

Acknowledgement

After months of working on my master thesis, the writing process has finally come to an end. It feels strange that I will no longer be able to call myself a student, as this identity has been a big part of my life over the past few years. I am both happy and sad that it is over. While the process of studying and writing has been long, and at times demanding, I know that I have matured, both personally and academically. I am now ready for whatever the future will bring.

There are many people I wish to thank. I want to start by thanking my supervisor Martin Rasmussen. Thank you for believing in me and my project. Thank you for being supportive and encouraging whenever I needed it the most. Your guidance and constructive feedback has been invaluable to me and inspired me to keep striving to achieve my academic goals.

Martin Schanche, thank you so much for taking time to proofread my thesis! Your linguistic corrections and suggestions greatly improved the ‘sound’ of the text, making it run smooth and easy to read. Your feedback, being an academic outsider, was priceless as it reminded me to keep the text understandable and clear for the reader. I also want to thank my best friends Heidi, Kama, and Malene for all support and encouragement over the past two years. Being in a new city is never easy, but with your frequent phone calls and messages I have never felt alone. Nora and Ingeborg, thank you for making our apartment a place I always looked forward to come home to.

Lastly, I want to thank my family, especially my mom, Evelina. These past two years has been a journey of self-discovery and growth, which has been both exiting and scary. Without your support, advice, and encouragement I would never had dared explore the world. I also want to thank my dad, Jan, my brothers Nojus and Lukas, and my aunt Karolina. Thank you all for believing in me, being proud of me, and loving me. I feel blessed to have you all in my life. Without your encouragement, laughs, support, hugs, drawings, and video-calls my master thesis writing would have been a lonely process indeed!

Abstract

Due to increased globalization, competition, the introduction of new technologies, and an increasingly aging workforce, among other things, organizational change has become a major topic of interest. However, change processes pose great risks to the organizations as they are often the cause of high stress levels in those involved, which may ultimately lead to negative organizational outcomes. Prevention of such outcomes is therefore much desired. Job crafting, a relatively new theoretical approach in job redesign literature has recently been suggested to act as a coping strategy to change. Here, employees are thought to proactively engage in behaviors that adapts the change situation to fit more with their own preferences and needs. A clear gap in literature makes this topic a highly relevant master study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in two rounds where managers and leaders working in a Norwegian Municipality participated. This Municipality had just undergone a major change process called Mindful Leadership (Helhetlig ledelse). The preliminary interview round included 12 participants (6 males, 6 females). The main round included 5 participants (1 male, 4 females), all of whom were part of the original 12 individuals. The thesis question was *'Is job crafting used among managers and leaders in a public organization after a change process?'*, where it was investigated whether job crafting was present as a coping response to the change. Results did not support the thesis question and alternative explanations (e.g. general JD-R Model, general coping strategies, leadership, personal attributes) for the participants' responses to the change are discussed. Limitations and future research are presented. As organizational change is unlikely to decrease in the future, it is important for both researchers, practitioners and organizations to know more about how employees may deal with it in constructive ways.

Keywords: organizational change, job crafting, change management, coping strategies

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Investigating the Role of Job Crafting Among Managers and Leaders in a Public Organization After a Change Process

Organizational change has always held one of the main positions of interest in the social sciences (Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001), though researchers have never quite agreed on what change really is nor how to manage it in the best way possible (Beer & Nohria, 2000). For example, organizational change is also known as transformation, development, reorganization, restructuring or innovation, to list a few of the names used – and for each concept there are equal amounts of practical remedies to handle it (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Flakke, 2008). Similar divergence in definitions is possible to detect even in the earliest management literature where researchers looked to other disciplines in order to attempt explaining change processes, resulting in compartmentalized perspectives and isolated research lines (van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Yet, despite the vast quantity of information on organizational change that has accumulated since the 1970s, its relevance and interest has never been greater (Birken et al., 2017). Some of the main reasons for this is harsher competition due to increased globalization and an increasingly fast-paced economy (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 2004a; Helms-Mills, Dye, & Mills, 2009). Unfortunately, changes often disturb ongoing operations within the organization, creating uncertainty and stress in employees as things like role structures and ‘old’ work patterns changes (Lawrence & Callan, 2011). In addition, because great amounts of change initiatives fail (Armanakis & Haris, 2009; Bakari, Hunjra, & Niazi, 2017; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 2015; By, 2007; Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Kotter, 1996), change is shrouded in threat and fear as senior managers get fired, employees get laid off or demoted for unsuccessful change implementations (Helms-Mills et al., 2009). Even changes that are considered small might have negative consequences (e.g. creating change fatigue) (Amundsen & Kongsvik, 2008; Burnes, 2004b), especially when the frequency of change initiatives increase (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005), which has been argued to be the case in recent times (Cinite, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2009; Neves, Almeida, & Velez, 2017). This is supported by several researchers, who argues that change has become more frequent, less predictable and carrying far greater impact than earlier (Birken et al., 2017; Brunsson & Olsen, 2018; Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). Accordingly, it seems that even though organizations put themselves, their employees, and their future at great risk by initiating a change process, it seems to be considered a necessary evil as they attempt to stay ahead of the herd, or at least not fall behind

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(Beer & Nohria, 2000; Dahl, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2010; Whittle, Suhomlinova, & Mueller, 2010).

The majority of researchers agree that change is unavoidable, and that all organizations will experience change at one point or another during their lifetimes (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; By, 2007). Organizations in the public sector have increasingly been the subject of continuous change during recent years due to the oncoming aging workforce and the need to upgrade public services, among other factors (Kuipers et al., 2014). Thus, there is a rising need for employees who are able to manage organizational change on an ongoing basis (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013). Since organizational change processes and initiatives have gained such great attention in recent times –and considering the significant impact it has on the organization –knowing how to implement it correctly and handle the resulting outcomes is understandably one of the foremost interests of researchers, practitioners and managers (Helms-Miller et al., 2009). Unfortunately, as mentioned above, there seems to be a struggle to reach a consensus on exactly what change is and therefore how to manage it (Beer & Nohria, 2000), making successful change notoriously difficult to accomplish (Bakari et al., 2017; Beer & Nohria, 2000). Due to contextual factors (e.g. individual employees, organizational culture, technological change) there are an unlimited range of change situations and factors to take into account (Helms-Miller et al., 2009), which might be one explanation as to why change has been so difficult to define and manage. Over time, this issue has led several researchers to suggest that a standard way of dealing with change simply is not possible –each and every change process is unique and needs to be handled accordingly (Burnes, 1996; By, 2007; Coch & French, 1948; Dunphy & Stace, 1993; Jabri, 2016).

Following this process of thought, researchers naturally look for alternative strategies that are both adaptable for different change contexts *and* able to reduce negative impacts of change. One suggestion of such a strategy, that meets these criteria, is one of the recent theories within job redesign, termed *job crafting* (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2010). Job crafting is a relatively new bottom-up theory about how employees *proactively* shape their jobs, either through cognitive, task or social means (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This behavior is thought to increase positive job outcomes (e.g. satisfaction, motivation, engagement) and feelings of meaningfulness because the job is shaped to the preferences and needs of the employee (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In addition, it is believed that job crafting occurs on smaller or bigger scales, during daily job life as well as during particular stressful events, and in all types of jobs (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017).

Based on the claim that proactive responses to change are the most effective strategies in restoring the job-person fit after the disruption of a change program (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003), job crafting is a fitting suggestion, due to its focus on the proactive behaviors of employees (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). By applying it to the context of organizational change, the issue of ‘handling change’ (i.e. handling resistance to change) has now shifted from the hands of management to the hands of employees. In other words, the employees themselves facilitate their own adaptation to a change, which is thought to create more sustainable reactions, as they fit the change environment to their own needs and preferences, instead of being forced to accept the other way around (Petrou, Demerouti, Schaufeli, 2016). Finally, within the context of organizational change, job crafting is thought of as a type of coping strategy to change (Petrou et al., 2016). One suggested definition is by Folkman and Lazarus (1980), who defines it as ‘the conscious cognitive and behavioral effort to manage internal and external demands of situations that are appraised as stressful’ (van den Heuvel et al., 2010, p.134).

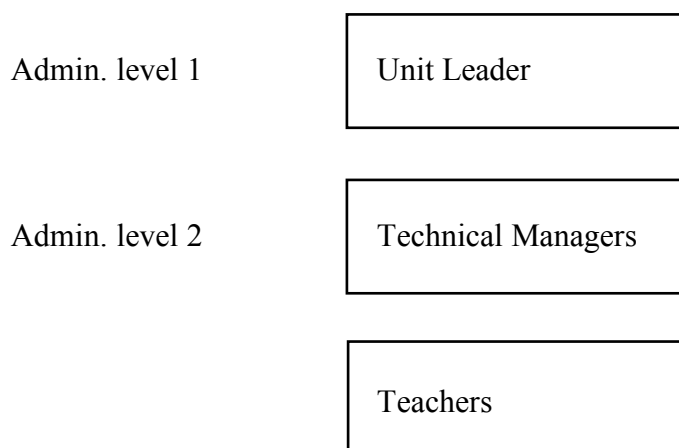
In this current master thesis, a Job Demands-Resources Model-based job crafting (Tims & Bakker, 2010) will be applied. This is both because it is one of the most recent development within job crafting theory and because its flexible nature fits well with the aforementioned notion of keeping individual organizational contexts in mind when dealing with organizational change. The term ‘job crafting’ further down in this paper will therefore refer to this version of job crafting, unless stated otherwise. The theoretical framework detailing organizational change, coping strategies, and job crafting will be presented in more detail later. Furthermore, this paper will limit organizational change theory to ‘changes in public sector’ because the change process studied for this master thesis occurred in a Norwegian Municipality. The change project, termed Mindful Leadership (Helheltig ledelse) was created as a response to a political policy where the request was to strengthen leadership by changing the structures in the strategic and operative levels in the Municipality. The project therefore aimed to enable more room for leadership development and mindful leadership (i.e. paying attention, showing genuine empathy, giving support, being present) by restructuring the administration. Within the sector units (e.g. schools, home care services, kindergartens), this change was only implemented where the total number of employees exceeded 30 people. By sharing the organizational management and its accompanying responsibility and tasks between more people, it would hopefully increase the overall quality of the leadership in the organization, as each leader would have one part of the leadership to take care of (e.g. economics, personnel, sick leave).

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In theory, the change sounded easy and simple, but in practice it became quite an extensive change process. While the new position ‘Department Manager’ was very similar to the previous position ‘Technical Manager’ (only with some added responsibilities and tasks), the Municipality considered them to be sufficiently different to implement a full process of re-employment (i.e. application letters and attending job interviews). The Technical Managers lost their job positions and were then asked to re-apply for them. As it was not guaranteed that they would regain their jobs in the same workplace or unit, they were strongly encouraged to additionally apply for positions in other matching organizations in the Municipality. Once the recruitment process was done, the new Management Teams were required to participate in the School of Leadership (Ledelsesskolen), a leadership program that is aimed at increasing leadership competence and development, as well as helping the teams get used to the new structure. The duration of this management program was set to last one year after the new positions had been established and filled.

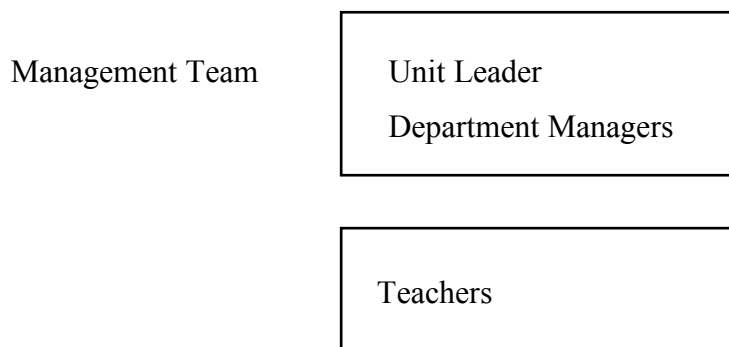
For this study, the new daily work lives of the Management Teams within the units of schools and kindergartens in the Sector of Education and Upbringing are of interest. These were chosen due to availability. Although the Unit Leaders and Department Managers in these units act as administrative members, they are people with previous teacher experience, and are all still working in close contact with the students (e.g. occasionally working as substitute teachers). To further gain understanding of the change process at these units, the change in their administrative structure will now be explained. Previously, the administration consisted of one Unit Leader (enhetsleder) and one or more Technical Managers (fagledere) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Previous management model.



After the change process, the organizational map was to consist of a so-called Management Teams (Lederteam), consisting of one Unit Leader (enhetsleder) and one or more Department Managers (avdelingsledere) (see Figure 2), whom, *together*, would act as the upper-most management. Compared to the previous Technical Manager position, the tasks in the Department Manager position would be closer related to leadership. The Unit Leader would, however, still remain officially the highest-ranking member within that management sphere.

Figure 2. Present management model, after the change project Mindful Leadership.



Rationale for this master thesis

The topic of job crafting after a change process was chosen due to information that came up during preliminary interviews, where it was mentioned that while tasks and responsibilities had increased, resources (like time) had not, thus possibly raising issues (e.g. how to prioritize, manage time pressure). In addition, it was reported that the Municipality did not have any actual guidelines for how the Management Teams were supposed to delegate the leadership responsibilities among themselves or execute shared leadership. This uncertainty and possible stress due to new demands as well as limitations of resources makes job crafting applicable for the situation. Furthermore, as job crafting may occur as a response to temporary stressful or demanding periods of time (Tims & Bakker, 2010), it was a viable theoretical topic to explore. While job crafting traditionally concerns itself with employees, not managers or leaders, it is still arguably applicable in this context, as managers and leaders in public sector organizations are in similar positions as their employees – their roles are determined by the upper management in the organization, and they are as much at the mercy of the external environment (e.g. political policies, social movements) as their employees. Change initiatives are often out of their control – being more often than not imposed by government bodies (Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016). Thus, it would not be too unrealistic to expect

managers and leaders in the public sector to use job crafting to cope with change processes. After all, job crafting may be performed by anyone in any type of job or position (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Further supporting the relevance of this paper is the current gap in organizational change literature concerning management's experience of imposed change at the administrative level (in other words, they experience their own change process), how *they* deal with it, and generally how employees help themselves to adapt to change. In addition, the majority of change management studies are employee-focused (e.g. what can leaders do to facilitate change to reduce the impact on employees, how to deal with employee resistance, how to improve leadership trust and employee commitment). Not only are there fewer leader-focused change studies, but there also seems to be fewer *qualitative* studies on the topic, not to mention studies on the topic in the public sector. According to Kuipers et al (2014) there is a gap in literature on change management that specifically focus on public administration. Even fewer studies have combined all the elements of this current study (i.e. administrative members and job crafting, administrative change, change in public sector, job crafting as coping strategy to change). Lastly, it has been argued that this Norwegian Municipality is one of the first Municipalities in Norway to undergo the change program Mindful Leadership, and if successful here, it may be implemented in other parts of the country. Thus, the context is also unique and worth exploring.

The thesis will mostly follow the standards of the APA format, however, in some instances (i.e. tables, figures, citations, line spacing) it will deviate from this structure due to aesthetic or practical purposes, or due to the guidelines given from NTNU. The thesis question is '*Is job crafting used among managers and leaders in a public organization after a change process?*' To answer the research question, it will be explored whether job crafting is present, and if so, whether it has decreased or increased due to the change process, and what role it plays in coping with daily work life after the change process, among other things. Based on the preliminary interviews and theoretical literature it is expected that job crafting will be present, and that it has been a necessary coping strategy due to the increased demands after the restructuring. In sum, the gap in literature about this specific topic, the practical implications of the program, and the need to further understand organizational change and job crafting in change processes, makes this current study and its topic highly relevant.

Theoretical framework

Definitions of organizations and organizational change. Furnham (2005) states that organizations are human creations, describing them as ‘entities in which interacting and mostly interdependent individuals work with a structure to achieve a common goal’. He remarks that there might exist more than one goal, and that these may not necessarily be shared implicitly or explicitly by all the members of the organization. In a similar vein, Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990) defines an organization as an ‘established pattern of relationships between the component parts of an organization, outlining both communication, control, and authority patterns. Structure distinguishes parts of an organization and delineates the relationship between them’ (p. 125). Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, and Turner (1969) further elaborates on what an organization is by identifying six characterizing dimensions of the formal organizational structure: specialization (i.e. the number of specialist roles in the organization and their distribution), standardization (i.e. the number of commonly occurring procedures that are supported by invariable bureaucratic rules and processes), formalization (i.e. the number of written rules, procedures, instructions and communications), centralization (i.e. where the authority lies in the hierarchy), configuration (i.e. the width and the height of the role structure), and traditionalism (i.e. organizational culture of ‘the way things are done around here’, in other words, how many procedures are ‘understood’ rather than written down). Taking these together, one may summarize the definitions of an organization as a combination of the established social systems of relationships between individuals and groups that work together towards common goals within formal structures like size and shape and authority (i.e. the hierarchy).

One might argue that an additional main characteristic of organizations is *change* – as some researchers now believe that change has become the only constant aspect of organizational life (Jabri, 2016). Furnham (2005) proposes change to be the result of the dynamic interaction of various organizational factors (e.g. organizational age and size, complexity, hierarchy) and personal factors (e.g. employees’ age, levels of education and training, personal values and beliefs). Other researchers have proposed that organizational change is the empirical observation of difference in state or form over time in an organizational entity (e.g. work-related tasks, service or product, overall strategy) (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Helms-Mills et al. (2009) refer to organizational change as ‘a level of difference that makes a significant or substantial impact on the way people think about their organization, their jobs or the way they carry out their jobs’ (p. 4). Thus, they defined change as ‘an alteration of a core aspect of an organization’s operation’ (Helms-Mills et al., 2009, p.

4). Gathering the definitions of organizational change from several researchers, Flakke (2008) summarized it as ‘a process that occurs in an organizational setting where the aim of reshaping, altering or transforming is to move something from one state to another, with the intention of improving the organizational performance, production, or interaction with the individual or the external environment’ (p. 3-4). A brief history of organizational change literature will now be presented below before it will be expanded within public sectors.

The planned vs. the emergent approach to change. Many consider organizational change theory to have started with Kurt Lewin’s (1947) Change Management Model (CMM) (Burnes, 2004a; Petrou et al., 2016). It consisted of the four elements: *Field theory* and *Group dynamics*, where the aim is to understand group behaviour by mapping it out and investigate the interactions between the members (Allport, 1948), *Action research*, in which the aim is to help the group identify and achieve change (Burnes, 2004a) and the *Three-step model*, the theoretical framework for successful change (Schein, 1996). In essence, the Three-step model proposed change to happen by *unfreezing* the present level, *moving* to the next level, and then *refreezing* the new level (Burnes, 2004b). The Three-step model became by far the most famous element of Lewin’s work, creating the foundations of several of modern day’s methodologies, like the Organizational Development approach (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). It was also the first of a series of later organizational change theories gathered under the common umbrella *planned approach to change* (Petrou et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, the three other entities in the CMM were largely discarded (Burnes, 2015), and the Three-step model alone faced harsh criticisms during the 1970-1980s (Burnes, 2004a). For example, it was argued that Lewin’s approach was unsuitable to the organizational setting due to its inflexibility and linear nature, its inability to incorporate varying temporal aspects of change (e.g. leader-follower relationship dynamics), and its lack of adaptability to other types of change (e.g. continuous change vs. episodic change) (Bakari et al., 2017). It was therefore claimed that the CMM was better suited as a *general* theoretical framework of change rather than an operational change management tool (Flakke, 2008). Consequently, the 1970s-1980s saw a series of more dynamic change theories developing as a response to the theoretical vacuum the criticisms of Lewin’s CMM created. Examples of dominant theories during this time was Romanelli and Tushman’s (1994) Punctuated Equilibrium model, Kanter, Stein, and Jick’s (1992) Continuous Transformation model and their Ten Commandments for Executing Change, and Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Stage Process for Successful Organizational Transformation. These theories, along with several more, were all gathered under the term: *the emergent approach to change* in the late 1980s (Burnes &

Cooke, 2012). The common factors in the emergent theories were that they were, in comparison to the planned approach to change, more focused on a) continuous and rapid transformational change, b) organizational culture and learning, and c) the role of power and politics in decision-making – and they mostly had a bottom-up perspective (Burnes, 2004a). Despite this approach dominating the main perspective over the next two decades, it was still criticised for lack of coherence and the fact that it offered no more choice than the Planned approach (Burnes, 1996). Therefore, in the 1990s researchers started revising Lewin's CMM, but this time acknowledging the need to see the theory as an integrated theory to change (Huang & Mas-Tur, 2016). This was based on arguments that Lewin had always intended the four elements to be treated as a unified theory where each element supported and reinforced the others (Burnes, 2015).

Today, many considers CMM as essential in understanding fundamental aspects of change (Bakari et al., 2017), and Flakke (2008) states that, despite its criticisms, a great number of researchers still thinks of the Three-step model as 'one of the best-developed, best-supported, and best-documented approach to change' (p. 4). Together with the revived interest in the Lewin and the later alternative methodologies, planned and emergent approaches to change are now considered to be the major directions within organizational change literature (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Pettigrew et al., 2001).

Organizational change in public sector. It has been argued that although change research has not previously differentiated explicitly between change in public and private sectors, it is now time to do so (Cinute et al., 2009). An aging public service workforce and the general need to modernize public service has created a higher rate of change in the public sectors all across the globe (Corman & Burnes, 2001; Ferlie, Hartley, & Martin, 2003). Like the majority of other types of change the public sector change programs tend to fail as well (Cinute et al., 2009), but Ferlie et al. (2003) state that certain factors makes it harder to implement change in the public sector compared to the private sector. Some of these factors are bureaucracy and complexity of reforms, embedded practices and jurisdictions as well as the frequent change of senior leadership (e.g. politicians). This is supported by Kuipers et al. (2014), who made a review of current literature on change in public sectors. They found that the most fundamental contextual difference between public and private sectors were political context of democracy (i. e. parliament, politics, and politicians) and the juridical context of 'Rechtsstaat' (i. e. legislation, rules, bureaucracy). Factors like socio-economic forces, political system characteristics, and central government decisions (e.g. policy changes, changes in financing), among others, were identified to be the main drivers of change.

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Furthermore, it is also important to look at the nature of the organizational change in public and private sections (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). The most common distinction is of incremental and transformational (also known as radical) change (Dunphy & Stace, 1993). Robinson and Griffiths (2005) states that the former retains the overall organizational structure, the strategic goals and the cultural values while focusing on adjusting existing management and business processes. The latter involves a greater radical change as the business strategies, established systems and structures, and distribution of power is altered significantly. Kuipers et al. (2014), however, suggest that when studying change in the public context, it may be more useful to divide the nature of change in ‘orders of change’ (see Table 1).

Table 1

Orders of organizational change (copied from Kuipers et al., 2014)

Order	Description	References
1 st : Sub-system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaption of systems and structures • Occurs within part of an organization or sub-system • Is incremental 	Burnes, 2004; Carnall, 2007; Watzlawick et al., 1974
2 nd : Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformational change • Movement in core organizational paradigms • Organization-wide • Whole systems change 	Burnes, 2004; Carnall, 2007; Watzlawick et al., 1974; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995
3 rd : Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity change • Cross-organizational change • Change spans specific organizational boundaries • Affects many organizations/sector-wide change 	Tsoukas & Papoulias, 2005; Gratton, 2005

In the case of the current master thesis, the project Mindful Leadership seems to fit both the first and the second order well. To further understand change in public sector, it is also essential to mention how change literature (and the general public) view the failures of change in organizations. Most studies on change failures and resistance to change tend to identify inadequacies of the individual employee (e.g. attitudes, emotions and behaviors) as the reason for the unsuccessful change (Piderit, 2000). In other words, if a change program fails it must somehow be the employees' fault (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). This view is still dominant among researchers, practitioners and organizations (Thomas & Hardy, 2011). Fortunately, in recent decades opposition to this perspective has started to regain attention, where researchers look back to previous literature. For example, Kotter (1995) argued that while resistance to change happen and may play a significant role in the unsuccessful implementation of change, it is more likely that the resistance may be found somewhere in the *system*, rather than at the employee level. Further, Dent and Goldberg (1999) argued that people do not resist to change *itself*, but to the accompanying threat of losing, or the actual loss, of things such as status, pay, or comfort. This side of the discussion has its origins in the early studies of resistance to change – Coch and French (1948), in one of the earliest and most cited studies on resistance, championed an organizational context perspective, rather than focusing on a particular group or individual employees (Burnes, 2015). This notion of focusing on the *context of the change* has thus regained increasing support over the last few decades (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 1996; Cao, Clarke, & Lehaney, 2004; Dunphy & Stace, 1993; Jabri, 2016; Kotter, 1996; van den Heuvel et al., 2010).

Based on this, it may be useful to frame the study of change in public sector in a similar fashion to Pettigrew et al. (2001). They identified four factors that they thought important to studying change: context (i.e. factors in the external and internal environments), content (i.e. what constitutes the change), process (i.e. interventions, process and actions involved in the implementation), and outcomes (i.e. results in attitudes, behaviors and experiences after the change). This idea is supported by Kuipers et al. (2014), who suggested that these factors, in addition to the factor leadership, may help in the understanding of change processes and implementation of organizational change in the public context. These factors will therefore be taken into consideration in the analysis and results section of this paper. Lastly, Van der Voet et al. (2016) stated that employees do not only react to the content of a change, but also to the implementation process. In other words, based on the implementation process employees may have room to act and react to change to a greater or lesser extent, shaping the outcome of the change. This is where the topic of job crafting as a

reaction to change becomes relevant. But first, the history of job crafting (i.e. job design and job redesign) will be presented.

Job design. During the course of history of industrial psychology, the topic of *job design* has been one of the most prominent topics (Oldham & Fried, 2016). According to Hackman and Oldham (1976), job design refers to the actual structure of the jobs that employees perform, in other words the daily tasks and activities that constitute a job. Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) defined it as ‘the study, creation and modification of the composition, content, structure, and environment within which jobs and roles are enacted’ (p. 11). In other words, who is doing the work, what is done at work, what is the interrelationship of different work elements, and what is the interplay of job and role enactment with the broader task, social, physical, and organizational context (Daniels, Gedikli, Watson, Semkina, & Vaughn, 2017; Truxillo, Cadiz, Rineer, Zaniboni, & Fraccaroli, 2012).

Starting the job design discussion as early as the mid-1800s, the idea that jobs should be characterized by a high degree of specialization and simplicity was championed (Oldham & Fried, 2016). The argument behind this opinion was that standardization and simplicity would increase work efficiency as employees would be focusing on only a handful of tasks and therefore hone their skills in that particular activity. This view dominated the field of job design for several decades until Herzberg (1966) introduced the radical notion that jobs should be enriched, not simplified (Oldham & Fried, 2016). According to Herzberg and his Motivation-Hygiene Theory, “motivators” – intrinsic aspects of the job that were aimed at promoting professional growth of the employees (e.g. increase performance, responsibility, competence) were a necessity if the goal was to enhance job performance and job satisfaction, (Oldham & Fried, 2016; Truxillo et al., 2012).

Herzberg’s job enrichment theory stimulated a great amount research and job initiatives (i.e. job enrichment projects), however despite the substantial impact of his revolutionary idea, there were several issues with his approach that needed to be addressed (Truxillo et al., 2012). For example, types of job properties that would provide job enrichment, not to mention the guideline and framework to measure such properties, was not specified (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Further, Davis and Taylor (1972) pointed out that the possibility of the employees responding differently to job enrichment were not considered by Herzberg (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Solving these issues were therefore the focus of many organizational researchers during the 1960s and 1970s (Oldham & Fried, 2016; Truxillo et al., 2012).

One pioneering study by Turner and Lawrence (1965) laid the early foundations for the development of the Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; 1980). They presented an index tool called the Requisite Task Attributes (RTA) index to quantitatively measure six factors that was expected to positively relate to employee job satisfaction (Turner & Lawrence, 1965). These were variety, autonomy, required interaction, optional interaction, knowledge and skill required, and responsibility. Their study concluded that employees with different subcultural backgrounds reacted differently to high RTA jobs (Oldham & Fried, 2016). This was later supported by Blood and Hulin (1967).

Hackman and Lawler (1971), building further on the work of Turner and Lawrence (1965), argued that individuals possessed different levels of need for professional growth and development, and that this was the explanation for employees' varied responses to their jobs (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Further, the stronger the need for professional and personal growth, the more likely it was for a positive response to jobs high on variety, autonomy, task identity, and feedback. In their study, it was found results that linked these four job characteristics to high work quality, high motivation, high job satisfaction and low absenteeism (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). Hackman and Lawler's study had a major impact on the following years of research, acting as the base for the work of Hackman and Oldham (1976; 1980) and their Job Characteristics Model which became one of the most researched and debated approaches to job design over the next few decades (Oldham & Fried, 2016).

Like Herzberg (1966), Hackman and Oldham argued that enriched and complex jobs resulted in better work outcomes than simplified and monotonous jobs (Fried & Ferris, 1987). Specifically, they believed that the five core job characteristics skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and job-based feedback influenced three essential employee psychological states that had an association with internal motivation and work outcomes (Singh, Singh, & Kahn, 2016). According to the Hackman and Oldham (1976) skill variety, task significance and task identity were expected to contribute to the experienced meaningfulness of work, while autonomy contributed to the experienced responsibility for work outcomes. Lastly, feedback was expected to provide direct knowledge of the results of the work (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Oldham & Fried, 2016). Together with the applicability and testability of the Jobs Characteristics Model, in addition to the consistent demonstration of supportive results in various studies, the theory has continued as one of the biggest and most influential contributions to the field of job design research, and is still utilized today (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Ghosh, Rai, Chauhan, Gupta, & Singh, 2015; Oldham & Fried, 2016; Singh et al., 2016; Truxillo et al., 2012).

Job redesign and job crafting. As the research on job design continued on, researchers became increasingly interested in the concept of job *redesign*, and theories like role innovation (Schein, 1971), task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990), personal initiatives (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997), and organizational citizenship (Organ, 1997) started to emerge. These theories introduced the idea that employees could somewhat change their job conditions (i.e. job characteristics) to improve the quality of work and productivity (Daniels et al., 2017; Siengthai & Pila-Ngarm, 2016; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2011). Especially in jobs that are poorly designed, job redesign has been argued to offer an alternative approach to reduce job dissatisfaction and enhance motivation (Siengthai & Pila-Ngarm, 2016). Often, using the Jobs Characteristics Model as a conceptual framework, researchers have found job redesign to be associated with work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (Rhoads et al., 2002), employee well-being (Holman, Axtell, Sprigg, Totterdell, & Toby, 2010), employee attitude and organizational commitment (Morrow, McElroy, & Scheibe, 2012). It was not until the turn of the century, however, with the introduction of the concept of *job crafting*, that the topic of job redesign was properly brought to the center of attention in job design research (Oldham & Hackman, 2010; Tims & Bakker, 2010). While some researchers had previously mentioned that employees often take their own initiatives to re-shape their job characteristics (Black & Ashford, 1995; Nicholson, 1984), it was not until this point that the concept was fully explored in detail (Nicholson, 2010; Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

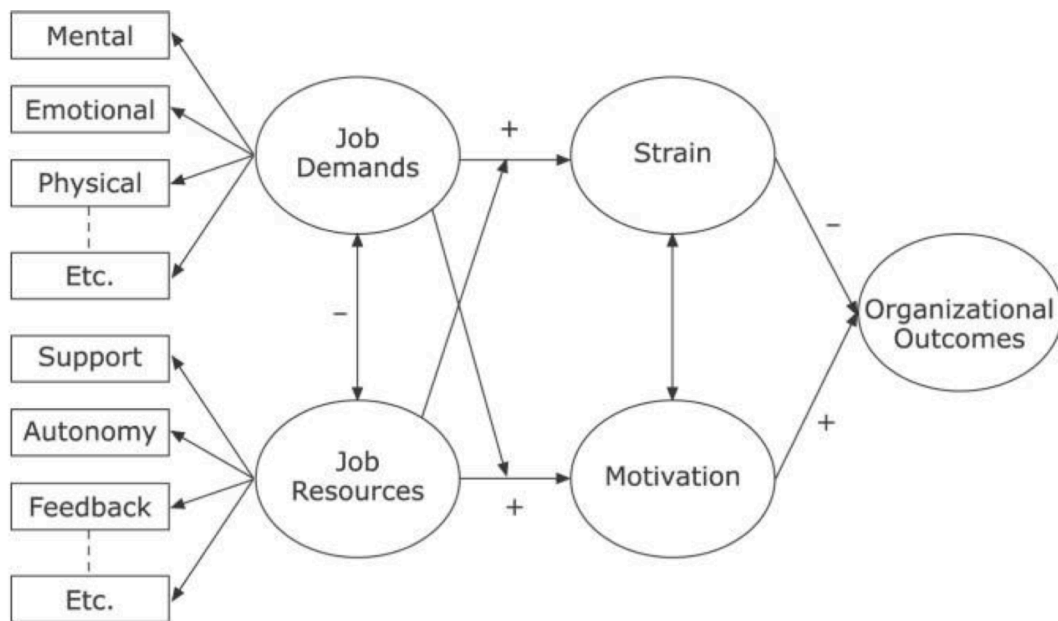
This theory of job crafting has been described as one of the most interesting developments within job design research in the last few decades, as it deviates substantially from previous literature (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Job design literature traditionally viewed job design as a top-down process – where the organization (i.e. management) has created a job or a position where the person deemed most fit (e.g. possesses relevant knowledge or skills) is hired (Chen, Yen, & Tsai, 2014; Oldham & Fried, 2016; Tims & Bakker, 2010). The pioneers of the job crafting theory, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), however, proposed the notion that employees actively engaged in job redesign at an *individual level*, making them responsible for *their own* job outcomes – in other words, employees themselves customized their jobs to individual needs and preferences (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008). Employees were now put in a position of *empowerment* where they were no longer considered passively responding to the environment – they were now helping to create it (Peeters, Arts, & Demerouti, 2016; van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015). In contrast to previous theory, this individual job redesign was executed without the supervisor's knowledge

(Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), and ultimately benefited the individual, not necessarily the organization (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Drawing upon a social constructionist world view, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) thus reframed the employee as an active crafter in the workplace who, through social interaction with others, shaped the tasks and social relationships that composed a job. They termed this new job redesign behavior *job crafting*, defining it as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010). It is considered to happen in three ways: by changing task boundaries (i.e. altering the form or number of job activities), by changing relationship boundaries (i.e. altering how often and with whom one interacts with at work), and/or by cognitively changing the meaning of the job (i.e. altering the way one sees the job or ascribe meaning to it) (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

The initial paper by Wrzesniewski and Dutton inspired a vast amount of quantitative and qualitative research (both cross-sectional and longitudinal) on the topic of employee-driven job redesign, as well as international and cross-cultural studies (Mäkikangas, 2018; Oldham & Fried, 2016; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wong & Tetrick, 2017). Today, there exist a general consensus that any employee in any type of job can engage in this process, although the extent of the crafting behavior depends on individual factors and the organizational setting (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton, & Berg, 2013). In addition, it is argued that job crafting can either happen on an everyday basis (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012) or as a response to a temporarily demanding work situation (Tims et al., 2012).

Job crafting and the JD-R Model. The JD-R Model (see Figure 3), is one of the most famous occupational stress models within strain literature (Petrou et al., 2012). It categorizes job characteristics into those who are motivational (termed resources) or impairing to health (termed demands) (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

Figure 3. The Job Demands-Resources Model



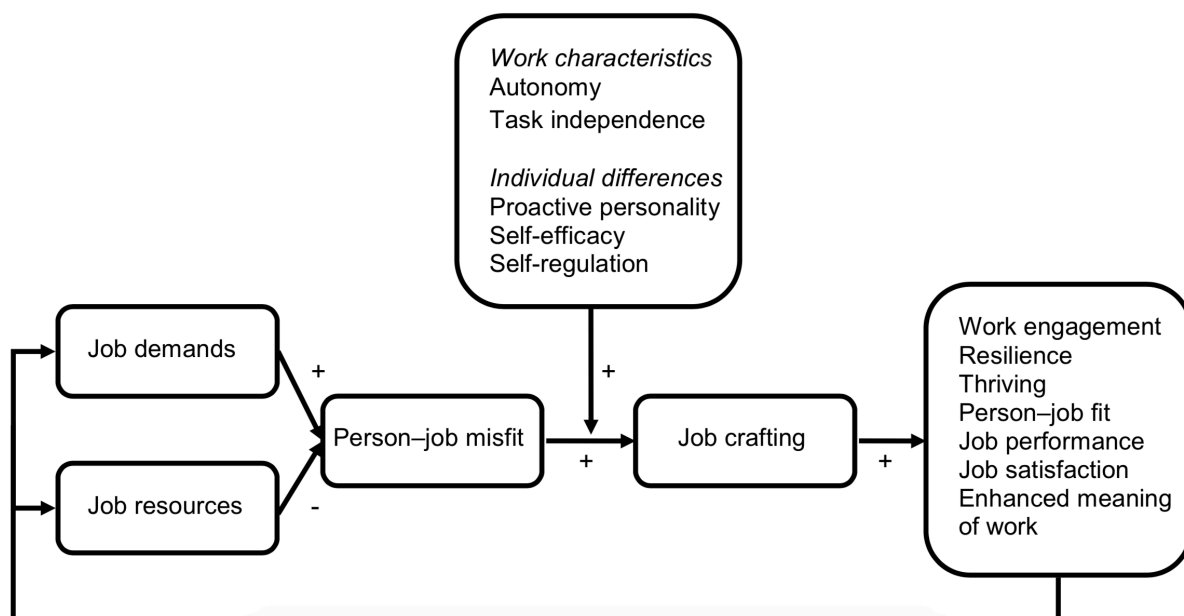
Note. Copied from Bakker & Demerouti (2007).

Job resources refer to ‘physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: (a) functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth, learning and development’ (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). Job demands refer to ‘physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs’ (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 312). Job demands have since been further divided into hindering demands and challenging demands (Tims & Bakker, 2010), with the purpose of making a clear distinction between demands that cause strain and demands that are necessary for employees to feel stimulated (Tims et al., 2012).

Despite its popularity in organizational psychology literature, it may be argued that the JD-R Model has a rigid (or top-down) perspective, as it seems to concern itself with purely describing the status quo of the job environment. In other words, it may seem like the JD-R Model presents the job environment as something static, where the individual is simply subjected to the forces of the demands and resources that happen to exist in that particular context. However, as demonstrated by the job crafting literature, the relationship between the job environment and the individual is far more dynamic than the model seems to suggest,

where each individual has the potential to greatly impact their job situation. This may therefore be considered one of the limitations of the JD-R Model. Recent developments within the job crafting research, however, may resolve this issue (Peeters et al., 2016). Tims and Bakker (2010) were one of the first researchers to consider job crafting within the framework of the JD-R Model (see Figure 4), now conceptualizing job crafting as ‘changing levels of job demands and job resources in order to align them with employee’s own abilities and preferences’ (p. 4).

Figure 4. Proposed model of job crafting



Note. Copied from Tims & Bakker (2010, p. 5).

Although Tims and Bakker initially agreed with Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) that job crafting was a type of proactive organizational behavior, they argued that the original theoretical framework (i.e. categories of cognitive, task, relational) was too specific to certain types of work domains, and limiting it to certain behaviors, thus not fully acknowledging all the different possible ways of crafting. In addition, Tims and Bakker did not identify cognitive crafting as a type of job crafting as they did not consider it to be any sort of active behavior but rather as accepting or coping with the circumstances (Tims & Bakker, 2010). This is one of the most distinct differences between the two conceptualizations beside the JD-R Model framework. In any case, by re-conceptualizing job crafting within the realm of the JD-R Model it was argued that the theory would finally become applicable to *all* types of

jobs, organizations and work situations, in addition to being able to encompass a far greater range of proactive behaviors, as well as capturing the smaller ‘everyday’ modifications (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Tims et al., 2012; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2014; Tims et al., 2016). This is due to the very premise of the JD-R Model, which assumes that even though every work environment has its own unique characteristics it can still be captured in one overall model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; van den Heuvel et al., 2010), making it more flexible than alternative job design models (Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, Petrou, & Karagkounis, 2017; Petrou et al., 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Because this new concept of job crafting is still fairly new, most papers (even Tims and Bakker) have been relatively vague in describing how exactly job crafting is supposed to work with the JD-R Model framework (e.g. what types of demands and resources are possible to craft, which types of proactive behaviors are considered job crafting). This is supported by Petrou et al. (2015), who state that there is much left to discover about how job crafting occurs in the changing job environment. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, it is important to try to explain the difference between the original job crafting theory by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) and JD-R Model-based job crafting by Tims and Bakker (2010). The following explanation is, however, based on interpretation of JD-R model-based job crafting articles. The original job crafting theory has presented job crafting almost like a type of skill that all individuals possess, while the combination of the concepts of job crafting and JD-R Model, allows job crafting to become a *tool* with which an individual may intentionally, though proactive behavior, regulate demands and resources. More specifically, the individual may use job crafting as a tool to ‘seek resources, seek challenges, and reduce challenge demands in order to improve their job conditions’ (Petrou et al., 2015, p. 2). Going back to the earlier point about the perceived limitation of the JD-R Model, this combination of concepts is beneficial for both fields of research – the JD-R Model now incorporates the dynamics that may regulate the demands and resources (i.e. removing the static aspect), while job crafting becomes more applicable to all types of jobs and behaviors. Furthermore, Tims and Bakker’s (2010) JD-R Model-based job crafting allows for an empirical *and* standardized measure of job crafting, which did not exist previously (Demerouti et al., 2017). Thus, the majority of recent job crafting literature is based their work, although others (including the pioneering authors and associates) still work with the original three types of job crafting (i.e., cognitive, task, relational).

Today, the study of job crafting has spread internationally, consistently demonstrating supportive results to the original authors of both job crafting and the JD-R Model of job

crafting. For example, one paper from Taiwan investigated whether person-job fit mediated the relationship between job crafting (individual and collaborative) and job engagement (Chen et al., 2014). They found a significant result in both types of crafting behavior, although individual job crafting demonstrated a stronger of job engagement than collaborative crafting. This was supported by a similar Chinese study by Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, and Bakker (2014) and a recent Finnish paper by Mäkikangas (2018). Another paper, by Nielsen and Abildgaard (2012) found job crafting to influence employee attitudes such as burnout and cynicism. Similar findings were reported by Gordon et al. (2018). Tims et al. (2016) found job crafting to be associated with meaningfulness of work. Lastly, job crafting and its link to positive work outcomes (e.g. commitment, engagement, well-being, employability, performance and satisfaction) have also been demonstrated in many types of professions such as employees at manufacturing plants (Berg et al., 2010), tour leaders (Cheng, Chen, Teng, & Yen, 2016), child care center teachers (Leana, Appelbaum, & Shevchuk, 2009), technology employees (Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker, 2014), flight attendants (Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017), healthcare professionals (Gordon et al., 2018; Tims et al., 2013), and school teachers (van Wingerden, Bakker & Derks, 2017). Job crafting has thus become firmly established as one of the most relevant topics within job design in an industrial world where ever-changing dynamics in the global market dictates types of jobs, ways to work and organizational structures, among others, all of which calls for employees to respond accordingly (Grant & Parker, 2009). As stated previous, the main focus will be on the JD-R Model-based type of job crafting. This version is therefore the one referred to when using the term ‘job crafting’ in following sections of this current master thesis, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Crafting the change. As mentioned previously, one of the suggested ways employees may respond to or cope with organizational change is job crafting. While successful implementation of change involves simultaneously managing several factors at many different levels (e.g. external, internal, societal, psychological, organizational, individual, departmental) (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993), it all eventually boils down to the individual employees’ attitudes and behavior (Van Dam, Oreg, & Schyns, 2008; Woodman & Dewett, 2004). They are, after all, the ones that ultimately make up the organization and carry out the work – they are the ones that change (Bovey & Hede, 2001). In other words, the employees’ reactions to change is a determining factor to successful change (Oreg et al., 2011). Ironically, few empirical studies have actually focused on the micro-level of analysis (van den Heuvel et al., 2010), instead investigating how *organizations* prepare for, implement, and react to organizational change (Oreg et al., 2011). Thus, there is a gap in

organizational change literature concerning the role of individual resources in the face of change (van den Heuvel et al., 2010) and what employees themselves actually do to adapt to change (thereby affecting the success rate of the change) (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). This is a vital aspect to consider, as the failures in reaching change objectives within a certain period of time may be partly explained by individual reactions to change (Sorge & Van Witteloostuijn, 2004). As a change often affects the immediate work environment, it is only natural that employees may experience reduced levels of well-being, motivation, work engagement and job performance (van den Heuvel et al., 2010). Further, the implementation process itself may negatively affect employee health as much as the actual content of the change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Consequently, in response to this gap in literature, van den Heuvel et al. (2010) added individual characteristics (i.e. personal resources) to the previously mentioned essential factors to studying and implementing change by Pettigrew et al. (2001) and Kuipers et al. (2014) (i.e. context, content, process, leadership, and outcomes). Personal resources are perceived as something that is useful in coping with (adverse) situations, and something that adds to the creation of a more favorable situation or goal attainment (van den Heuvel et al., 2010). Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, and Jackson (2003) described them as ‘aspects of self that are generally linked to resiliency’. It concerns the person-environment interaction and is based on the Conservation of Resources theory, which states that ‘people are intrinsically motivated to obtain, retain, and protect as well as accumulate their resources’ (van den Heuvel et al., 2013). According to van den Heuvel et al. (2010) the individual always strives for the person-environment fit (i.e. balance between their abilities vs. the external demands), applying several strategies to retain it. During a change, this balance is threatened, as job demands tend to increase (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005), and employees may resort to using coping strategies to restore the fit. This supports the Transactional Model of Stress-Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), a model that suggests that psychological stress is a result of the mismatch between a person and an environmental event. Coping strategies, defined as ‘the conscious cognitive and behavioral effort to manage internal and external demands of situations that are appraised as stressful’ (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980), may be problem-focused (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992), emotion-focused (Judge et al., 1999) or stressor-focused (Callan et al., 1994), ultimately aiming to regulate these factors (van den Heuvel et al., 2010, p.134).

It has been stated that the most efficient coping strategies that individuals may employ are the ones that are active or proactive, as these behaviors positively impact the demanding working environment and help restore the fit (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003). There is a

differentiation between strategies that manage the external change environment (e.g. job crafting, active coping) and the strategies to manage oneself in the face of change (e.g. self-regulation, self-leadership) (van den Heuvel et al., 2010). In this current paper, the former type will be investigated. This is in line with recent literature which suggests job crafting is a type of coping strategy to change.

Traditionally employees have been considered passive elements during the change process (Dent & Goldberg, 1999), but researchers are now increasingly interested in adaptive, proactive attitudes and behaviors to change (Oreg et al., 2011). It is thought that such responses to change is more beneficial for the adaptability of both organization and the employees in the long term (van den Heuvel et al., 2013). Job crafting has recently been suggested as an alternative framework to external change environment coping strategies (Grant & Parker, 2009; Oldham & Hackman, 2010). In the ambiguous change situation job crafting is thought to enable employees in creating new roles for themselves that aid them in managing the new demands better (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2015). In addition, job crafting allows for a broader range of possible actions and strategies that the employees may take to respond to the change demands, making the change situation more flexible and easier to manage. However, Petrou et al. (2015) note that change does not automatically evoke proactive responses in employees – the motivation is due to a mix of contextual factors (e.g. job stressors) and individual characteristics (e.g. openness to change). This is based on earlier literature that states that the impact of the change implementation on the employees' work (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and the employees' positive orientation towards the change may cause crafting behavior (Cunningham et al., 2002). This fits well with the current master thesis study as preliminary interviews indicated an extensive implementation process while participants at the same time were mostly positively oriented toward the change.

Current master thesis

Based on the previous literature, the theoretical framework, and preliminary interviews this current master thesis study is investigating whether job crafting is used as a coping strategy by managers and leaders after the change process Mindful Leadership in a public organization in a Norwegian Municipality. In addition to these aspects, the 'cognitive boundaries' -aspect of the original job crafting theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) will be included as well, because the preliminary data indicated cognitive ways of coping that seem more like active choices of perspective rather than passive acceptance of the situation. In any case, it is better to include it and investigate whether it is there rather than to miss it. The thesis question is 'Is

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job crafting used among managers and leaders in a public organization after a change process?, where it will be investigated whether job crafting is present, and if so, in what form and why. Due to the scope and size of the change implementation (as it extends to *all* sectors in the organization), its lack of guidelines and reported increasing demands (e.g. more tasks) after the change, it is expected that job crafting will be present and that it is used to make the situation to make it more manageable. Lastly, if job crafting is present, its extent will be explored and it will be investigated whether it truly is a coping response to the change.

Method

Participants

There were in total 12 participants from the section of Welfare and Education in a Norwegian Municipality included in this study. Four were Unit Leaders (1 female, 3 males) and eight were Department Managers (4 females, 4 males). These participants were from four primary schools and one kindergarten. The overview is presented below (Table 2).

Table 2

Participants in this master study

Kindergarten	Primary school	Primary school	Primary school	Primary school
	1	2	3	4
	Unit Leader (f)	Unit Leader (m)	Unit Leader (m)	Unit Leader (m)
Department	Department	Department	Department	Department
Manager (f)	Manager (f)	Manager (m)	Manager (f)	Manager (m)
			Department	Department
			Manager (f)	Manager (m)
				Department
				Manager (f)

Materials

The participants were given an information sheet/consent form that they signed (Appendix A). During the preliminary interview, a self-developed interview guide was followed, consisting of the three questions ‘What are your thought about the ongoing change process «Mindful Leadership» that was implemented by the Municipality of [City]?', ‘What are your thoughts about the implementation of the new leader position Department Manager?', and ‘In your opinion, what are crucial aspects to consider when implementing a change process such as this?’ (Appendix B). In the main interview another interview guide was used (Appendix C). This was based on the quantitative job crafting questionnaires of Nielsen and Abildsgaard (2012), Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2013) and Tims and Bakker (2012). The guide was organized in color codes according to which paper it was taken from. During both interviews an Olympus Digital Recorder was used. An audio-program and Microsoft Word were utilized during transcriptions of the interviews. Both the audio-files and the finished transcripts were stored in an encrypted password-locked folder on an external USB-drive. A qualitative

analysis software program, NVivo (version 11.4.3), was used for the qualitative analysis of the data.

Procedure

In my internship period in the spring of 2017 I had a meeting with a woman from NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration). She put me in contact with a Municipality whom she knew was going through a big change process. A classmate of mine was also interested in this change process, and we decided to team up for the first part of the data collection (i.e. design of study, data collection, transcription). At the start-up of the Master project, the sections of Welfare and Education (specifically primary schools and kindergartens) had just finished the first part of the process (i.e. the re-employment) and were starting the School of Leadership. This is the reason for the choice of participants. Over the summer months we created our project design and applied for research approval from NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data), which we received in early August.

When we came back to NTNU after the summer vacation, a group of Management Teams from several primary schools and kindergartens were just enrolling in the School of Leadership program. We therefore decided to join them on the first of five seminars of the School. The first seminar consisted of two full-day meetings in August, both in which we participated. The first day we simply observed the participants to gain a better understanding of what exactly the School of Leadership was about as well as building a rapport with the participants and offering information about our project. On the second day we walked around to each Management Team and asked whether they were willing to participate in our research. Those of the Management Teams who agreed to participate were given the information/consent forms to sign and give back to us (Appendix A). After the seminar we called the ones who had signed to re-confirm their participation and to schedule a date for the interview. We got in total of 12 participants from four schools and one kindergarten (4 Unit Leaders, 8 Department Managers; 6 males, 6 females) whom we interviewed in the course of two weeks in September 2017.

Our supervisor at the time recommended that we started with preliminary interviews, going into the topic with an open-minded attitude and with little to no theoretical knowledge beforehand. This was to avoid any prior biases or assumptions about the nature of the participants' experiences - the aim was to let the participants *themselves* decide what to talk about, to let them raise the topics *they* thought were most relevant. We decided to use semi-structured interviews because this is one of the most used data collection methods in

qualitative data research (Willig, 2013). It is a popular method because the data can be analyzed in many different ways as the method is compatible with most qualitative methodologies. Semi-structured interviews keep the conversation within the topic of interest (for the researcher) while simultaneously allowing the participants to talk freely and guide the conversation to some extent. In addition, semi-structured interviews have been argued to be the most efficient way to gain in-depth experiential information in short time frames (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). Thus, we created three open-ended, broad questions about the change and the position of Department Manager that we used for the first round (Appendix B). The interview times ranged from approximately 15 to approximately 35 minutes. We then transcribed these interviews and shared them between us. At this point, I decided to switch supervisors thus going separate ways from my classmate.

When the time came to decide a qualitative analysis methodology I decided that Thematic Analysis (TA) would suit the best considering the open-minded approach we had started with. TA is about recognizing and organizing patterns of meaning in qualitative data (Willig, 2013). One of the benefits of TA is that it is not formally associated with any specific theoretical approach or epistemology – it has so-called "theoretical freedom" or "theoretical flexibility" (Willig, 2013). I therefore thought it would fit well with our project as it was uncertain what topics would appear from the pilot data. It is worth noting that the theoretical flexibility is not purely a positive thing, as it brings with it perhaps too much freedom of choice (Willig, 2013). Without a theoretical anchor it is quite challenging to conduct research, and it is therefore important that the researcher chooses their theoretical and epistemological stance before starting the project properly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unfortunately, this idea of having a theoretical stance from the get-go was against my first supervisor's research principles. When I then changed supervisors, it was agreed that it would be wise to have *some* prior theoretical foundation while working with the data. I therefore chose to start on my theoretical framework before I had completely finished collecting my data or analyzing it.

Because the first round of data collection was not guided by theory, I did a rough inductive thematic analysis this data to find a topic that was interesting and present in the data. I found possible instances of job crafting, an area I had some knowledge of from before, and I decided to pursue it. After discussing with my supervisor, I conducted a second round of interviews, where 5 (2 Unit Leaders, 3 Department Managers; 1 male, 4 females) of the 12 original participants were included. Based on the quantitative questionnaires of Nielsen and Abildsgaard (2012), Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2013) and Tims and Bakker (2012) I created a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) focusing on job crafting after the change

process. The duration of the interviews were approximately 30 to 45 minutes. I then transcribed these. As this second round of interviews was driven by job crafting theory, my main TA was deductive. The coding was also leaning more towards a latent type of analysis rather than a semantic one. This is because I believe that job crafting is not directly measurable – both quantitative and qualitative research measure facets that make up job crafting (e.g. resources and demands) and these facets are again divided in to actual behavior. Hence, if job crafting present, it is likely to be found latently in the data. Lastly, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) I had an essentialist/realist epistemological view as I was not interested in any type of discourse or some broader sociocultural explanation of the data. I was interested in the experiences of the participants.

During the first round of data analysis I chose to not code word-for-word or make very descriptive labels of sentences or paragraphs. ‘The change is not so big yet – I still have the same tasks as before’ may for example be labeled ‘low change impact’ instead of the descriptive ‘change is not big’ and ‘same tasks’. This choice was based on the fact that this analysis method extracted the necessary information of the data, creating no need to break down the data even more. I used the three categories of job crafting behavior (i.e. increasing resources, increasing challenging demands, decreasing hindering demands) to guide the analysis. In each category there were three aspects that were considered (i.e. social, task, cognitive). I distinguished between what they actually did (‘I asked my leader for help’) and the cognitive way of perceiving the situation (‘I am not afraid to ask my leader if there is something I do not know’). My research questions of whether job crafting was present, whether it had been there before or whether it was present now as a response to the change was also in the back of my mind, thus the analysis was done with intent to answer these queries.

I created TA theme folders called in NVivo (i.e. called nodes) according to the job crafting categories. As I continued coding, I expanded the number of nodes as more topics and themes emerged, like personal aspects and leadership as well as the change context (before, now) and change impact. This was because I found this helped me get a broader understanding of the experience of the participants. Following suggestions of previous literature, I paid attention to the different contextual factors as well, instead of isolating job crafting completely. After each interview I gathered the topics or themes on a separate Word-file to keep an overview of what was found – as the analysis of the other interviews went on this file was added to. I mapped out the job crafting demands-resources in a table with corresponding visual between the factors. For example, I would write down one demand that

was mentioned (e.g. time restraints) and put in the corresponding solutions (i.e. resources). It was at times difficult to distinguish between decreasing hindering demands and increasing resources in the data as both had to do with diminishing a demand or the stress of a demand. I tried defining the former to actual behaviors that reduced demands, while the latter was more about increasing the storage of resources to be able to decrease hindering demands later. Another aspect to consider was to distinguish between contextual factors that increased resources, but that were not caused by some specific behavior from the participant (e.g. Unit Leaders allowing Department Managers to expand knowledge and competence by going on extra courses), and actual behavior that increased resources (e.g. choosing to seek out courses and enroll in them).

While coding the interviews, I wrote down summaries of my findings for each interview on a separate document. These summaries were put together in a cleaner and more cohesive way after the first round of coding. As I edited the summaries I created sections that were based on the NVivo nodes (i.e. context, job crafting, leadership, individual aspects). I divided the two first themes further into 'change context and individual context', and 'job crafting connected to change' and 'not connected to change'. During coding I also found several proactive behaviors that did not fit into job crafting per se, as they did not directly regulate their demands or resources within the job crafting context. Therefore, I also created a section called 'proactive behavior/job demands-resources'. I also wrote down keywords that were common for all five interviews and drew up simple models of factors that were connected (e.g. increased bureaucracy and its impact). By gathering the summaries, the keywords, and the drawings I put my findings in systems related to each other which gave me a more organized overview and understanding of them.

Results

Although some degree of job crafting was found in the data, there was overall very little evidence suggesting that job crafting, specifically, was used as a tool to handle the demands by the change itself. Table 3 offers an overview of the possible job crafting that occurred in relation to the change. However, most of the demands (e.g. uncertainty of roles, high level of tasks) and resources (e.g. social support from colleagues, seeking information) found in the data was more in tune with the general JD-R Model rather than the job crafting model. In other words, the demands and resources in the data was more about the participant's motivations and possible stressors rather than them purposely increasing or reducing demands and resources to increase work engagement.

Table 3

Overview of possible job crafting found in the data

The demand	Decreasing the demand
Increased level of work tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making to-do lists • Delegating outward/downward • Working longer hours
Time pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict daily prioritizing • Postponing task to next day
Uncertainty (due to the new roles and unfamiliar tasks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased frequency of meetings • Defining the role together with the Management Team • Creating long-term plans for implementation • Seeking more information (e.g. reading) • Asking more competent colleagues for help/guidance

The most significant themes that emerged from the data was that of leadership with mutual social support (resource), personal attributes (resource), change context with increased bureaucracy (demand), and unpredictable work environment (demand) (see Table 4). While the demands heavily impact the participants' daily life, the presence of the resources seems to

buffer the stress significantly. Although the effect of the demands and resources were quite similar among all the participants, there was a slight difference in stress between the Department Managers and the Unit Leaders. The cause of this seemed to be that the Unit Leaders, being the highest level of their administration at their organization (e.g. school), were able to delegate more tasks downwards or outwards. This opportunity was limited among the Department Managers, which meant fewer ways of alleviating demands. However, overall the Management Teams seemed to work mostly at the same level and focused on togetherness and team cohesion, sharing tasks as fairly as possible among themselves. In regards to the change project, the impact at their particular work places was deemed by the participants to be small (as of yet). Below the findings are presented in more detail.

Table 4
Findings categorized as Job Demands and Resources

Demands	Resources
Change context	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased bureaucracy • Unpredictable work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual social support • Personal attributes (e.g. motivation, passion, competence, personal resources)

Demands (related to change context)

Increased bureaucracy. All participants reported a more noticeable presence of bureaucracy after the change, in the form of stricter structures and pressure to conform from the outside of their organizations. This bureaucracy was evident in the increased demand for documentation and reports. Because these reports often had short deadlines and were required by law, the participants were often forced to prioritize these tasks first, giving less attention to other types of work (e.g. competence development, teaching). Many felt they did not have time to practice what the change had intended (e.g. focus on developing leadership, perform mindful leadership) or do what they actually wanted to do, which was to be close to their staff and students or work on developing the organizations.

One Department Manager summarizes: *‘oh, if I were to give an estimate, I would say that the admin tasks now take up about 80 percent of my work day, sometimes even*

100 percent. You cannot ignore student issues that come up, and now with new law Paragraph 9A that concerns the students learning environment, you get only five days to take measures to solve the cases or else they go to the city chancellor -and then you have to coordinate meetings with the team, perhaps even parents, and you have to map out everything that happened, how it happened and everyone involved -if it is about bullying or whatever -you have to document everything -what has been said, what has been done, what is said and done during the process, until SUDDENLY, there it is. There are so many bureaucratic tasks with deadlines where you just have to get it done.'

Unpredictable work environment. Another problem that made focusing on the intended change intention more challenging was the fact that the work places were highly unpredictable. Even though participants made daily plans and tried hard to prioritize the most important tasks of the day, there were still unforeseen incidents happening on a daily basis. These incidents were of various types, like technical problems with equipment, sudden teacher absence due to illness or students bullying each other. All of them had to be dealt with then and there.

One Department Manager explains: 'suddenly one student hits another student, and stuff like that pulls you away from the must-do administrative tasks because I cannot choose not to deal with incidents like that.'

Sometimes there was not so much about incidents but smaller administrative things like unplanned telephone calls from parents or e-mails from the outside that needed to be answered.

One Department Manager says: 'I have been here for four years now, and I do have to say I notice a great difference in the number of e-mails I get -this is both from the staff but also from the outside'.

In addition, a third aspect mentioned by a couple of participants were tasks that concerned the daily safe and responsible running of the school. For example, the correct classrooms had to be booked at the right time, substitute teachers had to be at the right place, and milk and food deliveries ensured. Much like the other unpredictable aspects of the school and kindergarten environment these tasks could not be ignored either. Thus, the result was that many participants had to deviate from their daily plans and to-do lists and postpone the tasks to later

in the day (or even the next day) to deal with the immediate tasks that occurred. A couple of participants even solved the problem of work load by working longer hours or taking work home with them on the weekends. Still, few managed to be completely on top of things. The overall time and task pressure was therefore significant among most of the participants.

Department Manager: *'it is not so much about being able to choose to prioritize tasks, but the fact that certain tasks keep pushing themselves to the front, you know? (...) and how are you supposed to prioritize? There are no extra resources to draw from, and there is only so many hours of the day at your disposal. (...) The tasks seem to come at you, one after the other like a conveyor belt where you just have to take care of them as they come, so you never get, like, ahead, you know.'*

Department Manager: *'we really do want to focus on improving structures or developing a more efficient running of the school, but all too often the day gets overtaken by events -so of course, at times it certainly feels like it is boiling over here.'*

Unit Leader: *'the thing about trying to structure your day, and trying to choose what to prioritize -well, there is so much stuff going on all the time, and so many things that you have to prepare and do -there is something about trying to even it out a bit so you do not end up with doing nothing at all because it is all so overwhelming.'*

Resources

Leadership. A big topic among all the participants was leadership. They all mentioned to a smaller or bigger degree how their roles as leaders affected people around them, the organizational culture and ultimately the school environment.

Unit Leader: *'there is no doubt that we have an extremely important job, and we talk about this often -at least I have it on my mind often because I know that in the daily running of the school my role is almost insignificant. I am not directly involved in the daily running, but my choices and my behavior, what I focus on, how I relate to my staff -we can see it all affects the culture -or at least the culture responds to it. To change culture is generally quite an endeavor, but we observe that the moment we as a Management Team change direction, we can immediately observe the effects outside -we see the staff responding, almost like in response to us. And if we do not make our focus and intentions clear we start seeing a division in the unit. People would start*

doing all sorts of things then...so I am aware of the impact my role has on the department, how our choice of priorities manifests in the unit.'

All of them were aware of the impact their jobs had on the greater community, through their students. Therefore, many participants were mindful of how they affected the learning environments and how this in turn affected the students' well-being.

Department Manager: *'the well-being of the students is so important and creating a great learning environment for them is what I really love to do. After all, the students are the reason we are here.'*

As leaders they were also very preoccupied with how their actions could motivate or engage their staff, how they could aid their staff in development of confidence and skill and letting them shine. An important part of that was to be able to stay in the background and regulate themselves as leaders.

Unit Leader: *'well, I am the also the supervisor of my Department Manager, and I have been quite occupied with helping her perform her job, you know, like what I can teach her and how I, in this phase, can downplay my presence somewhat so that her position becomes more prominent -we had that survey where we were supposed to measure ourselves and I was big yellow and she was small and grey -and that was actually quite useful to see because it confirmed the fact that my presence is too big, and that she has to come up to the front more (...) so I have been working on that this autumn (...) and I think it is going well, it is going better.'*

Unit Leader: *'how can we, as leaders, contribute so that the school becomes even better, or what do they need from us to be able to perform well?'*

Department Manager: *'(...) at the same time I wanted the Unit Leader to have the opportunity to get to know the staff and put his own mark on the school as well, so I was a bit careful so that I did not -I made sure he got some room to show the school who we were -it was like trying to strike this balance between giving important information, but not overwhelming him either.'*

Unit Leader: *'giving people the opportunity to participate and take on more responsibility and letting them experiment with their comfort zone -it makes people want to do more, it inspires them to want to join and grow and develop their*

competence -I think it is great, and letting people feel their own value, feel that they are important -which they are -they keep wanting to work.'

Some participants stressed how important it was to lift their gaze out towards the bigger community, both locally and internationally, to learn from others. In addition, all participants eagerly joined seminars, conferences or classes about topics that would strengthen their leadership skills or develop their understanding or knowledge about certain areas connected to their leader position. Naturally, they were therefore mostly positive to the School of Leadership program.

Unit Leader: 'networking is something I do actively, absolutely. Being able to exchange experiences with other schools in [city name] is extremely valuable. And we are also actively working with [university] for example, either related to the headmaster educational program or seminars or other things, so, yes, we are actively networking -or at least I do.'

Department Manager: 'that is something I find exciting about the School of Leadership -the fact that you get to lift you gaze up from your own unit and team and look at yourself in comparison to the rest of the Municipality -we are part of something bigger, which is important to remember, or else you only see what you do at your own school.'

Another example of the leadership was provided by one Department Manager, who explained the dilemma of having to be involved enough while at the same time not being too involved in everything.

Department Manager: 'we have these support structures in the administration through various group leaders where each leader is responsible for their group, in a way, like, I am not -it is important that I am not the driver of these groups, it has to be that person who leads the group -but at the same time I have to be there to guide them in the right direction or else they might fall of the track completely (...) but it is really important the person leading the group is responsible for it. If we were responsible for all the groups and made all the decisions, if everything had to go through you -you can forget about it. It just would not be possible to do. (...) but at the same time, we have to know what is going on. Like, for example, when new students arrive the special needs teacher is responsible for receiving them and integrating, but because I

put together the classes later, I need to have the whole picture (..) so we cannot have control of everything, but we need to have enough control.'

And finally, a big part of their leadership was about problem solving. All participants stated that they never avoided tasks and rather wanted to focus on solving the issue in the best way possible, either by asking for support from their colleagues, study the task or bringing the issue to the Management Team to be solved collectively.

Department Manager: *'if there was a task I found myself being anxious about, one that I would rather not take on, I must find out how to solve it in the best way possible -I might ask others for support then (...) I will get support from someone who is more competent in that particular area, or we find a solution together.'*

Mutual social support. Closely related to leadership is the social resource that all the participants invested heavily in. They all emphasized how important these social relationships were for them both professionally and personally. Many participants noted how being approachable and actively supporting to their staff (e.g. stepping in during conflicts with parents, helping out with tasks, greeting staff first) created an 'open dialogue' between the staff and themselves. In addition, this behavior enforced a supportive, cohesive work environment where people were not afraid to ask each other for advice or help.

Department Manager: *'at the same time, me going in to a classroom as an additional resource, for example, is about leadership and building relationships to staff etc. And there is no place where this is written that I have to do it, but if I have the opportunity and time, I like to do something extra -or practical things, as simple as emptying the dishwasher even though it is not my responsibility that day - I will do it because I have time, and my staff really appreciate it -both to be a support for my colleagues, but also for my own benefit so that I know what is going on in the unit'*

Unit Leader: *'like yesterday for example, there was an incident about biting among the smaller kids (...) the father was furious, and I saw that my special needs teacher was almost crying and she felt insecure and she thought this was really difficult to deal with -so for me to step in and be there with her and give support during that conversation with the father, which was way beyond my -like, suddenly the workday was 9-hours long, but I did not care, because you receive so much in return for being that support person -I know they really appreciate it, and then I got feedback later in*

the evening 'thank you so much for supporting me' (...), then it becomes a dialogue! It is a two-way street! So, when I give support to my staff, they give me support in return, you see, so you are in this good dialogue, like a supportive and acknowledging way of being (...) nobody here is alone, I feel like 'I am not alone either, I have the support of my co-workers' and we are doing the job together.'

Department Manager: *'one of my main priorities is to talk with people I do not know very well or whom I do not talk with as often -it is one of my daily goals – 'sit together with people you do not normally sit with' (...) -I have that on my mind every day - because it is so important to get to know the staff, and letting them see that I do not only talk with people I have better chemistry with -it is really important! Being mindful of who you choose to sit with or talk with in the halls -it has to be the people you feel need to be closer to you, who maybe need you a bit more -and whom you know want that contact -some people think 'oh, why is she in my classroom again?' while others think 'why are you never around?' -and to find these people is extremely important -so being aware of this is really, really important.'*

Personal attributes. Finally, the last of the prominent resources are the personal attributes of the participants. Although the participants expressed a demanding and stressful change implementation and current issues with the level of tasks, they were all positive about the change, seeing it as an opportunity to improve and develop rather than an unnecessary and troublesome process.

Unit Leader: *'I find the change experience to be very positive. I feel that it has been so far. I am very excited about continuing.'*

Department Manager: *'(...) to see that I actually make a difference, that is something that gives me energy -you know you do an important job, but at the same time it can be very draining (...) there is something about when you have long workdays and a never-ending list of tasks and you may think 'is this how life is going to be?' – but like you say, there is something about the cognitive processes in regards to that -do you want to have draining thoughts or constructive ones?(...) so this is about your perspective.'*

Unit Leader: *'(...) the topics of this change is not unknown to us, you know, team development, leadership focus, team building, but that does not mean that we do not like the School of Leadership and find it beneficial, because we do. It gives us the*

opportunity to revitalize and rethink things -are there things we do now that can be done differently?'

They were also all high in work engagement and retained their passion for their jobs and their job mission despite the distress. Even though they had little time to spare, many were still more than happy to make extra room for their staff and their students, giving them as much attention as they needed. For example, one Department Manager never said no to her staff if they sought her out to the in her office, 'her door was always open' even though these interruptions affected her work performance. They all made time to continue their professional development as well, but with the future and safety of their schools in mind, not only for their own benefit. Not one of the participants indicated being close to burnout, no matter the level of current stress.

Department Manager: *'of course, there is a lot less freedom and autonomy in the job than I expected after the change (...) so much more administrative tasks than I ever imagined (...) but I love it here -one colleague asked me 'if you knew what you know now, after last autumn, would you still choose it?' and of course I would. I absolutely would.'*

Unit Leader: *'I am never ill or sick because of work. Never. (...) but it is busy here, it really is busy at times -but I like it, I get bored easily, you see, and having things happening throughout the day like that -I really like it. The pace of work here is high, certainly. And that often ends in overtime (...) but I never feel that I am working myself to death here, far from it. I am having a grand time.'*

In sum, the results of the thematic analysis suggested that the degree of job crafting was low. There was some evidence suggesting strategies for reducing hindering demands and for increasing resources, however these proactive activities were quite general and few. In addition, they did not do it for their own benefit, but for the sake of their staff, students and the organization. There were little evidence suggesting an increase of challenge demands as well as joining seminars and taking on extra tasks were more about increasing competence resource and being a resource for their staff. The majority of participants expressed that their situation (i.e. the level of demands and resources) were not that much different from before. The task demands had always been significant (although now increased) and their investment in the social and professional aspects of their jobs had always been important. Thus, the

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findings suggest that job crafting was not much present before the change and did not increase or occur due to the change. In the next section the results will be discussed, and the possible reasons for why job crafting was not found will be explored.

Discussion

Preliminary interviews with Unit Leaders and Department Managers who were undergoing the change project Mindful Leadership in the Norwegian Municipality had suggested a presence of significant amounts of anxiety, uncertainty and stress among the participants due to the change. Increasing demands (e.g. increased workload) were also reported, and there existed traces of proactive behaviors (e.g. seeking more information, adapting tasks to fit the change situation), which seemed to act as a response to the change implementation. Based on these factors and previous change and job crafting literature, a second round of interviews were conducted. This main round of interviews was conducted guided by the thesis question *'Is job crafting used among managers and leaders in a public organization after a change process?'*, however, after analyzing the data, the results demonstrated little evidence in affirming the question. Below, the reasons for why the results did not meet this expectation will be explored, followed by a general discussion of the more general findings in the data. The last sections will address the current master thesis' limitations, and future research will be suggested. Lastly, reflexivity during the work process will be discussed, followed by a summary and conclusion.

The case of possible job crafting

There were several proactive behaviors present in the data. For example, all participants were actively seeking more information, independent of the change. They sought out their colleagues or Unit Leaders for support if there was a situation in which they felt less confident or competent. Lists, strategy plans and extra meetings were created in attempts to regulate the level of demands. Whenever they had time to spare, many participants would volunteer to take on more tasks. These are all examples of proactive behaviors that fit with the job crafting theory. As presented in the earlier theoretical framework section, job crafting may happen in three ways, namely by changing task boundaries, cognitive task boundaries and relational boundaries (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In this master study, the JD-R Model of job crafting was applied, as this was the most recent theory development within job crafting literature. The JD-R Model of job crafting merged the theories of the JD-R Model and the job crafting framework, where this type of job crafting is about actively seeking resources, seeking challenges and reducing demands (Petrou et al., 2015). Within the context of a change process, these behaviors are thought to reshape the job conditions (i.e. the change) in a way that maintains or improves the job-person fit, which is often altered due to the change (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). Although the JD-R Model of job crafting did not include the

cognitive aspect of job crafting (Tims & Bakker, 2010), this current master thesis chose to do so, as the preliminary interviews indicated more than simply passive cognitive responses to the change.

The possible job crafting found in the data seemed to be mostly task and relational crafting. According to theory, these crafting types are also the most common (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In regards to the cognitive task crafting, there were arguably traces of it in the data, as the participants reported being actively mindful of how important their job was to the community. Cognitive crafting has been described by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) as how people make sense of and give meaning to their jobs. Some participants were more vocal about this topic compared to the rest, emphasizing what their work meant to them personally and how the meaningfulness of their jobs would be lost if bureaucracy increased too much, and what they tried to do to prevent this from happening. In many instances, the types of job crafting behaviors that the participants engaged in did not seem to significantly alter their work lives on a great scale, however, as literature states, job crafting does not necessarily have to happen by big noticeable actions – it might just be about skill development or regulating the degree of difficulty of tasks (Petrou et al., 2015; Tims et al., 2012). The results are therefore still in line with job crafting literature – the participants increased resources (i.e. skills, social, positive attitudes), increased challenge demands (i.e. taking on extra tasks) while reducing demands (i.e. lists, plans).

However, while it might seem like the thesis question of the study was supported, when looking at the results in total, it becomes less viable to confidently conclude that job crafting was present or that it occurred as a response to the change project. This is because few behaviors were related to the actual change, and on the few occasions they were, the behaviors had also been present before the change. In other words, the proactive behaviors were largely unrelated to the change project itself. In addition, the behaviors were rarely self-centered – if at all – which is not in line with the job crafting theory. Furthermore, few to none of the proactive behaviors were done with the intention of reducing a particular demand or increasing a particular resource. This held true even if one considered the fact that the possible job crafting would happen unknowingly – there were little to no evidence that supported the link between a particular proactive behavior and the reduction of demand or increase of resource. This was one of the criteria that Petrou et al. (2015) states as a factor in their description of JD-R Model of job crafting. Thus, the thesis question is therefore not easily supported, and one needs to look for alternative explanations for the proactive behaviors found.

Coping strategies

As presented previously in this paper there exists an enormous amount of literature related to proactive behaviors at work aside from job crafting (e.g. organizational citizenship, role innovation). All of these theories could potentially give an in-depth and broad understanding of the data, however, to limit this master thesis, the results will be framed within the general theoretical frameworks of the JD-R Model and coping strategies to change (see *Theoretical framework*, p. 15). These topics have previously been mentioned in earlier sections. First, in this section, the results will be assessed in the view of coping strategies. To refresh, coping strategies are various types of strategies individuals may employ to deal with internal or external stressors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980), where it has been argued that the most effective strategies are the ones that are proactive (Griffin & Hesketh, 2003). During a change process, proactive coping strategies are thought to aid in restoration of the job-person fit that is often unbalanced due to the changing demands and resources in the working environment (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). Job crafting has been suggested as one example of a coping strategy to change that deals with the external environment (i.e. regulation of external change factors, rather than internal ones within oneself) (van den Heuvel et al., 2010). However, as seen above, while there seem to be little actual job crafting behavior, the proactive behaviors still fit well with the general coping strategy literature. Based on previous works, as well as their own study, Robinson and Griffiths (2005) made a list of four common coping strategies to change, these four categories being: task-centered coping, social support-based coping, cognitive coping, and emotion-focused coping (see Table 5).

Table 5

Coping strategies, taken from Robinson & Griffiths (2005)

Coping type	Coping Response
Task-centered coping	Continued commitment
	Delegation
	Work longer hours
	Prioritizing and organizing
Social support-based coping	Emotional social support
	Instrumental social support
	Information seeking
Cognitive coping	Resigned acceptance
	Positive reinterpretation
	Detachment from work
	Switching off after work
Emotion-focused coping	Avoiding confrontation
	Confrontation
	Emotional restraint
	Focusing on, and venting, emotions

The three first coping categories (task-centered, social support, cognitive) in this table fit extremely well with the findings in the current master study. The participants worked longer hours when the need arose, they delegated tasks among themselves, and they tried prioritizing and organizing to the best of their abilities. They were all proactive in seeking more information about the new responsibilities or tasks they were given, and they sought out both professional and personal support from their colleagues. There were also talks about how the participants used hobbies, cottage vacations and physical exercise to switch off from work. After the initial resigned acceptance of the change project situation, they all chose to try to make the best of it, choosing to focus on the opportunities that the change might bring. and emotion-oriented (social). A paper by Lawrence and Callan (2011) further backs up the social support coping aspect of Robinson and Griffiths' table, as they found evidence suggesting that perceived available support played a mediating role when coping with organizational change.

These coping strategies seemed effective enough for the participants, as their stress levels were not unmanageable despite the demands. This is in line with coping strategy literature which states that coping strategies are able to diminish the impact of work stressors, such as work demands (Begley, 1998), when a given strategy and a corresponding situation is combined (Fugate, Kinicki, & Prussia, 2008). In the earlier theoretical framework section, it was mentioned that different coping strategies have different focus areas; they are either problem-oriented, emotion-oriented or stressor-oriented (van den Heuvel et al., 2010). In this case, the strategies utilized by the participants seemed to be mostly problem-oriented. Dealing directly with a problem (e.g. in this case administrative tasks or student incidents) that is considered changeable produces positive effects as it responds to the stressor itself, increasing the feelings of efficacy in the participants, which further stimulate positive results (Begley, 1998). This might therefore explain the how the coping strategies in this study buffers the negative effects of the task demands.

The JD-R Model, without job crafting

An alternative way of viewing the results is through the JD-R Model. As presented in earlier sections of this master thesis the JD-R Model is an occupational stress model concerned with how job factors may cause strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These factors are physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job, categorized as 'job demands' or 'job resources'. Job demands may potentially cause stress if they exceed the individual's adaptive capability (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job resources, on the other hand, may lead to increased abilities to perform, may buffer the effect of the demands and/or increase motivation (Demerouti et al., 2001). The main reason for the argument that the data may fit better in the general JD-R Model framework rather than job crafting, is that at its essence, job crafting is ego-centric. The job demands and resources are regulated to fit better with the *individual's* preferences and needs regardless of the organization's goals and wishes (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In addition, within job crafting theory, the regulation of the job demands and resources are done with a focused intention (Petrou et al., 2015). In other words, the proactive behaviors are purposeful, as the very definition of job crafting states how the employee *proactively changes* aspects of their jobs (Berg et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims et al., 2014). The data in this current master thesis did not meet these criteria in a satisfactory manner – the participants were focused out towards the organization, their subordinates and the students, and their proactive behaviors were not done with intent of enhancing their own jobs for the sake of themselves.

Now, viewing the data in the light of the general JD-R Model framework, rather than that of the job crafting, the data falls in line with the JD-R theory. When looking at the substantial levels of demands, one would expect the participants to be experiencing significantly more strain than they presented with and reported. This may be explained by the fact that while demands were indeed high, they were matched by the levels of. The participants' great personal resilience (e.g. cognitive, personality) as well as their work relationships seemed to act as a buffer on the potential negative impact of the demands. This is in accordance to previous JD-R literature, where social support as a resource has been seen to act as a potential buffer against job strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In addition to adding to individuals' general well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985), social support also assists employees in achieving work goals as support from colleagues may help get the work done on time, reducing the perceived overload of work (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). The JD-R Model may also explain the situation where a Department Manager and a Unit Leader were on the opposite ends of the stress scale. The former, who was newly employed at their school, reported feeling more restricted in their ability to deal with the demands, while the latter reported no signs of stress, feeling very satisfied with the workload. Based on the theoretical framework of the general JD-R Model (not job crafting), they seemed to simply have different levels of resources available. For example, the Department Manager had not had a leadership post before and was, according to the Department Manager, unskilled in prioritizing as of yet. They were also new to the organization, which makes one assume that they might not have the social relationships established to the same degree as the Unit Leader. They also reported not feeling as confident in their role as leader yet, perhaps not having had enough time to assimilate that identity with the rest of their character. The Unit Leader, on the other hand, had been in a leadership post for many years and was also familiar with their workplace. This most likely acted as a great resource when facing the increased demands – they were skilled in planning and prioritizing, they had established social relationships, they were familiar with the workplace, and they were confident of their position as leader. They also reported that their home situation was ideal, adding to their resources. Thus, the two participants seemed to have had very different circumstances to begin with, resulting in different levels of strain due to different levels of resources. This is in line with previous literature and the general JD-R Model, which states that employees with more resources experience less stress than employees with less resources (Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010). This situation also agrees with the motivational aspect of the JD-R Model, which states that job

resources have a motivational potential that may lead to high work engagement among other things (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which seems to be the case of the Unit Leader.

As seen above, it seems more feasible to conclude the results within the realm of the general JD-R Model or within the coping strategies literature rather than job crafting. However, there is no need for this case to be an either-or situation as it might be possible to combine the arguments made of the general JD-R Model and coping strategies. It can be argued that the participants' contexts and circumstances is linked to the demands and resources of the JD-R Model, while the actual behaviors presented in the accounts were active utilization of strategies to cope with the demands. In other words, the participants made sure to have the suitable resources available by making use of practical coping strategies (e.g. organizing, prioritizing, seeking information, seeking social support). This is in line with Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources theory which states that successfully dealing with high job demands is only possible when one has the correct resources in dealing with these demands (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Thus, while the data content may indeed fit the theoretical framework of the JD-R, one might argue that the practical aspect of the data fits the coping strategies framework. In the follow section, there will be a general discussion, where other contextual factors that might have influenced the results will be presented.

General discussion

Now that the theoretical explanations of why job crafting was not found in the data has been explored, it is also worth mentioning other possible reasons for why and how the results came to be. The following section will bring the discussion slightly outside the realm of the chosen theoretical framework for this master thesis and will be more based on speculation or inferences. These points are included as they may widen the perspective on the results, and therefore perhaps bring further understanding to the topic.

First, an aspect to consider is the level of impact the change project Mindful Leadership had on the participants' daily work lives as this is related to the amount of job crafting expected. Surprisingly, despite the moderate to high increase in demands and stress in comparison to the situation before the change, the participants reported that their work lives were largely the same as before. There were several contextual reasons why the change had such a low impact on the different workplaces, as reported by the participants. For example, one school was relatively small, needing every member of the Management Team involved in the happenings at the school – the implementation of Department Manager position did not change this. Another school already implemented the structure of a two-level leader model,

and again, the change initiative did not make much of a difference to the daily administrative running of the school. However, as mentioned previously there were two participants with contrasting experiences concerning the change, and in regards to the change impact, they again represented as the outliers. The Unit Leader felt that the change had given them more autonomy and more freedom to focus on leadership and development, while the Department Manager reported low levels of autonomy and that they felt very restricted to the practical, bureaucratic administration tasks. Interestingly, though, no matter the level of change impact, *all* the participants reported that there was no difference in proactive behaviors or work engagement from before. In addition, although the participants did indeed notice a slight to high increase in task demands, and therefore stress, they all stated that this situation was not unfamiliar to them. Not being able to complete tasks, dealing with the unpredictable work environment and always failing to following their priorities list (despite good attempts) was accepted as part of the job. Several of the participants had worked numerous years in both the teacher and the leader position, and they said that the task demands were the same, except the intensity was slightly higher in the leader position. Considering these factors (i.e. low change impact, same type of behaviors as before the change, being used to high task demands) it is therefore not unnatural that the job crafting behaviors were not as present as there were little need to engage in it. This is in line with Petrou et al. (2015) who suggests that one of the factors that may trigger job crafting during change processes is the impact the change has on people's daily activities. As seen in this case, the participants' daily work lives were largely untouched by the change, and there was therefore no need to engage in alternative coping behaviors, thus perhaps making the JD-R Model of job crafting unnecessary.

Another possible explanation for why job crafting was not found is that while the participants are indeed employees in the hierarchy of the municipality, they seemed to considerer themselves leaders first and foremost, and their accounts were therefore strongly influenced by this perspective. In other words, the participants' sense of leader identity was stronger than that of the employee in the municipality. This makes sense, as the participants acted as the upper management in their own organizations on day-to-day basis. As mentioned previously (see *Theoretical framework*, p. 15), job crafting is a bottom-up, employee-focused perspective to job redesign, and as their identification with the position of leader was stronger than that of an employee, the job crafting theory is perhaps therefore not as applicable in this situation. Following this line of thought, one arrives at the topic of leadership. In the case of this current master study, the participants seemed to follow the principles of transformational leadership rather than strictly management leadership, as their accounts were characterized by

their consideration of the people around them. Lowe and Galen (1996) argues that transformational leadership is the most ideal leadership form in many cases. Among other things, this leadership style is characterized by the leader's consideration of the individual employee and their abilities to motivate and inspire their employees (Politis, 2001). It is different from the more traditional strict management type of leadership by the fact that this leadership style is more about development and movement, while the latter is more about hierarchy and order (Kotter, 1990). This is supported by Bush (2008) who describes leadership as change and management as maintenance. Demonstrated by the participants, they were all preoccupied with how they, as leaders, could improve their knowledge, behavior and leadership – albeit not for their own benefit, but for the sake of their staff and students. The welfare and development of the people around them was given emphasis, rather than how they could improve their own work for their own sake. The participants were more invested in what constitutes great leadership with the intention of improving conditions for the school, a notion that was strengthened by the fact that all of the participants, independent of each other, talked about the same leadership themes, using the same language. This selfless leadership characteristic does not fit well with the previously mentioned ego-centric focus of the job crafting theory and could be an explanation why job crafting behaviors were not present in the data in the way that was expected.

Linked to the hierarchy of administration, there was a general finding that was interesting to note; namely the seeming existence of a slight difference in stress levels among the Unit Leaders in comparison to the Department Managers. From the main data it was clear that Department Managers were perhaps slightly to moderately more stressed than the Unit Leaders when it came to task demands. There seemed to be two factors that explained this; the Department Managers had more direct contact with the work environment, compared to the Unit Leaders, and they had less opportunity to delegate tasks downwards, compared to the Unit Leaders. Both these points can be argued to be a natural occurrence due to the administrative hierarchy – even though the Department Managers and the Unit Leaders, as a Management Team, are supposed to be on the same level in the two-leader model, the Unit Leaders are still officially above the Department Managers. As a result, the Unit Leaders mostly dealt with the Management Teams and less with the staff, while the Department Managers, were more directly involved with practical, daily running of the schools and kindergartens compared to the Unit Leaders. The hierarchy also enabled the Unit Leaders to delegate tasks downwards/outwards more freely than the Department Managers. This is in line with literature, which suggests that middle managers often have more pressure on their

position due to having to be the mediator between the upper management and the rest of the staff (Currie & Procter, 2005).

The last topic to be raised is that of the participants' personality as they seemed to exhibit a common leadership personality profile. Note that this argument is purely based on speculation due to the lack of personality tests conducted in this current study. Still, it is an interesting aspect to consider as the personality (a latent variable) of the participants may have indirectly impacted the data results. In addition, literature have suggested that personality attributes may affect managerial behavior (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2013). Personality may be defined as 'a spectrum of individual attributes that consistently distinguish people from one another in terms of their basic tendencies to think, feel, and act in certain ways' (Ones, Viswesvaren, & Dilchert, 2005). Considering what they chose to focus on during the interviews, presented in their accounts as thought processes and actions, the participants seemed to demonstrate similar personality characteristics that may paint a common profile of the participants as leaders. Several participants talked about creating to-do lists and action plans or making use of calendars and notebooks. That in itself might not be surprising seeing how intense the work day could be, however the common factor was how the participants emphasized the importance of being ahead of things or being on top of things by creating strategies and plans. It was important for the majority of them to have a plan, a strategy, to have a clear overview, not only for the organization but for their own benefit and their daily work lives. To the best of their abilities they always sought to reach their set goals of the day or the general goals of the change. Considering the commonly used Five Factor Model of Personality (divided in the five traits Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990), the participants seemed to demonstrate a high level of conscientiousness. Conscientiousness concerns the individual's dependability, achievement striving and planfulness (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001).

Next, the participants emphasized the social aspect of their work lives and how important this was to them personally, not only professionally. They were concerned with the wellbeing of both their staff and their students, expressing desire to contribute to development and happiness. None of the participants expressed dislike or exhaustion in regards to the social aspect of the job. In addition, they all seemed to have a positive outlook on the future, and a positive perspective to the change despite the stress they had endured or were currently in. They expressed positivity towards joining projects like Mindful Leadership or sought out additional courses (e.g. headmaster course), conferences and seminars (both locally and

internationally) whenever they had the opportunity. Therefore, they arguably seemed to exhibit decent levels of Extroversion, which is about levels of sociability, dominance ambition, positive emotionality and excitement seeking (Vassend & Skrandal, 2011). The personality factor Openness to Experience was not as clearly seen in the data, however it would be reasonable to assume that they would have scored at least medium on these factors, as they are about creativity and broad-mindedness (Barrick et al., 2001). The last two factors, Agreeableness and Neuroticism/Emotional stability did not seem to be as prominent in the data; however, one may assume that these would have been medium to low as they measure cooperation, trustfulness, compliance and affability, and anxiety, hostility, depression and personal insecurity, respectively (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). This is because, as leaders it is not necessary to have high levels of agreeableness in the same way as an employee would as they need to be more dominant and assertive in their leadership (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2013). Further, all the participants seemed to demonstrate high levels of work engagement, positivity, and self-assuredness, which is why the Neuroticism should be low. Research on personality in the face of change indicates that traits like locus of control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive affectivity and tolerance to ambiguity, among others, may influence the managerial responses to organizational change (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999), thus the participants' personalities (both individual and as leaders) might have had some impact on how they chose to deal with the change project and its demands.

One final comment will be made about the data results. The participants reported a significant presence of anxiety, uncertainty and stress. It is possible to read it in the light of the previous personality traits argument (i.e. could be Neuroticism), however, it may also be considered reactions independent of personality, as literature states that these emotions are a common – and largely inevitable – experience during change processes (Olson & Tetrick, 1988). Especially the re-employment phase of the project created the highest levels of stress and uncertainty as nobody quite knew what was going to happen and how, and what the consequences would be. Thus, uncertainty and anxiety remained. These elements are common to organizational environments (Milliken, 1987), but increase during change processes (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997) due to the aforementioned mismatch between the person-environment fit that may happen during a change (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The participants' stress responses in this current master study therefore seemed to correspond to previous literature. This uncertainty (and following stress) is often linked to the level of communication during the change (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). The preliminary interviews and the main interviews supported this as the participants reported

feelings of dissatisfaction in regards to the given information. Due to these feelings, people started talking amongst each other, resulting in rumors spreading, further increasing uncertainty, anxiety and stress. Lastly, change literature often has an employee perspective or middle manager perspective as changes are often initiated by the administration and impacts the organization downwards, but in this study the change project was imposed on the participants from above (i.e. the municipality), where they had little say in the matter. Thus, even though the participants were part of the upper management, they were in this case essentially in the same situation as the employees in general change literature. Their stress responses were therefore a natural reaction to the change implementation, and in line with change literature.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this current master study. First, if one considers the articles and literature used, the research on the topic of job crafting is relatively new, and job crafting during organizational change even more so. Literature on the former has started to gain solid traction due to almost two decades of research, with studies being done across nations, professions and contexts, the literature on the latter is still sparse. While studies are of different research designs (e.g. choice of participants, cross-sectional data, longitudinal data) there has not been sufficient amount of studies of each type or particular topic to generalize the results. There are also only a few studies that have looked at job crafting in changing public organizations; the majority of studies having been conducted among private sections. Most studies have also maintained a focus on the employee (not surprising due to the nature of job crafting theory), however this means that conclusions on those studies had to be translated to the administrative level, something that may not have been transferable in the first place. Thus, this might have had an impact on this current study. Another problem was also that while articles on job crafting during change was perhaps too specific on what they investigated, the parts concerning job crafting were too general, never truly stating how the JD-R Model of job crafting played out in practice. Based on these arguments, there is still very little known of how job crafting occurs during change processes, how JD-R Model of job crafting works in practice and under what circumstances. This is in contrast to change literature, which has a long tradition. Here, finding enough and varied articles on change processes, both in private or public organizations, was less difficult compared to the job crafting literature review. These articles were both of cross sectional and longitudinal design. Perhaps the biggest issue that emerged in this part of the current study was to limit oneself to

the most relevant literature, as change literature has a great many theories, models and approaches available for application to one's own study.

In regards to this current master thesis there are several things done during this process that can be done differently in the future. For example, it might be interesting to investigate other sections in the Municipality in addition to, or instead of, the Sector of Education and Upbringing. This notion is based on reports by some participants who felt that it was too early in the change process to be sure of any substantial differences in their daily work lives. The interviews might therefore have yielded different results if they had been carried out in some of the sectors that had completed the change project several months prior, as they might have had noticed bigger differences in their work lives. In addition, some participants held the opinion that the change project was more beneficial for other sectors in the municipality than their own. This was because they felt that other sectors were more in need of the change than themselves, due to the fact that some schools already worked under the very structure that the change wanted to implement, or that some schools were too small to be able to implement the change (as seen in the results section of this paper). This issue might have been noticed and investigated more during the start-up phase of this master study if one had taken more time to read up about the project and tried to properly understand the different contexts of the different sectors. In other words, what the situation for the sectors before the change project was, and what exactly the change project was trying to achieve for each sector. However, as this was a master study, it would have been too great a task, and the Sector of Education and Upbringing was chosen due to convenience. As this might not be an issue for future studies, it is encouraged to investigate other sectors as well.

When it comes to the choice of participants, there was perhaps not an optimal selection, as the gender balance was skewed in both interview rounds (i.e. largely female). Still, perhaps this gender imbalance makes sense in the master study as most employees in these organizations are female (Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet. 2018). Having an equal number of male and female participants in this case would perhaps not have been representative of reality. Next, participation in the study was voluntary. Thus, the current study might have missed out on individuals who might have had stronger reactions to the change than the ones who did sign up, as they did not have time or energy enough to join the study. Ideally, participants should have been randomly chosen from the list of people in the School of Leadership. By involving the individuals with the strongest reactions to the change, one might have picked up on other coping behaviors than the ones found among the current participants. However, as participation needs to be voluntary, it is difficult to involve these

individuals unless they choose to do so. It is therefore important to be aware that the results in this study is perhaps not a true representation of how the group of people in that particular School of Leadership course reacted and dealt with the change.

The choice of using semi-structured interviews was decided upon fairly quickly due to its familiarity and because it was considered the most fitting type of data collection to our study. This decision was also based on previous literature, which has stated that semi-structured interviews are one of the most widely used qualitative data collection methods and is perhaps the most effective interview method as it is neither too rigid nor too open in its execution (Willig, 2013). However, as seen in the results section of this current paper the participants seemed unsure of what job crafting really was and answered the questions out of their own familiar definitions of leadership. One might therefore have benefited from alternative methods of data collection. This notion is supported by previous literature which suggest that a mix of methods may be advantageous as they may reinforce findings (Jamshed, 2014). In this case, one might have chosen to do a mix of data collection methods like observations of daily work lives after the change project, a short job crafting questionnaire and a short semi-structured interview. By observing, the researcher could categorize the occurring behaviors themselves, alleviating the participants' struggle to think of ways they may job craft. Alternatively, one might have given the participant a diary to note down in themselves, as diary studies have been proven to be somewhat effective (e.g. Damps (2017), Nielsen et al. (2017)). However, this would have demanded a level of commitment from the participants that they might not have been able to give considering their stress levels at the time, and again, it would have been difficult to achieve within the give frameworks of a master study. The job crafting questionnaires (which was used in the semi-structured interviews) would ensure that the participants got the same information and questions about job crafting, as the oral explanations different slightly from time to time. Lastly, one could then have done some semi-structured interviews based on the observations or the answers on the questionnaire, thus anchoring the interviews in something that has been known to occur, and that the participants recognize. Still, considering how the circumstances of the schools turned out to be (e.g. small workplace) changing the data collection method might still not have given any support to the thesis question of job crafting being present after the change project. Nevertheless, this is something to consider if one wants to investigate other sectors in the municipality in the future.

Lastly, another possible limitation to the current master thesis is linked to the choice of analysis method. Ideally, the method of analysis should be chosen with care and as early in

the study process as possible as the research approach, methodology and subsequent analysis underpins the research question (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015). In this current study, flexibility to changes in topics and theory was important, and the choice of analysis method (i.e. TA) reflected this decision. However, as Willig (2013) states, the theoretical flexibility of thematic analysis is a double-edged sword, where one needs to be very clear on the research question and the aim of the study for thematic analysis to be a good choice. As this was not the case in the start-up phase of this master thesis, one should perhaps have taken time to consider other options. For example, because the approach in the beginning of the study was to not have any prior theoretical knowledge of the topic, grounded theory, where theory emerges from the data, might have been more useful. In addition, the practical aspect of thematic analysis was unfamiliar, and thus the inexperience of analyzing and interpreting texts may have influenced the results. At the same time, one must also acknowledge that there is a limit to what the data may represent as well, and that this is dependent on choices prior to the analysis stage. Again, due to the way the research progress unfolded, it was too late to make major changes once the final topic was decided, and thematic analysis remained the chosen analysis method.

Further research

While the results in this current master thesis did not support the thesis question it is still a highly relevant topic and should be investigated further. As stated previously, there is a clear gap in literature about job crafting during change processes, and even less about how it plays out in public organizations. Furthermore, while job crafting is in essence about the employee, it is still stated that *all* individuals may job craft in *any* type of job (Tims & Bakker 2012) – it has even been suggested that all people do job craft to some extent (Rudolph et al., 2017). It is therefore still relevant to investigate how job crafting occurs due to change processes on all organizational levels. This will give a better understanding of how individuals in an organization, including people in the administration, respond to stressful change process. Other types of jobs would also be of interest, as different professions may react differently to change due to different levels of business focus. For example, how would people in a highly competitive job environment cope and respond to organizational change? This idea is based on the notion that not all employees respond to changes in a proactive fashion (Petrou et al., 2015). Bell and Staw (1989) have previously stated how situational factors and individual characteristics shape human behavior, while Parker, Bindl, and Strauss (2010) proposed that contextual factors (e.g., job stressors) and individual differences (e.g., openness to change or

positive affect) shape employee motivation to be proactive. This is why it would be interesting to follow some of the paths that emerged from the discussion of this master thesis.

For example, interesting factors to investigate further would be job crafting in relation leadership styles or personality during organizational changes. This is based on papers that suggest how leadership styles may influence how people deal with organizational changes (Appelbaum, Degbe, Macdonald, & Nguyen-Quang, 2015; Holten & Brenner, 2015). For personality, Judge et al. (1999) investigated how personal traits may influence responses to change in the organization (e.g. openness to change, self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive affectivity). Although their study only found two of the seven traits to have a significant prediction value of managerial responses to change, there seems to be an association between personality traits and responses to change. Thus, this aspect is interesting to continue investigating, and see how personality may mediate organizational change and job crafting behaviors. Next, it might be interesting to investigate further how gender influences the likelihood of choosing job crafting as a coping strategy opposed to alternative strategies. This is based on the study of Torkelson and Muhonen (2003) who found evidence suggesting a difference in preference among men and women in regards coping strategies used during change processes. In their study, results suggested that women tend to make use of more emotion-focused coping strategies (e.g. seeking social support) than the men. Four of the five participants in the main data collection of this master study were women, which may explain why social support arose as a one of the most prominent coping strategies. Torkelson and Muhonen (2003) did not, however, find that men seem to use more problem-focused coping strategies than the women, which was contrary to previous literature. Much like this current master thesis, their study was conducted on men and women in a governmental sector during a change process. This makes it even more important to pursue this matter, as studies on change in public organizations and job crafting are rare.

Lastly, an interesting point is that some participants in this current master thesis study expressed that they had little to no leftover time to focus on the intention of the change as they (i.e. leadership, development of the school). In other words, they did not have, at that point in time, enough resources to do anything but *react* to the change. It may therefore be interesting to go back to the same group of participants later, once things have settled more and routines have become established. This is based on Tims and Bakker's (2013) argument job crafting is more applicable in practice on jobs high on autonomy, as making changes is easier in such positions. Several of the participants indicated a general satisfactory level of autonomy in their jobs in everyday life aside from the change, and job crafting may therefore occur more

readily at a later point in time. In any case, this is an idea to bring to future studies on job crafting and change processes. Due to the general gap in knowledge about job crafting in change literature, it is always useful to investigate further on different types of organizations, different kinds of job positions, groups, or cultures. This is based on Kuipers et al.'s (2014) argument that most change literature conducted in public sectors are mostly done in Western societies (most notably in English-speaking countries like the United States), and therefore this research area needs more diversity.

Reflexivity

In this section, reflections around the reflexivity during the research process will be briefly discussed. While emphasis on reflexivity varies across different qualitative research methods, Willig (2013) states no matter which methodology or epistemological position one chooses, it is always necessary to have 'an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research' (Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 9, para. 2). Based on this, this reflexivity section is an important part to include in the master study.

Choice of topic. My inspiration concerning the topic of job crafting came through comments in the preliminary interview data about lack of resources and guidelines, increased stress and uncertainty together with using resources to make the best of the situation (e.g. seeking out more information, creating own leader-teams, having extra information meetings with staff outside the official meetings, thinking positive). My eagerness to study job crafting may have been influenced by the fact that I had written an essay about it last year, and that I had already considered the topic of job crafting in change processes earlier in the spring. This was because I was interested in job crafting in addition to wanting to learn more about change processes. At the time, I attempted doing research without preconceptions of what participants were experiencing. Still, I might have had the topic in the back of my head subconsciously because I started thinking about it again after the first round of transcriptions (i.e. I felt I found traces of it in the interviews). It was around this time I changed supervisors, and I was given approval of the topic. The traces were perhaps just that, however as our preliminary interviews included *very* broad questions, it was worth exploring further. In addition, I did an initial literature research on the topic of job crafting and change processes, finding enough papers on it for it to actually be a relevant topic to explore. Still, I was indeed aware that the traces were small, and I therefore decided to do another round of interviews, this time

specifically focusing on job crafting. For this main round of data collection, my approach was slightly different as I based my interview on previous theoretical knowledge.

It is worth noting that reading up on theoretical literature before doing the analysis may have caused me to be too concentrated on only one part of the data, neglecting the subtler features (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This might not necessarily be a negative thing as I had decided the specific topic and specific research question beforehand, thus making it less meaningful to focus too much on other aspects of the data. At the same time re-readings of my data gave me indications that my results may not be purely job crafting after all, and previous literature had already made me aware of other alternative explanations for my findings. Thus, I stand by my decision to have some previous knowledge of the topic before analysis.

Choice of written language. Because I took my Bachelor of Science in Psychology in England I have become accustomed to, and most comfortable with, writing academically using the English language. I continued writing English on my academic papers when I returned to Norway, and therefore chose to continue writing English on my Master thesis. I found it unnecessary to write Norwegian as most of the literature I read was in English, in addition to the fact that if my paper were to be published I would most likely have to publish in English anyway. I do, however, acknowledge the challenges that will arise when translating from Norwegian to English during my analysis. My interviews are done in Norwegian and so the transcripts are in the Norwegian language. I am therefore acutely aware that the meaning of Norwegian words will not always be 100 % equivalent to the meaning of English words and vice versa. Nevertheless, I do believe I have made the right choice in writing English as it will make a much better and comprehensive text in the final report than if I wrote in Norwegian. I simply had to remember the possible divergence of meaning in words and be aware of it in the analysis process.

Analysis process. Some things that I thought I already knew were re-defined during the analysis. For example, during the interviews I had categorized enrolling on extra courses as increasing challenging demands in my head. But during the actual data analysis I realized that those actions fit better in the increased resources than increasing challenging demands, as they had increased knowledge and competence, not given themselves more tasks during their workday. The challenging aspect of the analysis was the defining and re-defining of the job crafting categories, in other words what data fit in which category. The semi-guided interview both gave me a general direction of the conversations, but also allowed the participants to talk freely, resulting in data that did not always correspond to the category. For me, that made it

less clear where the actions fitted. Thus, there were a lot of decisions made regarding the definitions of the categories during the first interview analysis, which is both natural and necessary, according to Braun and Clarke (2006).

Conclusion

In this master thesis study, a handful of units within the Sector of Education and Upbringing in a Norwegian Municipality were investigated for the occurrence of job crafting after undergoing the change project Mindful Leadership. The thesis question was *'Is job crafting used among managers and leaders in a public organization after a change process?'* where the topics of interest were whether job crafting was present and whether it occurred as a coping response to the change. The results did not seem to fully support the existence of job crafting, raising the need to look for additional or alternative explanations for how people responded to the change and why these responses occurred. This was discussed, and future research has been suggested accordingly. Considering how change has now seemed to become determined as one of the inevitable aspects of organizational life, and the emotional, physical and psychological strain it puts on individuals (Petrou et al., 2015), this is an extremely important topic to pursue further. As job crafting is thought of as a type of coping strategy to change, future research on this topic might also shed some light on coping strategies to change in general, which is needed. This is based on arguments by Fugate et al., (2008) who states that despite the importance of coping, there is no consensus on the structure of how people cope. In other words, there is little knowledge about the relationship between coping constructs (i.e., cognitive appraisals, emotions, and coping strategies) at a given point in time, and how these influence various coping outcomes in a given context. Research on job crafting during change processes is still a very recent development in job crafting literature, and a considerable gap exists, which needs to be filled. So far, little is known about the way in which a changing work environment stimulates job crafting or the effects of job crafting on employee health and performance after a change (Petrou et al., 2015). Further understanding of how individuals respond and deal with organizational change, and how job crafting may play a role in these processes is of great practical and theoretical importance, for both researchers, practitioners, employees, and leaders, and will continue to be relevant for many years to come.

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Appendix A

Information sheet given to participants to sign

Informasjonsskriv for intervjuer

Bakgrunn og formål

Vi er to masterstudenter i Arbeids- og Organisasjonspsykologi fra NTNU som skal samle inn data for masteroppgaven vår som omhandler omstillingsprosesser og ledelse.

Vi søker dermed etter deltakere i Trondheim kommunes utviklingsprosjekt, Helhetlig Ledelse for å kunne kartlegge gjeldende temaer og aspekter som kan oppstå ved en slik omorganisering. Siden Trondheim kommune er den første av kommunene til å utføre denne type restrukturering av ledernivåene, kan din deltakelse bidra med viktig informasjon til videre forskning og praksis av hvordan slike prosesser påvirker arbeidsmiljø og ansatte.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Vi tenker å gjennomføre to runder med intervjuer der det vil brukes lydopptaker.

Hensikten med første runde er å utforske gjeldende temaer for prosessen, De vil vare ca. 15min. Runde to vil være noe lengre (ca. 45min) og basere seg på informasjon fra tidligere intervjuer. I tillegg har vi tenkt å observere deltakerne under de to første prosjektmøtene for å tilføre ny og bredere forståelse til dataene vi samler.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt under innsamlingsprosessen, og være anonyme i den endelige rapporten.

Identifiserbare personopplysninger og all innsamlet data og informasjon er konfidensielt, og vil bli behandlet anonymt videre i transkribering og analyse av dataene. Deltakelse i studiet vårt er helt frivillig, og du kan til enhver tid trekke deg ut av studien, selv etter at intervjuene er fullført. All innsamlet data vil oppbevares på passordbeskyttede enheter, og slettet når oppgaven er innlevert.

Personopplysninger som navn eller postadresse vil bli oppbevart slik at de ikke kan kobles til intervjuene. Bare studentene Rebekka Thomsen & Erik Barbuti, og veileder Per Øystein Saksvik vil ha tilgang til personopplysningene. Om studien publiseres, vil all informasjon forbli anonymt og ingen opplysninger kan spores tilbake til deltakerne.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes mai 2018.

Alle opplysninger og lydopptak vil bli slettet etter innlevert og godkjent oppgave.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg samt innsamlet data fra deg bli slettet.

Studien er meldt til og godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

Har du videre spørsmål angående studien kan du kontakte prosjektveileder Per Øystein Saksvik på tlf: 73 55 03 303 og/eller e-post per.saksvik@ntnu.no
Masterstudent Rebekka Thomsen på e-mail: rebekkt@ntnu.no
Masterstudent Erik Barbuti på e-mail: embarbut@ntnu.no

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

- Jeg samtykker at jeg har lest informasjonsskrivet gitt om studien
- Jeg samtykker til å delta i studien
- Jeg samtykker til data fra observasjon brukes

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix B

Interview guide for preliminary interviews

Spørsmål 1: Hvordan opplever du den pågående omstillingsprosessen Helhetlig Ledelse som er igangsatt av Trondheim Kommune?

Oppfølging	Notater

Spørsmål 2: Hva tenker du om innføring av det nye lederleddet “Avdelingsleder”?

Oppfølging	Notater

Spørsmål 3: Hva mener du er viktig for at en omstillingsprosess som denne skal utføres på best mulig måte?

Oppfølging	Notater

Appendix C

Interview guide for main interviews

(basert på (Nielsen & Abildsgaard, 2012) → basert på (Tims & Bakker, 2012), verified (Nielsen et al, 2015). Kognitiv basert på (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013).

Temaet mitt for studien er hvordan job crafting brukes under en omstillingsprosess. Job crafting handler om hvordan et individ aktivt former jobben sin – dette kanskje på tre måter (kombinert eller alene): 1) ved å øke resurser, 2) minke hemmende krav (altså krav som skaper stress) og 3) øke utfordrende krav (altså krav som bidrar til selv-utvikling). Resurser og krav er grovt delt inn i tre dimensjoner: sosiale, fysiske og kognitive. Det er disse dimensjonene vi vil komme inn på under intervjuet.

Bakgrunn for temavalget er at job crafting kan oppstå i større eller mindre grad i alle typer jobber, selv om man ikke alltid ved at det er det man gjør. Det kan være fordelt utover arbeidsdagen (altså generelt i jobben), og spesielt da i jobber med mye autonomi (da er job crafting ofte i en positiv kontekst), men det er også kjent som en midlertidig løsning som en reaksjon på stressende eller problematiske jobb perioder.

I dette tilfelle har jo dere vært igjennom en omfattende omstilling, med en noe krevende nyansettelsesprosess hvor dere til slutt endte opp med et nytt lederledd og et nytt sammensatt lederteam. Hensikten er, som jeg har forstått å fordele ledelse slik at hver leder har mindre oppgaver og færre ansatte å forholde seg til og dermed også får mer tid til nærledelse. Men, i realiteten har dere vel ikke fått noen retningslinjer fra Kommunen og dere har heller ikke fått gitt mer resurser til å få utført både de nye og de gamle arbeidsoppgavene. Min interesse er da om og hvordan dere bruker job crafting for å løse jobb situasjonen dere er i på best mulig måte.

Øke Resurser

Sosial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg ber om tilbakemelding fra mine klienter (foresatte), fra kollegaer og/eller leder ○ Jeg spør kollegaer om råd ○ Jeg ber min nærmeste leder gi meg opplæring (coach me) ○ Jeg ser til min nærmeste leder for inspirasjon ○ Jeg legger ekstra innsats i å skape nye og/eller gode relasjoner med folk på jobb (eks: oppsøker folk jeg ikke kjenner og hilser på dem, prøver aktiv å bli bedre kjent, organiserer og/eller deltar på sosiale arrangementer)
Fysisk/strukturelt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg prøver å utvikle nye evner eller forsterke de jeg har ○ Jeg prøver å utvikle meg profesjonelt ○ Jeg prøver å lære nye ting på jobben ○ Jeg prøver å utnytte evnene mine til det fulleste <p>Eget spm: Hvordan øke tidsressursen?</p>
Kognitiv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hvor ofte tenker du på hvordan jobben din gjør livet ditt meningsfullt? ○ Hvor ofte minner du deg selv på rollen arbeidet ditt spiller i din organisasjons suksess? ○ Hvor ofte minner du deg selv på rollen arbeidet ditt spiller i resten av samfunnet? ○ Hvor ofte tenker du på måter jobben din påvirker livet ditt positivt? ○ Hvor ofte reflekterer du over hvilken rolle jobben din spiller i din generelle helse/velvære?

Minke hemmende krav

Sosialt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg passer på at arbeidet mitt ikke blir for emosjonelt utfordrende (eks. Unngår emosjonelt utfordrende situasjoner med foresatte/kollegaer)
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Kognitivt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg passer på at arbeidet mitt ikke blir for mentalt krevende (eks. Unngår kontakt med personer som har urealistiske forventninger) ○ Jeg organiserer arbeidet slik at jeg ikke må sitte konsentrert i for lange perioder av gangen ○ Jeg passer på at jeg ikke må ta <i>for</i> mange vanskelige beslutninger på jobb
Fysisk/strukturelt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg prøver å organisere arbeidet slik at jeg blir minst mulig stresset ○ Jeg organiserer arbeidsoppgaver slik at de passer bedre til egne evner og interesser (endrer fokus eller omfang av oppgaver) ○ Jeg gjør endringer på arbeidsoppgaver/prosedyrer som ikke er produktive

Øke utfordrende krav

Fysisk/strukturelt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeg skaper nye arbeidsoppgaver eller arbeidsmåter som utfordrer meg profesjonelt (eks: tar aktivt på meg ekstra arbeidsoppgaver selv om jeg ikke får betalt for det, tar initiativ til å gjennomføre en ny oppgave eller prosjekt som dukker opp) ○ Når muligheten for å bli involvert er der, tar jeg den ○ Når nye metoder blir introdusert er jeg en av de første som hører om det og tar dem i bruk/tester dem ○ Når det er roligere stunder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tilbyr jeg meg å hjelpe mine kollegaer - bruker muligheten til å gjøre oppgaver som må utføres /starter nye prosjekter <p>Eget spm: Er dette oppførsel som er ny eller kommer den av omstillingen? Eller har den vært til stede før men forsterket?</p>
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