al. (2010), most employees have an underlying aspiration to find positive meaning in their work. However, this traditional job design is not likely to have many opportunities to contribute to this personal desire.

2.4.1 Job redesign

Job redesign is related to the process through which the management of the organisation, or more specifically a supervisor, makes changes to the tasks or job of an employee (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Professional jobs nowadays are more complex than ever before, due to organisational innovations such as re-engineering and self-managing teams, and the increasing flexibility in work arrangements provided by advancement in information technology (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). As a consequence, job positions are becoming more a "unique constellation of working conditions that the organization can hardly be aware of" (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014, p. 414), and therefore, top-down interventions by management are no longer effective (Biron, Karanika-Murray & Cooper, 2012). Organisations realise that redesign activities are more effective when initiated by employees themselves or combined with initiatives of management. This proactive behaviour of employees redesigning their job is called job crafting (Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). Through job crafting employees are able to for instance improve their own working conditions. Demerouti and Bakker (2014) claim that job crafting should be used in combination with top-down approaches to improve jobs. Furthermore, job crafting can be useful in responding to the complex jobs of nowadays and in dealing with the specific needs of the current workforce.

2.5 Job crafting

The formal job design that is prescribed top-down by management is only part of the construction of the characteristics and meaningfulness of a job, and in these days many employees are able to modify their own jobs (Berg et al., 2013; Hackman & Oldham, 2010). So, besides job design, the characteristics of a job can also be influenced by the practice of job crafting. Therefore, the design of jobs could be seen as a starting point from which changes are introduced by employees, instead of a

"static source of constraint and top-down control" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013, p. 287). According to Berg et al. (2013, p. 110), job crafting is an "employee-initiated process that shapes one's own experience of meaningfulness through proactive changes to the tasks, relationships, and perceptions associated with the job". This means that employees are able to create more meaning in their work by means of proactively designing and redesigning the tasks and relational boundaries of their jobs. So, employees actively craft their jobs and the social environment of their work to make it fit their personal values, goals, and skills, and in this way make their work more meaningful to them (Berg et al., 2013). Employees are able to alter the tasks and relational boundaries of their jobs, which can lead to a change in the task and social components of their jobs, and therefore they will experience different kinds of meaning in performing their jobs and in themselves (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Job crafting is a highly individualised and bottom-up approach with regard to the shaping of job characteristics that is able to lead to more meaningfulness in work (Berg et al., 2013).

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) were among the first authors who looked at the concept of job crafting in combination with the experienced meaningfulness of work, and established a theoretical framework that will be explained hereafter. The framework is based on the theoretical insight that employees construct their own experience of the meaningfulness derived from their jobs by means of thinking about and performing their jobs in a certain way (Berg et al., 2013). When looking at the concept of job crafting, it could be said it puts employees "in the driver's seat" with regard to the design of their jobs (Berg et al., 2013, p. 81). So, in contrast to job design perspectives, job crafting puts the employee in the position that was traditionally held by managers, and therefore the employee is seen as a "competent and active architect of the job" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 194). Employees who craft their work reshape the boundaries of their jobs in a proactive way, and by means of this own job redesign, employees are able to cultivate meaningfulness in their work.

According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001, p. 179), job crafting is "the process of employees redefining and reimagining their job designs in personally meaningful ways". The specific changes made by employees are able to influence the experienced meaningfulness of the work. Job crafters can create jobs that are more meaningful to them, and in doing so, they can use specific knowledge about themselves and their jobs. By crafting their jobs, employees incorporate those things that are valued parts of their identity, and in this way job crafting is able to bring in more meaningfulness in work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Berg et al. (2013, p. 81) define meaningful work, according to Pratt and Ashforth (2003), as "work that employees believe is significant in that it serves an important purpose". According to these authors, meaningfulness "captures the amount or degree of significance employees believe their work possesses" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 81; Rosso et al., 2010). Related to the distinction made earlier, job crafting refers to both changes in meaning and in meaningfulness

(Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). So, what work means to an employee is able to change, as well as how much the work means to an employee (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Job crafting does not happen once, but is an on-going process instead. Moreover, the extent to which employees engage in job crafting is influenced by the stage of career trajectories in which they are (Fried, Grant, Levi, Hadani & Slowik, 2007), and the social context in which employees work (Berg et al., 2010b). Furthermore, job crafting happens at all levels of the organisation, and from highly routinized to highly complex jobs (Berg et al., 2010b). Therefore, the use of job crafting to change the way in which meaning in work is defined, is applicable to a very broad range of jobs (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Employees can craft their jobs quickly, but job crafting can also take longer periods of time (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters & Schaufeli, 2012). Job crafting is specifically an important mechanism to meaningfulness in work in modern work contexts (Wrzesniewski et al., 2010). This statement is in line with Grant and Ashford (2008), who argue that in the knowledge economy of nowadays organisations more appreciate proactivity of employees. The personal initiatives of employees in shaping their jobs can be beneficial to organisations with regard to their adaptability and innovativeness (Frese & Fray, 2001). Furthermore, job crafting can lead to positive outcomes for employees, such as a higher performance (Leana, Appelbaum & Shevchuk, 2009) and increased emotional well-being (French, 2009).

There exist three main ways in which employees are able to craft their jobs in such a way that it can alter the meaningfulness of work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Berg et al. (2013) name these three different crafting techniques 'task crafting', 'relational crafting', and 'cognitive crafting'. When employees use these three kinds of job crafting techniques, they are able to change the boundaries of their jobs, and this can change the way in which they experience their job as meaningful (Berg et al., 2013). Employees who craft their jobs may use any combination of these three different job crafting techniques, so they are not mutually exclusive (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

2.5.1 Job crafting through changing tasks

Task crafting is related to employees "altering the set of responsibilities prescribed by a formal job description" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 81). Through task crafting employees change the number or form of tasks they have to perform in their jobs (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Jobs consist of certain tasks that can be altered by employees to make the job more meaningful to them. In task crafting, the previously mentioned job- and relational design theories, in which jobs are more meaningful when they include task variety, task identity, and task significance, are combined with the job crafting techniques described by Berg, Grant, and Johnson (2010a). Berg et al. (2013) propose three ways in which employees are able to craft their tasks in such a way that task variety, task identity, and task significance are enhanced, which are: (1) adding tasks, (2) emphasizing tasks, and (3) redesigning tasks. In this way, the meaningfulness employees derive from their jobs can be increased.

The first way of task crafting is adding tasks, which is related to employees including all kind of tasks and projects to their jobs, which they perceive meaningful in their work (Berg et al., 2013). The addition of a certain task will mostly require the development of certain new and desirable skills, which will provide more depth to this task. This increased depth of tasks of the job will likely lead to more experienced meaningfulness of work. An example of adding tasks to a job could be that a recruiter who is interested in technology starts using social media to ease the communication with recruits (Berg et al., 2013). To perform this new task of using social media, the employee probably has to develop some new skills that are required, which will bring more depth into this task of the job.

The second way in which tasks can be crafted is through emphasizing tasks. Employees could start allocating more energy, attention, and time to certain tasks that they perceive as meaningful and are already part of their jobs (Berg et al., 2013). For instance, a physiotherapist could start spending more time on explaining right habits of body position to its patients. Through this emphasis on specific tasks, the physiotherapist is better able to leverage existing tasks of the job that are considered to be meaningful.

Redesigning tasks is the third way of task crafting. Due to time constraints in a job, adding and emphasizing tasks are not always possible options for employees (Berg et al., 2013). In this case, employees could try to re-engineer certain existing tasks to perceive them as more meaningful. A more experienced employee could for instance teach a new employee certain tasks during his work. In this way, the 'new' task of the employee does not only involve the task itself, but also the training of the inexperienced colleague (Berg et al., 2013). When an employee enables his colleague to learn specific tasks, this could make the work more meaningful.

2.5.2 Job crafting through changing relationships

Relational crafting is related to employees changing their interactions with others while performing their jobs. In this way employees change when, how, and with whom they interact in their work, in such a way that the meaningfulness they derive from their work will increase (Berg et al., 2013). More specifically, changes are made in connections (momentary, short interactions with others) and (longer-term) relationships with others at work. Connections are able to evolve into and contribute to the establishment of relationships (Berg et al., 2013). Research on employee interactions has shown that these short-term connections, specifically when these involve high quality connections (which are connections in which employees experience positive regard, vitality, and trust), can lead to several positive consequences for employees (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). For instance, these high quality connections between employees will increase positive work attitudes and job commitment (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Moreover, the relationships that employees have established are key inputs with regard to how employees derive meaning from their work and themselves in their work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Therefore, relationships built by employees, and the short-term connections that can

lead to these relationships, are important factors that influence the experienced meaningfulness of work (Berg et al., 2013). Berg et al. (2013) mention three ways through which relational crafting is able to foster the experienced meaningfulness of work, which are: (1) building relationships, (2) reframing relationships, and (3) adapting relationships.

The first way of relational crafting is building relationships. Employees are able to establish new relationships with others at work, which can provide them with "a sense of pride, dignity, or worth", which will foster the meaningfulness they experience in their work (Berg et al, 2013, p. 91). An example of such relationship building was observed by hospital cleaners who started building relationships with patients and their families. These interactions provided the hospital cleaners with feelings of appreciation, and increased the amount of meaningfulness they experienced in their work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003).

The second way in which relationships can be crafted is through reframing relationships. Employees are able to change the nature of their relationships with others in such a way that these relationships get a new and more meaningful purpose (Berg et al., 2013). For instance, a school's principal who previously only supervised and evaluated 'his' teachers, now also becomes concerned about what his relationships with these teachers mean and what the work interests and preferences of these teachers are (Berg et al., 2013). This different approach to relationships will probably change the content and nature of interactions, and therefore lead to more high-quality connections. Employees will experience more meaningfulness in their work because of these high-quality connections with others in their work (Laschinger, Purdy & Almost, 2007).

Adapting relationships is the third way of relational crafting. Employees are also able to craft their existing relationships, which will provide more meaningfulness in their work (Berg et al., 2013). Employees can start supporting and providing valuable help to others in carrying out their tasks, and in this way craft their existing relationships (Berg et al., 2013). Supporting and providing help will also encourage others to provide support and help in return. Such adaptations in relationships will make the relationships between employees stronger and increases the amount of high quality connections between employees (Berg et al., 2013). In this way new meaningfulness can be experienced from previously existing relationships, instead of establishing new relationships or changing the purpose of relationships. Therefore, this type of relational crafting is beneficial in organisations that are rather small or highly structured, because in this type of organisations the first to ways of relational crafting will be more difficult (Berg et al., 2013). An example of adapting relationships is when employees provide help and support to new or less experienced colleagues, for instance through coaching or mentoring. When both parties provide each other with support and valuable help, this will likely increase the meaningfulness derived from these relationships (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

2.5.3 Job crafting through changing perceptions

Lastly, cognitive crafting is related to employees "changing the way they perceive their tasks and relationships that make up their jobs" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 82). Task crafting and relational crafting are both related to changing something objective or 'physical' with regard to the job, such as which tasks are performed in a job and with whom employees interact in performing these tasks. This is not the case in job crafting through changing perceptions, in which employees change the way they think about their tasks, relationships, and their work as a whole in such a way that the meaningfulness they derive from their work increases (Berg et al., 2013). This form of mental job crafting is supported by research that has showed how certain mind-sets are able to influence and change the way in which employees subjectively experience their work, when no objective or physical changes are made to the job (Berg et al., 2013; Crum & Langer, 2007). Most important is that employees reframe and rethink the way in which they see their work and what their work means to them (Berg et al., 2013). Berg et al. (2013) describe three ways of cognitive job crafting that are able to increase the experienced meaningfulness of work, which are: (1) expanding perceptions, (2) focusing perceptions, and (3) linking perceptions.

The first way of cognitive crafting is expanding perceptions with regard to the purpose or impact of a job, which will influence the meaningfulness derived from this job (Berg et al., 2013). One way in which employees can do this is by means of not looking at their jobs as sets of separate tasks and relationships, but instead looking at their jobs as a whole. By looking at their jobs as a whole, employees are better able to see the ultimate goals and beneficiaries of their jobs (Grant, 2007). This will lead to employees experiencing their work as more meaningful and finding their work more motivating (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). An example of this holistic view of work was found in research on zookeepers, which showed that zookeepers see their jobs as a moral duty to provide care and protection to animals, instead of just feeding animals and cleaning their cages (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). This broader view on their jobs (instead of looking at separate tasks) will increase the meaningfulness these zookeepers experience in their work.

The second way in which perceptions can be crafted is through focusing perceptions, which Berg et al. (2013, p. 92) describe as "In contrast to expanding perceptions, employees can also foster meaningfulness by narrowing their mental scope of the purpose of their job on specific tasks and relationships that are significant or valuable to them". This specific job crafting technique is especially helpful to employees who dislike some aspects (tasks or relationships) of their work, but also see parts of their work as meaningful. An example of focusing perceptions could be research engineers who experience finding new ideas as meaningful, however, do not experience the actual coding, which is necessary for implementing these ideas, as meaningful (Berg et al., 2013). These engineers should try to continually remind themselves about the creative aspects of their work, in which they experience

the most meaningfulness, which enables them to cope with the less meaningful parts of their jobs (Oettingen, Pak & Schnetter, 2001). Moreover, trough the practice of mentally breaking down a job into a meaningful 'chunk' and a less meaningful chunk, employees are able to view the meaningful parts of their work as a reward that will motivate them in performing the less meaningful parts of their jobs (Oettingen et al., 2001).

Linking perceptions is the third way of cognitive crafting and is related to employees that "take advantage of existing components of their jobs by drawing mental connections between specific tasks or relationships and interests, outcomes, or aspects of their identities that are meaningful to them" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 94). An example of this linking of perceptions could be a customer service representative who is passionate about stand-up comedy trying to draw a mental connection between this passion and work by means of making jokes to build relationships with customers. In this way the employee links certain valued personal interests and preferences (which are important aspects of identity) to work, through which the work will be perceived as more meaningful (Berg et al., 2010b).

So, in sum, job crafting is a process that "involves shaping the task boundaries of the job (either physically or cognitively), the relational boundaries of the job, or both" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179). The meaning employees experience from their job is not static. Employees are able to use the derived meaning from their work as feedback about their job crafting activities, and in turn will use this feedback in further crafting their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

2.6 Conceptual model

In figure 2.1 the conceptual model of this study is displayed, which shows the expected relations between the identified concepts. Job crafting (task crafting, relational crafting, and cognitive crafting) influences the job characteristics of work (skill variety, task identity, and task significance) and the social environment at work (short-term connections and longer-term relationships). These job characteristics and social environment at work in turn influence the experienced meaningfulness of work (positive meaning in work, meaning making through work, and greater good motivations).

As outlined above, the way employees experience meaningfulness in their jobs can be significantly influenced by the design of employees' jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Grant, 2007), which is mostly a management-initiated structure. So, the design of jobs shapes employees' experience of meaningfulness through influencing the skill variety, task identity, and task significance of jobs. Moreover, through crafting the tasks of their jobs, employees are able to "cultivate greater task variety, identity, and significance, thereby enhancing the meaningfulness they are likely to derive from their work" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 89). In a similar way, through changing the relational boundaries of their jobs, employees are able to establish more high quality connections and relationships, which also influences the meaningfulness employees experience in their job (Berg et al., 2013).

In sum, employees are able to craft their jobs, through which they make changes in the task, relational and cognitive boundaries of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The changes in the task and relational boundaries of the work will influence the design and social environment of the work respectively. The changes in these job characteristics and social environment at work will influence the experienced meaningfulness of work.

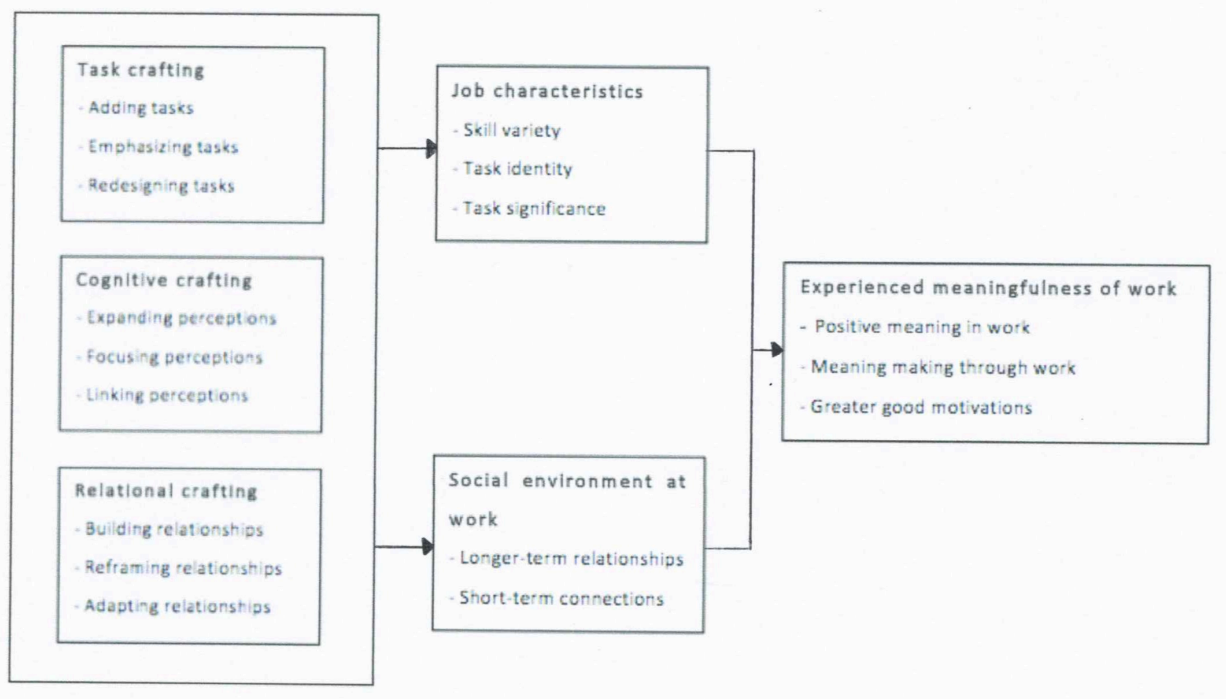

Figure 2.1 Conceptual model

Chapter 3 Methodology

In this third chapter insight will be provided in how this empirical study is conducted. First, the method and the research design of the study will be elaborated on, in which the research approach and the way of data gathering is described. Hereafter, the way in which the gathered data is analysed will be explained. Finally, ethical research practice and the quality of the study will be discussed.

3.1 Method

The purpose of this study was to gain an empirical and more in-depth insight in how job crafting contributes the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of AMD of the Radboudumc, by means of looking at how these job crafting processes take place by employees at the AMD, by means of qualitative research methods. The associated research question was formulated as "How does job crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?". Three sub-questions were distinguished, which are: (1) "How does task crafting by employees of the AMD contribute the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?", (2) "How does relational crafting by employees of the AMD contribute the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?", and (3) "How does cognitive crafting by employees of the AMD contribute the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?".

To provide answers to these research questions, theory-oriented research was conducted. The purpose of theory-oriented research is providing a contribution to existing theory about a certain topic. Job crafting is a concept that has emerged as a theoretical approach (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and some empirical research has been conducted, especially with regard to the influence of job crafting on employee performance and organisational performance. However, there is a lack of empirical research on how job crafting influences the positive sense of meaning in work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Therefore, this study has looked at if and how these job crafting processes take place in practice and how job crafting contributes to this experienced meaningfulness of work.

Furthermore, in this study qualitative research was conducted. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) state that because job crafting is a dynamic process, there are some methodological challenges with regard to how job crafting could be studied best. The authors state that they believe that "it is no coincidence that the examples of crafting we discovered in the organisational literature arose from detailed qualitative studies of work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 196). Studying narratives of employees may be the best way to study the process of job crafting, because job crafting can occur in many different forms and directions, and is related to how employees view their work and themselves in their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Therefore, it will be difficult to fully capture the process of

job crafting in (for instance) survey items, in which collecting personal stories and explanations is not possible.

Moreover, in qualitative research there is an emphasis on "processes and meanings that are rigorously examined, but not measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 100). Therefore, through a qualitative study, detailed data is yielded from a relatively small number of people or cases. In this study, nine in-depth interviews were conducted, which resulted in detailed insights in how job crafting processes take place and foster the experienced meaningfulness of work. Qualitative research can be useful in theory exploring, because it is able to provide an in-depth understanding of phenomena. Moreover, through qualitative research the richness of an experience can be captured, described in peoples own terms (Labuschagne, 2003). Capturing this richness of an experience is needed to gain an in-depth insight in how job crafting takes place and in which way this influences the way in which employees experience their work as meaningful. So, in this study knowledge had to be generated about certain processes and a qualitative approach is suitable for this purpose. Furthermore, a qualitative research approach best matched answering the 'how-question' of this study.

3.2 Research design

Because of restrictions on the scope of the study, in this master thesis a single case study was conducted. According to Buchanan (2013, p. 353), "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". In this study the concepts of job crafting and the experienced meaningfulness of work were investigated in the context of one organisation, the Radboudumc, and more specifically, at one department of the Radboudumc, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (AMD). This research is a single case study, because research was conducted at one single (department of an) organisation. The natural phenomenon that was investigated in this study is the experienced meaningfulness of work and the 'carriers' of this natural phenomenon are the employees of the AMD. The AMD is the natural environment of the carriers of this social phenomenon.

3.3 Semi-structured interviews

In this study in-depth, open-ended interviews were used as a means of data gathering. According to Alvesson and Lee Ashcraft (2012, p. 240), research interviews are seen by most organisational scholars as "reliable gateways into what goes on in organisations". The data that can be gathered through open-ended interviews are "direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 101). In these interviews participants are asked to share their

perspectives and experiences, and it is important that interviews are conducted in such a way that the interviewees are willing to openly share their knowledge.

In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted, in which a preconceived interview guide was used. This interview guide includes questions that are based on existing literature with regard to the research topics. Alvesson and Lee Ashcraft (2012, p. 248) state that "An intensified structure tends to amplify the probability that interviewees will respond to parameters set by the researcher rather than pursuing themes they regard as interesting or important (thereby minimising richness and novelty); but also facilitates an easier sorting, comparison and analysis of the material". So, the structuring of interviews beforehand is advantageous because in this way the researcher is able to steer which questions are addressed during the interviews, and therefore what kind of information is gathered from the interviewees. As a consequence, this method enables the researcher to yield a large amount of targeted information in a relatively short period of time (Bleijenbergh, 2013). Furthermore, because the interviews are structured beforehand, the researcher is more assured that all interviewees are presented the same questions.

The interviews that were conducted in this study were face-to-face, in which open-ended questions were presented to the interviewees. Through asking open-ended questions, the perceptions and experiences of interviewees can be revealed. Moreover, during face-to-face interviews the interviewees are able to show their feelings and emotions (Bleijenbergh, 2013). In this study the experienced meaningfulness of work is an important concept and insight had do be gained in what characteristics of work influence this experienced meaningfulness of work. So, during the interviews the interviewees were enabled to express their experiences and perceptions with regard to (the meaningfulness of) their work.

During conducting the interviews the researcher is able to elaborate on specific aspects by means of asking more in-depth questions about certain topics. In this way the researcher adds questions to the 'standard package of questions', because this will provide a better insight in phenomena or processes. Besides asking more (in-depth) questions, the researcher is also able to ask the interviewees to give examples of the phenomena and events explained (Boeije, 2012). Furthermore, the interviewees are able to notice when a question is not understood well. When this happens, the researcher is able to clear up the misunderstanding by asking questions in another manner or providing some relevant context information. Lastly, during an interview non-verbal behaviour of interviewees can be observed, which can be of importance when interpreting answers provided by interviewees (Boeije, 2012).

3.3.1 Interview guide

The questions that were included in the semi-structured interviews about job crafting and meaningful work were based on literature of Berg et al. (2013), Steger et al. (2012), and Wrzesniewski & Dutton

(2001). Furthermore, a few self-invented questions were added to the interview guide. The way in which the interview questions are derived from literature and theoretical concepts is showed in Appendix A – Operationalization. The interview guide used during the interviews is displayed in Appendix B – Interview guide AMD.

3.3.2 Sample selection

Due to restrictions on the scope of the study, the potential population of research participants was constrained to a smaller sub-group. According to Saunders (2012), many researchers adopt an 'opportunist approach' with regard to gaining access to the organisation and in the process of choosing research participants, because of the many difficulties related to gaining access to organisations. Furthermore, according to Holt (2012), because of ethical considerations, coercion should not be used to ensure that people participate in research studies.

In this study nine interviews were conducted with employees working at the AMD of the Radboudumc. In table 3.1 a list of the interviewees and their corresponding job positions is provided. To ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms for their names are used (in the following chapter). A non-probability sample was used in this study. In a non-probability sample, an 'appropriate' sample should enable the researcher to gain insights and understandings about the constructs that are being studied (Patton, 2002). So, a criterion of sample selection should be that the researcher is able to collect appropriate data that will meet the aim and needs of the study (Saunders, 2012). The nine interviews conducted in this study provided an adequate insight in the experienced meaningfulness of work of the interviewees and how job crafting is used to contribute to this experienced meaningfulness of work.

Interviewee	Job position
Interviewee 1 – John	Research assistant
Interviewee 2 – Gerard	Occupational health physician
Interviewee 3 – Pauline	Occupational health nurse, absenteeism consultant
Interviewee 4 – Alice	Management assistant, coordinator midoffice
Interviewee 5 – Gert	General coordinating (radiation) expert
Interviewee 6 – Mieke	Occupational health nurse
Interviewee 7 – Ian	EHS manager
Interviewee 8 – Carel	Higher safety expert
Interviewee 9 – Hanneke	Occupational health physician, customer manager

Table 3.1 Interviewees and job positions

3.4 Data analysis

The conducted interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed afterwards. After transcribing the interviews, qualitative data can be seen as descriptive and 'raw' information. These direct quotations or narrative comments "reveal the respondent's level of emotion, their thoughts, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 102). After transcribing the interviews, the interview transcripts were analysed. This analysis consists of the unravelling of the gathered data and the classifying of these 'pieces of data' to different categories. In this manner the data becomes structured, and this enables the researcher to easier compare the interviews (Boeije, 2012).

In this study a deductive approach was used, which means that the analysis is (partly) led by theoretical expectations (Bleijenbergh, 2013). Within a deductive content analysis, the gathered data is reviewed on its content and coded by means of looking at its correspondence to or exemplification of the categories that are identified (Polit & Beck, 2012). Existing literature on job design, job crafting, job characteristics, and meaningful work to a certain extent formed the basis of the data analysis, because the codes that were used are partly based on this literature. The final codes that were used in the data analysis are displayed in Appendix D – Code tree.

Template analysis was used as analysis technique in this study. Template analysis is a relatively flexible technique, in which few specified procedures are prescribed. Therefore, template analysis can be tailored to match specific research requirements (King, 2013). For instance, template analysis does not prescribe a fixed number of levels of coding hierarchy, but instead "encourages the analyst to develop themes more extensively where the richest data (in relation to the research question) are found" (King, 2012 p. 429). When labelling the data, specific concepts were used, which are called codes. In this template analysis a coding template was developed, based on existing literature and a subset of the data (King, 2013). So, in the template analysis of this study a priori codes were used, which matches the deductive research approach of this study. However, usually only a limited number of a priori codes are defined beforehand, which are related to the key concepts or perspectives of the study. In template analysis the researcher is allowed to redefine and discard certain a priori themes, and does not start from scratch every time another data set is analysed, "analysis progresses instead through an iterative process of applying, modifying and re-applying the initial template" (King, 2012, p. 430). This style of analysis is more efficient than analysis techniques that require the researcher to carry out all steps on all the gathered data. During the coding process, the researcher moves from "the more concrete and data-grounded to the more abstract and interpretive" (King, 2012, p. 429). The final template developed in this study is displayed in Appendix C – Template.

3.5 Quality of study

Many authors argue that in qualitative research other assessment criteria should be used than in quantitative research, because of the different methodologies used by researchers in each area (Easterby-Smith, Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2008). In qualitative research, subjectivity, interpretation, and emancipation are key elements, instead of objectivity in quantitative research (Symon & Cassell, 2012). These different research goals lead to different appropriate assessment criteria. To assess this qualitative study, four assessment criteria indicated by Guba and Lincoln (1989) are looked at, which are based on a relativistic or naturalistic research approach, namely 'credibility', 'confirmability', 'dependability', and 'transferability'.

Credibility is related to "rather than trying to find a best fit between interpretation and reality, the researcher tries to demonstrate a good fit between 'constructed realities of respondents' and the reconstructions attributed to them'" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237; Symon & Cassell, 2012, p. 206). To enhance the credibility of this study a research diary was used in which the initial constructions of the research and the development of understandings of the research were written down. This is called progressive subjectivity, and in this way initial understandings and assumptions of the study could be challenged. Furthermore, throughout the study the researcher's interpretations of the data were tested with the participants. For instance, all interview transcripts were sent to the interviewees, so that they were able to check the transcripts on correctness. This member checking ensures that the views of the participants have been accurately captured.

A challenge to this credibility of the study is that only one researcher performed the data analysis of this study. Burla, Knierim, Barth, Duetz, and Abel (2008) recommend performing content analyses by more than one researcher, because this will result in a better interpretation of the data.

Confirmability can be described as an audit process in which the researcher indicates where certain data came from (for instance from interviews or observations). Moreover, the researcher should make clear how these data were transformed to the presented research findings (Symon & Cassell, 2012). So, this confirmability audit should include how data collection and data analysis were performed, and in this way the reader of the study can be assured that "data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in context and persons apart from the researcher and are not simply figments of the researcher's imagination" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 234). In this report it is made clear that data was collected through semi-structured interviews. After the data collection, the recorded interviews were transcribed and coded. This coding and structuring led to the final interpretation of the data. In the methodology chapter a more detailed description of the data collection and data analysis is provided. Moreover, in the results section, sentences of the initial interview transcripts are used to show parts of the original data, and to show how interpretations are derived from this gathered data.

A specific challenge to credibility and confirmability in this study is the providing of social desirable answers by interviewees. Information gathered by means of conducting interviews can be biased when interviewees provide social desirable answers (Boeije, 2012). In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted, which resulted in self-reported data from the interviewees. These self-reported data possibly contained sources of bias, probably caused by social desirable answers (Boeije, 2013). When this is the case, people tend to try to appear and answer questions in a more positive way, because this will portray them in a positive light. Moreover, employees can be fearful to express themselves in a negative way about the organisation. For instance, in this study employees were asked about the meaningfulness they experience in their work. It could be possible that interviewees were not willing to acknowledge that they do not experience their work as meaningful, because this might be perceived as a negative statement with regard to the organisation. These biases in the answers of the interviewees could have led to biased research results. In trying to prevent biased answers, it is important to provide the interviewees with enough time and space to answer questions, tell interviewees that the questions should be answered with regard to their own experiences, and that there are no right or wrong answers. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that the results of the interviews (and study) will be processed confidentially and anonymously (Boeije, 2012). These actions were applied during the interviews that were conducted in this study.

Dependability is related to how "methodological changes and shifts in constructions" are revealed and are made open for evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242). These methodological changes and shifts in constructions are something that is essential in the qualitative research process, in which the refinement of understandings is important. Throughout this research process a research diary is used in which the decisions that are made throughout the research process are made explicit. For instance, why certain concepts or codes are removed or renamed during the data analysis or why certain research material is not used in the data analysis.

Transferability is not showing that specific research results are generalizable to other contexts (generalizability), however, the researcher should provide enough detailed information about a certain research case, for instance through think description, in such a way that the reader is able to judge whether there are some other similar context that can be informed by the specific research findings (Symon & Cassell, 2012). This eventual transferability of the study will be discussed in the discussion section of the study (in the fifth chapter).

A challenge to this transferability of the study is that only a limited number of employees could be interviewed, due to constraints in resources of the researcher. The available time to conduct this study was limited, therefore only nine employees could be interviewed. So, the resources that were available in this study to support the research constrained the amount of data that could be collected and analysed (Saunders, 2012). Conducting more interviews probably would have resulted in more

comprehensive insights and results. However, these nine interviews did provide an accurate insight in the concepts and processes investigated in this study. There appeared a certain saturation with regard to the themes that were appointed by the interviewees, however, within these themes, there was still 'new content' showing up. This could partly be due to the fact that the concepts of experienced meaningfulness of work and job crafting are highly individual, and therefore, all employees have their own stories with regard to (how they experience) these concepts. Moreover, conducting nine interviews is per definition a small study. However, because the department that was studied is not that big, nine interviews becomes a relatively 'larger number' (than if nine employees from a larger department would be interviewed).

Another challenge to the transferability of the study is that this study was conducted at one department of one organisation, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Service (AMD) of the Radboudumc. The behaviour of employees that is studied in this organisation and department may not totally reflect the behaviour that could be observed in other entities, for instance another department or organisation. In this case study suggestions could be made about whether the same results could be find in similar organisations or departments. However, additional research should be conducted to verify whether the findings of this study are indeed transferrable to other departments and organisations.

3.6 Ethical research practice

Conducting research (within an organisation) will influence the people who are involved in the research. This is especially the case when employees are interviewed about certain topics, because as researcher you are digging into perceptions, values and experiences of employees. Therefore, it is important that attention is paid to 'proper' research and that a researcher tries to anticipate on potential harmful effects of the research (Holt, 2012). According to Holt (2012), there exists no fixed set of duties that researchers should consider if they would like to conduct their research in an ethical way (as 'ethical practice'). However, Holt (2012) mentions several virtues that contribute to ethical research practice. A few of these virtues will be elaborated on and applied to this study.

'Deliberate conversation' means that researchers should be clear and open when explaining the study to research participants. Moreover, research participants, for instance in interviews, should be given enough space and time to tell their stories. In this study research participants, who were invited for an interview, were timely informed about the subject of the study they were going to participate in. Furthermore, during the interviews, interviewees were given the time and space to tell about their experiences and perceptions with regard to how they experience their work.

The 'constancy of language and behaviours within different institutional settings and through time' virtue is related to the awareness that researchers should have with regard to the consistent and careful use of concepts, and the interpretation of concepts by others (for instance research

participants). A practical consequence of this virtue with regard to conducting interviews is the use of similar techniques and interview questions in a set of interviews that are part of the same study (Holt, 2012). In this study all interviews were conducted by the same interviewer. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted, which means that the interviewer uses a predefined interview guide, which ensured that all interviewees were presented the same questions. Furthermore, participants were reminded that when questions or concepts were unclear, they should not hesitate to ask for clarification.

'Sensitivity in handling participant relationships and data' is related to the fact that information will often warrant anonymity and confidentiality. A researcher should acknowledge the interests of the research participants, and should be aware that these can be in tension with the interests of the researcher. Preferably, research participants should be informed about the purpose of the research beforehand, and if this is not possible, at least after the research is conducted. Moreover, participants should be informed about the extent of involvement and the duration of the research. Furthermore, participants should have the opportunity to withdraw and should be informed about the consequences of withdrawing. Lastly, any possible effects and affects of involvement in the study should be discussed (Holt, 2012). In this study information about participants is treated anonymously and confidentially, and is only used for the purpose of this master thesis. Real names of participants were not revealed in the documentation of the study and the interview transcripts were not publicly published. Before participating in this study, potential participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their contribution to the research (providing information via an interview that will last for about an hour), and were informed about the ability to withdraw from the study.

The 'honesty' virtue is related to the researchers' willingness to disclose intentions, data, thoughts, and facts (to participants and the organisation). However, full disclosure could hinder access to organisations or participants to conduct research, therefore, it can be an option to temporarily postpone the release of intentions and data (Holt, 2015). However, at the end of the research, participants should be informed about the results of the study. Before and during the research process, contact was kept with the organisation. Before the research was conducted, an employee of the organisation was contacted (contact person), with whom certain issues with regard to the research were discussed, such as whether the research topic would be interesting for the organisation (department) and if the research could be conducted at this organisation (department). During the research process the organisation was regularly informed about the progress of the research, and when the study was finished, the final report was sent to all participants of the study.

Chapter 4 Results

The template that resulted from the analysis of this study is displayed in Appendix C – Template. In this chapter the emerging of this template from the gathered data will be elaborated on. Moreover, answers will be provided to the three sub-questions of this study.

4.1 Experienced meaningfulness of work

The experienced meaningfulness of work can be sub-divided (as expected by literature of Steger et al. (2012)) in three sub-themes, which are: (4.1.1) 'positive meaning in work', (4.1.2) 'meaning making through work', and (4.1.3) 'greater good motivations'.

4.1.1 Positive meaning in work

The first sub-theme of the experienced meaningfulness of work is positive meaning in work. Positive meaning in work is related to the idea of psychological meaningfulness, in which meaningful work is foremost a subjective experience in which employees perceive what they are doing as having personal significance, which is related to the way in which people experience their work as meaningful and as something that matters (Steger et al., 2012). From the stories of the interviewees a few sub-themes of positive meaning in work can be identified, or stated differently, a few ways through which employees experience positive meaning in their work can be identified, which are 'providing help to clients and colleagues', 'interactions with colleagues at work', 'participating in society', 'being part of the organisation', and 'feeling appreciated by colleagues'.

Most employees (Gerard, Pauline, Alice, Mieke, and Hanneke) explain that providing help and support to clients and colleagues is an aspect of their work that provides their work with meaningfulness. So, these employees find their work meaningful because they are able to help and provide assistance and advice to other people. When employees experience they are of significance to other people, this provides them with a sense of satisfaction. For some employees (Gerard, Pauline, and Mieke) the personal contacts with clients (when providing help) are also an important factor that contributes to their experienced meaningfulness of their work.

> "Ehm, well, because I work with people, it feels meaningful to me, ehm, my work. The contact with people, also to make people feel comfortable and, ehm, yes, that people feel heard and also just really, yes, get a good consult when they visit me" (Interview 6 Mieke, note 32).

Most employees (Pauline, Alice, Gert, Ian, and Hanneke) explain that the interactions with colleagues at work (the social interactions) form an important aspect that contributes to the meaningfulness they experience in their work. Having a nice group of colleagues who get along with each other well, and collaborating with these colleagues, is described as really meaningful in work. Moreover, some employees view this having of a nice group of colleagues as a prerequisite in performing their job. A few employees describe that they appreciate that the organisation 'provides' them with this social network.

> "Yes, no, I, ehm, what is especially important to me is, is that I, ehm, have a nice group of colleagues around me in that, ehm. (..) Who all have a good time together, ehm, for me that is an essential condition to do my work" (Interview 5 Gert, notes 58; 59).

Some employees (Pauline, Alice, and Ian) explain that because through their work they participate in society, this provides their work with meaningfulness. Work gives employees a reason and purpose to stand up in the morning everyday, which also provides a kind of 'structure' in life. Moreover, by working someone does more than if one would sit at home all day. Some employees describe that because through working one participates in society and earns money, work is able to provide employees with a sense of independence and a feeling of ability to take care of oneself. Furthermore, work provides employees with an income, with which employees are able to buy certain valuable things in their private time, resulting in more enjoying one's private life.

> "Yes, very meaningful, because, ehm, yes, you know, it is surely nice to, to, to have a purpose to stand up in the morning, that anyway. (..) And you participate in society, I earn my own money, I am able to take care of myself. Yes, that I find really important" (Interview 3 Pauline, notes 75; 76).

A few employees (Pauline, Mieke, and Carel) describe that belonging to an organisation is in someway related to the meaningfulness they experience in their work. Being a member of the organisation provides them with a sense of belongingness, and employees feel that they are part of something 'bigger'. The feeling of belongingness is important to employees, and the idea of being part of the Radboudumc is something employees experience as meaningful. For some employees the feeling of being part of something bigger is a sort of confirmation that their work is meaningful, because if one is part of something bigger, one is also able to contribute to something bigger through work.

> "Yes, belonging to something, having colleagues, collaborating. Yes, it may be all open doors, however, that are important things to me" (Interview 3 Pauline, note 77). "Ehm, yes, also just the idea that you, that you, ehm, well yes, are part of the Radboudumc. That you, you are, I am proud at, at my hospital" (Interview 6 Mieke, note 43).

Most employees (Alice, Gert, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that the appreciation of colleagues gives them the feeling that their work is meaningful. It provides employees with a good feeling when they know that other employees appreciate that they do the work they do. For some employees it is also important that colleagues speak out this appreciation now and then, for instance during a meeting. In practice employees experience this appreciation when they feel they are of worth to the organisation or when others appreciate a specific opinion or advice they gave.

> "And that, that I, ehm, yes, get a sort of appreciation for what I do. (..) And that I, ehm, that they appreciate that and also speak that out" (Interview 4 Alice, notes 38; 39).

So concluding, there are five main ways through which employees of the AMD experience positive meaning in their work, which are the providing of help to clients and colleagues, the interactions with colleagues at work, the feeling of participating in society, the feeling of being part of the organisation, and the feeling of being appreciated by colleagues. These five aspects employees of the AMD notice as contributing to their positive meaning in work, all provide them with a certain personal significance.

In line with Steger et al. (2012), these employees know what aspects of their jobs provide their jobs with meaningfulness. Some aspects of their jobs employees describe (such as providing help to clients and colleagues) also contributes to viewing work as having a satisfying purpose, which is according to Steger et al. (2012) important with regard to experiencing positive meaning in work. Moreover, providing help to clients is something that can directly be experienced (for instance by occupational health physicians and nurses) in health care, so this aspect of work that provides positive meaning in work can be seen as typically related to the health care sector. The other mentioned aspects of work that contribute to the positive meaning in work are not related to specific occupational positions, but instead are experienced by all kind of employees.

4.1.2 Meaning making through work

The second sub-theme of the experienced meaningfulness of work is meaning making through work. For most people work is an important source of meaning in life, and therefore work is able to contribute to people's meaning in life as a whole (Steger & Dik, 2010). So, meaning making through work is related to how (meaningful) work contributes to meaningfulness in life. From the stories of the interviewees a few sub-themes of meaning making through work can be identified, or stated differently, a few ways through which work contributes to the meaning in life of employees can be identified, which are 'dealing with different kind of people', 'gaining new skills and competencies', 'gaining more self-understanding', and 'insight in organisational processes and procedures'.

Most employees (Gerard, Alice, Gert, Mieke, and Hanneke) explain that they meet a lot of different people in their work, and in this way they gained insight in things such as different personalities and how to deal with these differences (because different people react in different ways). Employees for instance learn that different people should be treated in different ways, gain understanding in why people act in certain ways, and what could be the causes of certain behaviour. Moreover, some employees (Gerard and Hanneke) explain that they experience it as an enrichment that they are able to look into the lives of so many different people.

> "Ehm, anyway of course, yes, you get in contact with all kind of different people, so people who for instance can be very blunt or just very, ehm, or claiming or, ehm, you all encounter that. (..) And that is of course what you learn most of. Also about yourself, how you react to that and, ehm. (..) Yes, ehm, how you can deal with that" (Interview 6 Mieke, notes 50, 51; 52).

Most employees (John, Gerard, Pauline, Alice, and Hanneke) explain that their work contributes to their experienced meaningfulness in life, because through their work they obtained new skills and competencies. Some employees (Alice, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) told that they got the opportunity to follow some vocational retraining, in which they were able to learn some new skills and competencies, which they found necessary in their work. Employees from different occupational positions were for instance able to attend (sometimes in consultation with their supervisor) different occupational

courses, educational programmes, and master classes, in which they learned things they would not have learned otherwise. Employees for instance learned how to cope with specific issues, to relativize, how to set goals, and certain planning skills. What is important to note is that employees experience the freedom and ability to learn in their work, and that in this way they are able to develop themselves continuously. Some employees describe that in this way their work enriched them as a person.

> "I have always been able to develop myself, I have, ehm, also told my supervisor that, that I would like to do certain things, but that then I first have to follow a certain course, ehm (..). How am I able to dot that then? I am a nice guy of course and having nice contacts comes easy to me. But yes, there are also a few skills I have to learn" (Interview 7 Ian, notes 85; 86).

Some employees (Gerard, Alice, and Ian) explain that their education and vocational retraining has in some way contributed to their self-understanding. Employees explain they gained a lot of self-knowledge through the different courses they followed, because most educational programmes are accompanied with some personal development aspect, in which attention is paid to this self-knowledge, for instance with regard to the kind of personality one has or what someone's real purpose in life and in work is. Moreover, some employees (Gerard, Alice, and Carel) explain that the conversations with and feedback from colleagues and supervisors provided them with insights about themselves. For instance certain peer reviews or coaching sessions that are performed, are able to contribute to self-understandings of employees (for instance with regard to someone's qualities and 'allergies'). In a similar vein, most employees (Pauline, Gert, Mieke, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that in some way they experience that they learned about their own personalities in their jobs. Employees for instance found out which occupational positions fit their personalities best, and whether their recent jobs are the right jobs for them.

> "And we also see it, we engage quite intensively in, ehm, with the colleagues here, but also with colleagues from outside the organisation. A few, peer supervision and peer reviews. (..) And that does more contribute to personal development than the fact that you work here. (..) Ehm, you know, that provides more personal growth than" (Interview 2 Gerard, notes 71, 72; 75).

A few employees (John, Gerard, and Ian) explain that through their work they gained more insight in how organisational processes unfold and how decisions in large organisations (such as the Radboudumc) are made. Employees for instance learn how pressures from different (political) parties influence each other, are better able to predict certain situations, and are better able to see where and why things go wrong within the organisation.

> "Within organisations, or within the government, I am more able to see the polictical 'game' behind it. Such as, what causes that certain movements occur and certain decisions. And that you sometimes see here at a micro level what happens and also hear what, so to speak, what is going on within this organisation, that you are able to. Link it all of a sudden to, this is going to happen next, and that you have a little bit more understanding of the broader 'frames' you are in and living in" (Interview 1 John, note 27).

So concluding, there are four main ways through which work contributes to the broader meaning in life of employees of the AMD, which are through the dealing with different kind of people at work, through gaining new skills and competencies at work, through gaining more self-understanding through work, and through gaining more insight in organisational processes and procedures through work. The stories of the employees confirm that work is a source of and beneficial to meaning in life as a whole, as stated by Steger and Dik (2010). These authors also argue that meaningful work can be helpful to people to gain a better and deeper undertsanding of themselves and the world around them, and that this deeper understanding enables personal growth and development. Employees of the AMD indeed indicate that they gained more self-understanding and insights in the broader context they live in (for instance insights in organisational processes and political pressures) through their work. Moreover, employees explain that through their work they were able to continuously develop themselves (for instance through following educational courses and gaining new skills and competencies).

4.1.3 Greater good motivations

The third sub-theme of the experienced meaningfulness of work, greater good motivations, is related to the desire of people to make a positive impact in their work on some greater good (Steger et al., 2012). When employees experience that through their work they are able to make a positive difference in the world or serving a greater purpose, they will experience their work as more meaningful. From the stories of the interviewees a few sub-themes of these greater good motivations can de identified, or stated differently, a few ways through which these greater good motivations are present in work can be identified, which are 'feeling of being able to help others', 'contributing to organisational goals', and 'encouraging people to make a change'.

Some employees (Gerard, Pauline, and Mieke) explain that they experience in their work that they are able to directly help their clients, and they really recognise their added value for their clients. In general, employees of the AMD experience it as meaningful when they are able to contribute to the higher purpose of well-being and health of employees. Employees for instance explain that it is nice when they feel they are able to help clients in finding a new healthy balance in life, and most of the time clients are really thankful for the advice and treatment they get. In a similar way, some employees (John, Alice, and Carel) explain that in their work they experience that they are able to help their colleagues, and they recognise their added value for their colleagues. Most employees also experience that their colleagues appreciate this help, for instance when colleagues thank them in a meeting or when they get a small thank you note.

> "Yes, yes, I really do think my work contributes to, ehm, to, to well-being and to health of employees, yes. (..) But, ehm, ehm, I see, see, I visit, I visit some parts of departments now and then and then I meet people, and they are still very happy that they, that I gave an advice once, or yes" (Interview 3 Pauline, notes 112; 113).

A few employees (Gerard, Mieke, and Ian) explain that through their work they experience that they are able to make a positive contribution to the organisation, in such a way that the organisation is able to reach its strategic goals. Employees for instance explain that through their work they contribute to the health and happiness of employees, which enables the organisation to function well and reach its goals, or that one contributes to organisation wide issues such as the sustainability of the organisation.

> "And if you are able to help the organisation in realising these strategic goals by ensuring that those who have to do that, namely the employees, feel good. (..) Well, then you kill two birds with one stone. (..) On the one hand then there are employees who go to their work happily, and on the other hand the organisation is happy, because they are able to reach their goals" (Interview 2 Gerard, notes 93, 94; 95).

Some employees (John, Alice, Ian, and Carel) experience that they are able to encourage people to do certain things, for instance to change their way of working, as their contribution to some greater purpose, or the positive difference they make. Employees for instance see themselves as setting a good example (for instance with regard to waste separation), and when other people start following this example, they influence these people and experience they contribute to something 'bigger'. Moreover, bringing people together or 'launching' certain things within the organisation gives employees a satisfying feeling.

> "Thus that, yes, that you think like oh, ehm, and also bringing people together. (..) Yes, then what did I do so that it, ehm. But yes, so I did do, sometimes launch certain things I think and yes, I think that is nice. So that is" (Interview 8 Carel, notes 133; 134).

So concluding, there are three main ways through which employees of the AMD experience these greater good motivations in their work, the way in which they make a positive impact on the greater good, which are the feeling of being able to help others, contributing to organisational goals, and the encouraging of people to make a change. In line with Steger et al. (2012), through these different ways employees experience that their work makes a positive difference and is serving a greater purpose. Steger et al. (2012) also state that employees will experience their work as more meaningful when they experience their work has a broader impact on other people. In this case, employees of the AMD experience that their work has a broader impact on (the well-being of) clients and colleagues, and the organisation at large.

4.1.4 Experienced meaningfulness of work at the AMD

What can be concluded from the stories of the interviewees is that overall, all employees of the AMD experience their work as (highly) meaningful. With regard to the second and third facet of meaningful work, literature indicates very 'big impacts' of work, such as that trough work employees are better able to make sense of the world around them and that employees experience their work makes a positive difference in the world (Steger et al., 2012). However, looking at the stories of the interviewees, employees more indicate aspects of their work that are closer related to their work. For

instance that through their work they gain more self-undertsanding and insight in organisational processes (instead of insight in the world around them), and that employees experience that they make a positive difference to clients and colleagues, and to the organisation at large (instead of a positive difference to the world). In general, the interviewees were easily able to think and talk about how they experience meaningfulness in their work. However, during the interviews it became clear that most employees found it easier to talk about the positive meaning in work and meaning making through work than about greater good motivations in work. This could be the case because the first two facets of meaningful work are more directly related to someone's job, which makes them easier to think about.

4.2 Job crafting

Job crafting can be sub-divided (as expected by literature of Berg et al. (2013)) in three sub-themes, which are: (4.2.1) 'task crafting', (4.2.2) 'relational crafting', and (4.2.3) 'cognitive crafting'. All these three forms of job crafting were present at the AMD.

4.2.1 Task crafting

Task crafting can be sub-divided (as expected by literature of Berg et al. (2013)) in three sub-themes, which are: (4.2.1.1) 'adding tasks', (4.2.1.2) 'emphasizing tasks', and (4.2.1.3) 'redesigning tasks'.

4.2.1.1 Adding tasks

According to Berg et al. (2013), adding tasks is related to employees including all kind of tasks or projects to their jobs, which they perceive as meaningful. The addition of certain tasks will mostly require some addition and development of certain new and desirable skills (task variety). Moreover, more insight can be gained in how one's efforts influence results (task significance). More task variety and task significance will provide more depth to the tasks of a job, which will likely lead to more meaningfulness experienced in work. From the stories of the interviewees it can be concluded that all employees are able to add (and also drop) certain tasks and projects, and that they have different motives to do so. Some employees needed to develop new skills and competencies to execute these new tasks, and some employees experienced more meaningfulness in their work through adding these new tasks.

All interviewees explain that they are able to alter the set of tasks that comprises their jobs, that they have the possibility to add certain tasks or projects to their regular sets of tasks. Gerard for instance describes that he is able to make his own choices with regard to which tasks he would like to add to his job. However, he also explains that these tasks should fit and should be in line with the goals of the AMD (and the Radboudumc).

> "Yes, I, you have, so you have the possibility to, ehm, to pick up certain tasks in addition to the regular package of tasks, so to speak. (..) Therefore, together with, ehm, a few physicians and, ehm, with some people from HR, I join a

> few workgroups. (..) To just, you, to delve into the, into the interests you have. (..) And you are also able to make your own choices within that, yes" (Interview 2 Gerard, notes 98, 100, 103; 104).

Other employees also explain that they are able to take part in (and sometimes lead) workgroups, committees, and projects (sometimes also with employees from other departments) with regard to certain themes and issues they are interested in, such as the sustainable employability at the Radboudumc or the rehousing of the department. Moreover, some employees added a whole new occupational position with different tasks to their regular tasks. Some employees describe altering their tasks as inherent to their work, for instance because they do not have a 'fixed package' of tasks or they continuously have some 'side tasks', which they are able to (partly) choose themselves. This description of job crafting being 'just part of the job', is in line with Petrou et al. (2012), who argue that job crafting can take place on a daily basis, and that although employees can craft their jobs quickly, it can also take longer periods of time. Moreover, according to Fried et al. (2007), job crafting is an on-going process, and so does not happen once. What can be concluded is that through adding tasks (task crafting) the design of jobs can be altered.

Besides (and before) adding tasks to a job, some employees (John, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) also dropped certain tasks. Sometimes this dropping of tasks (for example because a task did not really fit someone) was necessary before certain new tasks could be added. Ian for instance had to let go certain tasks so that he was able to develop himself. So, content wise he took a step back, and certain content related tasks he delegated to his colleague. As a consequence, he created more time to join other projects. In this way he was able to add certain projects to his package of tasks, which lie closer to his 'purpose', tasks that are related to things he finds really important.

> "And in this way I delegated a few tasks. And that thus gave me the freedom to, ehm, yes, such a project as the rehousing, to pick up more projects, to pick these up. (..) Yes, and, and to pick up things that are more in line with my, ehm, yes, more in line with my purpose" (Interview 7 Ian, notes 119; 120).

Other employees also dropped certain tasks (or even whole occupational positions), because they felt these did not fit them. Mostly employees are able to pass these tasks on to other employees. Hereafter, these employees have more time available to pick up other tasks and projects that fit them better, they feel they are more talented performing in, or they find more interesting or necessary (in their job). So, what can be concluded is that employees change their package of tasks through dropping (and hereafter) adding tasks, in such a way that their resultant tasks are more in line with certain talents, interests, and ambitions, which will make their jobs more meaningful to them. However, besides employees' own 'wishes', they also take the needs of the organisation (or department) into account. Experiencing that through work one is able to contribute to the (goals of the) organisation is an aspect of work that contributes to the meaningfulness experienced in work (which followed from the previous meaningful work section). When looking at the reasons why employees drop certain tasks (for instance because employees feel they are too busy and lagging

behind the events), it became clear that when a task is seen as meaningful, this task will mostly only also be experienced as meaningful when someone is able to execute and complete this tasks well.

With regard to choosing specific tasks or projects to add to one's job, employees have different motives. Alice explains that through adding a different occupational position and different tasks to her job, she is able to delve deeper in certain organisational topics. Therefore, taking on extra tasks broadens her work and creates more involvement in certain organisational processes.

> "And that is a task that, yes, ehm, that occupational position opened up so to speak, and you are able to, if you like. (..) Yes, well, I thought that, it seemed nice to me anyway. But also that, yes, then I am able to, then I am able to again delve a bit deeper into some, some other stuff. (..) Yes, broadening" (Interview 4 Alice, notes 94, 96; 97).

Another reason some employees (Alice, Gert, and Mieke) provide with regard to choosing tasks, is that adding certain tasks is sometimes necessary, for instance joining or starting a certain project because content wise this is necessary for the department, for instance to contribute to the quality, efficiency, and clarity of working processes and procedures. Other motives employees provide with regard to picking up certain tasks or projects are related to tasks relating to certain personal interests or educational backgrounds (John, Gerard, Gert, and Carel), tasks employees feel they are familiar with or have the right qualities for, employees thought they would just like to do these tasks (Pauline, Alice, Carel, and Hanneke), or employees think these tasks fit them best. Furthermore, many motives of employees are related to the curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm they get from certain tasks. So, what can be concluded is that besides personal motives (such as certain interests) with regard to choosing specific tasks, employees also take into account how they are able to contribute to the organisation in choosing these tasks. So the package of tasks can be changed in such a way that employees experience more meaningfulness in their work because tasks for instance better fit them, or because they experience they are more of a contribution to the organisation.

Most employees (Pauline, Alice, Mieke, Ian, and Hanneke) explain they had to develop some new skills and competencies to perform the newly added tasks in their jobs. Mieke for instance learnt about how to work with and enter certain data in databases.

> "Ehm, yes, I acquired more skills indeed, I acquired more skills in the development of working procedures, protocols, ehm. (..) To put that in a database, yes, yes. (..) Those I control myself, therefore, then you immediately learn something again, well, about that system anyway and how it works and, ehm, yes. (..) Which is useful in terms of, how you have to set it up and arrange it. Well, that kind of stuff, yes" (Interview 6 Mieke, notes 77, 78, 79; 80).

Other employees also explain that they followed (sometimes in consultation with their supervisor) some training sessions (for a committee) and educational and refresher courses (for instance about leadership) to gain some new competencies and skills (for instance because one sees this as useful with regard to a specific role or occupational position). However, some employees (Gert and Carel) also explain that they did not had to learn any new skills or competencies to execute their newly

added tasks (although they were sometimes unsecure about whether they had the right skills to perform these new tasks).

Some employees (Pauline, Alice, and Hanneke) describe that these new competencies and skills (continuously learning new stuff) provided more depth in their work, and some (Alice and Mieke) also explained that this made their work nicer to do. Moreover, some employees explain that these extra tasks and skills provided their work with more meaningfulness, what is in line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), who state that the addition of tasks will lead to the development of new skills, which provides more depth to the job, which will enable employees to experience their work as more meaningful. However, the addition of certain tasks and the development of skills and competencies to perform these tasks seemed to be only one factor that contributed to the increasing of the meaningfulness employees experience in their work. Other employees explained that because they chose tasks that are more in line with their interests and they find more important, their work becomes automatically more valuable and meaningful. In a similar way, other employees explain that through adding new tasks to their jobs they experience their jobs as more meaningful, but this was related to the fact that in this way they are now more involved in certain new issues, their jobs are broadened, which leads to more depth in work.

4.2.1.2 Emphasizing tasks

The second way of task crafting is emphasizing tasks, in which employees could start allocating more energy, attention, and time to certain tasks that are already part of their jobs and they perceive as meaningful (Berg et al., 2013). Through this emphasis on specific tasks, employees are better able to leverage existing tasks of their jobs that they consider as meaningful. Looking at the stories of the interviewees, it can be concluded that some employees emphasize certain tasks in their work, however, there are also certain fixed tasks that just have to be executed, whether employees find these tasks meaningful in their work or not.

A few employees (Gerard, Alice, and Carel) explain that there are always some 'fixed' tasks in one's job that should be carried out, whether one finds them meaningful or not. Gerard for instance explains that there are certain tasks that 'present' themselves in the organisation, and there is no other choice that to work on these tasks. These fixed tasks he has to perform are about half of his tasks. The other half of his tasks is also depending on the demand of the organisation, however, he is also able to choose these tasks in combination with his own interests.

> "You are indeed able to make choices. Yes, there are, look, with regard to a specific part, in particular the, the absenteeism issues so to speak, that is something that presents itself and, ehm, we get requests about that such as, in particular from supervisors, but sometimes also from employees. Yes, you just need to do something with that. In that case you do not have a, no, no moment of choice. So, if these requests are present, then you have to work on that. (..) And at other moments this, ehm, ehm, depends on, yes, the demand from the organisation in combination with your own, with your own interests" (Interview 2 Gerard, notes 107; 109).

Other employees explain that the amount of time and attention one allocates to certain tasks is related to the priority of these tasks organisation-wise, and not so much to the priority they give these tasks themselves. Some employees explain that they are not able to deprioritise certain tasks they experience as less meaningful, independent from which task and whether this task has priority or not, tasks should be executed in the best possible way.

Some employees (Gert, Mieke, Ian, and Hanneke) explain that they in some way focus on specific tasks in their work they find most meaningful. Employees provide different examples of how they emphasize certain tasks in their work. Hanneke for instance explains that she tries to emphasize the tasks in her work that are related to training and coaching supervisors in their role as 'caregiver'. Sometimes when employees visit her on consultation hour, she does not experience this as very meaningful, because according to her, in many cases a supervisor is also able to assist and support his employees. Therefore, if supervisors are better trained in their role as caregivers, employees have to visit the consultation hours of the physicians less. So, this is a task she likes to execute and experiences as more valuable, because in this way she feels she is of more significance and helping the organisation and its employees.

> "When a supervisor assists someone well, and knows how to do that, we are able to see them less frequent. (..) Because mostly I find it meaningless, what I do on a consultation hour then, then I have to, okay, how are you doing, ehm, well, let's schedule another meeting. Then I think, yes, you know, that supervisor is also able to ask that. (..) So what I am doing now, is that I try to teach that supervisor in that. (..) And, but I do try to coach supervisors in that, so what I, and try to do at this moment, and that, that movement I am getting done now, which is, less consultation contact with the people, more coaching of supervisors" (Interview 9 Hanneke, notes 168, 169, 170; 174).

Other employees explain that they emphasize tasks in their work because they find these tasks most interesting, these tasks fit them best, or come easy to them. They for instance spend more (free) time on these tasks or dive into certain topics relating to these tasks. Moreover, some employees also explain that there are certain tasks in their jobs that they on purpose do not want to emphasize. For instance that they do not want to emphasize the 'controlling' part in their work, but instead want to work on an equal footing with colleagues. Lastly, there are also employees who explain that they provide equal attention and time to their tasks, because they find all tasks in their work meaningful. However, some employees are able to do so because they already dropped certain tasks they did not find meaningful.

So concluding, a few employees describe that there are always some fixed tasks in work that just have to be carried out, regardless of whether one finds these tasks meaningful or not. In line with Berg et al. (2013), who argue that employees are able to take advantage of certain tasks by allocating more attention, time, and energy to tasks that are already part of their job and are experienced as meaningful, most employees explain that they in some way emphasize specific tasks in their work.

When employees start emphasizing these tasks (through for instance paying more attention to these tasks), employees can better leverage this part of the job that is considered meaningful. Different employees emphasize different tasks in their work, related to different motives to do so. Besides emphasizing tasks that are experienced as most meaningful (which is in line with literature of Berg et al. (2013)), employees also emphasize tasks for other reasons, for instance because they find these tasks most interesting or these tasks fit them best.

4.2.1.3 Redesigning tasks

The third way of task crafting is redesigning tasks, which is the reengineering of existing tasks in such a way that these tasks are perceived as more meaningful. In this way a mundane task can become more meaningful, which can get employees more invigorated in their work (Berg et al., 2013). What can be concluded from the stories of the interviewees is that employees to a certain extent redesign how tasks are carried out and that employees are able to give their own twist in carrying out tasks.

Some employees (Alice, Mieke, and Carel) explain they changed the way in which they carried out their tasks. Carel for instance explains that he is able to carry out tasks in his own way, and provides an example of this with regard to the discussion of the risk assessment that has to be tested in the hospital. Before there were certain questions on a checklist that had to be answered with yes or no (with regard to whether the situation is right). However, Carel thought that this was quite unwieldy, and that it would be more efficient to make changes to a (wrong) situation right on the spot.

> "Then you get a few questions, and there it was noted that, well, at question one the answer should be 'yes' instead of 'no', and question, ehm. (..) Yes, and then I thought well, but that is not smart, in that case you could better change it on the spot and then ensure that the question is answered right. (..) Also, also efficiency, yes. (..) And also, but also, also meaningful, also meaningfulness. I did not find it meaningful to write a letter, the answer has to be 'yes' instead of 'no'. (..) Then I think yes, change it immediately then. (..) You can better intervene directly, yes, yes" (Interview 8 Carel, notes 173, 174, 178, 179, 180; 181).

Other employees also explain that they were able to (sometimes in consultation with colleagues) change the way in which they carried out tasks. Some employees explain that they experience the freedom to alter certain tasks in their own way, and that they are able to mention and discuss things they would like to do different. For instance, many working procedures have changed (sometimes simultaneously with technological developments) to make processes more efficient.

Most employees (John, Pauline, Gert, Ian, and Hanneke) explain that they are able to give their own twist in carrying out certain tasks. Pauline for instance explains that she followed a course about how people are able to quit smoking. She set up herself WhatsApp groups with employees who would like to stop smoking, in which she sends for instance 'weekend notes'. She experiences that people appreciate the attention and that they in some way feel a little 'controlled', which will keep them from smoking. So, this is a working procedure she made up herself, and is not written down in any protocol.

> "And so we have a 'groupapp', we have a WhatsApp group. (..) And I did that myself, we made that up ourselves and, ehm, yes, that is very nice. So that is something I just do myself, figure out a little you know. (..) Exactly, and that is, that I notice, that people need that (..) Yes, and I just make something up, but you know. (..) So, ehm, that, but that, see, because that, that is not written down in any books you know. (..) That you make up yourself. So with the modern resources we also try in that way, ehm, well, ehm, that, to do this kind of things" (Interview 3 Pauline, notes 160, 162, 164, 165, 167; 168).

Other employees also in certain ways give their own twist in carrying out tasks. Hanneke for instance explains that it is the goal of all physicians working at the AMD to work in a similar way, and therefore they align their way of working with each other. However, there will always be personal differences in how tasks are carried out. So, most employees explain that they have some freedom in how they execute their tasks. However, to a certain extent employees are also bounded to how tasks should be carried out. Gerard for instance explains that from a professional point of view, employees are able to make decisions with regard to how and by whom a client should be treated. However, these 'options' or 'choices' are always bound to certain occupational protocols.

So concluding, employees are able to alter how tasks are carried out and to give their own twist in carrying out tasks, in which these tasks, in line with reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), who argue that tasks can become more meaningful when employees are able to re-engineer them, can be experienced more meaningful. Through these alterations in how tasks are carried out, employees are better able to help others (for example through more specific attention) and contribute to organisational goals (for example through making processes more efficient), which are aspects of work employees experience as meaningful (as indicated in the meaningful work section). However, with regard to re-engineering tasks, employees to a certain extent are also bounded to certain occupational protocols.

4.2.1.4 Answer sub-question 1

Sub-question 1: "How does task crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?".

With regard to the task crafting technique adding tasks, it can be concluded that all employees have the possibility and experience the freedom to add (and drop) certain tasks or projects to their regular sets of tasks. In line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), who state that through learning new skills with regard to these newly added tasks (increased skill variety), which will lead to more depth and therefore more meaningfulness in one's work, some employees explained that the development of new skills to perform these tasks provided more depth and meaningfulness in their work. However, not all employees needed to develop new skills to execute these new tasks. Furthermore, it can be concluded that there are other ways that (through adding tasks) contribute to the meaningfulness of work. A finding that is was not yet present in literature is that this type of job crafting can also contribute to more involvement in organisational processes, which in turn leads to more

meaningfulness experienced in a job. However, a footnote with regard to this statement is that this reasoning might be only applicable to employees who think on a certain level, in which they take certain greater good motivation into account (for instance the willingness to contribute to organisational goal), about the meaning of their work. With regard to the task crafting technique emphasizing tasks, most employees describe that they, in line with Berg et al. (2013), emphasize certain tasks (through paying more time to these tasks) they experience as meaningful, and therefore they can take advantage of these tasks that they experience as meaningful, which will likely lead them to experience their jobs as more meaningful. However, besides emphasizing tasks that are experienced as most meaningful (as in line with Berg et al. (2013)), employees also emphasize tasks for other reasons, such as that a task is experienced as most interesting. Moreover, there are always some fixed tasks in a job, that just have to be carried out whether one finds them meaningful or not. With regard to the task crafting technique redesigning tasks, most employees experience they have the freedom to make certain changes in how they carry out tasks and give their own twist in carrying out tasks. These changes are sometimes made to make tasks more meaningful, which is in line with literature of Berg et al. (2013), who state that employees can find ways to re-engineer existing tasks to make them more meaningful. However, employees will always be bounded to a certain extent in how they carry out their tasks, for example because they should comply with certain organisational protocols. So, what can be concluded is that all three task crafting techniques are used by employees of the AMD to experience their work as more meaningful. So, the altering of tasks is indeed able to enhance the meaningfulness employees experience in work.

4.2.2 Relational crafting

Relational crafting can be sub-divided (as expected by literature of Berg et al. (2013)) in three sub-themes, which are: (4.2.2.1) 'building relationships', (4.2.2.2) 'reframing relationships', and (4.2.2.3) 'adapting relationships'.

4.2.2.1 Building relationships

The first way of relational crafting is building relationships. According to Berg et al. (2013, p. 91), when employees establish relationships with others at work that provide them with "a sense of pride, dignity, or worth", this is able to foster the meaningfulness employees derive from their work. From the stories of the interviewees it can be concluded that employees build most of their relationships for work-related goals.

All employees explain they experience the freedom and the opportunity to form new relationships with others at work. All employees explain that they build relationships with other employees because this is in some way necessary with regard to the tasks they have to perform in their jobs. Pauline for instance explains that she has to collaborate with many different people, and therefore she searches contact with others, for instance to ask them certain questions. In this way she has built a large

network throughout the years, and this networking is something she finds important. She explains that (the building of) these new relationships is something that is required in her job position, but that it also provides meaningfulness to her work.

> "That, yes, yes, that was, that was needed with regard to my tasks. I just also have to collaborate, ehm, with many people. But, ehm, I, I also involve people or I also ask people. (..) I work a lot for the university, therefore, I find it really important to also maintain certain contacts. (..) Ehm, yes, yes. And through the years I also did build a large network. Yes, I, I do that, but not with the in-, not like well, I will. (..) I need them, yes. But that, that is just the way it goes, you understand? (..) Yes, but that is more, that is also just what my occupational position includes so to speak, yes, yes" (Interview 3 Pauline, notes 179, 182, 183, 184; 187).

Other employees also explain that they build relationships with others (sometimes from other departments) because this is necessary in their work, so building relationships mostly has a certain purpose. Employees for instance build relationships with others from specific departments, others who are interested in specific topics, or others who are working on the same topics and issues, in such a way that knowledge and expertise can be shared. Employees search who they need to collaborate with within a specific context, and try to build a network around this. Therefore, employees build new relationships to reach certain goals and to get 'the job done', and not just to get more satisfaction from their work or with the main reason to make their jobs more meaningful. So, fostering meaningfulness is not the main reason to build relationships, however, the forming of new relationships does indeed lead employees to experience their work as more meaningful (as is also described in the meaningful work section). Furthermore, when employees add certain tasks to their work, they sometimes also meet new people through new collaborations, and in this way expand their network. Most employees are open to building new relationships and explain that this building of relationships most of the time goes automatic.

So concluding, some employees explain that building new relationships in their work provides their jobs with more meaningfulness and make their jobs more enjoyable, which is in line with Berg et al. (2013), who state that building new relationships at work can cultivate meaningfulness in work. However, overall it can be concluded that employees do not primarily build new relationships to cultivate more meaningfulness in their work, but this building of relationships is most of the time led by the need to build these relationships with regard to the tasks employees have to perform. Therefore, building new relationships and networking is by most employees seen as just 'part of the job'.

4.2.2.2 Reframing relationships

A second way in which employees can craft their relationships is through reframing relationships, which means that employees change the nature of their relationships with others in such a way that these relationships get a new and more meaningful purpose (Berg et al., 2013). The different approach in these relationships is able to change the content and nature of interactions with others,

and therefore will probably lead to more high-quality connections, which will provide jobs with more meaningfulness. This reframing of relationships is also described by employees of the AMD, by means of more supportive and proactive approaching others and approaching colleagues on an equal footing. A few employees (Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that the content of their interactions with colleagues has changed in such a way that they started to emphasize the supporting elements in their interactions, or they started supporting colleagues in a different way. Carel for instance explains that because of his role as coordinator of the safety experts, he had to learn to delegate work to others. So, he had to hand over more tasks to others and support them in executing these tasks. He now tries to be more involved in this part of his job, provides more space to others to execute their tasks, and makes sure that others are (and stay) involved in these tasks.

> "No, well, I do think that I, that I did try to do that. It is, for me it is a hard one, because I, so I do try those relationships to, because I also have that task as coordinator of the safety experts. (..) Ehm, I also try to, also, I have to, or I have to, I, I become, I also try to delegate work. (..) To hand work over to others. Ehm, and then, then I sometimes also have to assist others with that. And not like well, this and that. (..) Not to go too fast with regard to that, too big steps, but also taking along others with that" (Interview 8 Carel, notes 193, 194, 195; 196).

Other employees also explain that they changed the nature and content of interactions with others in such a way that they experience these interactions as more meaningful, for instance through instead of finding solutions for the problems of clients themselves, they try more to support clients in finding their own solutions. Some employees explain that they try to execute less 'directly' supporting tasks, and in the interactions with others they more try to steer others to fix things themselves. Gerard explains that he now works six years at the same department and that at the beginning he regularly got questions from managers and supervisors about specific employees, he answered these questions, and 'that's it'. However, this changed in that he now more proactively approaches these managers after he has seen specific employees at the consultation hour. In this way the interactions with supervisors went from reactive to more proactive.

Some employees (John and Gert) explain that they changed the nature of their interactions with colleagues in such a way that they started approaching them on an equal footing, and that interactions changed from more formal to more informal. Gerard consciously chose to approach the people he has to 'control' in this work on a more equal footing. Although he possesses a 'higher function', he does not want to emphasize this difference in his interactions with others. John explains that the nature of his interactions with colleagues has changed in such a way that they moved from more formal to more informal. When he started working at the AMD, he had conversations with colleagues with a specific purpose, and because you are not familiar with each other, you are not directly talking about informal subjects. When he got to know people better, the informal conversations became more important and he got a tighter network with his colleagues.

> "Yes, I think that the nature of relationships in that sense has moved from the formal to the more informal. That is how I started then, I most of the time had a purpose with regard to someone. So, I had a conversation with someone because I had to talk about something. Ehm, but you do not know someone of course, so you are not able to directly start talking about informal stuff. And now you notice that when you get to know people better, that the informal part becomes more important. But that also means that, yes, that you get a more tighter network" (Interview 1 John, note 50).

So concluding, employees reframe their relationships in two ways, through more supportive and proactive approaching others, and to starting to approach others on a more equal footing. One way in which employees change the nature of their relationships to be about a new, more meaningful purpose, is through approaching employees more on an equal footing, which changes the nature and content of interactions, for instance in such a way that interactions with colleagues move from more formal to more informal. In this way more high-quality connections and a tighter network can be established, what in line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013) increases the meaningfulness experienced from these relationships.

4.2.2.3 Adapting relationships

The third way of relational crafting is adapting relationships. Besides adding new relationships or changing the purpose of relationships (reframing relationships), employees can also start supporting and providing valuable help to others in carrying out their tasks, which will encourage others to provide support and help in return. According to Berg et al. (2013, p. 11), "these adaptations are likely to deepen and strengthen the relationships that comprise employees' jobs by fostering higher quality connections, through increasing levels of mutual trust, positive regard and vitality". In this way, new meaningfulness can be experienced in previously existing relationships (Berg et al., 2013). From the stories of the interviewees it follows that providing help to others in carrying out their tasks is something employees at the AMD do on a daily basis and that a helping culture is present at the department.

Most employees (John, Alice, Gert, Mieke, Ian, and Hanneke) explain that providing help to others is part of their jobs, and something they do in their jobs on a daily basis. Gert for instance explains that when new colleagues enter the department, it is important that they find their own 'place' within the organisation. Moreover, as team leader he continually talks with employees about topics related to their work and motivation, for instance whether they still like their work. Therefore, asking employees whether they need help is part of his job.

> "Well, yes, you know, we get new colleagues now and then, and they do have to find their place, ehm, of course, within the organisation. (..) So, to that extent yes, I am also, ehm, team leader. So then, ehm, you are continually talking with, ehm, with people about, ehm, like, ehm, do you still know what you have to do? Do you still like what you have to do? Ehm, how are you able to efficiently execute your, ehm, work? (..) Do you need help with something? Ehm, yes, that is, ehm, part of my job" (Interview 5 Gert, notes 138, 139; 140).

Other employees also explain that providing help (sometimes already with small issues) and support to colleagues is part of their work (especially when they are coordinator). Help is for instance provided to employees who have certain questions (for instance with regard to protocols or working procedures). A few employees explain that there will always be (new) colleagues who need certain help, and one head of the department is of course not able to help all these people on a daily basis. Therefore, this task has to be divided over more people, and everyone should try to help others when possible. Moreover, some employees coach others and explain that this is something they really enjoy in their work. Providing help to others is something employees view as an aspect of their jobs that provide their work with meaningfulness.

Some employees (Gerard, Pauline, Alice, and Carel) describe that there is a culture at the AMD in which people help each other and people do not hesitate to approach each other when they need advice. Gerard for instance explains that there is a culture at the AMD that if someone gets stuck in a complex situation, one can easily ask others for advice. So, employees can just walk into each other's room to discuss a certain situation. Moreover, periodically there are peer evaluations, in which everyone is able to bring in complex situations, which can then be discussed. So, colleagues provide each other with advice in these sessions. Furthermore, Gerard describes the culture at the AMD as very open and safe.

> "Over here we have, ehm, see, we for instance have a culture here in that if you get stuck in something, in a complex, ehm, situation, then you just walk into each others rooms and then, ehm, you discuss it with each other. (..) And, ehm, we also have, periodically we have so-called peer evaluations. (..) Well, and then everyone who would like to do so is able to, is able to, ehm, bring in complex situations in which one got stuck, and then you get advice from others like, ehm, "Well, you could tackle that on this and this way or tackle that on that and that way", and then you can make your own choices. (..) The culture is so open, that if you get stuck in something, and so safe. (..) That if you get stuck in something, the, then you just approach each other" (Interview 2 Gerard, notes 137, 138, 139, 141; 142).

Other employees also explain that employees at the AMD are really involved in each other, know where to find each other, and help each other when necessary. Alice describes that employees at the AMD will look for others to help them when they need help, and that this is stimulated because there is no formal hierarchy within the department. Employees explain that this culture contributes to a nice working environment, so in this way is viewed as really positive.

So concluding, there is a helping culture at the AMD and employees see providing help to others as part of their jobs and something they do on a daily basis. The ability to provide help to others is described by employees (in the meaningful work section) as an aspect of work that contributes to the meaningfulness in work. Because the culture at the department stimulates employees to provide help to each other, the culture indirectly contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD. In line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), that this providing of help to

each other is likely to deepen and strengthen relationships through fostering high quality connections, the relationships employees of the AMD have with each other will likely be strengthened, which could lead to employees experiencing more meaningfulness in their work.

4.2.2.4 Answer sub-question 2

Sub-question 2: "How does relational crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?".

With regard to the relational crafting technique building relationships, it can be concluded that (the building of) these new relationships provides meaningfulness to the work of employees, which is in line with Berg et al. (2013), who argue that through forging relationships with others (who enable them to feel a sense of pride, dignity, or worth) employees can cultivate meaningfulness in work. However, all employees have work related motives to build these new relationships, and not gaining more meaningfulness in itself. However, some employees indicate that they experience having a group of colleagues (a network) as important in their work and something that is worthwhile. So, these relationships employees form with others will provide them with a sense of worth, which is likely to influence the meaningfulness they experience in their work. With regard to the relational crafting technique reframing relationships, it can be concluded that there are a two ways in which employees change the nature and content of interactions with colleagues, which in line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), leads to employees experiencing more high-quality connections, and therefore employees will derive more meaningfulness from these relationships. With regard to the relational crafting technique adapting relationships, it can be concluded that there is a culture at the department in which people help each other and do not hesitate to approach each other when they need advice, and employees see providing help and support to others as part of their jobs. In line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), who state that employees can cultivate meaningfulness in their work by providing others with support and help in carrying out their work, and in this way strengthen their relationships, employees of the AMD also experience meaningfulness from providing each other with help and support. Moreover, because the culture is very open, safe, and not hierarchical, employees helping others when possible is stimulated. So, what can be concluded is that all three relational crafting techniques are used by employees of the AMD to experience their work as more meaningful. So, the crafting of interactions with others at work (altering how and with whom relationships are formed) is indeed able to enhance the meaningfulness employees experience in their work.

4.2.3 Cognitive crafting

Cognitive crafting can be sub-divided (as expected by literature of Berg et al. (2013)) in three sub-themes, which are: (4.2.3.1) 'expanding perceptions', (4.2.3.2) 'focusing perceptions', and (4.2.3.3) 'linking perceptions'.

4.2.3.1 Expanding perceptions

The first way of cognitive crafting is expanding perceptions with regard to the purpose or impact of one's job. Employees can start looking at their jobs as a whole, instead of looking at their jobs as sets of separate tasks and relationships (Berg et al., 2013). When employees look at their jobs as a whole (and keep this holistic purpose of their jobs in mind), they are better able to see the ultimate goals and beneficiaries of their jobs, which will result in employees experiencing their work as more meaningful (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). In this case study, a few ways can be identified in which employees look at their jobs as a whole, instead of looking at their jobs as consisting of separate tasks and relationships, which are the realisation work has a supporting function within the organisation, looking at long-term outcomes of work, and looking at outcomes of work on an organisational level.

Some employees (Alice and Gert) describe that they experience that their jobs have a supporting function within the organisation, however, which is very important to the organisation. Gert for instance explains that his discipline (radiation safety) is automatically a supporting function, however, radiation safety is of course not core business of the Radboudumc. Therefore, when he 'zooms out' on his work, he realises that his work is responsible for supporting the main processes of the organisation.

> "Yes, well, see, for me that is, for my, ehm, discipline, that is supporting. (..) However, it is of course not core business of, ehm, of the Radboudumc or the Radboud University to, ehm, so, ehm, radiation safety. (..) So to that extent, yes, I do zoom out sometimes, but, well, then you come to the conclusion that, ehm, you know, it is not something that" (Interview 5 Gert, notes 141, 144; 147).

In a similar way, Alice explains that for most secretariats it is the case that when they do a good job, they are able to 'unburden' professionals. For instance in such a way that these professionals do not have to execute all kind of administrative tasks, but are able to focus on their clients (on the real content of their work) instead.

A few employees (Pauline and Mieke) explain that they try to look at the long-term effects of the contribution of their jobs to the organisation. Mieke for instance explains that in her work, for instance with regard to infection prevention at the hospital, short-term thinking is not valuable, but that it is necessary to look at long-term outcomes (for instance of certain interventions).

> "Yes, yes, that is right. Yes, yes, for sure. Also when you are working a lot on prevention of course, also infection prevention at the hospital, then, yes, then of course short-term thinking does not make a lot of sense actually. And is it smarter to expand the line, yes, for a, for a longer period of time. Ehm, also to prevent certain outbreaks in the future for instance" (Interview 6 Mieke, note 103).

With regard to looking at long-term impacts, Pauline explains that the sustainable employability of employees is an important subject at the AMD, and she values the fact that attention is paid to this subject in the workplace. So, attention is paid to how employees are able to persevere the longest in their work. Employees try to contribute to this issue through giving good (preventive) advice and

trying to provide people with insights about sustainable employability, which will contribute to this sustainable employability on the long-term.

Some employees (Gerard, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that in their work they try to look at the purpose and outcomes of the whole organisation, instead of only focussing on their own purpose. Gerard for instance explains that looking at the ultimate goal of his work is part of his motivation. According to him, it is important to have a kind of 'helicopter view' over one's work, and that one should know what the higher purpose of one's job is.

> "Yes, I do, that, that is part of my motivation. (..) And it is very important, I always say, to have a kind of helicopter view over the discipline you are working on. (..) Ehm, to see what the higher purpose is. (..) And when you are able to accomplish something on an organisational level, that, that is in my view, you accomplish more with that than if you are able to on an individual level, ehm, accomplish something. (..) So in that way looking at the total of your whole organisation, yes" (Interview 2 Gerard, 143, 144, 145, 146; 149).

Other employees also explain that in their work they try to look at the bigger impact or purpose of the whole organisation, for instance through becoming more aware of this bigger picture through visiting organisation-wide events (where for instance organisational goals and important issues are discussed), through focussing on issues 'outside' the organisation (political issues for instance), or through just 'zooming out' on one's work now and then, to look in which way one contributes to the whole organisation and experience that one is part of something bigger. Moreover, some employees explain that in their work they already look at the bigger added value of their jobs, because they work on organisation-wide subjects such as environmental or climate issues.

So concluding, from the stories of the interviewees, three ways through which employees think about their jobs as a whole instead of looking at their jobs as sets of separate tasks can be identified, which are the realisation that their work has an important supporting function within the organisation, looking at the outcomes of their work on the long term, and looking at the contribution of their work in the light of the bigger impact and purpose of the whole organisation. In line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), through keeping this more holistic purpose of work in mind, employees are in this way better able to see the ultimate beneficiaries of their work, which will enable them to experience their work as more meaningful. For some employees this broadening of the perceptions of the purpose or impact of the job (zooming out on work) and looking at their jobs as a whole is something that is inherent to their work.

4.2.3.2 Focusing perceptions

A second way of cognitive crafting is focusing perceptions, which can be described as "In contrast to expanding perceptions, employees can also foster meaningfulness by narrowing their mental scope of the purpose of their job on specific tasks and relationships that are significant or valuable to them" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 92). This specific job crafting technique is especially helpful to employees who dislike some aspects (tasks and relationships) of their work, but also see parts of their work as

meaningful. Trough the practice of mentally breaking down one's job into a meaningful 'chunk' and a less meaningful 'chunk', employees can view the meaningful part of their work as a reward that will motivate them in performing the less meaningful part of their job (Oettingen et al., 2001). From the stories of the interviewees it became clear that the employees of the AMD do not really use this focusing of perceptions in their work, because they already experience most tasks of their work as meaningful (and therefore this job crafting technique becomes unnecessary).

Some employees (Gerard, Pauline, Ian, and Hanneke) explain that they try to skip certain tasks in their jobs they do not experience as meaningful. Therefore, they experience almost all of their 'remaining' tasks as meaningful. Pauline for instance explains that she focuses on all three of her main tasks, because she finds all three tasks equally important and valuable. However, the fact that she experiences all three of her main tasks as meaningful is due to the fact that last year she decided to drop a few tasks she did not experience as meaningful and she was done with.

> "Yes, yes, all three tasks I have, there I really do try to, to divide my attention in a right way, because I find all three tasks important. (..) Yes, well, but that is partly due to that last year I just, very specifically chose to. (..) Exactly, those three things also provide me with energy and I want to focus on, and the others, yes, there, there I was done with. (..) Yes, well, see, you will always have tasks that are not nice. But at this moment, ehm, I really do have tasks of which I think, well, this, these are the, this is just nice" (Interview 3 Pauline, notes 215, 216, 217; 218).

Other employees also describe that they try to drop or quit those tasks they do not experience as meaningful, that not make them happy, that do not fit them, or that employees feel they have no added value in. In this way employees are able to focus on tasks that really fit them. Some employees even discuss it with colleagues when they experience tasks as not meaningful. Moreover, some employees describe that at an organisational level, less meaningful tasks are skipped, for instance some unnecessary statements that had previously to be signed by an occupational health physician are now abolished.

Most employees (John, Gerard, Pauline, Mieke, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that they experience almost all tasks in their jobs as meaningful. They do not really mentally focus on specific tasks in their jobs, because there are no tasks in their jobs that they experience as not meaningful. Mieke for instance explains that her tasks do not really differ with regard to the meaningfulness she derives from them. However, there are some tasks, such as administrative tasks, that she does not experience as meaningful (and this holds for more employees). However, these administrative tasks just have to be done and are only a small percentage of the total package of tasks of employees.

> "Yes, with regard to meaningfulness there are no big differences or so. (..) No, in the different tasks, no. (..) Yes, yes. No, well, that is more administratively for instance, you understand? (..) Then it is more like. But not so much my task, however, yes, well, it is actually also a task of course, administration. But with regard to administration I sometimes think like, oh, that I do not find meaningful" (Interview 6 Mieke, notes 105, 106, 107; 109).

So concluding, mentally focussing on specific aspects (tasks and relationships) of work that are experienced as most meaningful, is something that becomes unnecessary when employees already experience almost all tasks (except for some administrative tasks) in their jobs as meaningful. The fact that most employees experience almost all their tasks as meaningful is partly enabled by the possibility employees have to quit certain tasks they do not experience as meaningful. So, the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), who state that employees who narrow their mental scope of the purpose of their jobs on specific tasks they experience as most meaningful and valuable in their work, will experience their work as more meaningful, is not really applicable to employees of the AMD.

4.2.3.3 Linking perceptions

The third way of cognitive crafting is linking perceptions, which is related to employees who "take advantage of existing components of their jobs by drawing mental connections between specific tasks or relationships and interests, outcomes, or aspects of their identities that are meaningful to them" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 94). So, in this linking of perceptions, employees link their valued personal interests and preferences to their work, which will lead to employees experiencing their work as more meaningful (Berg et al., 2010b). From the stories of the interviewees, three ways can be identified in which employees make use of this cognitive crafting technique, which are being sportive at work, sharing personal lessons learned with others, and using personal values in work.

Some employees (John, Alice, and Hanneke) describe themselves as sportive and explain that they see this back in their work. Alice for instance explains that she is sportive and exercises a lot, and she tries to 'use' this personal characteristic in her work in different ways. She finds exercising important herself, and therefore she tries to be a good example to others and tries to stimulate others to exercise more.

> "Yes. Yes, that is very much the sportive side in my case. Ehm, I am sportive, I exercise a lot, I sport a lot. (..) And I, ehm, indeed try to bring this back in my work through, ehm, not to call, but to walk to people instead, ehm. (..) Ehm, to stimulate people to for a moment, ehm, leave that computer or leave that, that desk, ehm, ehm. (..) But also to stimulate people like, well, that desk bike is available, go there, go and sit there for a while, thus yes" (Interview 4 Alice, notes 163, 164, 165; 167).

Other employees also explain that they experience a link between their personal characteristics and values, and certain choices or preferences with regard to their work. Hanneke for instance is project manager of a project that is related to vitality and health. She is also a sportive person and convinced that a healthy life style can be valuable to feel vital, and she wants to make others aware of this. So, she will always search for tasks in this sportive and healthy life style area.

A few employees (Gerard, Pauline, and Mieke) in some way try to teach others the lessons they have learned in life. So, they use their own 'life experiences' to make others more aware about certain topics. Mieke for instance explains that she uses her own travel experiences in her work at the travel

clinic. Moreover, there are other personal things she uses and takes with her in her work. According to her, one should use these personal experiences in work when this is meaningful.

> "Yes, that is of course because of, yes, our travelling, that, you really take that with you in your work with regard to the travel clinic. (..) But, ehm, and, you do also take something from that with you anyways, like. Well, with regard to eating healthy for instance, or I have juvenile diabetes myself, diabetes type one. (..) And, ehm, ehm, well, that, that you can use for instance, when someone goes travelling with type one, just like me, and who, who is fearful however with regard to how that will work out and. Then I also use it" (Interview 6 Mieke, notes 110, 113; 114).

In a similar way, other employees also try to teach others certain 'life lessons' they find important. Gerard for instance explains that he would like to make others aware of his vision on work, that work is really important, however, that there are also other things in life that are probably more important than work, such as the situation at home or relationships.

Some employees (Gert, Ian, and Carel) explain that they find their personal values back in the way they work. Gert for instance explains that something he finds really (the most) important and tries to bring back in his work are the relationships between colleagues at work. According to Gert, employees should have a mind-set in which informal aspects and content aspects should be in a right balance.

> "Yes, no, I do take with me, ehm, to my work, that, ehm, that I nevertheless find the relationships between colleagues so to speak the most important, ehm. (..) And I also think that when this works out well, that everyone performs better, thus, ehm. (..) Yes, that that will accomplish more than, ehm, whatever seminar" (Interview 5 Gert, notes 155, 156; 158).

Other employees also explain that they try to bring their personal values back in their work, which are mostly related to certain personal interests.

So concluding, the linking (or drawing) of mental connections between specific tasks and relationships and certain interests or aspects of identities that are meaningful to employees, happens in three different ways, employees link their sportiness to certain choices or preferences with regard to work, employees teach others the personal life lessons they have learned in life, and employees use certain personal values in (how they) work. In line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), when employees link these valued personal interests and preferences to their work practices, employees are able to experience their work as more meaningful.

4.2.3.4 Answer sub-question 3

Sub-question 3: "How does cognitive crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?".

With regard to the cognitive crafting technique expanding perceptions, three ways can be identified in which employees think about their jobs as a whole instead of looking at their jobs as sets of separate tasks, which in line with the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), will enable employees to better see the ultimate beneficiaries of their work (increased task significance), which will enable them to experience their work as more meaningful. With regard to the cognitive crafting technique focusing perceptions,

the reasoning of Berg et al. (2013), that employees who mentally focus on specific tasks they experience as most meaningful, will experience their work as more meaningful, is not really applicable to employees of the AMD. This finding can be related to the fact that (as showed in the task crafting section) employees experience high levels of freedom and ability to alter their sets of tasks, which leads to employees being able to drop tasks they do not experience as meaningful (and therefore experiencing all remaining tasks as meaningful). When employees would not have this opportunity to alter their package of tasks, this cognitively dealing with less meaningful and likeable tasks would become more important. With regard to the cognitive crafting technique linking perceptions, employees of the AMD describe three different ways in which they draw mental connections between specific tasks and certain personal interests or aspects of their identity, which in line with Berg et al. (2013), enables employees to experience their work as more meaningful. So, what can be concluded is that the cognitive job crafting techniques expanding perceptions and linking perceptions are used by employees of the AMD to experience their work as more meaningful, and that the job crafting technique focusing perceptions is not used by employees of the AMD. So, the altering of how employees think about their jobs (changing perceptions), is indeed able to enhance the meaningfulness employees experience in their work. However, when employees are able to alter their tasks (engage in task crafting) in such ways that their jobs become more meaningful to them, changing perceptions with regard to work (with the purpose to experience work as more meaningful) becomes less relevant.

4.3 Preconditions job crafting

Throughout the stories of the interviewees, some general issues with regard to the experienced meaningfulness of work and job crafting became clear, which are described hereafter.

4.3.1 Mind-set with regard to job crafting

According to Berg et al. (2013), employees are better able to craft their jobs when they have a certain mind-set with regard to job crafting in which they see their jobs as changeable and flexible, instead of unchangeable and fixed. Moreover, in a job-crafting mind set, employees should believe that they have the right to alter their jobs themselves, instead of that only managers should have the power to introduce changes to work (Berg et al., 2013). Looking at the stories of the interviewees, all employees explain that they view their work as something in which they should be able to make their own choices and alterations. Moreover, all employees at the AMD experience the freedom to decide themselves how to execute their jobs and to make changes in their work. So, it could be concluded that employees at the AMD have the right mind-set (according to Berg et al. (2013)) with regard to job crafting. The organisational context of the AMD could be an important factor that facilitates this mind-set. Employees for instance feel free to discuss their work with colleagues and their supervisor, and

are able to notice when they are not satisfied with things in their work, which could enhance the feeling of being able to make changes in work.

Most employees (Gerard, Pauline, Alice, Mieke, Gert, Ian, and Carel) explain that the goals that should be reached at the end of the year should be clear, but that how these goals are reached and tasks are performed is less important, and professionals should be able to make this up themselves. So, employees should be able to decide themselves how they execute their work. However, with regard to certain tasks there should be some fixed protocols and working procedures, and altering tasks is only possible to a certain amount, because there are always some tasks that just have to be done. A few employees explain that with regard to the alterations they make in their work, they prefer to have some kind of autonomy and control in their work. Some employees explain that within their job, they should be able to for example dive deeper into some issues and should be able to use all their talents. So, employees should get the best out of themselves and develop themselves. Most employees also experience that they have the freedom to develop themselves and are able to give the meaning to their work they need.

4.3.2 Person-job fit

According to Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005), employees will experience their work as more personally meaningful when they see more a fit between their jobs and themselves. The different job crafting techniques explained by Berg et al. (2013) are all able to contribute to this person-job fit. Berg et al. (2013) identify three key categories with regard to personal characteristics that employees could focus on while crafting their jobs to enhance the meaningfulness they derive from their work, which are: motives, strengths, and passions.

Most employees (John, Alice, Mieke, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) alter their work in such a way that their work becomes more aligned with their personal interests, and in this way employees are able to 'work with' these interests in their work. Employees alter their jobs in such a ways that their work becomes more interesting and challenging to them, mostly driven by a certain curiousness and enthusiasm with regard to tasks and projects. This job crafting with regard to personal interests can be seen as aligning an employees' job with a certain passion. Employees can experience more meaningfulness in their jobs when they are able to execute activities that they have deep interests in (Berg et al., 2013). Furthermore, some employees (John and Gert) explain that they alter their work in such a way that that they are able to positively influence their personal development. Some employees like to try new things, and in this way develop themselves continuously. Job crafting with regard to personal development can be seen as aligning an employees' job with a certain motive or "specific outcomes that drive them put forth effort and persistence" (Berg et al., 2013, p. 14). Reaching more personal development can contribute to the meaningfulness experienced in one's job, because in this way employees pursue outcomes that they deeply care about (Berg et al., 2013).

4.3.3 Role of manager or supervisor

Most employees (Gerard, Pauline, Gert, Ian, Carel, and Hanneke) explain that managers should facilitate employees in executing their jobs. So, managers should have a more supporting function and should not interfere with regard to the content of work of professionals. The opinion of most employees is that managers should not 'manage' professionals too much, but that managers should only talk with employees about their responsibilities, give employees advice when necessary, and support employees when things do not go well at work. Some employees explain that their colleagues, and especially their supervisors, were important in creating opportunities for them. Some employees see their supervisor as someone who tries to get the best out of his employees, and positively stimulates and provides employees with the space and freedom to develop themselves. These statements with regard to the role of managers can be expected from highly educated professionals who execute complex and rich jobs. These professionals are likely to know best themselves how to execute their jobs.

4.3.4 Culture at department

With regard to colleagues, most employees (John, Gerard, Pauline, Alice, Mieke, and Carel) explain that at the AMD everybody is open to ask each other for help, and employees support each other when necessary. Colleagues are really involved to each other and are willing to take on work from others when necessary. Most employees describe the AMD as a really nice workplace with a 'nice team of colleagues'. Because of the open culture at the AMD, issues are easily expressed, and therefore working becomes easier for everybody. At the AMD, employees are open to address and correct each other, and employees describe this as valuable.

4.3.5 Conclusion preconditions job crafting

It can be concluded that employees at the AMD posses the (according to Berg et al. (2013)) right mind-set with regard to job crafting, in which they view their work as something in which they should be able to make their own choices and alterations. Employees experience the freedom to decide themselves in which way they execute their work. Employees to a certain extent craft their jobs to increase their person-job fit, which will likely lead to employees experiencing more meaningfulness in their work. In general, employees of the AMD are highly educated and have complex and rich jobs. In practice this means that employees prefer that the goals that should be reached should be clear, however, how these goals are reached and tasks are executed, should be something employees have the freedom in to decide themselves. Most employees explain that supervisors should have a facilitating role, and should not interfere with regard to the content of work of professionals and 'manage' employees too much. Managers should talk with employees about their responsibilities and provide help when things do not go well. The culture at the AMD is described as open, one in which employees support each other when necessary and employees are really involved in each other.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The research question of this study is defined as "How does job crafting by employees of the AMD contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees at the AMD?". In the previous chapter the three sub-questions of the study are answered, in which it becomes clear and more insight is gained in how the different job crafting techniques are used in practice by employees of the AMD, and how these different forms of job crafting contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of the AMD. In this conclusion of the study the focus will be on the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of the AMD and on the job crafting techniques used by employees of the AMD on a more abstract level.

First of all, it can be concluded that in this study a special case is looked at (in comparison with the cases looked at in most literature with regard to the relationship between job crafting and the experienced meaningfulness of work). The case is special because at the AMD employees have more complex and rich jobs (in comparison to the simple jobs looked at in most literature) and already experience their work as (highly) meaningful. Employees at the AMD engage in job crafting, however, not just to make their work meaningful, but to make their work even more meaningful (than it already was). The different job crafting techniques that are looked at in this study are all used by employees at the AMD, although in different degrees. These job crafting activities contribute in certain ways to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees of the AMD. However, in the case of the employees of the AMD, job crafting mostly does not lead to real radical changes in jobs, but is more used to make alterations in 'the details' of jobs. Mostly jobs are altered in such ways that they become more in line with the way in which employees would personally prefer to do their jobs.

Another important finding is that in the case of the jobs of employees of the AMD, job crafting sometimes seems an inherent part of the job. The employees working at the AMD are foremost independently operating and highly educated professionals. So, it can be concluded that at the AMD jobs are designed in certain ways that seem to support this job crafting, which is something that is special in this case study and has implications for the findings of this study. Related to the question of how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work, it is in this case important that the design of the jobs of employees supports this job crafting. All employees explain that they indeed feel free and able to alter their jobs. Moreover, the jobs of the employees of the AMD could be jobs in which job crafting and an assertive attitude with regard to adaptations in work are more or less expected. So, what can be concluded is that at the AMD jobs are designed well (with regard to supporting job crafting) and are experienced as meaningful. Moreover, the culture at the AMD also seems to support employees to engage in job crafting activities and contributes to employees

experiencing their work as meaningful. Employees for instance indicate that they feel the ability to discuss with their supervisor when they would like to make certain changes in their work.

Another finding is that employees craft their jobs in different and especially personal ways. Employees have different motives to make certain changes in their jobs, with which they also try to reach different goals. The increasing of the meaningfulness in work is sometimes a motive to engage in job crafting, however, job crafting also takes place for other reasons, such as to reach more efficiency in certain working procedures. Therefore, employees sometimes craft their jobs because they experience it as necessary in their job, and not primarily to provide their jobs with more meaningfulness. So, in some cases the increasing of the meaningfulness of work is more a 'positive side effect', but not the main reason to engage in job crafting. What also became clear is that a few job crafting techniques are used more intensively by employees than others. With regard to cognitive crafting for instance, expanding perceptions is a technique that is used relatively frequent. In contrast, focusing perceptions is a job crafting technique employees at the AMD barely use. Because employees at the AMD experience almost all their tasks as meaningful and are able to quit certain tasks they do not find meaningful, this focusing of perceptions becomes less needed. Related to this, it can be concluded that in general the cognitive job crafting techniques are less important to use by employees of the AMD, because these employees have to ability to alter their sets of tasks. When employees would not have this ability to craft their tasks, for instance dropping tasks that are not perceived as meaningful, cognitively dealing with less meaningful and likeable tasks would become more important.

What can be concluded is that all employees working at the AMD experience their work as meaningful (what could be caused by job crafting activities in the past), however, different employees describe different aspects of work that cause this meaningfulness. Employees provide personal stories with regard to how they experience meaningfulness in their work. While one employee could experience dropping a certain tasks as meaningful (because the task is for instance not experience as meaningful), another employee could experience adding this tasks as meaningful. Whether an employee is highly educated (a professional) or less highly educated (a secretary function), all employees are able to experience their work as meaningful in some way. One reason for the fact that employees at the AMD experience their work as (highly) meaningful could be that most employees work in the health care sector (for instance as occupational health physicians or occupational health nurses). In this sector, employees are able to directly experience that they are able to help others (high task significance), which provides them with a sense of satisfaction and meaningfulness. In most literature, the status quo is that employees experience their work as not (highly) meaningful, and that they are then able to make their jobs (more) meaningful through crafting their jobs. So, in this situation the 'condition' of experienced meaningfulness of work moves from worse to better. However, it can be concluded that

at the AMD, through job crafting, the condition of the experienced meaningfulness of work moves from good to even better. It could also be that at the AMD, job crafting is less needed, because jobs are already experienced as meaningful. A final remark with regard to meaningful work is that is could be the case that there is a shift in the kind of meaningfulness that is experienced in work. From the stories of the employees it seemed that aspects of work related to greater good motivations became more important related to the other two facets of meaningful work. It could be that when these 'lower' forms of meaningfulness, in which employees experience their own work as meaningful for themselves, are already present, there becomes more room for these greater good motivations, such as thinking about how one is able to help others and to contribute to the organisation. So, different motives with regard to job crafting (crafting to make work more interesting for oneself or crafting to contribute to the organisation) are related to the different forms of meaningfulness.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Methodological reflection

Looking back at this study, it can be concluded that the research subject of this study does not totally fit the theoretical angle (part of the theories and previous research used) chosen in this study. This is due to the fact that this case is not stereotypical with regard to existing literature about the investigated topics. In the main part of the articles used, simple jobs in which simple tasks are executed are looked at (in which employees do not experience much meaningfulness). However, this view on work does not fit the more complex and rich jobs of the employees working at the AMD. Therefore, the way in which certain job crafting techniques are described in literature to contribute to meaningfulness in work, are not totally in line with and applicable to how employees of the AMD execute these job crafting practices.

Because in this master thesis a single case study (at one specific department) is conducted, the transferability of the results of the study is automatically low. However, the data analysis of the collected data led to detailed descriptions and results of the study. Because of these detailed descriptions of the data, the reader of this study is to a certain extent able to judge whether other contexts could be informed by these research findings. The results of this study might for instance be transferable to (departments of) organisations where employees also have more complex and rich jobs and already experience their work as meaningful.

The qualitative research method used in this study enabled to gain insight in and provide an answer to the 'how' question formulated at the begin of the study. In the methodology chapter it is explained that because job crafting takes place in many different and personal ways, studying narratives of employees might be the best way to study these job crafting processes. Moreover, meaningfulness is a concept that is hard to 'score' (to translate into numbers), but should be talked about instead, because the meaningfulness becomes visible in stories of employees. Looking at the results of this

study, this qualitative approach indeed contributed to a detailed description of how employees experience their work as meaningful, how job crafting takes place in practice, and (to a lesser extent however) how these practices contribute to fostering the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees. From the interviews it can be concluded that employees working at the AMD already experience their work to a certain extent as meaningful and that they are already able to make certain changes in their work. However, how meaningful employees find their work and how much 'more meaningful' employees experience their work after job crafting, is not looked at in this study. In this study, meaningfulness is studied in a qualitative way, which led to descriptions of how employees experience their work as meaningful and which aspects of their work contribute to this meaningfulness. This meaningfulness in work could also be studied in a more quantitative way, for instance through a survey. However, the purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth insight in how job crafting is able to contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work, and these in-depth insights can not be captured by single scores on survey items.

Related to these measurement issues, it became clear that meaningful work and job crafting are relatively difficult themes to conduct research in, because experienced meaningfulness is a highly subjective experience and job crafting sometimes happens unconsciously. Meaningful work sometimes seemed to be a difficult concept to 'describe' for interviewees (because it is such a philosophical concept) and therefore to 'measure', which makes it harder to answer the defined research questions. Meaningful work is a difficult concept to think about for interviewees, because sometimes employees are not (immediately) aware of what exactly provides their jobs with meaningfulness. The meaningfulness employees of the AMD experience in their work seemed to be high, and they also to a certain extent engaged in job crafting. However, to find out whether this meaningfulness in work is indeed caused by job crafting, or more by for instance certain intrinsic motivations, is not looked at in this study. What can be said is that job crafting does not lead to a lower experienced meaningfulness in work. Besides that meaningful work is a difficult concept to describe by employees, the meaningfulness that is experienced is already high at the AMD, which makes it also harder for employees to tell about this concept, because employees do not experience big changes in their experienced meaningfulness (what could be the case by employees who first experience their job as not meaningful, and through job crafting as meaningful).

Lastly, open-ended interviews were used as a means of data gathering in this study. Sometimes probing was necessary to obtain the right 'response framework'. For instance with regard to the sub-theme 'adding tasks', in which extra questions had to be asked such as "Did you have to obtain new skills and competencies to execute these new tasks?" and "Did these newly learned skills and competencies provide your work with more meaningfulness?". Because this probing was necessary, it also in some way steered the answers of interviewees. Moreover, it sometimes seemed like some

questions (related to forms of job crafting) were not totally understood. Furthermore, sometimes it felt like because a researcher was asking employees whether they engaged in certain job crafting techniques, employees were more inclined to answer these questions positively. This is a difficult issue with regard to semi-structured interviews, interviewees are always inclined to provide answers, and do mostly not dare to say when they do not know something (for instance that they do not make use of a certain job crafting technique). So, maybe some kind of social desirable answers were provided by the interviewees.

When considering the theoretical and practical implications of this study, these methodological concerns should be taken into account.

5.2.2 Theoretical contribution of study

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis, little empirical research has looked at the direct influence of job crafting on work meaning (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Only some of the nine different job crafting techniques to foster the experienced meaningfulness of work indicated by Bert et al. (2013) have been looked at in practice. Therefore, the contribution of this study to the existing theory is that this study had looked empirically at the relationship between job crafting and the experienced meaningfulness of work. This study has looked in a qualitative way at if and how these job crafting techniques are used in practice with the purpose to increase the meaningfulness experienced in work within one single department of an organisation. In this way insight is gained in how these job crafting processes take place and what motives employees have to engage in job crafting. It can be confirmed that all nine job crafting techniques take place (to contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work), however, all in varying degrees.

Moreover, this study has looked at job crafting in more complex and rich jobs, compared to the jobs looked at in most literature so far. These rich jobs are mostly already experienced as meaningful, in contrast to the more simple jobs described in most existing literature. What is most notable is that in more rich jobs, certain job crafting techniques are practices that are experienced as inherent to the job. Building new relationships for instance is something that is (experienced as) necessary in a complex job in which collaboration with many colleagues is needed. The cognitive crafting technique focusing perceptions is barely used by employees of the AMD, probably due to the fact that this technique becomes unnecessary because employees already experience almost all their tasks as meaningful. This means that the design of jobs (especially whether a job is simple or complex) influences whether certain job crafting techniques are used. Another link between job design and job crafting is related to whether jobs are designed in such a way (for instance are employees provided with enough freedom), so that employees are able to craft their jobs. Furthermore, looking at the AMD it became clear that the organisational context facilitates a certain mind-set of employees in which they experience they are able to make changes in their work.

Looking at the conceptual model of this study in the light of the research results, it can be concluded that task crafting and relational crafting are related to each other, and not as 'separate' as displayed in the model. For instance, a frequently noticed form of task crafting (adding tasks) is joining projects or workgroups. When employees start to join a new project, there is a high chance that they will meet new people in this project. Therefore, it can be concluded that task crafting and relational crafting are conceptually distinct, but empirically appear to be closely related. From the perspective of De Sitter (2000), who looks at organisational structures as networks of tasks, this seems to be logical. When employees start altering their tasks, as a consequence they will also build new relationships in these new tasks. So, it is logical that the concepts of task crafting and relational crafting are separated conceptually (to make the conceptual model more clear), but it is also logical that empirically these concepts are closely related. It also depends on whether employees begin with altering certain tasks or relationships. So, do employees start executing new tasks, which will also lead to new relationships, or do employees have the purpose to meet new people, and therefore start doing other work. With regard to the case of the AMD, the first way is applicable. Most employees do not have the purpose to meet new people, because they already have large networks of relationships. However, in literature of Berg et al. (2013), this second option is also noticed, especially with regard to employees with simple jobs in which they do not meet so many different people, and therefore, meeting new people can be an enrichment of the job (and make the job more meaningful).

5.2.3 Recommendations for future research

This study provided a more concrete insight in how certain job crafting techniques are used in practice, which can be a starting point for future research on job crafting. Because this study makes the use of job crafting techniques more visible and explicit, certain topics that could be investigated further become clear. First of all, more research should be conducted on how job crafting contributes to the experienced meaningfulness of work of employees who have more complex jobs (instead of simple jobs). So, future research should be conducted at (departments of) organisations where employees execute more complex tasks (instead of only simple tasks, which is now the case in most literature). This could provide insight in whether job crafting indeed happens in different ways (because employees already experience more meaningfulness in their work), and in this way a contribution could be made to existing literature on job crafting in relation to meaningful work. These insights are relevant because nowadays there is a growing number of knowledge-intensive organisations, which will result in more complex jobs, and also with regard to complex jobs, the question of how work can be experienced as meaningful stays important.

With regard to the measurement difficulties of the concepts looked at in this study, more research should be done with regard to how meaningful work and job crafting could best be studied. Meaningfulness in work and job crafting can be vague concepts for people, and what people

experience as meaningful and in which ways they engage in job crafting can be different. However, the measurement obstacles that were present in this study may be valuable insights for future research, because now one is better able to anticipate on these difficulties beforehand. In this study, the interviewees were informed about the topic of the research, however, not much further information about meaningful work or job crafting was provided. Looking back, it may was hard for the interviewees to directly form their answers on certain questions with regard to meaningful work and job crafting. Telling about what one finds meaningful in work and what aspects of work contribute to this meaningfulness may are topics for which someone needs more time to think about to prepare accurate answers. The concept of job crafting was most of the time new to employees, which made thinking about whether they use certain job crafting techniques harder. Therefore, it might be better to more inform the interviewees beforehand about how the researcher defines the concepts that are going to be investigated in the study. In this way, interviewees have more time to think about these concepts, how they experience them, and what they mean to them, before the interviews are conducted.

Looking at the sub-conclusions of this study with regard to the different job crafting techniques, it becomes clear that with regard to task crafting and relational crafting more clear conclusions could be drawn than with regard to cognitive crafting. This could be caused by the fact that the cognitive component of job crafting is still a bit 'fuzzy'. So, more research could be conducted on how this cognitive crafting occurs and what it exactly entails. Cognitive crafting can be something that is hard for interviewees to tell about. A reason for this could be that employees easier forget this cognitive crafting (than for instance changes with regard to task crafting). When employees engage in cognitive crafting, and for instance change the way in which they look at their work, they will probably quickly forget that they changed this way of looking at their jobs. A qualitative way of finding out how employees engage in (cognitive) job crafting and how this contributes to the meaningfulness in their work could be an approach of walking through each stage of an employees' career, and discussing what choices employees made within this career path. In this way certain earlier changes with regard to work (which employees otherwise might would forget) can be talked about, for instance why someone made certain decisions with regard to work. This is a sort of critical incident technique (in Dutch: kritische incidentmethode), in which conversations are held about important moments in life, for instance when people started to do things different, or started to look different at things (their work).

As indicated in the methodological reflection part, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches have their opportunities and shortcomings. Through qualitative research in-depth insights in how certain (job crafting) processes take place and how certain (meaningful work) conditions are experienced can be obtained. So, insights in 'how' questions can be gained, however, insight in 'how

much' questions are more difficult to obtain, because no certain measurement scale is used. For quantitative research methods, this is the other way around, 'how much' questions can be investigated through for instance surveys (in which 'how' questions are more difficult to capture). From the interviews in this qualitative study it could not be derived exactly how meaningful employees find their work and how much 'more meaningful' employees experience their jobs after job crafting has taken place. Therefore, it could be an option for future research to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods (mixed methods) to gain insight in how job crafting processes take place (how), but also in the extent to which the experienced meaningfulness increases through this job crafting (how much).

5.2.4 Practical contribution of study

As explained in the theoretical background chapter, work that is experienced as meaningful is associated with many potential benefits for employees as well as for organisations. Therefore, it was stated that insights in how job crafting influences the meaningfulness that is experienced in work, is something that can be beneficial to organisations. When the organisation gets a better understanding of how job crafting influences certain job characteristics and the social environment at work, and in this way the experienced meaningfulness of work, it could take these important aspects into account and try to design jobs and foster job crafting in such a way that the meaningfulness employees experience in their work is improved. From this study it can be concluded that all employees working at the AMD experience the ability and freedom to make certain changes to their jobs (to craft their job). So, these conditions of ability and freedom to craft one's job are already good within in the AMD, which is something positive. Besides being able to craft their jobs, employees at the AMD also already experience their work as meaningful (which could be a consequence of their ability to craft their jobs). Being aware of these two positive conditions that are already met within the organisation can be relevant to the organisation, because in this way the organisation knows it is doing a good job.

According to Berg et al. (2013), the increasing body of literature on job crafting makes job crafting a concept that can be used as a tool to help employees to increase the meaningfulness they experience in their work. Therefore, insight in which job crafting techniques are best able to contribute to the meaningfulness employees experience in their work could be beneficial for employees. For instance because they could start using these specific job crafting techniques more intensively. What can be concluded from this study, is that the need and added value of certain job crafting techniques depends on the design of jobs (are jobs complex and rich or simple) and whether employees already experience their work as meaningful or not. Berg et al. (2013) state that the job crafting technique focusing perceptions is especially a valuable technique for employees who experience part of their job as meaningful and a part of their job as not meaningful. In this case study it became clear that this focusing perceptions is a cognitive crafting technique that is not really valuable for employees of the

AMD (who already experience their jobs as (highly) meaningful). So, this theory of Berg et al. (2013) declares this finding and in turn this finding confirms part of the theory (which is a theoretical contribution of this study).

5.2.5 Recommendations for practice

What can be concluded from the interviews is that a precondition for employees to engage in job crafting, is that employees should experience the ability and 'freedom' to do so. Therefore, it is important that organisations and managers provide their employees with this freedom to alter their jobs. This experienced freedom to engage in job crafting is partly related to a certain mind-set of employees with regard to job crafting (being able to make changes in one's job), and partly related to the design of jobs. A job design in which employees experience decision latitude and autonomy with regard to how they execute their job and with whom they interact in their work, will encourage employees to engage in job crafting. From this study it can be concluded that employees working at the AMD experience this ability and freedom to craft their jobs. During the interviews employees noticed certain aspects of their jobs, which contribute to this feeling of ability and freedom to make changes in their jobs (engage in job crafting). First, some employees noticed that they are able to consult their supervisor with regard to certain choices in work. Employees are for instance able to talk with their supervisor when they would prefer to drop certain tasks in their work or join a certain project. Moreover, employees explain that they experience that they are able to make their own choices with regard to their work, because they have enough decision latitude and autonomy in their work. Finally, employees believe that supervisors should talk with them about certain goals and responsibilities, however, they should not interfere with regard to the content of work, this should be left to the professional. So, these structural and cultural conditions are already met at the AMD, and also other (departments of) organisations could take these (pre)conditions into account to enable employees to engage in job crafting.

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Appendix A – Operationalization

Concept	Dimension	Sub-dimension
Job crafting (Berg et al., 2013)	Task crafting	Adding tasks
		Emphasizing tasks
		Redesigning tasks
	Relational crafting	Building relationships
		Reframing relationships
		Adapting relationships
	Cognitive crafting	Expanding perceptions
		Focusing perceptions
		Linking perceptions
Experienced meaningfulness of work (Steger et al., 2012)	Positive meaning in work	
	Meaning making through work	
	Greater good motivations	
Job characteristics (Oldham &H Hackman, 2010)	Skill variety	
	Task identity	
	Task significance	
Social environment at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001)	Long-term relationships	
	Short-term connections	

Appendix B – Interview guide AMD

Introduction

Firs of all, thank you for participating in this interview. The study for which this interview is conducted is related to the experienced meaningfulness of work. Preliminary, some general questions with regard to your work will be asked, which serves as background information.

The results of this interview will be treated anonymously and are only used for this particular study. When you have any questions or if there is something unclear during the interview, please do not hesitate to report this. Finally, I would like to ask whether it is okay to you if the interview is recorded on audiotape? If you do not have any additional questions, we can start the interview now.

1. General questions

- What is your recent job position within the organisation?
- Could you give a short description of your job and the tasks you execute in your work?
- Are the previously mentioned tasks described in a formal job description?

2. Experienced meaningfulness of work

2.1 Positive meaning in work

- Can you describe in which way you experience your job and career as meaningful?
- Can you describe which aspects of your job contribute to this meaningfulness in your work?
- Can you describe in which way you experience your job as having a satisfying purpose?

2.2 Meaning making through work

- Can you describe in which way your job contributes to the meaning in your life as a whole (in which way your job has personal meaning)?
- Can you describe in which way you experience that your work contributes (or has contributed) to your personal development and growth?
- Can you describe in which way your work helps you to increase your self-understanding or helps you to better understand yourself?
- Can you describe in which way your works helps (or enables) you to make sense of the world around you and to experience it as meaningful?

2.3 Greater good motivations

- Can you describe in which way you experience that your work makes a positive difference (has a positive influence) on your surroundings (or broader, the world around you)?
- Can you describe in which way you experience that your work serves a greater purpose?

3. Job crafting

3.1 Task crafting

Adding tasks

- Can you describe in which way you add or drop certain tasks in your work, with the purpose to make your job more meaningful? Can you describe in which way you add certain tasks to your 'package of tasks', that were not described in your formal job description?
- Can you describe what your motives were to choose these specific tasks or projects to add to your job?
- Can you describe whether you had to develop necessary new skills and competencies to perform these new tasks (more skill variety)?
- Can you describe whether this adding of tasks provide you with more insight in how certain tasks influence others or certain results (more task significance)?
- If yes, can you describe in which way this provided more depth and meaningfulness to your job?

Emphasizing tasks

- Can you describe in which way you put emphasis on (through providing more time, energy, and attention to) certain tasks that are already part of your job and you already experience as meaningful, with the purpose to make your work more meaningful (prioritising)?

Redesigning tasks

- Can you describe in which way you adept or redesign certain tasks, with the purpose to make your job more meaningful (continuous improvement)?
- Can you describe in which way you give your own twist to carrying out certain tasks?

3.2 Relational crafting

Building relationships

- Can you describe in which way relationships and interactions at work contribute to the meaningfulness you experience in your work?
- Can you describe in which way you build new relationships in your work, with the purpose to make your job more meaningful?
- If yes, can you describe in which way these new relationships provide you with more pride, dignity, or worth?

Reframing relationships

- Can you describe in which way you change (reframe) the nature and content of interactions and relationships at your work, in such a way that these get a different and more meaningful purpose, with the purpose to make your work more meaningful?

Adapting relationships

- Can you describe in which way you change (or adapt) certain already existing relationships in your work, in such a way that you start providing help and support to colleagues, with the purpose to make your work more meaningful (also being mentor or coach to new or less experienced employees)?
- If yes, can you describe in which way you experience that you got this help and support in return?
- Can you describe in which way did you experience that this leads to deeper and stronger relationships?

3.3 Cognitive crafting

Expanding perceptions

- Can you describe in which way you look at the ultimate purpose or impact of your job (what your work contributes), with the purpose to make your work more meaningful (looking at the broader impact of work)?
- Can you describe in which way you 'zoom out' on your work, in such a way that you are able to see your job as a 'whole', instead of separate tasks and relationships (holistic purpose in mind)?

Focusing perceptions

- Can you describe in which way you focus on specific tasks and relationships in your work that you experience as most important and valuable, with the purpose to make your work more meaningful?
- Can you describe in which way you see certain tasks you experience as meaningful as important tasks in your job, and certain tasks you experience as less meaningful, as less important in your job?

Linking perceptions

- In which way do je see a link between specific tasks and relationships at your work and certain specific interests or aspects of your identity that you experience as meaningful?

Appendix C – Template

1. Experienced meaningfulness of work

1.1 Positive meaning in work
- 1.1.1 Providing help to clients and colleagues
- 1.1.2 Interactions with colleagues at work
- 1.1.3 Participating in society
- 1.1.4 Being part of the organisation
- 1.1.5 Feeling appreciated by colleagues

1.2 Meaning making through work
- 1.2.1 Dealing with different kind of people
- 1.2.2 Gaining new skills and competencies
- 1.2.3 Gaining more self-understanding
- 1.2.4 Insight in organisational processes and procedures

1.3 Greater good motivations
- 1.3.1 Feeling of being able to help others (clients and colleagues)
- 1.3.2 Contributing to organisational goals
- 1.3.3 Encouraging people to make a change

2. Job crafting

2.1 Task crafting
- 2.1.1 Adding tasks
  - 2.1.1.1 Addition of tasks and projects
  - 2.1.1.2 Dropping tasks
  - 2.1.1.3 Motives to choose specific tasks
  - 2.1.1.4 Need to develop new skills and competencies
- 2.1.2 Emphasizing tasks
  - 2.1.2.1 Fixed tasks
  - 2.1.2.2 Putting emphasis on specific tasks
- 2.1.3 Redesigning tasks
  - 2.1.3.1 Redesigning how tasks are carried out
  - 2.1.3.1 Own twist in carrying out tasks

2.2 Relational crafting
- 2.2.1 Building relationships
  - 2.2.1.1 Building relationships for work-related goals
- 2.2.2 Reframing relationships
  - 2.2.2.1 Supportive and proactive approaching
  - 2.2.2.2 Approaching colleagues on an equal footing
- 2.2.3 Adapting relationships
  - 2.2.3.1 Providing help is part of the job
  - 2.2.3.2 Helping culture at department

2.3 Cognitive crafting
- 2.3.1 Expanding perceptions
  - 2.3.1.1 Realisation work has supporting function
  - 2.3.1.2 Looking at long-term outcomes
  - 2.3.1.3 Looking at outcomes on an organisational level

2.3.2 Focusing perceptions

2.3.2.1 Skipping less meaningful tasks

2.3.2.2 Most tasks experienced as meaningful

2.3.3 Linking perceptions

2.3.3.1 Sportive at work

2.3.3.2 Share personal lessons learned with others

2.3.3.3 Using personal values in work

3. Preconditions job crafting

3.1 Min-set with regard to job crafting

3.2 Person-job fit

3.3 Role of manager or supervisor

3.4 Culture at department

Appendix D – Code tree

1. Job description
2. Tasks specified in formal job description
3. Qualities of employee
4. Meaningfulness of job and career
5. View on work
6. Personal meaning
7. Responsibilities of employee
8. Enrichment of employee
9. Satisfaction derived from work
10. Added value of employee
11. Contribution of work to personal development and growth
12. Contribution of work to self-understanding
13. Contribution of work to make sense of the world
14. Making a positive difference through work
15. Work serving a greater purpose
16. Task significance
17. Alteration of tasks
18. Dropping tasks
19. Freedom to choose specific tasks and projects
20. Motives to choose specific tasks
21. Emphasizing tasks
22. Redesigning tasks
23. Working more efficiently
24. Building relationships
25. Motives for building relationships
26. Reframing relationships
27. Adapting relationships
28. Providing assistance to colleagues
29. Building stronger relationships with colleagues
30. Zooming out on work
31. Broader impact of work
32. Network relationships
33. Position of employee in organisation
34. Working on a more abstract level
35. Perceptions of existing work procedures
36. Final completion of tasks
37. Transferring tasks
38. Personal interests
39. Purpose of organisation
40. Influencing colleagues
41. Being yourself at work
42. Control over own work
43. Appreciation of 'freedom' in work
44. Liking one's job
45. Interactions with colleagues
46. Adapting the way of working in organisation
47. Way of approaching colleagues
48. Recognising added value
49. Clear structure in job
50. Clear what job entails
51. Need for interaction with specific people
52. Alignment of job and person
53. Adding tasks
54. Diversity of tasks in job
55. Autonomy in work
56. Task interdependence
57. Team work
58. Supervision
59. Discussing expectations
60. Specific role of employee in project
61. Evaluation of tasks and projects
62. Evaluation of personal development
63. Role of supervisor
64. Motives to choose specific department
65. Motives to choose specific job
66. Stimulating people
67. Support from colleagues
68. Opinion that employees should be able to craft their jobs
69. Changeability of work
70. Role of job design
71. Learning on the job
72. Need for job crafting
73. Expectations of employee
74. Role of job crafting
75. Task variety
76. Job complexity
77. Sustainable employability
78. Obstacles older employees face
79. Quality of work outcomes
80. Prevention of burnout

81. Recovering from burnout
82. Main purpose of job
83. Commitment
84. Career
85. Aspects of job contributing to meaningfulness
86. Educational background
87. Interactions of employees
88. Organisational issues
89. Inter organisational relationships
90. Contribution of education to self-understanding
91. Contribution of education to personal development and growth
92. Ability to empathize
93. Joining workgroups
94. Restrictions in choosing specific tasks
95. Fixed tasks
96. Personalized approach in work
97. Restrictions in work
98. Strategic goals of organisation
99. Network organisation
100. Proactively approaching colleagues
101. Approachability of colleagues
102. Culture at department
103. Motivation of employee
104. Important aspects of life
105. Importance of work
106. 'Freedom' of professional
107. Setting goals
108. Managerial support
109. Evaluation of goals
110. Restrictions in providing assistance to colleagues
111. Versatility of employee
112. Opportunities of employee
113. Strain on employee
114. Liability of employee
115. Challenging work
116. Collaboration with colleagues
117. Colleagues showing understanding
118. Perceived workload
119. Pitfall of employee
120. Broad interests
121. Personal way of working
122. Working conditions
123. Independence of employee
124. Social contacts at work
125. Providing help to other people
126. Learning from colleagues
127. Ability to relativize
128. Vocational retraining
129. Dedication to reach goals
130. Seizing opportunities
131. Transferring work
132. Personal assistance
133. Personal issues
134. Burdening colleagues
135. Contribution of work to well-being
136. Appreciation of employees
137. Acquiring new skills
138. Retraining
139. Depth in work
140. Keeping up with workload
141. Lagging behind events
142. Declare own limits
143. Changing existing work procedures
144. Providing help to colleagues
145. Focusing perceptions
146. Linking perceptions
147. Personal values
148. Willingness to help each other
149. Personal work preferences
150. Assertiveness
151. Contribution of work to 'structure' in life
152. Contribution of education to make sense of the world
153. Trust between employees
154. Work influencing home situation
155. Involvement in organisation
156. Priority of tasks
157. Need for collaboration to perform tasks
158. Demonstrating good behaviour
159. Aspects inherent to the nature of work
160. Supportive culture at department
161. Relieving colleagues
162. Paying attention to informal aspects of job

163. Balancing different interests
164. Working for a living
165. Importance of colleagues
166. Optimisation of organisational processes
167. Skills of employee
168. Way of interacting with employees
169. Understanding behaviour of employees
170. Acquiring social skills
171. Ability to 'look further than work'
172. Job crafting inherent to the nature of work
173. Taking part in a committee
174. Ability to craft job
175. Equality within organisation
176. Keeping relationships 'low profile'
177. Support function
178. Importance of relationships at work
179. Approachability of manager
180. Alignment between manager and employee
181. Organisational structure
182. Doing a good job
183. Conversations with people
184. Coaching people
185. Being part of the organisation
186. Long-term impact of work
187. Tasks perceived as not meaningful
188. Collaboration with other parties
189. Achieving goals
190. Ability to develop oneself
191. Coping with high workload
192. Being accountable to supervisor
193. Purpose of employee
194. Organisational sustainability
195. Personal characteristics
196. Curiosity of employee
197. Learning from others
198. Fulfilling tasks
199. Critical evaluation of way of working
200. Visibility of results
201. Working for external parties
202. Difficulties with tasks
203. Person-job fit
204. Come forward with own problem
205. Alignment between different parties
206. Hard to set priorities
207. Make your own contribution
208. Feeling appreciated
209. Influencing people
210. Doing work one is good at
211. Doubting right job
212. Working as an independent contractor
213. Retraining possibilities
214. 'Protected environment' of university
215. Motives to drop tasks
216. Feeling comfortable at work
217. Self-confidence
218. Scheduling different tasks
219. Focussing on own work
220. Attending organisational events
221. Feedback from colleagues
222. Consultation with manager
223. Managerial advice
224. Employees correcting each other
225. Making a contribution to the organisation
226. Less enjoyable tasks
227. Creating own workload
228. Physical complaints
229. Interactions with people
230. Unpleasant feelings about work
231. Looking for challenges in work
232. Finding out own preferences
233. Work giving energy
234. Importance of liking one's job
235. Responsibilities of supervisor
236. Alignment of way of working
237. Being innovative
238. Focussing on specific tasks
239. Employees should take own initiatives in work
240. Need for personal alignment
241. Motives to craft job
242. Asking supervisor for advice
243. Feeling heard by supervisor