CRAFTING A JOB: REVISIONING EMPLOYEES AS ACTIVE CRAFTERS OF THEIR WORK

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We propose that employees craft their jobs by changing cognitive, task, and/or relational boundaries to shape interactions and relationships with others at work. These altered task and relational configurations change the design and social environment of the job, which, in turn, alters work meanings and work identity. We offer a model of job crafting that specifies (1) the individual motivations that spark this activity, (2) how opportunities to job craft and how individual work orientations determine the forms job crafting takes, and (3) its likely individual and organizational effects.

Organizational researchers care about what what composes the experience of a job. Traditionally, they have focused on either individual determinants (Dubin, 1956; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; Roberson, 1990), such as expectations or values, or external characteristics of the job itself (Griffin, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1980), such as work tasks or social interaction at work. Both perspectives minimize the role that employees play in actively shaping both the tasks and social relationships that compose a job. Even in the most restricted and routine jobs, employees can exert some influence on what is the essence of the work.

The core premise of this article is that the work tasks and interactions that compose the days, the jobs, and, ultimately, the lives of employees are the raw materials employees use to construct their jobs. In our perspective we draw on assumptions of social constructionism that "place particular stress on the individual's psychological construction of the experiential world" (Gergen, 1994: 67). The social context provides employees with the materials they use to build the experience of work (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Interactions with others help employees define and bound tasks by shaping impressions of what is and is not part of the job. However, job boundaries, the meaning of work, and work identities are not fully determined by formal job requirements. Individuals have latitude to define and enact the job, acting as "job crafters." We define job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work. Thus, job crafting is an action, and those who undertake it are job crafters. Our perspective illuminates how, when, and why employees are likely to craft their jobs, and how crafting revises both employees' work identities and work meanings.

An employee's job is made up of a "set of task elements grouped together under one job title and designed to be performed by a single individual" (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992: 173). Thus, tasks represent the most basic building blocks of the relationship between employees and the organization (Griffin, 1987) and are composed of "the set of prescribed work activities a person normally performs during a typical work period" (Griffin, 1987: 94). Crafting a job involves shaping the task boundaries of the job (either physically or cognitively), the relational boundaries of the job, or both. Changing task boundaries means altering the form or number of activities one engages in while doing the job, whereas changing cognitive task boundaries refers to altering how one sees the job (e.g., as a set of

discrete parts or as an integrated whole), and changing relational boundaries means exercising discretion over with whom one interacts while doing the job. By changing any one of these elements, an individual alters the design of the job and the social environment in which he or she works.

We argue that such actions affect both the meaning of the work and one's work identity. By "meaning of the work" we mean individuals' understandings of the purpose of their work or what they believe is achieved in the work (Brief & Nord, 1990). The meaning of work is reflected in the framing of the work more generally (e.g., a physician may frame work as being about healing people or about acting upon illness with technology, among other possibilities; Hughes, 1971; Terkel, 1974). By "work identity" we mean how individuals define themselves at work. Work identity is partly cognitive: it describes the attributes and the more holistic conception that people have of themselves at work. At the same time, individuals make claims about what work is and what it is not, making work identity a set of actions as well as a set of cognitions (Bartel & Dutton, in press; Creed & Scully, in press; Guild, 1999; Van Maanen, 1998). While identity cannot be changed at will, individuals make claims about who they are and why what they do matters, and this is part of the social identity that is created at work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Work identification, like organizational identification, assumes correspondence between how individuals define themselves and how they define their work (Pratt, 1998).

What individuals do at work and who they interact with are two important means by which employees change their work identities. For example, when a hospital cleaner changes the job by cutting tasks and avoiding interaction with others, the meaning of the job and the identity of the employee change as well. Clearly, changing the meaning of work informs and is informed by one's work identity, or by being the person who accomplishes these purposes. The meaning of work and one's work identify are core ingredients in the creation of a job over time. Changes in one's framing of the work's purpose by definition changes the meaning of the work, which, in turn, alters how one defines oneself as a doer of the work. For example, when an internet service provider changes the framing of the work from being about making sales to being about connecting those who would otherwise be left behind in the computing revolution, the meaning of the work changes, as does the employee's identity (deal maker versus champion of the masses).

In this article we construe employees as "job crafters," and we use the term *job crafting* to capture the actions employees take to shape, mold, and redefine their jobs. Job crafters are individuals who actively compose both what their job is physically, by changing a job's task boundaries, what their job is cognitively, by changing the way they think about the relationships among job tasks, *and* what their job is relationally, by changing the interactions and relationships they have with others at work. Job crafting is a psychological, social, and physical act, in which cues are read about physical boundaries of the work and are interpreted by motivated crafters. Job crafters act upon the task and relational boundaries of the job, changing their identity and the meaning of the work in the process. In doing so, job crafters create different jobs for themselves, within the context of defined jobs. Thus, job crafting is a creative and improvised process that captures how individuals locally adapt their jobs in ways that create and sustain a viable definition of the work they do and who they are at work. Whether this crafting is "good" or "bad" for the organization is an issue that is situationally dependent.

We offer a model of job crafting that specifies (1) the individual motivations that spark this activity, (2) how opportunities to job craft and how individual work orientations help to determine the forms job crafting takes, and (3) its likely individual and organizational effects. Job crafting is a situated activity, in the sense that different contexts enable or disable different levels and forms of crafting. Because job crafting is related to similar concepts in the organizational literature, we contrast job crafting and its contribution to these concepts. In addition, we provide several examples of job crafting, which bring to life two aspects of job crafting: (1) employees construct their work worlds by shaping the tasks that compose the job, and (2) employees form interactions and relationships that compose the social environment at work.

Job crafters are all around us. Job alterations can be incremental or radical—visible or invisible. For example, a computing support person who helps employees with their web pages, in

addition to regular job tasks, is changing the job as well as his or her relationships with others. Similarly, when an overworked employee reduces the scope and scale of work activities to prevent exhaustion, this is a form of job crafting.

Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1992) define such job changes as emergent task elements, but they separate this idea from the job itself, instead naming these changes as part of the employee's new role. Thus, in their view, jobs do not change as a result of job crafting; we, however, contend that the job (and its tasks), its meaning, and employee identity all change when job crafting occurs. Although a dominant focus in studies of work has been on understanding the connection between employees' ratings of their jobs and objective job properties, we argue for a perspective that acknowledges the everyday altering of jobs that individuals do. Therefore, there is no "objective" job to which to compare employees' perceptions. Instead, the job is being re-created or crafted all the time. Also, job crafting differs from job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) in that it addresses the processes by which employees change elements of their jobs and relationships with others to revise the meaning of the work and the social environment at work. In contrast, the job design perspective focuses on employees' experiences of jobs in which task elements are more static.

Job design perspectives are largely concerned with determining how employees interpret objective task characteristics and social information in the job setting to produce attitudinal and motivational responses to the work (Griffin & McMahan, 1994; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992). Job crafting complements theories of job design by essentially changing the direction of this relationship; instead of the design of the job eliciting attitudes and motivation, the opportunity and motivation to craft elicit job crafting. Rather than assume that employees who are satisfied in their work will take on more job tasks, as those with the job design perspective do, we assume that employees alter the task and relational boundaries of their jobs to create work with which they are more satisfied.

Our discussion of job crafting proceeds in three steps. First, we present our model of job crafting, followed by an account of how job crafting differs from related constructs and how it builds upon a subset of these to portray the motivations for and effects of crafting a job. Sec-

ond, we offer six examples from organizational research of job crafters in action to enliven our model. Third, we discuss how our model contributes to organizational research, offer practical implications, and suggest areas for future research.
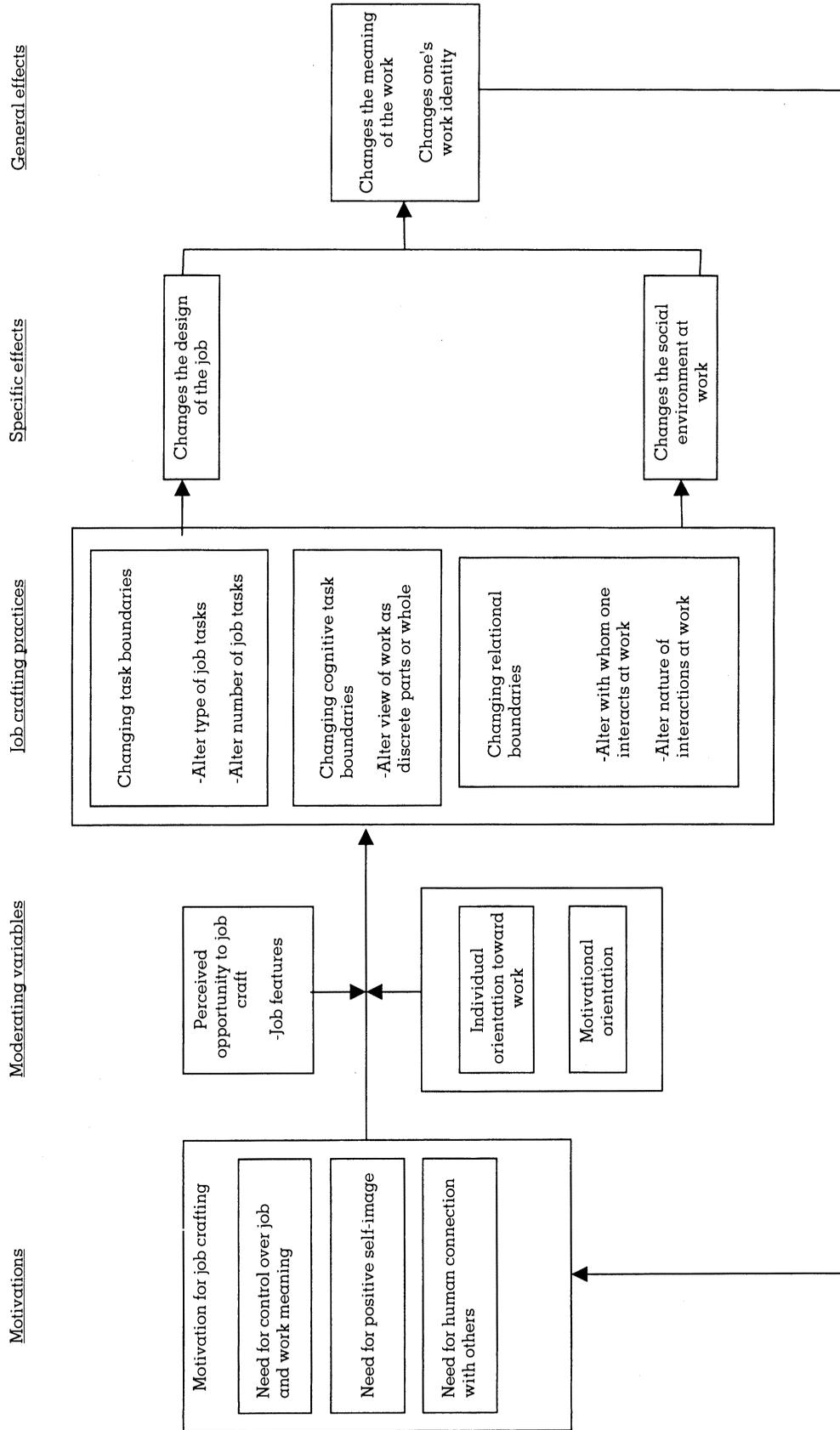
JOB CRAFTING

In Figure 1 we present our job crafting model —built on the premise that the motivation to job craft and the perceived opportunities present within the organization to engage in crafting act in concert to affect the form and extent of job crafting. More formally, we argue that the motivation to craft a job is moderated by the perceived opportunity to do so, as well as by individuals' work and motivational orientations. Thus, situational and dispositional conditions moderate how motivation to craft creates job crafting patterns. We outline the contours for a general framework of job crafting in Figure 1.

Motivation for Job Crafting

The motivation for job crafting arises from three individual needs. First, employees engage in job crafting to assert some control over their jobs in order to avoid alienation from the work (Braverman, 1974). Second, employees are motivated to create a positive self-image in their work. Third, job crafting allows employees to fulfill a basic human need for connection to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). We consider each motivation below.

The need for personal control is a basic human drive. Humans respond well to having control even over seemingly small matters, and control in one's own environment has been described as "an intrinsic necessity of life itself" (Adler, 1930: 398). Thus, one would expect that having or taking control over certain aspects of the work would be a basic human need. The implications of having little control over one's work are even more profound; the hallmarks of alienating work are having little or no control over the tasks of, conditions for, or overall purpose of the work (Braverman, 1974; Rogers, 1995). By taking control of or reframing some of these factors, even in small ways, job crafters make the job their own. Even in low-autonomy jobs, employees can create new domains for mastery and shape facets of job tasks to take control over

FIGURE 1
A Model of Job Crafting

General effects

Changes the meaning of the work

Changes one's work identity

Specific effects

Changes the design of the job

Changes the social environment at work

Job crafting practices

Changing task boundaries
-Alter type of job tasks
-Alter number of job tasks

Changing cognitive task boundaries
-Alter view of work as discrete parts or whole

Changing relational boundaries
-Alter with whom one interacts at work
-Alter nature of interactions at work

Moderating variables

Perceived opportunity to job craft
-Job features

Individual orientation toward work
Motivational orientation

Motivations

Motivation for job crafting

Need for control over job and work meaning

Need for positive self-image

Need for human connection with others

some aspect of the work (Hamper, 1986; Roy, 1959).

People also desire to create and sustain a positive sense of self in their own eyes (Steele, 1988) and in the eyes of others (Baumeister, 1982; Erez & Earley, 1993). The drive for self-enhancement through construction of a positive self-image is a basic tenet of social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel, 1981, 1982) and is reflected in the drive to create positive images of self in work (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). When the jobs that people have make this positive construction of self difficult, they (and people in general) are motivated to remedy the situation. For example, Roger (1995) describes how temporary workers change the pace of the work, as well as their names, while working in temporary jobs to separate negative impressions of temp work from the positive image they have of themselves as people. Goffman's (1956) focus on deference and demeanor illustrates the range of actions people engage in to create a positive impression of themselves in the eyes of others. This pressure to create a positive image infiltrates many aspects of employees' work activities. Accordingly, one important motive for job crafters is to change the tasks and relationships that compose their jobs to enable a more positive sense of self to be expressed and confirmed by others.

The third motivation for job crafting concerns a need for human connection. Human beings are motivated to forge connections with others as a way to introduce meaning into their lives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Most theories of the meaning of work are individually based (Brief & Nord, 1990), but we extend this view by showing that employees build relationships with others at work to reframe the meaning of work and their work identities. For example, when hospital cleaners integrate themselves into patient care functions, they are able to see their work as being about healing people and to see themselves as a key part of this process, thus enhancing work meaning and creating a more positive work identity (e.g., worker as healer instead of cleaner). Through these kinds of changes, employees narrate a different sense of who they are at work (Gergen & Gergen, 1988) and why the work matters. By altering their jobs, they fulfill prescribed work tasks but craft the job into something fundamentally different at the same time.

The job crafting motivations we describe complement other perspectives on the role of need fulfillment in jobs. For example, employees with high growth-need strength (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) are likely to respond well to changes that expand their jobs. However, we suggest that those with high growth-need strength will craft boundaries for themselves, rather than respond positively to task boundaries that are expanded for them, in order to respond to their own motivation and opportunity to craft in the job. Thus, job crafting addresses a set of practices and dynamics quite different from theories of job design.

Not all employees are motivated to fulfill needs for control, positive image, and connection at work. Individuals who look to fulfill these needs at work likely will look for opportunities to craft their jobs in ways that allow them to meet their needs. Others may find that these needs are met elsewhere in their lives. Likewise, when employees work in jobs that fulfill their needs for control, positive image, and connection, they may not be motivated to job craft, since their needs are met by their current work situation (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990). Motivation to craft a job most often will result from situations in which employees feel that their needs are not being met in their job as it is currently designed.

Perceived Opportunities for Job Crafting

Motivation to craft a job is more likely to spark job crafting when employees perceive that opportunities for job crafting exist. Perceived opportunity to craft a job refers to the sense of freedom or discretion employees have in what they do in their job and how they do it. Like other opportunity perceptions, opportunities to job craft are psychologically positive, since they imply autonomy to act (i.e., a form of control), a sense of possible gain, and some sense of ability or means to act (Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, motivated employees are likely to assess opportunities for job crafting at work before crafting their jobs. Following this, perceived opportunity for job crafting moderates the relationship between motivation to job craft and job crafting behaviors; perceived opportunities for job crafting can restrict or open up possibilities for employees to

see what paths are available in how they enact their jobs.

Our model sets forth two major contributors to the perceived opportunity to craft a job, both of which are tied to the actual design of work: (1) the level and form of task interdependence and (2) the level of discretion or freedom to job craft implied by monitoring systems in the job.

In any organization, employee tasks are carried out with more or less task interdependence built into the work. Task interdependence refers to "the extent to which the items or elements upon which work is performed or the work processes themselves are interrelated so that changes in the state of one element affect the state of the others" (Scott, 1987: 214). Employees engaged in tasks with higher degrees of interdependence (e.g., approximating reciprocal as opposed to pooled interdependence; Thompson, 1967) are yoked more strongly to the timing and tasks of others, restricting the degree of possible task alterations, how the employees perform tasks, and with whom they interact along the way. Thus, those with more task interdependence work under more constraints and have less freedom to alter task and relational boundaries as a result. In effect, the more task interdependence an employee has, the fewer degrees of freedom he or she has to job craft. In contrast, an employee with job tasks that require little task interdependence with coworkers (e.g., hairdresser, cleaning staff member) has more latitude to alter the task and relational boundaries of the job. Thus, we expect that less interdependence with coworkers creates more freedom for crafting, enhancing the perceived opportunity to job craft.

Also, closeness of monitoring or supervision by management may affect whether employees perceive opportunities to job craft. In jobs in which managers closely control employee tasks and time (e.g., customer service agent, telemarketer), job crafting is likely to be both high in visibility and less welcomed. When employees work "out of the limelight" of management's gaze, they may perceive more opportunities to be creative in crafting their jobs (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). We argue that when employees' jobs are explicitly defined and controlled, employees may see less opportunity for crafting activities. This point offers a contrast with a job design perspective, in which it is assumed that autonomy in the work leads to enhanced meaning in the work and felt responsibility for the job. Instead, we assert that autonomy in the job leads to perceived opportunities for job crafting and encourages employees to alter the task and relational boundaries of their jobs.

This argument suggests that there are contradictory forces at play in the modern workplace that might affect crafting patterns. As technology enables organizations and supervision to be more controlling (e.g., by monitoring computer work, web usage, and e-mail traffic), these forces are likely to dampen perceived opportunities for job crafting. At the same time, however, organizations are embracing less limiting practices, in which casual dress, flexible work hours, and flexible workplaces may accentuate perceived opportunities to job craft. These boundary conditions are meant to be suggestive about conditions that might encourage motivated employees to job craft.

Work and Motivational Orientations and Job Crafting

Individuals' orientations toward their work are likely to affect the relationship between motivation to craft and job crafting behaviors. Research shows that most people have one of three distinct relations to their work, seeing it as a job, career, or calling (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). The distinctions, drawn starkly, are these: people with jobs focus on financial rewards for working, rather than pleasure or fulfillment; those with careers focus primarily on advancement; and those with callings focus on enjoyment of fulfilling, socially useful work. Research indicates that employees in a wide range of occupations—from clerical to professional—see their work primarily in one of these three ways and that jobs, careers, and callings are each represented within occupations as well (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

Work orientations are likely to interact with motivation to job craft in encouraging or discouraging job crafting. Work orientations allow people to see different kinds of possibilities for how to change their tasks and relationships at work. Employees are likely to revise their jobs in ways that fit their work orientation, enacting the same jobs very differently. For example, employees with job orientations working in a hu-

man services organization are likely to focus on tasks done for pay rather than on helping as many people as possible. Likewise, employees with career orientations are likely to craft their jobs so that they interact with and help those who are more powerful than them, and engage in high-visibility tasks that are good for the organization.

Employees' general motivational orientations may also affect job crafting (Amabile et al., 1994). Specifically, those with intrinsic (e.g., doing the work for its own sake) motivations for working may engage in more expansive job crafting, which will allow for the expression of self-determination (control) and competence in their work. In contrast, extrinsic (e.g., doing the work for a reason apart from the work itself) motivations for working may encourage job crafting that limits the task and relational boundaries of the job, since the work is done to meet some external end. Indeed, extrinsic motivation has been shown to produce rigid behavior and less creativity in approaching tasks (Amabile et al., 1994). While Amabile and colleagues suggest that people may choose occupations based on their motivational orientations, we suggest that, through job crafting, people will craft from within their jobs to meet their needs.

Thus, job and individual features both moderate the relationship between motivation to job craft and job crafting behaviors. When job and individual features create conditions that are favorable for job crafting, more job crafting should result among employees who are moti-vated to job craft. We argue that employees who perceive limited opportunities to job craft or who are not motivated to craft will engage in less job crafting than those who are motivated or see opportunities. Job crafting is a way that individuals express and use often-hidden degrees of freedom in their job to customize it to fit their own sense of what the job should be.

Forms of Job Crafting

In Table 1 we present three forms of job crafting. The first form involves changing the job's task boundaries. Employees achieve this by changing the number, scope, or type of job tasks done at work. By choosing to do fewer, more, or different tasks than prescribed in the formal job, employees create a different job.

The second form of job crafting entails changing the relational boundary of the job. This practice involves changing either the quality or amount of interaction with others at work, or both. Employees often can decide how frequently they wish to interact with others on the job and can also help determine the quality of those interactions. The examples we offer later in the article highlight cases in which employees change their level of involvement with others at work and alter the nature of these relationships in ways that change the job.

The third form of job crafting occurs when employees change the cognitive task boundaries of their jobs. Changing the cognitive boundaries can take many forms, but one likely involves employees' altering how they parse the

TABLE 1
Forms of Job Crafting

Form	Example	Effect on Meaning of Work
Changing number, scope, and type of job tasks	Design engineers engaging in relational tasks that move a project to completion	Work is completed in a more timely fashion; engineers change the meaning of their jobs to be guardians or movers of projects
Changing quality and/or amount of interaction with others encountered in job	Hospital cleaners actively caring for patients and families, integrating themselves into the workflow of their floor units	Cleaners change the meaning of their jobs to be helpers of the sick; see the work of the floor unit as an integrated whole of which they are a vital part
Changing cognitive task boundaries	Nurses taking responsibility for all information and "insignificant" tasks that may help them to care more appropriately for a patient	Nurses change the way they see the work to be more about patient advocacy, as well as high-quality technical care

job—viewing it either as a set of discrete work tasks or as an integrated whole. Changing the view of the job in this way fundamentally changes how employees approach the job. For example, nurses who see their work as being about advocacy and total patient care, rather than the delivery of high-quality technical care, change the way they view the job and, as a result, engage in different job activities (Benner, Tanner, & Chesla, 1996). Johansson (1996) describes a similar process, in which housing company employees shifted the way they framed the work when the company delegated "total responsibility" to its workers in caring for the building areas to which they were assigned.

Effects of Job Crafting on the Job Crafter

The effects of job crafting are outlined in Figure 1. Following directly from the conditions encouraging job crafting and the ways employees craft their jobs, the effects of job crafting are both specific and general; job crafting creates alterations in the meaning of the work, as well as revisions of work identity.

Job crafting changes the meaning of the work by changing job tasks or relationships in ways that allow employees to reframe the purpose of the job and experience the work differently (Tausky, 1995). Psychological meaningfulness of work results when people feel worthwhile and valuable at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Thus, any actions that employees take to alter their jobs in ways that increase feelings of purpose are likely change the meaning of the work.

Creating or adding meaning to the work by job crafting is similar to the process Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) describe regarding how those in stigmatized occupations (e.g., involving "dirty work") transform the meaning of the work by reframing the job. For example, public defenders claim they are "protecting the constitutional rights of all citizens to a fair trial" (1999: 421)—not helping criminals avoid condemnation. Similarly, Goffman (1974) describes regrounding, in which individuals perform an activity for reasons or motives that differ from other people's. This regrounding process helps employees to compose a different purpose for the work they are doing. In both cases, individuals reconstruct the job in ways that differ from its original structure, and they craft a different purpose for the work that is believable for self and others.

Job crafting also has the potential to shape one's work identity. Again, the reasons for shaping a work identity are basic. People attempt to create social communities that support desirable images of themselves (Schlenker, 1985). The people with whom one interacts on and off the job play a role in cocreating and sustaining the claims one makes about one's work identity. In Sampson's terms, others "endow us with meaning and clothe us with comprehensibility" (1993: 106). The basis of our argument is that people have some freedom in creating sustainable work identities by selectively influencing the relational partners with whom they interact (Gergen, 1994; Schlenker, 1985). These relational partners, in turn, through talk and action, help to cocreate employees' work identities by reflecting back, or not (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934), elements of this identity. Therefore, by shaping the form and amount of interaction with others at work, employees participate in the creation of their work identity with others and enable the creation of desirable identities that fulfill a need for positive self-assessment.

Job crafters seek out relationships with others on the job who serve as audiences for which they can sustain desirable identities. The creation of work identity is an active process, in which "people strive to create environments, in both their own minds and the real world, that support, validate and elicit desirable identity images. They thus selectively encounter, perceive and influence the situations and audiences with which they deal" (Schlenker, 1985: 89). As McCall and Simmons describe it, people create a self-confirming opportunity structure and then develop social environments that nurture their self-views (1966: 105).

The work meanings and identities employees forge by job crafting are not static. Employees are likely to use these meanings and identities as feedback about their crafting activities, and they may be motivated to engage in additional job crafting to further shape the work meaning and work identity. For example, an employee who alters the task boundary of the job to enhance control over the work might find that this practice changes the purpose of the work in unexpected ways, thus motivating the employee to craft the job in other ways. Thus, this employee may use the changed purpose of the work as feedback to guide more job crafting.

Job crafting is primarily an individual-level activity, in which the employee decides how and when to shape job tasks and interactions. We argue that this activity serves the employee, but it is not inherently good or bad for organizations; employees may change the job in ways that benefit or hurt the organization while benefiting themselves. For example, car assembly line employees who decide to make changes to their tasks might cause major problems in the flow and quality of work or, alternatively, might boost productivity and quality.

Our framework implies that all employees are potential job crafters. We realize this argument might mislead people into thinking that employees who are caught in jobs in which they find little meaning can choose to change their fate if they wish. We do not assume that all employees can and should engage in job crafting and, therefore, are to blame if their jobs are not meaningful. Rather, we choose to focus on the freedom employees have and the creativity they exhibit in crafting jobs to be different from their formally specified ingredients.

In addition, we do not address the point that job crafting may create more work for the employee, even though this work is voluntary. Job crafters are not necessarily recognized or rewarded for the effort they make to create more meaningful jobs; much of what they do may be invisible to managers, supervisors, and coworkers (Fletcher, 1998; Star & Strauss, 1999). Job crafters may engage in practices that benefit the organization, introducing innovation into tasks and the relationships that compose work. Yet, at the same time, by changing their jobs, job crafters' actions may put the organization at risk for legal or regulatory problems, or they may jeopardize the employees' capacities to perform the job well. However, as we argue, the rewards that employees can reap from job crafting are real and consequential.

Linking Job Crafting to Related Constructs

The idea that individuals can craft new jobs within the constraints of prescribed jobs is not entirely new. Building on Katz and Kahn's (1966) ideas of role innovation, Staw and colleagues argue that individuals engage in task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990) and sculpting activities (Bell & Staw, 1989) that make a difference for the organization and the individual doing the job.

For example, Rafaeli (1989) found that cashiers change features of their job by defining their level and type of customer service and control over customer interactions. The cashiers in her study engaged in different practices to maintain control over service interactions with customers, such as ignoring, rejecting, reacting to, or engaging the customers in the transaction. Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1992) note that job holders create emergent task elements in their roles in organizations and are most able to do this when the job has few formal requirements and allows employees to choose the work tasks to be undertaken.

Despite these useful developments, the idea that employees actively design their jobs has not been studied in proportion to its importance to organizational studies. In some perspectives researchers do address similar phenomena to job crafting, but they often implicitly or explicitly (e.g., Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992) assume that only those employees with a great deal of job autonomy or complexity can engage in such behaviors. Other perspectives on work share some features with job crafting but differ in their fundamental focus. In particular, job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and social information processing (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) perspectives on work stand in contrast to job crafting but offer foundations on which crafting can be offered as a useful complement.

The job design literature has historically been a central frame for understanding how individuals experience their jobs. Hackman and Oldham (1976, 1980) and, earlier, Hackman and Lawler (1971) outlined a theoretical framework regarding how individuals judge their jobs to be motivating and satisfying by focusing on objective task characteristics. According to this theory, job motivation is tied to objective features of the job, including skill variety, task identity and significance, autonomy, and feedback. Although support of the job characteristics model has been mixed (Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986; Hogan & Martell, 1987), it remains a dominant frame for understanding how employees experience their jobs.

The job design perspective puts managers in the role of job crafters: the managers design tasks and act as job crafters, altering the motivation and satisfaction of employees by changing task features. In recent research scholars have strengthened theory on job design by inte-

grating it with insights from the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to acknowledge that tasks are not purely objective but are socially constructed by the employee doing the work. In this integrated model, features of the objective and subjective work environments affect job attitudes (Griffin, 1987, 1991; Griffin, Bateman, Wayne, & Head, 1987). Individuals play a role in filtering and reacting to job information, but in this literature researchers tend to portray them as passive participants in the process: "lumps of clay, ready to be shaped by all those around them" (Bell & Staw, 1989: 232).

The job design perspective decouples interpretation of the job from the objective characteristics of the job itself, but there is still an assumption that the interpretation is based on the job as it was designed—not as the employee crafted it. Job crafting casts the employee in a more active light; those in the work environment (e.g., clients, coworkers) can help forge new work relationships that alter the boundaries of the job. More basically, job design assumes that employee responses derive from the motivating potential of the job; job crafting assumes that employees create this motivating potential by shaping elements that traditionally compose the design of the job (e.g., skill, significance, feedback).

Our theory of job crafting builds on this social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) by identifying different predictors of how people enact their jobs. According to the social information processing model, social information and cues from others act as inputs to the meaning of the work. However, this model does not account for the features in the context of the job (e.g., individual, task, and organizational features) that shape how the work gets done. Our job crafting perspective builds on Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) perspective in two ways. First, it complements the social information processing model by indicating that rather than simply interpreting and acting from the cues offered by the job and by others, individuals are instead interpreting and using as feedback the crafting actions they have taken in their own jobs. Second, our model explicitly addresses the identity changes that accompany job crafting and the meaning that employees derive from the work by doing their work differently. This is consistent with Salancik and Pfef-

fer's statement that "the critical variable in positive job attitudes is the construction of the environment and the appropriate attitudinal responses" (1978: 249). Advocates of other perspectives on how individuals change job tasks or other job elements offer additional contrasts to job crafting. In particular, they predict how and when individuals are likely to alter their jobs.

Below, we describe five different conceptual lenses on how jobs change, and we discuss how job crafting differs from each.

Role and Individual Innovation

Schein used role innovation to describe behavior that represented a "basic rejection of the norms which govern the practice of the profession combined with a concern for the role of the professional in society" (Schein, 1971: 522). Schein described role innovation behaviors that redefined who the professional's clients were, who initiated contact, what settings were appropriate for contact with clients, and what the appropriate boundaries were of the professional's expertise. Later, Van Maanen and Schein defined role innovation as "behaviors done to redefine the major premises concerning missions followed by the majority of the role occupants" (1979: 229). Nicholson (1984), following Schein (1971), defined role innovation as the initiating of "changes in task objectives, methods, materials, scheduling and in the interpersonal relationships integral to task performance." (1984: 175). These changes are intended to match the role requirements to the needs, abilities, and identity of the employee.

Job crafting theory resembles role innovation theory in that there is an assumption that employees can act upon the job to create a better fit. However, as a lens on employee behavior, role innovation theory restricts individuals' actions on the job to reactive, problem-solving behaviors and fails to develop the individual focus we describe here. Rather than an emphasis on problem solving, in job crafting theory there is an emphasis on the proactive changes employees make in the boundaries of their work to alter their identity or the meaning of the work.

The job crafting model is also less formal than the model of role making proposed by Graen and Scandura (1987). In their model there is a proposed sequence of activities, from first sharing standard job elements and then adding

task-emergent elements to the job and to the employee's role until, finally, some emergent task elements become part of the formal role description. Our model of job crafting is more fluid than the role-making model, and we see the process as having a more improvisational than planful quality.

A related research area involves individual innovation and creativity in organizations. Historically, in such research scholars have focused on individual problem solving in organizations (Kanter, 1983; West & Farr, 1990). Much of the writing is intended for managers, with prescriptions for how to develop and select for innovation among employees. West and Farr offer a definition of innovation as "the intentional introduction and application within a role, group, or organization of ideas, processes, products, or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society" (1990: 9). Although this definition is broad, the authors use it in a different way from that of job crafting. In Table 2 we describe the differences between job crafting and the perspectives on job change offered here.

Personal Initiative

Personal initiative also resembles job crafting (Frese, Kring, Soose, & Zempel, 1996; Frese, Fay, Hillburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997). Frese and colleagues (1996) define personal initiative as a behavioral syndrome in which individuals take self-starting approaches to work and go beyond formal job requirements. Individuals taking personal initiative engage in behaviors that (1) are consistent with the organization's mission, (2) have a long-term focus, (3) are goal directed and action oriented, (4) are persistent in the face of barriers, and (5) are self-starting and proactive. These researchers (Frese et al., 1996, 1997) have developed this concept through a comparison of East and West Germans' personal initiative.

Like job crafters, those with personal initiative redefine jobs to include extrarole work goals (cf. Staw & Boettger, 1990). However, Frese and colleagues emphasize problem-solving dimensions of personal initiative. Similarly, Morrison and Phelps (1999) describe "taking charge" behaviors, which also improve how work is executed in the organization. Although such an ori-

TABLE 2
Comparison of Job Crafting with Similar Organizational Perspectives on Work

Perspective	Locus of Activity	Purpose of Activity	Social Nature of Activity	Favorable Conditions for Activity
Role/individual innovation (Schein, 1971; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979)	Employee, with management intervention	Addressing or improving upon a faulty task or role	Inherently social activity	Support of others, feedback, autonomy, complex work
Role making (Graen & Scandura, 1987)	Employee, with others in the organization	Task accomplishment	Inherently social activity	High-quality dyadic structures in the organization
Personal initiative (Frese, et al., 1996, 1997)	Employee, with management intervention	Solving problems or overcoming barriers	Individual	Autonomy, complex work
OCB (Organ, 1988, 1997)	Employee	Discretionary behaviors to help others or organization	Can involve others or be pursued by others	Job satisfaction, organizational commitment
Task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990)	Employee, with management intervention	Correcting problems in roles or procedures	Individual	Authority, task alternatives are salient
Job crafters	Employee	Increasing meaning in the work, changing identity and role in organization	Can involve others or be pursued by individual	Can occur in any type of job

entation is useful in increasing organizational effectiveness (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Katz, 1964; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Organ, 1988), the focus on problem solving differentiates the personal initiative perspective from that of job crafting.

Organizational Citizenship

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) provides yet a different lens for understanding employees' behaviors. Organ (1988) first defined OCB as individual discretionary behavior that is not explicitly recognized by the organizational reward system but, in the aggregate, increases the effectiveness of the organization (Organ, 1988: 4). Later, Organ (1997) redefined OCB along the lines of a similar construct, called "contextual performance" (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), which consists of behaviors that support the broader organizational, social, and psychological environment of the organization. OCB includes generating new ideas for doing work, helping others with their work, being cheerful and neat, accepting orders without resentment, cooperating with others at work, and doing high-quality work (Bateman & Organ, 1983).

OCB is mostly targeted at helping others in the organization or the organization itself, whereas job crafting is focused on changing the task and relational landscape to alter work meaning and identity. While some crafting behaviors might be described as OCB (e.g., doing extra work to move projects along, forming relationships with clients), the intent behind such behavior is not fully to promote the good of others and the organization. Rather, job crafting can be motivated by a desire to create more meaningful work for the job holder, independent of effects on others. As such, it is not simply about doing more or doing better, which is the focus of OCB.

Task Revision

Task revision is the practice of employees' taking action to correct a faulty procedure, inaccurate job description, or dysfunctional role expectation (Staw & Boettger, 1990: 537). Staw and Boettger (1990) have shown that people engage in more task revision when they are in charge of and accountable for the function they perform

and when alternatives for doing the task are salient. Again, the focus in task revision is on problem solving or correction of work procedures. These researchers argue that when organizational roles are misspecified (from the employee's perspective), then task revision can be a valuable outcome. We contend that making changes in work tasks is beneficial not only when problems exist but also when task functions are entirely appropriate and functional, since they can enhance the meaning of the work. Staw and Boettger also argue that task revision should have a low base rate in organizations, since it "involves resistance to social norms and expectations" (1990: 538). We expect job crafting to appear often, in many different kinds of work. The organizational studies literature reveals several examples of job crafting that illustrate and animate the model of job crafting we have described.

In the next section we describe six examples of job crafting in action. The examples come from narrative or qualitative descriptions of work. We have culled from these sources evidence that job crafting is a part of the work being studied by organizational scholars, and we illustrate the antecedents and consequences of this important individual activity.

EXAMPLES OF JOB CRAFTERS

The examples of job crafting we offer range from the subtle to the more obvious actions of employees. We start with a study of hospital cleaners who craft the work very differently. Our other examples come from published research in organizational studies.

Hospital Cleaners Integrating Themselves into Care Delivery System

One study of a hospital cleaning staff shows that cleaners experienced and constructed the meaning of their work very differently (Dutton, Debebe, & Wrzesniewski, 2000). It became evident, through a series of personal interviews with twenty-eight members of a hospital cleaning staff about the nature of their work, that while the cleaners had the same prescribed job at the same hospital, they crafted it differently. The contrasts among the cleaners were striking, ranging from how they described the skill level of the work to the kinds of tasks they would do.

The data separated the cleaners into two groups. One group created a task and relational boundary in the job that included only a minimum of necessary tasks and interaction with as few others as possible. Members of this group disliked cleaning in general, judged the skill level of the work to be low, and were less willing to step outside formal job boundaries to engage with others and alter job tasks. In contrast, the second group of cleaners altered the task and relational boundaries of the job to include additional work tasks, as well as frequent interactions with patients, visitors, and others in their unit. Members of this group liked the job, enjoyed cleaning, felt the work was highly skilled, and engaged in many tasks that helped patients and visitors and made others' jobs in the unit (e.g., nurses, clerks) go more smoothly.

Table 1 describes the three dominant forms of job crafting that emerged from our examples. The cleaners engaged in the first form of job crafting by doing (or not) tasks that were outside the formal job. For example, cleaners in the proactive group added tasks or timed their work to be maximally efficient with regard to the workflow on their unit. By changing their work tasks, or by timing their regular tasks with care, cleaners altered the meaning of their work. Cleaners in the more proactive group saw the work and themselves as critical in healing patients, altering the meaning of the work and their own work identity. In contrast, cleaners in the less active group restricted the meaning of the work to being simply about cleaning and did not see themselves as anything other than room cleaners. Such differences in how employees define their jobs echo Morrison's (1994) account that employees vary in what activities they consider part of the job.

The cleaners also changed the relational boundary of the job by altering their interactions with others at work. While the passive cleaners did not seek additional interaction, the proactive group engaged patients and visitors in ways that fundamentally altered the job. Many of the relational interactions that cleaners engaged in were intended to brighten someone's day (e.g., talking to patients, showing visitors around). The proactive group of cleaners also interacted more often with the nurses on their units, resulting in a work unit that functioned more smoothly.

Cleaners manifested a third form of job crafting by changing the cognitive task boundary of the job so that they saw their job as an integrated whole, rather than as a set of discrete tasks (e.g., cleaning rooms). For example, proactive cleaners reported an increased number and complexity of interactions with others at work. They saw the larger picture of the unit workflow and adjusted their timing and tasks in response to this more interdependent view. These cleaners' own work descriptions revealed an awareness of the broader unit context in which they worked, which was reflected in their relationships with others and in the kinds of tasks they chose to do.

Hairdressers Cutting Hair and Crafting a More Enjoyable Job

Cohen and Sutton's (1998) ethnographic study of hairdressers also brings to life the prominence and pattern of job crafting. Their findings reveal hairdressers as able job crafters who change both the task and relational boundaries of the job by making personal disclosures about themselves, asking clients personal questions, punishing clients who refuse to disclose, and sometimes "firing" clients to create more desirable and affectively pleasant interactions. Hairdressers in this study changed the job tasks to include not only physically cutting hair but also getting to know clients—a practice that changed the relational boundary of the job by bringing hairdresser and client closer together.

Just as a subset of cleaners altered the physical and relational boundaries of their job, hairdressers created new jobs for themselves within the context of their prescribed role as hairdressers, in which norms *against* personal disclosure are sometimes enforced by management (Cohen & Sutton, 1998). Again, job features may have encouraged job crafting: hairdressers' tasks are low in interdependence, and there are very low levels of employee behavior monitoring. According to our model, these should have promoted job crafting as well.

Engineers Creating Jobs to Enable the Success of Projects and Others

Fletcher's (1998) research on the work of female design engineers provides another compelling example. Fletcher describes four differ-

ent kinds of engineering work (what she calls "relational practices") that changed the way engineers saw their work and their work identity. The first kind of work was *preserving,* which included taking on extra work in order to get a task done, connecting people on the project to the people and resources needed to do their work, and rescuing the project by calling attention to problems that needed to be addressed. *Mutual empowering* entailed behaviors that enabled others' achievements and contributions to the project (Fletcher, 1998: 170). These behaviors often involved teaching others a new skill in an empathetic manner or connecting others on the project to protect them from their own lack of relational skill. The third form of relational practice, *achieving,* involved reconnecting coworkers to avoid breaks in relationships, reflecting on the emotional nature of work situations and calibrating responses appropriately, and relational asking (i.e., asking for help in ways respectful of others and their tasks). Finally, the engineers engaged in *creating team,* or providing the conditions that allowed a team to do its work. They enabled collaboration by smoothing relationships and including everyone in the team effort.

Fletcher's taxonomy of relational practices illustrates how design engineers altered the task and relational boundaries of their jobs. By changing job tasks and how they were executed, engineers created new task boundaries to move projects toward completion. In addition, they changed relational boundaries by working toward a positive atmosphere for teamwork and by connecting people on the project to get work done, both of which involved changing the quality and amount of interaction with others. Finally, the engineers engaged in the third form of job crafting by shifting their focus from discrete project tasks to the whole project.

By constructing themselves as preservers, empowerment givers, achievers, and team creators, engineers changed the meaning of the job, from engineering to enabling an organization's work to go more smoothly. Creating such work conditions allowed the engineers to exert control and build relationships with others. At the same time, they altered their work identities to include expanded roles. This construction of the work and its significance to the organization enhanced its meaning to the self, creating different identities.

Nurses Creating a Pocket of Care Around Patients

A fourth example of job crafting in the workplace comes from two complementary studies of the nursing profession (Benner et al., 1996; Jacques, 1993). Benner and her colleagues interviewed and observed nurses from a variety of units, whereas Jacques observed nurses from a single unit to quantify acts of caring in their work. Both studies convey the skilled caring work that occurs in the practice of nursing and the role of this work in the organization's mission. The nurses acted as job crafters by actively managing the task boundary of the job to deliver the best possible patient care. By paying attention to the patient's world and conveying seemingly unimportant information to others on the care team, nurses re-created their job to be about patient advocacy, rather than the sole delivery of high-quality technical care.

Nurses changed the relational boundary of the job by expanding their relationship set to include patients' family members, on whom the nurses relied for information and input. Benner and her colleagues (1996; see also Jacques, 1993) describe examples of nurses engaging patients' families and involving them in the illness process to achieve the best patient outcome. Skilled nurses recognized that nonquantifiable and nonmedical observations were critical inputs in treating patients (Benner et al., 1996). Learning to seek out, notice, and convey this information to other care providers represented job crafting that helped the patients and the organization.

Information Technicians Supporting the Computer Workplace

Star and Strauss (1999) provide a fifth example of job crafting in their analysis of technicians' work in computer-supported cooperative work environments. They document the often unrecognized work of technicians, including articulation work, in which employees work to "get things back 'on track' in the face of the unexpected, and modify action to accommodate unanticipated contingencies" (Star & Strauss, 1999: 3). Articulation work allows for smooth workplace operation, but it is rarely acknowledged. Much like the relational work of Fletcher's engineers (1998), articulation work enables others to get their work done.

However, according to Star and Strauss (1999), what is considered "real work" depends on the definition of the situation and who is permitted to define it. Often, practices that appear as "non-work" serve the organization in important ways. Those in information technology work craft their jobs by altering the task and relational boundaries of the work to achieve the organization's mission. For example, what might seem like chatting between organization members may be "work" to smooth communication between managers of different work units.

Restaurant Kitchen Employees Creating Cuisine

The final example of job crafting comes from Fine's ethnographic study of work in restaurant kitchens (1996a,b). Fine describes how professional cooks engaged in structuring multiple tasks under time pressure in ways that reflected job crafting. By taking shortcuts and using tricks of the trade to compose a meal, professional cooks and kitchen staff altered the task boundary of their jobs by changing (1) the number of tasks and (2) the way they saw their tasks, from being a set of discrete food preparation steps to an integrated whole of dish creation that reflected the artistic character of their work. Fine uses the term *aesthetics* to describe activity in which the "sensory component of production ... captures the cognitive and affective components of aesthetic judgments and ... the intentional quality of human action" (1996b: 178). Like the other job crafters we have described, the cooks changed their identity through their execution of the work—in this case, from food preparers to culinary artists.

In creating dishes, cooks used their creative impulses to craft meals in ways that connected them to the work. Rather than simply prepare food that served customers' needs, the cooks tried to make the food as "nice" as possible, thus changing the task boundary of the work. Instead of thinking about the preparation of meal elements as separate tasks, the cooks engaged in the third form of job crafting by seeing their work as being about the gestalt of the entire meal. The cooks used their own artistic standards in trying to create a product worthy of pride. As such, the cooks Fine studied experienced "flow" as they executed their work tasks (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), paying attention to

their own artistic vision rather than management policy regarding cooking. In fact, the cooks worked as creatively as possible within strict managerial cost constraints. Cooks often tried new food combinations, creating novel dishes in order to meet job demands (i.e., preparing customers' meals) in ways that allowed them to experience the work as meaningful and creative, rather than scripted and uninspired.

In all of the examples, employees actively crafted the job, sometimes against management's wishes. Rather than have managers intervene to enable or encourage these employees to act as job crafters, the employees took initiative on their own. Each example suggests that employees actively shape both the design and the social environment of their jobs by changing job tasks and job-related interactions and relationships.

DISCUSSION

Our model and examples of job crafting offer three contributions to how organizational scholars think about and study job design, work meanings, and work identity. These contributions address how individuals, jobs, and individuals-in-jobs are conceptualized and studied. More generally, job crafting offers an alternative lens for understanding basic dynamics of work in organizations such that organizational elements that once seemed fixed (i.e., jobs) are made more complicated and dynamic.

Job Design

With our model of job crafting, we contribute to theories of job design by offering a new perspective on how jobs are constituted. We have specified the motivations, job, and individual features that create situations making job crafting possible. The process we propose opens up different pathways for understanding how people change their jobs and effectively shows that employees can be competent designers of their work. This suggests that employees are more agentic than typically depicted in theories of job design. Rather than paint employees as passive recipients of job tasks or of social information about job tasks, our job crafting model indicates that employees alter their jobs and use the feedback from these alterations to further motivate job crafting.

The job crafting perspective complements the job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and social information processing perspectives (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) by offering an alternative view on the direction of the relationship among work, motivation, and meaning. In effect, advocates of job design perspectives treat attitudinal and motivational responses as reactions to a job. The job crafting perspective flips this relationship around with the assertion that responses to a job actually *begin* the dynamic process in which employees alter task and relational boundaries in ways that change work meaning and identity. Thus, job crafting offers an alternative to job design perspectives, in which the employee is effectively placed in the position traditionally held by managers and is viewed as a competent and active architect of the job. Also, job crafting offers an alternative to the other perspectives reviewed here on how jobs change. In these perspectives managers are called upon to design more complex work, to permit greater autonomy, and to give feedback about the changes that employees make to their jobs. In contrast to such managerial-focused views of work, we argue that employees take on the role of job crafters even in work that might be considered low in autonomy (cleaning), authority (nursing), or complexity (cutting hair).

Meaning of Work

Our job crafting model contributes to the literature on the meaning of work by indicating how employees shape work meanings. Work meanings shape work motivation and performance (Roberson, 1990: 107) on the job; thus, a model of the processes by which employees imbue their work with meaning contributes to what we know about the meaning of work. Historically, the meaning of work has been argued to be the product of one of three forces. First, the work environment (design of job and reward structure) is thought to affect how individuals derive meaning from the work. A second influence is the individual; the psychological attributes and characteristics of the individual employee are thought to affect the kinds of meanings assigned to the work (Roberson, 1990). Indeed, debates have arisen over the relative strength of these two determinants of work meaning. Third, advocates of the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) have

argued that the social environment (e.g., managers, coworkers) at work helps employees interpret which job and work setting attributes are most important. All three perspectives are helpful for understanding the sources of work meaning, but they do not address the dynamic interplay between employee and job that we present here.

The evolving relationship between the employee and the job captured in the job crafting model suggests a dynamic view of individuals-in-jobs and of work meanings more generally. We have argued that individuals play an active role in creating the meaning of their work, through the small changes they make in task, relational, and cognitive boundaries of the work, and we have shown the different contexts that enable or disable these kinds of job improvisations.

More broadly, however, we hope to suggest a more holistic view of how individuals compose their lives and the meaning of their lives by changing their jobs and themselves within them. Through proactively crafting their jobs, people may create different trajectories through an organization and enact their work lives differently over time. Although job crafting behaviors are locally situated at any given point in time, they are connected to employees' enduring needs at work and their more general framing of the domain of work.

Individuals and Work Identity

As agentic architects of their own jobs, job crafters enable transformations of work identity. Although some elements of job crafting might seem like extrarole behaviors, they are rooted much more deeply in identity-altering processes that redefine both the employee and the job. A model of job crafting helps identity theorists to untangle the process through which identity-based motivations (i.e., desire for a positive image) change how people enact and craft their jobs. Thus, the shaping of a work identity through job crafting becomes an employee's behavioral accomplishment, undertaken over time with others encountered on the job.

Our model of job crafting paints employees as proactive and creative identity builders who take opportunities they see in their work setting to engage others in ways that change work identity and work meaning. This process unfolds

over time and likely is engaged in iteratively, as motivation and opportunity to job craft shift. We have named some of the ways that job crafters use their job tasks and relationships to change identity and meaning in the work; there are likely many more. Job crafters also may alter their work identities by altering how they use the physical space at work, the temporal dimensions of their work, and many other features of work.

Finally, in our model of job crafting, we assert that part of the identity-shaping process at work is relational. By changing with whom they relate, job crafters highlight the relational nature of work in organizations. This point reminds us, as organizational scholars, that work is more than job content and tasks; it also concerns relationships with other people (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994; Gersick, Bartunek, & Dutton, 2000). These relationships and the interactions composing them help to create and sustain not only different notions of what the work is but also who the person is who is doing the work.

Practical Implications of Job Crafting

Job crafting is neither inherently good nor bad for organizations. The degree to which job crafting behaviors contribute to organizational performance depends on the kinds of changes employees make and on job crafting's proximal effects on employee motivation and performance. We have suggested that job crafting is one route by which individuals alter the meaning of work and forge new identities. If these meanings and identity constructions motivated behaviors that aligned individual work patterns with organizational objectives, then job crafting could be a net positive for the organization. However, if job crafting altered connections to others or task boundaries in ways that were at odds with organizational objectives, job crafting could harm rather than enhance organizational effectiveness. Crafting's effects on organizations are also dependent on the systems in which individuals work; what others do to craft their own job interacts with any one individual's crafting behaviors to influence organizational outcomes.

There are important managerial implications of job crafting. These implications are both empowering and disempowering for managers wishing to affect job crafting. Job crafting is a process that can be affected only indirectly by managerial action. If we think about managers as architects of the contexts in which individual action is enabled, or not (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1994), managers can affect the context in which individuals do job crafting, although they may not be able to affect when and to what extent job crafting occurs. Managers have direct control over the incentives and material rewards that are associated with job outcomes. These rewards and incentives may encourage or discourage individuals to alter the relational and task boundaries of the job. At the same time, managers may affect how work is organized in ways that enhance or undermine employees' desire and capacity for job crafting. Thus, managers may affect the odds that job crafting will take place through both reward systems and the organization of work.

Managers also affect job crafting by indirect means. For example, organizations can include or exclude people from strategic conversations about what they are trying to accomplish and why (Westley, 1990). "The development and cascading of a strategy are critical management tasks" (Mohrman, 1993: 135), and they shape the extent and type of job crafting likely to take place. When employees know and buy into the strategic goals of an organization, they can use this knowledge to motivate and legitimate their own job crafting behaviors. We saw this kind of effect for hospital cleaners, who used the strategic goals of the hospital to motivate the framing of cleaning as care for customers. This type of work framing helped to legitimate a different form of relating to patients and visitors and encouraged the addition of caring tasks to the work.

Beyond thinking about how to affect patterns of job crafting, the crafting perspective opens up new ways of thinking about the competence involved in how employees conduct their work. Crafting takes effort. It often involves a series of creative acts in which employees push, shrink, or transform task and relational boundaries. Socialization programs and employee training would benefit from a recognition that this kind of activity occurs. In organizations in which crafting behavior is a means for "growing a job" or developing an employee, active acknowledgment and encouragement of job crafting are likely to yield tangible and intangible benefits.

Future Research Directions

The job crafting perspective affords many new research opportunities. First, it provides a range of individual, task, and organizational features that are likely to affect job crafting. In future research, how these variables directly and indirectly encourage or discourage important job modifications could be addressed. Similarly, the effects of job crafting on individual- and organizational-level outcomes could be addressed. We have suggested that job crafting is not fully positive or negative. An important future research agenda includes empirically testing under what conditions job crafting produces positive results or destructive outcomes. Candidates for situational and individual moderators have been hinted at throughout the paper, including elements of the job and work and motivational orientations.

A closer look at the lives of individual employees might also help explain job crafting. In our model we primarily consider the work context as shaping job crafting. Such a view violates a more holistic account of human behavior, in which individuals in their work and nonwork contexts would be considered. In future research scholars could consider the ways that motivations at work are related to demands and opportunities in employees' nonwork lives and how the meaning of work created through job crafting is related (or not) to the meanings and motivations that employees take from their nonwork activities.

The antecedents to job crafting motivation should be further delineated in future research. Features of individuals, jobs, and organizational contexts create motivation for crafting behaviors. Broadly speaking, any factor in individuals' personal or organizational lives that makes job crafting a vessel for need fulfillment is a potential antecedent for the motivation to job craft. We offer a few, realizing that the full set is much richer. First, individuals whose lives outside the job are not well positioned to fulfill needs for control, connection with others, or positive identity might be more motivated to meet these needs in the domain of work. Second, features of the job or occupation are likely to affect the motivation for job crafting. For individuals who work in stigmatized occupations, the pressures to assert a positive identity are greater (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Thus, job crafting that is in-tended to restore or create positive identity in one's work is more likely among those in stigmatized or "dirty work" jobs, and it could be an effective local solution to an occupational problem. Third, those who work at levels of the organization in which freedom and creativity to craft are constrained might find that they are more motivated to work against these constraints by using job crafting as a vehicle for control and self-expression.

In future research scholars should expand upon the set of individual factors affecting job crafting. For example, employees who view work as simply the source of a paycheck might reduce the amount and complexity of the tasks to be performed in the job (Henson, 1996), whereas those who view work as an enjoyable end in itself might see the job as an integrated whole, shaping work tasks and relationships accordingly. Individual economic needs also may shape crafting to signal ability and effort on behalf of the organization that are likely to be rewarded (Brief & Aldag, 1989; Brief, Konovsky, Goodwin, & Link, 1995). Finally, those who view work as a calling are more engaged with their work, spend more time working, and view the job as more central to their lives (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). As a result, these employees may actively craft their jobs because of a higher investment in the work itself.

In future research scholars could also focus on the process of job crafting and how it unfolds over time. Our model of job crafting provides snapshots of features that are conducive to the occurrence of this behavior. However, we ignore how the process unfolds over time. Future research would benefit from a more nuanced and processual account of how job crafting is initiated; how it is sustained and transformed in the work process; and how it resembles (or not) learning, improvising, and creative processes over time.

Job crafting is indeed dynamic. This raises methodological challenges for how to best study the practices, forms, and outcomes of job crafting in organizations. We believe it is no coincidence that the examples of crafting we discovered in the organizational literature arose from detailed qualitative studies of work. It is possible that studying narratives of work may be a better way to study job crafting, for crafting takes many forms and directions, involving how people see their work and themselves in their

work. Such matters are not often easily reduced to simple survey items. Thus, methodological care ought to be taken when one attempts to discover the nature of job crafting in employees' work lives.

Finally, we have construed job crafting as an individual-level activity. Valuable future research could be focused on exploring collective and negotiated forms of job crafting that are team based rather than individually based. Where task boundaries are drawn around teams or collections of individuals, there may be more opportunities to revise, alter, and craft relational and task boundaries as part of collective improvisation on how work gets done. In future research scholars could address the joint collaborative "working out" of job boundaries that is done in the context of work organized around groups rather than individuals.

CONCLUSIONS

Work in the twenty-first century increasingly will be changed by the necessity for more employees to actively craft their own work lives, as opposed to having them created by others (Bridges, 1994). Thus, we have much to learn from those who craft their own jobs. We believe that those who have worked in occupations offering little autonomy, complexity, and authority have always had to "take it or make it" in terms of the jobs they create for themselves (Juravich, 1985). We can glean important lessons from the examples offered here about how job crafters draw and redraw the task and relational boundaries of a job to make it a more positive and meaningful experience.

At the same time, we realize the limits of this agentic view of job crafting. Structural constraints do constrain job crafting possibilities. Economic constraints give individuals differential resources to derive job meaning (Brief & Nord, 1990). Differential occupational status, prestige, standards, and requirements bestow or deny individuals with varying resources the opportunity to evaluate, interpret, and act within job categories (Pavalko, 1988). Finally, organizational values, beliefs, and norms, as well as research on the division of labor within the organization, can affect employees' ability to construct a job differently. However, despite these constraints, we believe individuals do make use of limited job resources in creative and master-

ful ways. We have much to learn from them about how to create a meaningful job from materials that, many would argue, are limited in both value and amount.

In addition to revising passive perspectives of employees, the job crafting perspective follows the common call to "write the worker back in" as an active participant in shaping both the job and its meaning. By stressing the prominence of crafting practices and their effects for work meaning and identity, our perspective is consistent with theories of work meanings that are based on the individual (Alderfer, 1972; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). However, we add an important element by highlighting how the relationship among the employee, others, and the job itself ultimately shapes the meaning of the work by detailing the process by which an employee alters tasks and relationships to change the meaning of the work.

Our perspective reframes the debate over dispositional versus situational influences on work meaning. Instead of asking what determines job attitudes and work meaning, we are trying to change the question to ask how individuals shape their own work meanings through job crafting. Our view offers a reason for Spector and Jex's (1991) failure to find a strong link between job incumbents' descriptions of their job characteristics and those offered by the U.S. Dictionary of Occupational Titles. If employees crafted their jobs by changing task characteristics, we would expect weak relationships between the prescribed job and the job the employee created.

Why is it necessary to call attention to job crafting? Certainly, our perspective may be interpreted as little more than a timely correction to more passive models of how employees behave at work. However, we feel that in the current work environment, the nature of work is changing along with contemporary organizations (Rousseau, 1997). Employees are increasingly being treated as "free agents" (Bridges, 1994), left to shape their own work experiences and career trajectories. Thus, in addition to its contribution to our understanding of common notions of work, the job crafting perspective should play a critical role in understanding changes in the nature of work. As Rousseau (1997) points out, a shift has occurred in organizations such that the process of organizing is the

new focus to which we should direct our research efforts. This new model of organizations leaves open opportunities for improvisation and control over work by the individual employee. As organizations change their forms and functions more quickly, employees need to fundamentally realign how they understand the firm (Lau & Woodman, 1995). Thus, employees' ability to craft their own jobs (and, thus, their understanding of their role in the organization) may be a strategic advantage in larger-scale organizational change.

Also, we are entering an age of renewed entrepreneuralism, in which millions of employees have left their organization to go it alone. In such an environment, understanding job crafting is even more important. By uncovering hidden crafting skills that employees have and often use, we can explore the possibilities that emerge when we understand employees as able to change the form of their jobs to create work meaning and viable work identities. In addition, employees may be leaving organizations to form their own entrepreneurial ventures out of growing dissatisfaction with the opportunities they detect for crafting their own jobs within the organization. It is possible that employees have been frustrated in their attempts to make their jobs their own. By frustrating the job crafting efforts of employees, organizations may carry some of the responsibility for recent increases in entrepreneuralism in the United States.

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