

Examining Work Framing as a Method to Explore Cognitive Crafting of One's Job

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Purpose – Exploring the cognitive crafting of one's job as a social constructivism approach to job design.

Design/methodology/approach – In this study, cognitive crafting is argued to be closely related to how employees frame their work. Hence, capturing how employees frame their work is used to explore cognitive crafting. To do this, 34 mail carriers are interviewed using open interview techniques, enabling participants to fore- and background aspects of their job which they consider as relevant and irrelevant.

Findings – Mail carriers appear to frame their work in five distinct ways: as (1) an income, (2) a part-time job, (3) a pleasant job/activity, (4) having something to do/remaining socially involved, and (5) having a 'normal' job. Moreover, these framing categories appear to relate to job attitudes in general and turnover intention in particular.

Research limitations/implications – The results imply that cognitive crafting is an essential aspect of job crafting and has a considerable effect on job attitudes and behaviour. Besides, it is argued that future studies on cognitive crafting should treat it as a more multidimensional concept. Furthermore, it is argued that clarification is needed on the different cognitive concepts and their interrelation in the job crafting model of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001).

Practical implications – Based on the finding that different employees frame their work differently and, thus, are sensitive for different aspects of the job, suggestions are given both for human resource and for operational managers.

Originality/value – Adopting a social constructivist approach to studying job design and consequent behaviour has received little attention up to now. Nonetheless, the results of this study show its relevance.

Introduction

“Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true.”

Swami Vivekananda (Indian Hindu monk)

Organizational scholars who are interested in how employees experience a job, traditionally focus on either individual determinants such as expectations or values, or characteristics of the job itself such as the work tasks or social interaction at work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Furthermore, traditional organizational scholars often start with the presumption that these characteristics of the job and the work environment are objective (Daniels, 2006). Although these studies have provided useful insights into how job designs will lead to certain experiences and behaviour for different people, these studies ignore the fact that individuals can have different interpretations of these -commonly assumed to be objective- job characteristics. Therefore, in this study I adopt the idea that job characteristics should not be treated as objective characteristics but rather as subjective characteristics. These characteristics can be interpreted differently by different employees and thus can explain variations in job attitudes and behaviour based on these different interpretations rather than (only) by individual determinants such as personality, expectations or values. The aim of this study hence is to empirically investigate how various employees, having a similar job, differently interpret their work and how this relates to job attitudes and behaviour.

Adopting the idea that job characteristics should be treated as subjective rather than objective characteristics places this study in the research paradigm of social constructivism. In general terms, a research paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Each research paradigm consists of particular ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In the social constructivist paradigm, the ontological assumption (the form and nature of reality) is that there is no fixed reality but rather that individuals construct their own local reality. This implies that in a social constructivist paradigm reality actually consists of multiple local realities (Healy and Perry, 2000). The epistemological assumption (what can be known) in the social constructivism paradigm is that interpretations about reality are subjective and thus cannot be (objectively) evaluated as right or wrong. Finally, the methodological assumption (how can be find out what can be known) is that a constructed reality at best can be investigated by researchers acting as 'passionate participants' during their field work (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 112). By applying this social constructivist approach to how employees experience their work, the focus thus is on how employees use their daily tasks and interactions at work as the raw material for constructing the local reality of their work.

A domain of organizational studies that adopts a social constructivism approach, and as a result focuses on how employees use aspects of their work to construct a local reality, are studies about job crafting. Job crafting is the activity in which employees, that are holding the same job, actively craft their job by changing cognitive, task, and/or relational boundaries (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). People engage in job crafting for three reasons: first, to claim some control about their job and to avoid alienation from their work; second, to create a positive self-image in their work; and third, to fulfil a basic human need for connection with others. (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). The result of job crafting is that employees experience altered job designs and social environments at the job, which in turn affects the work meaning and work identity of these employees (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Since job crafting influences the interpersonal dynamics of the workplace, which tasks are completed and how they are completed, it has the potential to greatly impact individual and organizational performance (Berg *et al.*, 2008).

Empirical studies on job crafting confirm that job crafting occurs (Ghitulescu, 2007, Lyons, 2008). The results of these studies clearly identify two of the three aspects of job crafting: tasks crafting and relational crafting. The third aspect, however: cognitive crafting, is less obviously identified, or is measured in a rather narrow manner. In Lyons' study, 107 sales representatives were interviewed. The results revealed that 78% of the participants at least once mentioned an attempt for job crafting. Furthermore, he found that a considerable amount of these attempts were directed towards tasks or relationships changes, implying less occurrence of cognitive crafting. In addition, the study conducted by Ghitulescu (2007) did measure cognitive crafting, it was measured, however, using a very limited measurement tool. Her study focused on the antecedents and consequences of job crafting and included the measurement of all three aspects of job crafting and their relation to work outcomes. For measuring cognitive crafting, Ghitulescu (2007) used the task significance measure created by Hackman and Oldham (1976). It can be argued, however, that the task significance measure is a too limited tool to capture cognitive crafting, as it just measures the single dimensioned concept of meaningfulness. It might be argued, however, that cognitive crafting is more dimensional since it does not solely affect the amount of meaning people give to their work, but also the meaning that employees give to their work. The meaning of work for example, can be a job, an income, a higher calling, something to do, etc. On the contrary, task significance can only be more or less meaningful.

These findings ask for further exploration of the cognitive aspect of job crafting. Especially so, since altered work meaning, as cognitive concept, is one of the main outcomes of job crafting and thus might be considered as particular relevant. This presumed relevance of the cognitive aspect of job crafting, in contrast to the less obvious empirical appearance and narrow measurement of the concept in the two studies of Lyons and Ghitulescu, makes exploring the complex phenomenon of the cognitive crafting of one's job, the main theoretical goal of this study.

Meaning, Sensemaking and Framing Repertoires

In order to successfully explore the phenomenon of cognitive crafting, it is important to understand the concept. Equally important though, is to determine how it can be measured. Measuring cognitive crafting can be a challenging task considering that it is a mental process and therefore relatively difficult to capture. In the following paragraphs, theory will be presented that serves both goals. First, theory about work meaning is described. Then sensemaking theory is introduced, which can be used to understand how meaning is created. This section ends with elaboration on a specific aspect of this sensemaking process, called framing, which is useful for understanding and eventually mapping out how people actually give meaning to something.

Work meaning is an important concept in the job crafting model as it is depicted as one of the final outcomes of the process (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Work meaning, just as cognitive crafting, is a cognitive concept which makes work meaning a good starting point for exploring cognitive crafting. In general, meaning is defined as the output of having made sense of something, or what it signifies. In the context of work, meaning refers to how an individual interprets what the work means to him/her, or what role it plays in the context of his/her life (e.g., work is a pay-check, a higher calling, something to do, an oppression; Pratt and Ashforth, 2003; in Rosso *et al.* (2010, p. 94)). When a job is perceived as meaningful, it is found to lead to several favourable work outcomes such as motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1976), job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997) and/or work behaviour (Berg *et al.*, 2010). Another finding from these studies is that similar jobs can have different meanings for different people. Hence, referring to Weick (1995): individuals may share the same experiences but do not necessarily have to share the same meaning. As meaning is the output of job crafting, understanding how (different) meanings are created is a next step that brings us closer to understanding the phenomenon of cognitive crafting.

As explained above, meaning is the output of having made sense of something. Hence, understanding this sensemaking process enables us to understand how meaning is created. Sensemaking is the process of social construction that occurs when discrepant cues interrupt individuals' ongoing activity and involves the retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalize what people are doing (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010, p. 551). Thus, sensemaking can be seen as the process of interpreting a new or discrepant situation, by searching for the most plausible explanation for this situation based on former experiences. Furthermore, as Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010, p. 551) state: central to the development of plausible meaning is the bracketing of cues from the environment and the interpretation of those cues based on salient frames. It should be noted that each individual can bracket different pieces of information and interpret them differently, implying that different people can differently make sense of the same situation. Although sensemaking, as described here, looks like an individual process, studies show that social interactions also have a considerable effect on how sense is made (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 2003). In this interpersonal

sensemaking, it is suggested that conversations with other people affect how an individual makes sense of something. Knowing how someone makes sense of a situation is useful because depending on how sense is made affects how an individual behaves in that same situation (Weick *et al.*, 2005). Comparing this sensemaking process with cognitive crafting reveals that the bracketing and labelling stage shows great resemblance, or can even be considered as equal, to cognitive crafting, as both aspects affect the way in which people see a situation. Hence, to examine cognitive crafting, theory will be used belonging to this stage of the sensemaking process, called framing.

Framing is defined as: organizing experiences through a certain way of defining what is going on in a situation. This definition occurs retrospectively when people bracket their experience and give it meaning in a particular fashion (Brummans *et al.*, 2008, p. 26). When a person defines what is going on, certain aspects of a situation are foregrounded and other aspects are backgrounded, similar to the bracketing of cues. Subsequently, these foregrounded and backgrounded aspects are given a particular label, similar to the interpretation of cues. These labels are taken from a persons' framing repertoire. Each individual uses their own framing repertoire to describe a situation. What labels are used, and thus what particular framing repertoire someone has, is determined by a person's motivation to find plausible explanations for a present situation by taking into account former experiences and events. People, thus, use labels taken from their particular framing repertoire to apply to foregrounded and backgrounded aspects of a situation in order to create a coherent story of 'what is going on' and make decisions about 'what should be done' in line with this story (Weick 1999, as cited in Brummans *et al.*, 2008, p. 28). Consequently, how a situation is framed affects how people react and behave in that certain situation. It should be noted, however, that the type of framing used in this study -as a way of organizing experience by retrospectively looking for plausible explanations- is distinct from frames as mental structures which facilitate organizing and interpreting incoming information by fitting it into memorised, already learned, schemas or frames about reality (Dewulf *et al.*, 2009).

Based on the aforementioned theory, it might be suggested that the process of cognitive crafting is closely related, or even similar, to work framing. Work framing can be researched empirically by investigating what aspects of the job are foregrounded and what aspects of the job are backgrounded. Hence, empirically investigating how employees frame a similar job can provide insight into the complex phenomenon of cognitive crafting. Capturing how employees frame their job, and whether or not a similar job is framed differently amongst different employees, can be done by identifying what distinct framing repertoires are used by different employees holding a similar job. To empirically investigate this, an organization was sought after employing numerous employees who are exposed to similar job characteristics and having an identical job description. An organization that met these requirements was found in a nationwide postal service organization employing thousands of mail carriers. In the following section, this organization will be introduced.

Case introduction: Work Framing of Part-time Postal Workers

The research was conducted amongst mail carriers in a nationwide postal service organization. This organization employs about 25.000 mail carriers. The organization's policy is to offer no other than temporal or permanent part-time contracts and to pay the statutory minimum hourly wage. For each mail carrier, the job description entails picking up the mail for his/her delivery area from a local depot and subsequently distributing it to the correct address. There is no determined starting or ending time. The only restrictions are that the mail is delivered to the depot around ten thirty in the morning and that it should be delivered before five o'clock in the evening. Additionally, some mail carriers are offered small additional tasks such as cleaning up the depot or training newly hired mail carriers.

At the moment of research, the organization was in the midst of an extensive reorganization in order to respond to, and anticipate on, the declining mail market. This reorganization encompassed three major changes. The first change is that, gradually, all full time contracted mail carriers will be phased out and be replaced by part-time contracted mail carriers. The second change is that the mail carriers are not responsible anymore for their own mail preparation. Instead, the mail is now prepared in central preparation canters and distributed from there to the local depots. The third change has less impact on the daily operation of the organization, but is nonetheless quite influential. This third change is, that in a time span of just ten years, the organization's name and corporate branding changed four times. This covers the work outfit for all mail carriers, every public mail box, all corporate communication and the branding of the entire vehicle fleet. Hence, the reorganization has both a major impact on the organization's internal processes and is clearly visible for the public.

Resulting from the strategic decision to replace all full-time mail carriers by newly hired part-time mail carriers, thousands of new mail carriers are hired. This major operation, along with the turmoil and uncertainty inherent to any reorganization, is said to have led to an alarmingly high turnover rate amongst mail carriers. At the moment of this study the organization struggled with an average annual turnover rate amongst mail carriers of around 60%. In some of the bigger cities, the average annual turnover rate even surpassed the 100%. In order to identify and understand why so many mail carriers decided to quit, the organization initiated an exploratory investigation, which consisted of orientating talks with mail carriers from various depots. The results of these talks did, indeed, reveal various reasons why former colleagues had quit. Another highly interesting finding was that a great variety appears to exist in the ways how mail carriers perceived their job. This varied from mail carriers who were very enthusiastic about their job to mail carriers who were so dissatisfied with their job that they were thinking of quitting.

This presented case is excellent to explore cognitive crafting because employees having a similar job show a great variety in how they interpret that job. In addition to the theoretical introduction, this practical case introduces the element of turnover into this research. It is already suggested that how

someone frames his/her work affects how he/she behaves, as it is stated that sensemaking serves as a springboard into action (Weick *et al.*, 2005). More specifically, Tims and Bakker (2010) suggest that job crafting can lead to positive organizational outcomes, amongst which reduced personnel turnover. Therefore, besides exploring if, and how, mail carriers frame their work in a different way, this research also focuses on how a particular way of framing one's work relates to job attitudes in general and turnover intention in particular. Hence, in pursuing the main goal of this study which is: exploring cognitive crafting, the following specific research question is formulated: *What distinct framing repertoires do mail carriers use to describe their work and how do these relate to turnover intentions?*

Method

The research question: "what distinct framing repertoires do mail carriers use to describe their work, and how do these relate to turnover intentions?" can be divided into two major aspects. The first is whether, or how, mail carriers frame their work differently. The second aspect is whether, or how, these different ways of framing a job relate to the intention to quit. Investigating these questions was done by exploring what different framing repertoires are used by mail carriers when describing their work and whether or not they mention to have the intention to leave the organization or not. In order to find out what distinct framing repertoires are used, an explorative research design was used. An explorative research design facilitates the construction of presumptions of a subject by analysing descriptive data (Baarda *et al.*, 2009). It is assumed that carrying out an explorative research is done best by using qualitative research methods. These methods help to explore and to deeper understand a phenomenon, in contrast to testing and generalizing beforehand formulated hypotheses, as is often the case with quantitative research methods.

Data Collection

To investigate the framing repertoires and how they relate to the intention to quit, data was collected using a combination of two interview techniques: narrative interviewing and topic interviewing. Both techniques are fairly open which enabled participants to put emphasis on aspects of a story or topic that they considered as relevant, rather than giving their opinion on predefined statements of the researcher (Bates, 2004). The more open and broad an interview topic is introduced, the more participants are stimulated to respond in the form of a self-created narrative. By telling a narrative, participants are free to decide what pieces of information are relevant for their story and what pieces of information are not (Bates, 2004). Viewed separately, the pieces of a narrative are less meaningful. However, when placed in a logical order, in order to create a coherent narrative, these separate pieces of information become more meaningful (Czarniawska, 1998). Narrative and topic interviews are similar in the broad and open nature of the interview questions. They differ, however, in the inclusion

or exclusion of the time dimension. In a narrative interview, participants are asked for a story that happens over time, in a topic interview the time dimension is largely neglected.

To capture what framing repertoires mail carriers used to describe their job, or in other words: which aspects of the job are foregrounded and backgrounded in describing their work, each participant was asked to freely respond to four broad interview topics. The four addressed interview topics are:

- (1) Questions about the initial motivation for applying to the job and familiarization with the organization. This included that the participant was asked to tell his/her story about how he/she experienced the work. Beginning their story from the first moment they got in contact with the organization and ending at the present moment.
- (2) Questions in a more closed form that asked for what the work meant for the participant at this present moment.
- (3) Questions in a very open form that asked for their opinions about the job.
- (4) Question in a more closed form that asked what expectations the respondent had for the future in regard to staying at or leaving from the job.

The objective of the first interview topic was to gain insight in the background of the participant and the motivations he/she had to apply. Furthermore, this question aimed at identifying what aspects of the job were important for the participant based on the memories that the participants included in his/her narrative. This could include all sorts of memories of their job: remarkable happenings, noteworthy events, negative experiences, positive experiences, etc. The objective of the second topic was to identify what the work meant for the participant. The objective of the third topic was to shine light on whether a particular motivation to apply or meaning of the job could be related to certain opinions about the job. These opinions could include anything, either positive or negative. Obviously, the interviewer asked for reasons behind any given opinions. The objective of the last question was to measure the relative weight of the given opinions, as it might be assumed that the intention to quit could be a strong indication for the impact of those (negative) opinions.

Participants

Participants in this study were mail carriers who work for the national postal service. Their job description entails picking-up their mail from local depots and delivering it at the correct mail address. The local depots vary in size and number of mail carriers situated, ranging from 4 to 25 mail carriers per depot. Probabilistic sampling was used to select one depot in each of the five delivery areas, resulting in the random selection of two small depots (± 4 mail carriers), two medium depots (± 10 mail carriers) and one large depot (± 25 mail carriers). In order to obtain a great variety of framing repertoires, an attempt was made to interview as many mail carriers as possible from each selected depot, avoiding to, for example, only interviewing the more extravert ones. The vast majority of mail carriers which were asked to voluntarily take part in this research agreed to be interviewed.

Nonetheless, three mail carriers refused to participate because they did not like to be interviewed or did not want to be slowed down during their work. Two mail carriers had to be left aside because they did not speak the same language as the interviewer. Lastly, not all mail carriers of the selected depots have been interviewed because some mail carriers only worked one or two days per week. Waiting for them would have cost too much time. Eventually, the number of participants totalled 34, of which 19 (56%) were male and 15 (44%) female. The average age of the participants was 45 year old, with a great age distribution: the youngest participant was 22 years old; the oldest participants 63 years old.

Procedure

With the agreement of the relevant supervisor, each of the selected depots was visited. In some cases the interviewer was introduced to the mail carriers by the supervisor, in other cases the interviewer had to introduce himself. To be recognized and to appear credible, the interviewer wore recognizable company clothing. Before starting the interview, the interviewer introduced himself, explained the goal of the investigation and stated that the interview results would be treated confidentially. After it was agreed to participate in an interview, permission was asked to audio record the interview. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes, ranging from 25 to 70 minutes. No specific rewards were offered to the participants. It should be noted, however, that the interviews were conducted during working hours, which makes it likely that the extra time it took to participate in the interview was claimed. Nonetheless, the additional time the interview took could never have exceeded the 30 minutes.

The interviews were conducted during the execution of the mail delivery. This implies that the interviewer was shadowing the participants while simultaneously asking the interview questions. Except for the fact that this was time and cost saving for the participants and the organization, it also served the goal of seeing employees in action in their natural work environment which helped creating understanding of how participants enact their role and/or perspectives (McDonald, 2005). This shadowing served three specific goals. First, it decreased the tension between the interviewer and the participants since the participants felt more comfortable as they had something to fall back on while taking time to think of an answer. Secondly, it gave more insight into how particular roles or perspectives were acted out. This led to better understanding of participants' responses and/or served as trigger for asking clarifying questions when behaviour and responses were incongruent. For example, when a participant acted like he/she was enjoying the job by, for example, showing great pleasure in talking with people in his/her delivery area, but at the same time uttered a very negative opinion about the job, then the interviewer asked whether he/she could explain this incongruence. Thirdly, it was a good way to go into notable moments that occurred during the mail delivery, which most likely would have remained unaddressed otherwise.

Data Preparation

With one exception, all interviews were transcribed verbatim. In the only case that the participant did not agree on audio recording the interview, notes were taken during that interview and processed directly afterwards. In order to not to forget essential impressions of the interviews, the audio recorded interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. The transcripts included both the questions of the interviewer and the answers of the participants. Intonation and/or punctuation were largely excluded from the interview transcripts. In a few transcripts, exceptions were made when the interviewer or the participant laughed before or after an interview fragment, as it could possibly influence the later interpretation of the fragment. Notable moments that happened during the interview were written down as well. In some cases, a participant started a (long) story that had no relation whatsoever with the subject of study. In such cases, it was decided to not describe these fragments verbatim but to only mention that the participant told a story about that irrelevant subject. The data preparation resulted in 34 transcribed interviews covering a total of 184 single spaced A4 pages.

Data Analysis

To manage and analyse the qualitative interview data, several data analysis steps were taken. Analysing multiple interviews can be done by either starting with a cross case analysis or with an individual case analysis (Patton, 2001). Cross case analysis focuses on the variations of answers given to a single topic across all interviews. This can be seen as a horizontal approach. Individual case analysis focuses on the content and patterns of the interview answers of one individual participant. This can be seen as a vertical approach. In this study both analysis have been performed on the interview transcripts, starting with the cross case analysis.

The intent of the cross case analyses was to reveal the variation in responses to each of the four interview topics, as given by all participants. Besides providing an overview of the various specific answers given to the four interview topics, it also offered the opportunity to categorize these specific answers into more abstract response categories. Each of the four interview topics was analysed using the constant comparative method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method entails that when a specific response is identified, it is placed in a more abstract response category. Subsequently, it is determined whether responses from other interviews fit in this already identified category. If so, it is added, if not, a new category is defined. This process continued until all specific responses have been categorized.

The intent of the subsequent individual case analysis was to reveal the interrelation between the responses to the four interviews topics of one individual participant. In order to carry this out, a summary of all interviews transcripts was written. This summary included the answers to the four interview topics of one participant. Thus, each summary contained the information of: (1) why a

participant applied for the job and what he/she remembered as noteworthy from the first contact with the organization to this present moment; (2) what the work means for him/her; (3) what his/her opinions are about the job; and (4) what he/she expects from the future in regard to staying at or leaving the job. Each interview summary was scrutinized for recurring patterns in the interrelation between responses to the four interview topics. This was a challenging task since the interview questions had no determined number of responses categories. It was just the opposite: because the interview questions were fairly open, a limitless number of possible combinations between the answers of the four interview questions was possible. When a possible pattern was identified in one of the interview summaries, it was compared to other interview summaries in order to see whether this pattern also occurred elsewhere. As this constant comparison process proceeded, the identified patterns evolved in such a way that they did not just restrict to relations between two of the interview responses, but that they encompassed all four interview responses. This data analysis stage eventually led to the identification of five distinct response patterns, each of which reflects how participants answered during the interview as a whole. These five patterns, consequently, mirrored how participants framed their job. The outcome of the analysis was that mail carriers can frame their work in five distinct ways: (1) as an income, (2) as a part-time job, (3) as a pleasant job/activity, (4) as 'having something to do'/remaining active in society, or (5) as a 'normal' job. Further elaboration of these framing categories can be found in the Result section of this paper.

The identification of different framing categories, as described before, answers the first aspect of the research question: "do mail carriers differently frame their work, and if so, how?" The final data analysis stage focuses on the second aspect of the research question: "do different ways of framing one's job, relates to the intention to quit, and if so, how?" To answer this question, participants were clustered based on the mentioned intention to quit and related to the identified framing categories. This last data analysis stage, thus, provides information on the possible effects of framing a job in a particular way.

Trustworthiness

To ensure reliable and valid results in qualitative research, methods and analyses should be trustworthy (Guba, 1981). To pursue trustworthiness, seven second coders were asked to categorize, the assigned to them transcripts, into one of the five identified framing categories (as introduced above and elaborated in the Result section). Comparison between the categorizations of the researcher and the second coder revealed that there was a moderate inter-rater agreement with a Cohen's Kappa of 0.45, see Table 1.

Table 1*Crosstab results of the initial inter-rater agreement for placing mail carriers into framing categories**

Coder 2	Coder 1					<i>Total</i>
	Income	Part-time job	Pleasant job/activity	Something to do	'Normal' job	
Income	5	0	1	0	3	9
Part-time job	1	6	0	1	0	8
Pleasant job/activity	0	1	4	2	0	7
Something to do	1	0	1	2	0	4
'Normal' job	1	0	1	2	2	6
<i>Total</i>	8	7	7	7	5	34

*Cohen's Kappa is 0.45

A Kappa of 0.45 indicates that there is a moderate inter-rater agreement. The moderate inter-rater agreement may be indicative of unclearly defined framing categories or insufficiently trained second coders. Both arguments seem to apply to this study as the differences between each framing category, on the one hand, are fairly subtle, and on the other hand, that some participants could be placed into multiple framing categories. For example, a participant can frame their work both as 'a pleasant activity' and as 'something to do'. In such cases deciding which category was the dominant one could be challenging, because arguments for both categories can be given.

Closer examination of Table 1 shows that the framing category 'Part-time job' is clearly recognized by both the researcher and the second coders. The framing category 'income' also shows a substantial inter-rater agreement. This category illustrates the subtle differences between categories, as it is obvious that many mail carriers mention income as a reason for doing the job. Nevertheless, this doesn't directly imply that all those mail carriers frame their work as an income. Hence, for a second coder, it is easy to miss such subtle difference in either the framing category description or in the interview transcript. Apparently, the overlooking of these subtle differences also occurred in the framing category 'Normal job'. It is indicated in the description of the framing category (see the Result section) that people who frame their work as 'having a 'normal' job' show great resemblance with mail carriers who frame it as an income because they also mention the income as their primary motivation. These categories subtly differ in that people who frame it as a normal job are satisfied by simply having a job. In contrast, people who frame it as an income assume that they can get a better job and therefore are less satisfied.

To tackle the incongruence in inter-rater results, all incongruent interviews were discussed by the researcher and the relevant second coder in order to reach consensus about what framing category would be suited best. As a result, six interviews were placed in another category than they were placed initially. This more trustworthy, new categorization of the 34 interview transcripts led to the following categorization: eight mail carriers framed their work as an income; seven mail carriers framed it as a part-time job; five mail carriers as a pleasant job/activity; seven mail carriers as something to do/remaining active in society; and seven mail carriers as a 'normal' job.

Results

This chapter consists of three sections. First, the results of the cross case interview analysis will be described. This section specifically aims at providing an overview of the variation in responses to each of the four interview topics. The second section has the results of the individual case interview analysis and provides a description of how mail carriers frame their work differently. The third section will focus on the possible effects of framing the job in a specific way. This is done by clustering the identified framing categories on the basis of the degree of intention to leave or stay with the organization.

Cross Case Interview Results (Horizontal Analysis)

To provide an overview of the variations in interview responses to the four interview topics, a cross case analysis was performed. The first interview topic that is addressed in this analysis is ‘the meaning of work for mail carriers’. This topic contains the interview responses to the first two interview topics: ‘the motivation to apply for the job’ and ‘the meaning of the work’. These topics are combined since the responses to these topics showed great resemblance. The second topic, then, is ‘opinions about the job’ which is divided into positive and negative opinions. The last topic addressed is ‘what mail carriers expect of their future in regarding to staying at or leaving from the job’.

Each topic is briefly introduced, followed by a table showing the abstract response categories, the specific responses with exemplifying quotes and information about the frequency of occurrence of a specific response category. Even though these frequency numbers may be an indication of these responses within the entire population of mail carriers, it should be noted that this data is obtained by qualitative research methods and therefore not suited to draw hard/statistical conclusions based on these figures. Furthermore, it should be noted that the interview questions were very open, which gave participants the opportunity to respond freely. Although inherent to this method, it has as side effect that responses of different participants could have a different level of abstraction. For example, whereas one participant might just mention that he/she likes the job, other participants might mention that they like working outdoors and the flexibility of the job. These responses could all be included in the more abstract response of ‘liking the job’. Since the main purpose of this cross case analysis was to obtain an overview of the variation in responses given by the participants, it was decided to include responses of different level of abstraction in one and the same table. A final remark is that the total number of responses displayed in Table 2, 3 and 4 exceeds the number of participants. This is because participants often gave more than one meaning to their job and, obviously, had more than one opinion about their job. Only Table 5 contains exact 34 responses since each participant can only give one answer to the question how he/she sees his/her future in regard to staying at or leaving from the job.

Meaning of Work for Mail Carriers: The meaning of work is at the core of identifying how someone frames his/her job. To find out what the work meant for them, participants were simply asked that

question. In the analysis of the responses to this question, it appeared that there was great resemblance with the responses to this question and the answer to the interview questions about their reason to apply for this job. When, for example, the motivation to apply was ‘an income’, then the meaning of the work often also was ‘an income’. Hence, in defining what different meanings the work as mail carrier had, the responses to these two topics were merged. The analysis of the responses to these interview questions revealed that the sources of meaning could either be derived from characteristics of having a job in general or from characteristics of having the job as mail carrier in particular. The sources for meaning derived from having a job in general included: (1) the rewards for the job, (2) participating in society and (3) giving structure. The sources for meaning derived from having the job as mail carrier in particular included: (4) the part-time and flexible nature of the job, (5) the physical characteristics of the job, (6) public sector work and (7) more abstract job evaluations. Each of these sources of meaning led to various specific meanings that were mentioned by different participants. These sources of meaning and its corresponding specific meanings will be described below: first, the meanings derived from characteristics of ‘having a job’ in general, then the meanings derived from characteristics of this job in particular (see Table 2).

For many participants the source for giving a specific meaning to their job derived from characteristics of having a job, not of having the job as mail carrier. As might be expected, for many participants, the meaning of the job derived from the (financial) rewards that they received for performing that job. Moreover, this source of meaning illustrates that one source of meaning can lead to various, different, specific meanings. As can be seen from Table 2, for some participants the salary meant their main income, for others it meant a little extra or a supplementary income. For yet others, the regularity of the income was what made the reward of the job meaningful. Participants placed at the job by the social service indicated that they could not quit their job, because otherwise their (additional) social allowance would be discontinued. Although this meaning is not directly related to the income, retaining their social allowance is their reward for doing the work. For just two participants the work respectively meant ‘a honest income’ and ‘an independent income’.

Another source of meaning derived from having a job in general, was the notion of being an active participant in society. More than one specific meaning derived from this source of meaning. The first specific meaning is that the work meant ‘remaining socially involved’. ‘Remaining socially involved’ encompasses the social contact people have during their work, both with colleagues and with people in their delivery area. Often it was mentioned as remedy against becoming socially isolated. Another specific meaning derived from this source of meaning is that having this job meant that they were just ‘happy to have a job. These participants often have enjoyed little education and were glad therefore to actually have a job. For two participants, the work meant a great opportunity to ‘reintegrate into society’. These participants had suffered a (longitudinal) physical or mental sickness and were very delighted that this job offered them a new opportunity to reintegrate into society on their own pace.

Table 2
Specific meanings and sources of meaning for the job as mail carrier

Sources of meaning	Specific meaning	Exemplifying quotes*	N
Characteristics of having a job			
Rewards for the job <i>Total (37)</i>	Primary income	It means I work, I earn money, I'm looking for bread, food.	10
	Little extra	Well, you earn a little extra.	8
	Supplementary income	If I quit, that would be nice, but then I've to let go a lot of other things.	7
	Regular income	... at the moment I work freelance, for me this is just to have some additional, regular income.	6
	Maintain social allowance	... via the social welfare service, they decide where I have to work. So, at least, I get an additional social allowance.	4
	Honest income	An honest job, I can go on holidays and I can come back, looking everyone straight in the face.	1
	Independent income	For me it is important to have an independent income.	1
Participating in society <i>Total (16)</i>	Remaining socially involved	Actually, it does mean a lot for me. The regular contact you have with people.	10
	Happy to have work	... you may be happy that, at least, you have a job.	4
	Reintegration into society	I've suffered a severe sickness, so this gives me back the feeling that I belong to society again.	2
Giving structure <i>Total (15)</i>	Having something to do	And of course, that you have something to do.	10
	Structure/Routine	It gives me structure.	5
Characteristics of this particular job			
Part-time and flexible nature of the job <i>Total (23)</i>	Easy to combine side job	No, not my main activity. I mean, the work at the crèche, I just like that work better. ...but I just do it as an side job, so to speak.	12
	Few working hours	And because it only is a few hours per day...	11
Physical characteristics of the job <i>Total (18)</i>	Physical exercise	... it is physical exercise for me, because besides this I don't do sports. But I've always said, this is a paid work-out.	11
	Being outdoors	I enjoy being outdoors, ...because normally I'm always indoors, working on my computer.	7
Public sector work <i>Total (4)</i>	Socially relevant work	Actually, it should be like that with all the work you do, that you contribute to society.	2
	Responsible work	And it is a kind of responsibility that you have, carrying someone else's mail.	2
Abstract job evaluations <i>Total (13)</i>	Hobby/pleasant activity	It sounds simple, but I just really like it.	9
	Challenging job	... it is a job with future perspective for me. What I've achieved, that I've become depot checker, that have made me happy.	2
	Sort of therapy	... and for me, in the beginning, it was therapy. Let's put it that way. My thoughts just needed to..., I needed distraction.	1
	Security**	Back then, when you worked here, you were settled till retirement.	1

* All quotes are translated to English by the author. See Appendix A for the original quotes.

** Answer given by a participant who had a full-time contract instead of a part-time contract. In the present organizational strategy only part-time contracts are given. (participant did not belong to the target research population)

A final source of meaning derived from characteristics of having a job is that it gives structure to one's life. A specific meaning in this category is that participants mentioned that they 'have something to do' and have a reason to wake up in the morning. The, closely related, second specific meaning in this category is that it meant 'structure' or daily 'routine'.

Characteristics of the job itself also served as a source of meaning. For many participants, the part-time and flexible nature of the job was such a source. The most mentioned specific meaning in this category was that the work meant an ideal side job in addition to any other activities of the

participant. This was due to both the part-time nature of the contract and the flexible working hours. Some of the participants mentioning the part-time nature of the job as specific meaning did not explicitly mention the flexible nature. For these participants, the job meant a job with few working hours.

The physical characteristics of the job were also found to serve as a source of meaning. These physical characteristics refer to the physical context in which the job has to be performed and includes the outdoor work and that performing the job requires a considerable amount of physical effort. These physical job characteristics were the source for two specific meanings of the job: 'working outdoors' and 'having a (free) physical exercise'.

Another job characteristic that served as source of meaning was the given that the work is a public service job. This led to the specific meaning of performing 'socially relevant work' and 'having responsible work' derived from the fact of carrying someone else's mail.

A final source of meaning has to do with the more abstract job evaluations. This source of meaning is distinct from the ones described above in such that these meanings are overall evaluations of (characteristics of) the job and, therefore, cannot be directly ascribed to a specific source of meaning. For example, when a participant responded that his/her work meant a 'pleasant activity' this could be the result of the outdoor nature of the job, the flexible or part-time nature of the job, the active nature of the job or yet another characteristic of the job. When, during the interview, the participant answered with an abstract job evaluation to the question what their work meant, follow up questions were asked to find out what the specific source of meaning was. The reality however, was that not all participants could clearly define what the specific sources of meaning were. In such cases, the overall evaluations were recorded. The abstract job evaluation that was mentioned most, was that the work meant a 'hobby' or a 'pleasant activity'. Other abstract job evaluations were that the job meant a 'challenging job' or a 'sort of therapy'. One participant also mentioned '(life) security' as the meaning of work. It must be added that this particular participant started this job a long time ago, when only full-time contracts were provided. The present organizational policy is to only hire part-time mail carriers and to gradually phase out full-timers. Hence, this meaning is not representative anymore for the target group of this present study: the part-time mail carriers.

Positive Opinions About the Job: The preceding paragraph illustrates that mail carriers attach different meanings to different aspects of their job. To find out whether there is any relation between work meaning and job attitudes, each participant was asked for their opinion about their job. This question resulted in various positive and negative opinions. In this paragraph the positive opinions will be described, the negative opinions will be described in the succeeding paragraph. The categorized and specific positive opinions, supported with exemplifying quotes, are shown in Table 3. These positive opinions about the job could be split up into five categories: (1) positive opinions regarding the job design, (2) positive opinions as abstract job evaluations, (3) positive opinions regarding the social

aspects of the job, (4) positive opinions regarding the supervision, and (5) miscellaneous positive opinions. The categories will be elaborated below.

Table 3
Positive opinions about the job (categorized)

Category	Positive opinion about the job	Exemplifying quotes*	N
Job design <i>Total (67)</i>	Freedom (modest supervision)	It is a fairly free occupation, I really like that.... and it is very pleasant that there is not someone constantly looking over your shoulder.	17
	Outdoor work	You're always working outdoors, so you're experiencing all weather conditions. When it is pouring rain, it is not nice, but there are so many days that it is not raining and that the weather is good.	15
	Flexible working hours	You don't have to start at 1pm. You've a lot of flexibility.	11
	Active job	I still like it. I do like walking.	10
	Relaxed	... and I thought it is quite relaxed.	6
	Few working hours	And what I like about it, is working half days.	4
	Simple work	It is pretty easy, you don't have to think much.	2
	Close by	Working your own neighbourhood, so you don't have to travel much.	2
Abstract job evaluations <i>Total (14)</i>	Nice/beautiful/responsible work	I just think it is nice work and I really enjoy the job.	14
Social aspects <i>Total (14)</i>	Contact with people in delivery area	And you also have contact with people. Especially in the working class neighbourhoods, there you have much contact with people. I like that as well.	11
	Contact with colleagues	Yes, yes, that's why I bring my colleague as practice model for my hairdressing school.	3
Supervisor <i>Total (4)</i>	Sign of appreciation	And what I like as well... so now and then you're spoiled with presents, vouchers, flowers and so on.	2
	Good team coach	I have no problems with my supervisor. I can discuss everything with him. I've had worse bosses. He understands it. When I have something, I can always call him and he'll take care of it.	2
Miscellaneous <i>Total (3)</i>	Train newly hired mail carriers	And the advantage that I have, I've trained a lot of new people. And they've all said that I've trained them very well.	3

* All quotes are translated to English by the author. See Appendix B for the original quotes.

By far, most positive opinions about the job were related to the design of the job. Especially the freedom that mail carriers have during the execution of their job is perceived as very positive. Other job characteristics like 'outdoor work', 'flexible working hours' and the 'active nature of the job' are mentioned as positive as well. Another positive opinion is that the job is described as 'fairly relaxed'. It should be noted that this refers to little stressful, not to psychically relaxing. Although not mentioned that often, 'few working hours', 'simple work' and that the work can be done in a neighbourhood close by, are also perceived as positive. It should be noted, however, that both 'few working hours' and 'simple work' are mentioned both as a positive (see Table 3) and as a negative characteristic of the job (see Table 4).

Some participants mentioned to have a positive opinion about the job, but were not able to explain why. These responses have been placed in the ‘abstract job evaluations’ category, and include the opinions a ‘nice job’, a ‘beautiful job’ and a ‘responsible job’. Social aspects of the job were also perceived as positive. This category distinguishes between ‘contact with people in the delivery area’ and ‘contact with colleagues’. It should be noted that more participants seem to value the social contact with people in their delivery area than the contact with their colleagues. Some participants explicitly mentioned to appreciate the performance of their supervisor. Specifically mentioned in this category were a perceived ‘signs of appreciation’ in the form of a little present or some snacks at depots. Other participants explicitly mentioned to be fairly pleased with their supervisor. It should be noted that opinions about the supervisor differed greatly amongst the depots. This is easy to understand since each depot has its own supervisor doing his/her work in his own way. Finally, participants who had been given the task to train newly hired mail carriers evaluated this part of the job as very positive.

Negative Opinions About the Job: Obviously, the question about a participant’s opinion about the job, resulted in a number of negative opinions as well. These negative opinions could be categorised into negative opinions about: (1) the design of the job, (2) operational errors, (3) the supervisor (4) reorganizational consequences, and (5) miscellaneous negative opinions (see Table 4).

By far, the most mentioned negative opinion about the job was the ‘low salary’, followed by ‘heavy physical demand’ and ‘few working hours’. Although ‘few working hours’ and ‘low salary’ are indicated as separated concepts, respondents often mentioned them together, as both resulted in low earnings. Several participants mentioned that they perceived the job as ‘fairly simple’ which they evaluated as negative. It should be remembered, however, that other participants mentioned ‘few working hours’ and ‘simple work’ as positive characteristics of the job (see Table 3). Few participants indicated to regret that they had little contact with colleagues, as a consequence of the flexible nature of the work. Lastly, negative opinions about the job design also included ‘working in bad weather’ and the discovery that the work was ‘less flexible than expected’.

Another category leading to various negative opinions about the job concerned operational errors. The most frequently mentioned operational error was the delayed mail delivery at the depot. This included both unannounced and announced delays. Another frustrating error was the incorrect or insufficient salary payment. This often occurred when delivering of mail took more time than prescribed. A frustrating third operational error was poor preparation of the mail. This included that the mail was prepared in an incorrect order, implying that mail carriers had to walk a street forth and back in order to deliver the mail.

Table 4
Negative Opinions about the Job (categorized)

Category	Negative opinion about the job	Exemplifying quotes*	N
Job design <i>Total (37)</i>	Low salary	Well, the salary....., according to me, 10 euro per hour is the salary that cleaners get... that [10 euro's] would be more reasonable.	13
	Heavy physical demand	The work is becoming increasingly heavier, especially Thursdays are just very heavy.	8
	Few working hours	The downside of this job, you can't get a full-time contract. It always remains part-time.	6
	Simple work	But yes, sometimes the work is very simple.	3
	Bad weather	Rain, that sucks!	3
	Little contact colleagues	We all work at different times, so we don't see each other that much. I regret that, it would be more fun if you were here with some colleagues.	2
	Less flexible than anticipated	And now they deliver the post only at 11 am, and that sucks. And then it is not completely true that you can perfectly combine this work with school going kids and their school times.	2
Operational errors <i>Total (19)</i>	Delayed mail delivery on the depots	... that the post would be delivered at the depots more early. Because when I've days off from my other job, than I just want to start early.	9
	Incorrect salary payment	The bad thing is, with bad weather it costs you more time, but you only get paid the set amount. So you work 1 hour, or half an hour for free.	7
	Poor mail preparation	Everything is mixed up. Now I'm at number 122, but I have 114, and here 120, and here 112, that's where we have been already. This also occurs too often.	3
Supervisor <i>Total (19)</i>	Poor communication (questions)	And the communication is just really poor... then I write a remark in the report but I just get no response.	6
	Poor communication (information)	Well, some things are unclear, the communication.	6
	Lack of appreciation	According to me, they could show more appreciation for the people.	4
	Bad relation supervisor	I've called my team coach and I've told him. But then he start laughing out loud, so according to me he really don't get it.	3
Reorganizational consequences <i>Total (15)</i>	All little changes/chaotic	Because everything is so messed up..	4
	Anonymity	I do notice that the organization is becoming increasingly less personal.	4
	Geo-route	A real disappointment for me are the 'geo-routes'. What a mess is that.... your delivery route got totally messed up and was not sorted according the shortest walking route.	4
	Economizes on everything	I'm no driver anymore, they took me off that job too. Replaced by cheaper employees.	3
Miscellaneous <i>Total (2)</i>	Absence of toilet at the depot	... there is no toilet. If you need to go to the toilet then you have to go to a community centre. Or take a public toilet.	2

* All quotes are translated to English by the author. See Appendix C for the original quotes.

Next, several aspects relating to (the communication with) the supervisor were the cause for negative opinions. Poor communication with the supervisor in particular led to negative reactions. Two types of poor communication with the supervisor were distinguished. Firstly, 'poor provision of information', in the sense that mail carriers experienced a lack of information about various issues. Secondly, 'poor dealing with questions' of the mail carriers, which included poor reachability, lack of proper feedback on questions or just unsatisfactory answering to questions. The two final negative

opinions about the supervisor covered the relation with the supervisor and included 'perceived lack of appreciation' and a 'bad relation with the supervisor'.

Many negative opinions could be related to the aftermath of the present reorganization. These negative opinions included frustrations such as 'all little changes' or 'chaotic working environment'. Another frustration mentioned was the increased anonimisation of the organization; especially mail carriers with longer tenures felt that they were increasingly treated as numbers rather than as appreciated employees. In line with this frustration was the perception of mail carriers that the organization economizes on everything, even on the most basic utilities. A final reorganizational frustration consists of the 'geo-routes': computer determined walking routes and delivery order. These were perceived as very negative, because the new geo-routes differed from the walking routes and delivery order mail carriers used to take. Geo-routes were implemented in only one of the five visited depots; hence, mail carriers from four of the five depots did not face problems with the geo-route.

A final negative opinion, which could not be placed into another category, was the absence of a toilet at the depot.

Future Expectations in Regard to Staying at or Leaving the Job: Previous analysis provided information about, (1) what different meanings are given to the work as mail carrier and (2) what negative and positive opinions participants have about their work. Combining the responses of one individual to these two topics, generates insight into whether or not a particular meaning of the work relates to particular negative or positive opinions. It gives little insight, however, into how much weight the opinions bear, or how a particular pattern in these answers relates to the intention to quit. For example, when a participant responded to the first topic that the meaning of the work was an income, and to the second topic that he/she perceived the low income as negative and the part-time and flexible nature of the job as positive, it is not possible to say which opinion is more important and stronger affects the decision to stay or to leave.

To find out the weight of a mentioned positive or negative opinion, each participant was asked to indicate how they see their future in the organization in regard to staying at or leaving their job. The answers to this question are categorised into four expectation categories: (1) mail carriers who liked the job and were not thinking of quitting at all; (2) mail carriers who liked the characteristics of the job but started doubting whether to continue or not because of the many operational errors and/or (future) consequences of the reorganization; (3) mail carriers who knew on forehand that they would leave when a predefined condition, such as graduating or retiring, is met; and (4) mail carriers who indicated to be looking for another job because of the low earnings, the heavy physical workload or because the work was not their calling. For an overview, see Table 5. Apart from these expectation categories, it includes exemplifying quotes and the number of participants falling in a category. It should be noted that, in contrast to the analyses of the three former topics, each participant could only

give one answer possibility; hence the total numbers of participants placed in a category equals 34, the total number of participants.

Table 5
Expectation categories of mail carriers in regard to staying at or leaving the job

Expectation categories	Exemplifying quotes*	N
No plans to quit	Actually, as long as you're able to walk and able to read you can continue doing this for years. So how I see it now, I will keep doing this for years.	15
Doubting: depending on the amount of internal operational errors and (future) reorganizational consequences.	I can see myself doing this job for a long time. Provided that the payment and all is just accurately carried out and that the walking carts remain. Let's put it this way, it should remain a job that you is able do. Instead of making it so difficult that it is not worth for what you get in return. The work itself I just really like, but if they take out the walking carts and let you use your own bike, yes, then it just stops!	5
Looking for other work because of:		
- the low earnings	At the moment I'm applying for other jobs. When I find another job for in the morning, for example early in the morning, 5, 6 am to 12am. Right now I'm applying for jobs in the production and others.	7
- the heavy physical workload	Yes, I'm looking for another job. Why? This is heavy.	1
- a different calling	To be honest, I'm looking for something that I like. And as long as I haven't found such, I'll continue doing this because now I am used to it.	1
Quits by meeting a predefined external condition	For me I will just continue until I finish my studies and have found another job.	5
Total:		34

* All quotes are translated to English by the author. See Appendix D for the original quotes.

Half of all respondents reported to have no plans to quit because they were fairly satisfied with the job. More interesting is the category of participants who doubted whether to stay or not. In general, these were highly motivated employees who often really liked the job and had a long tenure as mail carrier. They doubted whether to continue or not because of the excess of operational errors or other reorganizational consequences. A reasonable number of mail carriers also mentioned to be looking for another job. Several reasons for this were mentioned but the main reason was the low salary. Less interesting for this study is the final category of participants, who mentioned to quit as soon as a predefined external condition was met, as any interventions are likely to have little effect on their decision to stay or leave.

The result of this final cross case analysis revealed that similar characteristics of the job can have different effect on different people. This raises the question why some participants emphasise the positive characteristics of the job and not seem to bother about the low salary and/or the heavy physical workload and why others emphasise the negative characteristics of the job and seem to ignore to upsides of the job. To answer this question, it was necessary to look at the responses of one participants to the four interview topics as an integrated whole. To this end, the individual case interview analyses were performed.

Individual Case Interview Results (Vertical Analysis)

In addition to the cross case interview analysis, the interviews were also analysed as individual cases, focusing on the interrelation of interview responses to all four interview topics of a single participant. Analysing these responses as integrated whole made it possible to identify patterns of interrelation between the responses to the four interview topics. These patterns, which consisted of a set of consistent responses to the four interview topics, are suggested to reflect how a specific participant frames his/her work.

From the 34 individual case interview analyses, five distinct response patterns emerged. These response patterns reflected how a participant framed their job, which led to the identification of five framing categories. It was found that mail carriers frame their job as: (1) an income, (2) a part-time job, (3) a pleasant job/activity, (4) having something to do/remaining socially involved, and (5) as having a 'normal' job. Each category will be elaborated below. For each category, it will be defined what meaning(s) is/are given to the job, what opinions are fore- and backgrounded and what expectations of the future exist with regard to staying at or leaving the job. Each framing category will be supported by exemplifying quotes. The exemplifying quotes are translated by the author, see Appendix E for the original versions of the quotes.

Income: Eight participants framed their work as an income. Participants who framed it primarily as an income foregrounded the financial rewards of the job. For them the work meant their primary income or the guarantee that they didn't lose their (additional) social allowance.

“Necessity, it is a matter of necessity. At a certain point you just need some money. And then you have to work somewhere.”

People who framed their work this way, often mentioned that the reason for applying was that they were assigned to this job by the social welfare service or that, because of (long-term) unemployment, were in desperate need of an income. Asked for their opinion about the job, they foregrounded the low earnings that resulted from the low salary, combined with the limited number of working hours. When asked for positive characteristics of the job, participants did acknowledge the pleasant characteristics, but these characteristics were backgrounded against the foregrounded opinions about the low earnings.

“Do you like it?” “No, currently not. Because I'm busy looking for another job. When I've found another job, then, maybe then, I can see this job as a sort of hobby.”

Participants who framed their job as their primary income often showed negative job attitudes and mentioned that they were looking for another job that pays more.

“As I find something else that pays better or what offers better working times, then I'll make the switch.”

Part-time Job: Seven participants framed their work as a part-time job. Participants who framed their work this way foregrounded the part-time and flexible nature of the job. For them the work meant a side job that could be combined easily with other activities.

“No, not my main activity. I mean, the work at the crèche, I just like that work better. ...but I just do it as an side job, so to speak.”

Participants in this category gave as reason why they applied for the job that they were looking for an additional income or a little extra from a job that could be combined with any another activity such as taking care of children, studying or running a small business. Asked for their opinion about the job they, not surprisingly, foregrounded the few and flexible working hours. They also foregrounded negative opinions about operational errors with a negative effect on the part-time and flexible nature of the job. This included errors such as ‘delayed mail delivery at the depot’, ‘poor mail preparation’ or a ‘lack of clarity’ about (new) rules or guidelines.

“It takes quite some time. I live at some distance. In the beginning I thought it would be nice, having a nice bike ride to get you in good shape. But every day it is a ten to fifteen minutes ride and back. So yes, it [the job] often costs me four, five hours a day. So actually, it often costs me an entire day.”

Participants placed in this category, furthermore, backgrounded the contact with colleagues, because apart from this part-time job they often had the social network of their own. People in this category mentioned to quit as the job appeared to be less flexible than was initially assumed. Another often heard reason was when a predefined external condition, such as a graduation or sufficient income from a small business, was met.

“For me, I’ll continue till I’ve finished my studies and found another job.”

Pleasant Job/Activity: Five participants framed their work as a pleasant job or pleasant activity. These participants especially foregrounded the positive job characteristics, such as the ‘freedom of the job’, the ‘outdoor and active nature of the job’, the ‘flexible working hours’, the ‘few working hours’, the ‘relaxed nature of the job’ and the ‘societal relevance of the job’. For this group, the work meant a nice or pleasant activity. For some it even meant a hobby, a therapy or a way to reintegrate into society after a severe mental or physical sickness.

“A, it is an income for me. B, it is a physical exercise for me because I practice no other sports. But what I’m always saying, it is a paid workout.”

The motivations mentioned to apply varied from looking for a job with these particular job characteristics, such as outdoor work or active work. Others said that they needed a job that allowed them to reintegrate into society at their own pace. Opinions about the positive job characteristics were foregrounded, whereas the one about the (low) income backgrounded.

“I wouldn’t like to give up this job. My situation is like this, I don’t know whether I should mention this, but there is no necessity for me to work. My husband is the breadwinner, so there is no real necessity. I always say: I do it for the fun.”

Participants in this category did the job because they liked it. Hence, events that cause the work to be less enjoyable are foregrounded by participants in this group. Negative opinions foregrounded in this group were problems with the supervisor, operational errors or negative consequences of the reorganization. Generally, participants framing their work this way showed positive job attitudes and were often perceived as being loyal to the organization. They were not planning to leave the organization, although, because of the increasing amount of operational errors which made the job less enjoyable, some doubted whether to stay or leave. Several participants in this category had this job for a long time already. Most of them, however, mentioned a decrease in enjoyment because of all the reorganizational consequences.

“I can see myself doing this job for a long time. Provided that the payment and all is just accurately carried out and that the walking carts remain. Let’s put it this way, it should remain a job that you is able do. Instead of making it so difficult that it is not worth for what you get in return. The work itself I just really like, but if they take out the walking carts and let you use your own bike, yes, then it just stops!”

This framing category is called ‘pleasant job/activity’. It should be noted that the difference between ‘pleasant job’ and ‘pleasant activity’ is in the fact that when framed as a pleasant job, it is still framed as being a job. This implies that one might still expect a (financial) reward for the work, which makes that a type of income still is the meaning of the job. When it is framed as pleasant activity, the same job characteristics are fore- and backgrounded, only, the financial rewards are totally ignored.

Having Something to Do/Remaining Socially Involved: The seven participants framing their work as ‘having something to do/remaining socially involved’ foregrounded the effects of having a job as such, not specifically the job as mail carrier. For this group the work meant a routine, a structure, something to do, or remaining socially involved. As a reason for applying, these participants mentioned that they did not want to sit at home, having nothing to do. It predominantly occurred with participants who enjoyed an early retirement or students taking a year off.

“I went in retirement at age of 55, in early retirement actually. I’m not the person to stay at home and get bored. So yes, that was why I applied for the job. ... And it is two folded of course, you also earn some money.”

Asked for their opinion about their work, people in this category foregrounded that they appreciate the contact with people in the delivery area and with their colleagues. Several positive opinions about the job were foregrounded, especially overall evaluations like: ‘a nice/beautiful activity’ or characteristics relating to the relaxing nature of the job.

“I like it, you have flexibility. If you don’t want to start at 13:00 o’clock, you don’t have to. You have a lot of flexibility and you work outdoors. If I want to take a cigarette break I do, if I can’t, I don’t.”

In this category as well, operational errors or problematic communication that made the work more difficult to do, were foregrounded. And just as with the preceding category, this framing category too included participants who attach no meaning at all to the financial rewards of the job and people that do attach some meaning to the financial rewards. Some participants placed more emphasis on the income than other, but since participants in this group often had another sources of income, like a pension, parents or a spouse, the income was largely backgrounded. Generally, people in this framing category demonstrated a positive job attitude. Nonetheless, participants in this group also got annoyed by recurring operational errors and could become a reason to look for something else to do. Another reason mentioned by participants in this category for leaving the organization was that a predefined external requirement was met.

“So to speak, as my Nepal project is cancelled, then I could do this job until I’m 60 years old because it is not really a job resulting in a burn-out.”

Having a ‘Normal’ Job: Seven participants framed their work as ‘having a ‘normal’ job’. Participants who framed their work like this were happy that they, basically, had work. They foregrounded the effects of having a ‘normal’ job, such as having a regular income and/or an honest income. For these participants the work meant that it guaranteed an income at the end of the month and/or that they were legally registered as employed.

“An income, an honest job. I can go on holiday and I can come back, looking everyone straight in the face and say, “yes, I’ve a good job”. Some people say it doesn’t pay well, that’s bullshit, I don’t mind.”

Participants placed in this category often mentioned that they applied for the job because they needed an income and that for this particular job no specific education or other requirements were demanded.

“... I kind of like it. Of course, tastes differ, and many colleagues left because of the heavy physical demand. But hey, what should I do? I have no education or anything.”

Asked for their opinion about the job, these participants foregrounded that they appreciated the positive job characteristics such as the freedom of the job, the working outdoors, the flexible working hours and so on. They also foregrounded to be pleased when they were assigned extra tasks, such as training new employees or being responsible for the depot. Although acknowledged by participants placed in this category, the low earnings were not particularly foregrounded by this group. This likely is because, in the light of their limited qualifications, no expectations exist of finding a better job. Generally, the participants in this framing category showed positive job attitudes and indicated to have no intention to quit. Rather the opposite applies as they were hoping that their contract would not be terminated.

“Yes, I do like the work. And I have a permanent contract, so they cannot easily kick me out like that.”

Relating Framing Categories to Turnover Intention

The results described above show that mail carriers framed their job differently. The second aspect of the research question was whether, or how, these different ways of framing their work, relates to the intention to quit. Hence, the last step in this analysis is to cluster participants based on the mentioned intention to quit and to identify how this relates to the identified framing categories. The analysis revealed that there was a mechanism at play that makes it understandable why mail carriers in a particular framing category get the intention to leave the organization or not.

This mechanism begins with the notion that each participant does this job to satisfy particular needs. It is these needs that influence what aspects of the job are foregrounded and what aspects of the job are backgrounded. In other words, the needs a mail carrier wishes being satisfied by doing their job, affects how the job is being framed. Depending on design and characteristics of the job, participants evaluated the extent to what the job could satisfy their specific needs. It is the result of this evaluation that appears to affect the job attitudes of mail carriers and the final decision to stay with or leave the organization.

The interview analyses showed that the organization, in this case study, could fulfil the needs of: (1) having a 'normal' job, (2) having a flexible and part-time side job, (3) doing a pleasant job/activity, and (4) having something to do. It also became clear, however, that this job of a mail carrier could not successfully satisfy the need for an adequate income. Looking back to the interview responses with respect to future expectations (see Table 5), it appears that the low income is the main reason for looking for another job. Therefore, the perceived importance of income is used as criteria to cluster participants in order to understand mail carriers' turnover intention. The first cluster contains of (1) participants who framed their work as their primary income. The second cluster contains (2) participants who did value the income, but foreground aspects from other framing categories. The last and final cluster contains (3) participants to whom the income played no role and who only foregrounded aspects from other framing categories. Below the three clusters will be explained.

Cluster 1: Income is the Dominant Framing Category: Participants in this cluster frame their job as primary income. Given that the income is relative little, as a result of the statutory minimum wage and the restrictions of only working part-time, makes it understandable that participants who foreground the income become dissatisfied. Hence, participants falling in this cluster are likely to have a negative job attitude and will constantly be looking for better job options.

Cluster 2: Income Plays a Role But is Not the Dominant Framing Category: For participants placed in this cluster, the work meant a type of income but it was not framed as such. Instead, it was framed as one of the other four framing categories. Participants in this cluster valued the income, despite the fact

that they acknowledged that it is not very much. This, however, did not seem to be a problem since participants in this cluster did not frame their work as an income and, hence, foregrounded other aspects of the job. Aspects of the job that could satisfy their needs. For example, people with no education were happy to have a legal and regular income. Although they did acknowledge that the income is very little, for these people, the fact that at least they had a job, apparently weighted more than this low income. Another example consists of participants that had another main activity like a study, children to take care of or a freelance job. These participants considered the income as low as well, but they were happy to have a job that could be combined well with their other activity. A final example consists of participants who liked the characteristics inherent to the job, or the ones who were looking for 'having something to do'. These needs could be satisfied by the job as well. Since they often had an additional source of income by means of a partner, parents or retirement, these participants see the income more as a little extra and, hence, are not bothered by its relative lowness. Although giving little weight to the low income, participants in this second cluster can get dissatisfied when their primary needs, which differs per framing category, are insufficiently met.

Cluster 3: Income Plays No Role, Other Framing Categories are Dominant: By the fact that they are not framing their job as income, participants in this cluster generally show positive job attitudes and no intentions to quit. Most participants falling in this cluster frame their work as 'a pleasant activity' or as 'having something to do/remaining active in society'. They see their work as a hobby or as opportunity to reintegrate into society and are mostly happy to have this job. Although rather positive in general, participants in this cluster are particularly sensitive for operational errors or other errors that make the job less 'fun' to do.

Summary of the Interview Results

Analysing the 34 interviews was done in three stages, the first of which consisted of a cross case analysis, the second of the individual case analyses and the final third one aimed at identifying whether any relation existed between a framing categories and job attitudes, and in specific turnover intention.

The first stage, the cross case analysis resulted in an overview of the variation in interview responses to each of the four interview topics and yielded several interesting observations. A first finding was that the response to the interview topics 'the motivation to apply for the job' and 'the meaning of work' showed great similarity in response, as it appeared that the meaning to apply for the job often was similar to the meaning of work. Secondly, a great variety appeared to exist in what their work meant for a participant and the opinions they have about their job. Lastly, the responses to the question whether participants were planning to stay at or to leave the organisation yielded five distinct expectations categories.

The second stage contained the individual case analysis, which was performed to identify patterns in the constellation of responses to the four interview topics of individual participants. These identified patterns were, in turn, compared with the interviews of other participants in order to look for recurring response patterns. Five response patterns were identified, reflecting how participants framed their work. It was found that participants framed their work as: (1) an income, (2) a part-time job, (3) a pleasant job/activity, (4) having something to do/remaining socially involved, and (5) having a 'normal' job. In each category, participants used a particular framing repertoire in which specific aspects of the job were foregrounded and backgrounded.

After having found that participants frame their work differently, the third analysis stage aimed at identifying whether there was any relation between framing categories and job attitudes and in specific turnover intention. It has been found that participants frame their work on the base of the needs they want to see satisfied by doing their job. So, the way in which participants evaluated to what extent the job could satisfy their specific needs, depended on the design and characteristics of the job. The result of this evaluation affected their job attitudes and the final decision to stay or leave the organization. It was found that the job as mail carrier can fulfil the needs that are at the bases of all framing categories, except the need for income. Hence, in order to show the likelihood that that participants show the intention to quit, respondents were clustered based on how important they consider the role of income. The three clusters identified were: (1) income is the dominant framing category, (2) income plays a role but is not the dominant framing category, and (3) income plays no role, other framing categories are dominant.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to empirically investigate how various employees, having a similar job, interpret their work differently and how this relates to job attitudes, and turnover intention in particular. In pursuing this aim, job crafting theory was found to be useful, as it states that individuals can alter a similar job by changing task, relational and/or cognitive boundaries (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Of particular interest for this study was the aspect of changing cognitive boundaries as this strongly relates to the (different) interpretations of a similar job. Despite being useful for this study, the concept of cognitive crafting has received little specific attention and asked for further exploration. Therefore, the theoretical goal of this study was to explore cognitive crafting. To do this, a case study was performed focusing on how postal workers frame their job differently and how this relates to job attitudes and the intention to quit. First, the results of this case study will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the methodological strengths and weaknesses of the study. Subsequently implications of these findings regarding theory about job crafting and in particular about cognitive crafting will be discussed. This discussion section concludes by addressing the implications for practice.

Discussion of Case Study Results

One major findings of this study is that mail carriers can frame their work differently. It is found that mail carriers can frame their work as: (1) an income, (2) a part-time job, (3) a pleasant job/activity, (4) having something to do/remaining socially involved, and (5) having a 'normal' job. It should be noted that, in only one of these framing categories the income is dominant. In the other four framing categories, mail carriers foreground other aspects of the job. This finding is in line with the early finding of Morse and Weiss (1955), who discovered that a job can serve many functions others than earning money.

Another finding of this study is that mail carriers who frame their job as an income are least satisfied with their job. Mail carriers framing their work as an income often mentioned to do the job out of necessity in order to earn a living for themselves and their families. These mail carriers foregrounded the (low) income and backgrounded the positive characteristics of the job. This finding corresponds with the argument that Leana *et al.* (2012) make, that employees with greater financial needs focus on the economic values of work more than other employees, simply because they cannot afford the luxury of not doing so.

One finding of this study was that the way how mail carriers framed their work, appeared to be affected by the need mail carriers wanted to see satisfied by doing this job. It is remarkable, though, that besides the motivation for doing the job, contact and communication with other people at work appeared to have little impact on how the job was framed. This can be considered as remarkable since the literature about framing suggests that communication with other people has a significant impact on how a situation is framed (Dewulf *et al.*, 2009). In particular, contact with other people at work, such as co-workers or supervisors, is found to strongly affect work meaning by means of interpersonal sensemaking (Rosso *et al.*, 2010, Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 2003). It still seems plausible that, in general, contact with other people has a considerable effect on how a situation is framed. The findings of this study, though, might suggest that little contact with colleagues lead to more diverse ways of framing, as employees are less likely to engage in shared sensemaking which might easily lead to similar ways of framing.

Methodological Strength and Weaknesses

To explore how mail carriers framed their work, a qualitative research design consisting of a combination of two rather open interview techniques: narrative interviewing and topic interviewing, was used. For the aim of this study, open interview techniques were evaluated as very suitable because two particular reasons. Firstly, they enabled participants to foreground aspects of a topic that they considered as relevant, in contrast to giving their opinion about a statement made by the researcher. Secondly, it enabled the researcher to identify subtle differences in interview responses, which is particularly relevant in studying work framing. This is demonstrated in the following fictive

example responses: “*What I really hate about the job is working in the rain*” and, “*I don’t like working in bad weather, but I see it as part of the job and the next day, when the weather is good, it is very great to work outdoors*”. Both responses indicate that the participants don’t like the bad weather, however, enabling the respondents to freely answer the questions helps the researcher to capture these subtle, yet important, differences.

Besides the aforementioned upsides of using a qualitative research design, qualitative research also has some shortcomings. In contrast to quantitative data, qualitative data is much more subject to the (biased) interpretation of the researcher. For this present study, the identification of framing categories and subsequent ascribing of participants to these identified framing categories, was subject to biased interpretation of the researcher. To obviate this subjectivity, trustworthiness was pursued by making use of multiple second coders. The initial inter-rater agreement for ascribing participants to a specific framing category was moderate, with a Cohen’s Kappa of 0.45. This, moderate Kappa is likely to be the result of the subtle differences between both the framing categories and the actual interview responses. It would be interesting to see whether these same categories can be identified by making use of quantitative research methods.

An interesting methodological choice was to use a shadowing approach to conduct the interviews. The time and costs that were saved by doing this, obviously, were evaluated as positive. Besides these practical advantages, this approach also served several positively evaluated methodological goals. What was evaluated as most valuable about this method was the low tension between the interviewer and the participants. This assumed to be a result of the familiar environment for the participant and the fact that they had something to do while thinking about an interview response. Two other characteristics of shadowing were the following: giving more insight into how particular roles or perspectives were acted out and addressing remarkable happenings that occurred during the delivery of the mail. These two characteristics were evaluated as less valuable because both characteristics did not provide much useful information for the interviews. Nonetheless, especially in the first couple of interviews, this shadowing helped the researcher to gain better understanding of the content of the job of the mail carrier. It should be noted that the act of shadowing can also affect the behaviour of the participant (Vásquez *et al.*, 2012). Although it would be naïve to ignore that this did not occur in this research, the notion is that this did not have a great impact on the interview responses.

A methodological shortcoming of this present study is that the method used to explore how employees frame their work, only captured how the work was framed at a given point in time. It might be suggested, however, that framing one’s job is a dynamic process and that employees are constantly reframing how they see their job. This is supported by theory about job crafting and cognitive crafting, as these concepts themselves include the process of crafting and therefore inherently are subject to change. Accordingly, it should be noted that this study revealed different states of cognitive crafting whilst it did not capture the actual activity of cognitive crafting/framing.

Theoretical Implications and Directions for Future Research

The theoretical goal of this study was to explore the phenomenon of cognitive crafting as an aspect of job crafting. Based on the findings of this empirical study, four aspects could be identified that ask for further elaboration in regard to job crafting in general and cognitive crafting in particular. The first aspect is the, presumed in this study interchangeably of cognitive crafting and work framing. The, closely related, second aspect concerns the differences, similarities and (inter)relations of the various cognitive constructs as depicted in the job crafting model developed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001). The third aspect addresses the relevance of cognitive crafting in relation to the two other aspects of job crafting: task crafting and relational crafting. A final aspect that is elaborated on is the richness/multidimensionality of the concept of cognitive crafting.

In this study, cognitive crafting has been explored by investigating how employees frame their work. A relevant question is, however, whether or not work framing can be actually used to measure cognitive crafting and how these concepts match and differ. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) describe cognitive crafting as changing the cognitive task boundaries. Moreover, they state that changing cognitive boundaries can take many forms. Framing, in turn, is described as using a particular 'repertoire' of categories and labels to bracket and interpret ongoing experience and inform action (Brummans *et al.*, 2008, p. 28). A first difference is that 'changing cognitive task boundaries' is more narrowly defined than 'interpreting ongoing experiences'. Nevertheless, (changing) task boundaries can be considered as an (ongoing) experience, which, in regard to this difference, justifies framing as a method to capture cognitive crafting. Another difference is that cognitive crafting specifically refers to the cognitive process and framing specifically to the communicative process. This communicative process, however, is considered to reflect a cognitive image. Hence, it is precisely this differences that makes it possible to capture framing but impossible to capture cognitive crafting. A final difference between cognitive crafting and framing is that employees have specific motivations to engage in cognitive crafting. Opposed to this, it is suggested here that no specific motivation is needed to engage in framing a situation, it just always happens. To conclude, it appears that cognitive crafting and framing actually are different concepts. Nevertheless, by acknowledging these differences, framing is argued to be a good way to capture cognitive crafting.

The cognitive constructs and their interrelation as depicted in the job crafting model developed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), also ask for further discussion. The job crafting model identifies three triggers for engaging in job crafting (claiming control over their job to avoid alienation from the work; creating a positive self-image in their work; fulfilling the basic human need for connection with others), three types of job crafting (task, relational and cognitive) and variables that mediate the relationship between these triggers and actual job crafting. Variables that mediate this relationship are features of the job and the orientation and motivation of the employee towards the job. The orientation towards the job refers to how someone sees his job; as a job, a career, or a calling (Wrzesniewski *et*

al., 1997). Reflecting the job crafting model to the results of this present study has led to confusion about the cognitive concepts of the model. In this present study, investigating how an employee frames his job is used to capture how employees cognitively craft their job. The confusion is, that the way in which someone frames his/her job shows great resemblance with the orientation towards the job, which is identified as a mediating variable in the job crafting model. To illustrate the ambiguity, see the following question: *what is the difference between crafting the job as a career, and seeing the job -as orientation towards the job- as a career?* Hence, to resolve the ambiguity between the orientation towards the job and cognitive crafting, I suggest that more theoretical work should be done to clarify the differences, similarities and relationships between these cognitive concepts of the job crafting model.

The third aspect, based on the results of this study, which asks for more elaboration, is the relative importance of cognitive crafting in relation to the two other aspects of job crafting; task crafting and relational crafting. In their seminal paper about job crafting, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) identify that job crafting can occur by altering cognitive, relational or task boundaries. Nonetheless, in empirical studies till now (e.g., Ghitulescu, 2007, Lyons, 2008), cognitive crafting has received little specific attention. Despite this little specific attention, results of this study clearly indicate that cognitive crafting occurs and that it can have a substantial effect on job attitudes and the intentions to leave the organization. Furthermore, as altered work meaning has been identified as one of the major outcomes of job crafting, and meaning itself can be seen as a cognitive concept, it is likely to be strongly affected by cognitive crafting. Thus, although given little specific attention so far, I would argue that cognitive crafting is highly important in job crafting. Hence, a fruitful direction for future research on job crafting should be to investigate the relative importance and relations between the three aspects of job crafting.

The results of this study show that mail carriers can frame, or cognitively craft, their work in five distinct ways. Although the framing categories identified in this study say little about framing categories in other organizations, it might be assumed that in other organizations various framing categories can be identified as well. See for example the study of Mallon *et al.* (2005), who found that scientists demonstrated four different orientations towards their work, as: an organisational careerist, an impassioned scientist, a strategic opportunist and a balance seeker. Thus, to successfully capture the richness of cognitive crafting, I would argue that investigating cognitive crafting by only measuring the perceived meaningfulness of a job (see Ghitulescu, 2007) seems to not reflect this complexity. Therefore, I would suggest that future studies on job crafting should focus on the presence of multiple framing categories for one job rather than only focussing on the perceived meaningfulness of a job.

Next to this, the results of this study also indicate that one framing category can contain multiple work meanings. Therefore, I endorse the direction for future research on work meaning suggested by Rosso *et al.* (2010, p. 119), who propose that: *“integrative perspectives on the meaning of work*

should recognize and model the interconnection of various sources of work meaning...”. To this, I would like to add that to successfully integrate multiple work meanings in future studies, cognitive crafting, or work framing, is a useful framework for doing this.

Practical Implications

Several useful insights for both human resource managers and operational managers arise from the findings of this study. It appeared that employees frame their work differently depending on the various needs they wanted to see being satisfied by doing their job. By framing a job in a particular manner, some aspects of the job were foregrounded and others were backgrounded. Some employees foregrounded job characteristics that could satisfy their needs, others foregrounded job characteristics that could not satisfy their needs. The identification of this mechanism, underlines the notion that ‘the employee’ does not exist and that general organizational interventions will work for some but not for all because each employee frames his/her work differently and is, consequently, sensitive for different interventions to the job. Thus, in order to understand, and eventually adjust, the behaviour of employees, managers should acknowledge that in every organization, each employee interprets his/her work on his/her own way.

This practically implies that an organization should be aware of the needs they can actually satisfy, and, more importantly, which needs they cannot satisfy. Subsequently, organizations should identify which (target group of) people are looking for the needs that the offered job can satisfy. Thus, by being aware of the needs a job can satisfy, recruitment and selection can be adjusted to find the perfect match. Especially organizations that have a large pool of potential employees, because of little/no educational requirements and/or part-time and flexible working hours, are advised to apply this knowledge. This is because many people will apply for such jobs, while a great amount of them will not be satisfied by the characteristics of the job, as they have needs that can not be satisfied by the characteristics of this job. For operational managers as well, it is important to be aware of how employees differently frame their work, and, thus, to be aware of which employees are sensitive for which job characteristics. By being aware of this, a manager can decide whether it is worthwhile to adjust the job characteristics or, in contrast, to decide that the organization is not suited for that employee.

Conclusion

This study explored the complex phenomenon of cognitive crafting as a social constructivist approach to job design. Exploring cognitive crafting was done by investigating how mail carriers use different framing repertoires to describe their job and how these relate to job attitudes and turnover intentions. During their work, 34 mail carriers were interviewed using open interview methods. These methods enabled participants to respond to topics by foregrounding and backgrounding aspects of an interview

topic the way they wanted it. This enabled the researcher to analyse what aspects of the job were important for different employees. The interview analyses resulted in the identification of five distinct framing categories in which different aspects of the job were foregrounded and backgrounded. Moreover, a mechanism was identified that explained why mail carriers framed their work in a specific manner and, in relation to the characteristics of the job, how this can explain dissatisfaction of employees and eventual turnover. Based on these findings, practical implications for operational and human resource managers are provided. Theoretical implications, about the importance of cognitive crafting and the lack of (empirical) research in this domain, are also discussed.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Original and translated quotes as displayed in Table 2

Interview ID	Translated quotes (original Dutch quotes in italics)
B-2	It means I work, I earn money, I'm looking for bread, food. <i>Het betekent ik werk, ik verdien geld. Ik zoek brood, eten.</i>
C-7	Well, you earn a little extra. <i>Nou, dan verdien je een leuk centje erbij zo.</i>
A-6	If I quit, that would be nice, but then I've to let go a lot of other things. <i>Als ik er mee stop, dat is erg leuk, maar dan zijn er veel dingen die ik moet laten rusten.</i>
A-1	... at the moment I work freelance, for me this is just to have some additional, regular income. <i>... en ik werk nu freelance, en ik doe het puur om er een klein stukje vast inkomen naast te hebben.</i>
B-8	... via the social welfare service, they decide where I have to work. So, at least, I get an additional social allowance. <i>... via zeg maar mijn uitkering, via mijn werkcoach, die deelt me in naar werk. Dan krijg ik tenminste aanvullend.</i>
B-1	An honest job, I can go on holidays and I can come back, looking everyone straight in the face. <i>Een eerlijk werk. Ik kan op vakantie gaan en ik kan terugkomen. Ik kan iedereen in het gezicht kijken.</i>
B-7	For me it is important to have an independent income. <i>Ja, ik vind het wel belangrijk om zelf een salaris te hebben.</i>
A-2	Actually, it does mean a lot for me. The regular contact you have with people. <i>Het betekent toch wel veel voor mij. Je hebt toch wel regelmatig contact met de mensen.</i>
B-5	... you may be happy that, at least, you have a job. <i>... maar je mag blij zijn dat je een baan hebt.</i>
D-2	I've suffered a severe sickness, so this gives me back the feeling that I belong to society again. <i>Dat ik gewoon best wel heel ziek geweest ben. Dat het mij weer een gevoel geeft van ik hoor er weer bij.</i>
C-7	And of course, that you have something to do. <i>En dan ook natuurlijk dat ik ook bezig ben hè.</i>
E-2	It gives me structure. <i>Het geeft me structuur.</i>
D-1	No, not my main activity. I mean, the work at the crèche, I just like that work better. ...but I just do it as an side job, so to speak. <i>Nee, niet mijn hoofd dinget, dat niet. Ik bedoel het werk van de peuterclub, dat vind ik gewoon leuker... maar ik doe het ook maar voor erbij, zeg maar.</i>
A-6	And because it only is a few hours per day... <i>En omdat het natuurlijk maar een paar uur op een dag is...</i>
B-9	... it is physical exercise for me, because besides this I don't do sports. But I've always said, this is a paid work-out. <i>... is het beweging voor mij, want ik sport verder niet... Maar dit is betaald sporten heb ik altijd gezegd.</i>
B-6	I enjoy being outdoors, ...because normally I'm always indoors, working on my computer. <i>Lekker buiten... want ik zit gewoon binnen altijd achter een computer.</i>
D-4	Actually, it should be like that with all the work you do, that you contribute to society. <i>Eigenlijk hoort het zo te zijn bij al het werk dat je doet, dat je ook een steentje bijdraagt aan de maatschappij.</i>
C-2	And it is a kind of responsibility that you have, carrying someone else's mail. <i>En het is ook een soort van verantwoording wat je toch met je meedraagt. Want het is toch iemand anders post die je bij hebt.</i>
B-3	It sounds simple, but I just really like it. <i>Het klinkt heel simpel, maar ik vind het leuk.</i>

- C-10 ... it is a job with future perspective for me. What I've achieved, that I've become depot checker, that have made me happy.
... werk met toekomst voor mij. Wat ik zelf heb gedaan, dat ik depotchecker ben geworden. Daar ben ik blijer om geworden.
- A-3 ... and for me, in the beginning, it was therapy. Let's put it that way. My thoughts just needed to..., I needed distraction.
... en het is voor mij in het begin ook therapie geweest. Laat ik het zo zeggen. Ik moest gewoon mijn gedachten..., ik had afleiding nodig.
- C-3 Back then, when you worked here, you were settled till retirement.
Toentertijd ging je daarheen, en dan zat je gebakken tot aan je pensioen.
-

Appendix B

Original and translated quotes as displayed in Table 3

Interview ID	Translated quotes (original Dutch quotes in italics)
A-6	It is a fairly free occupation, I really like that.... and it is very pleasant that there is not someone constantly looking over your shoulder. <i>Het is een redelijk vrij beroep, dat vind ik heel prettig ... en dan is het inderdaad wel erg prettig dat er niet voortdurend iemand achter je staat.</i>
A-2	You're always working outdoors, so you're experiencing all weather conditions. When it is pouring rain, it is not nice, but there are so many days that it is not raining and that the weather is good. <i>Je werkt altijd buiten dus je maakt alle weersomstandigheden mee. En als het plent van de regen is dat even niet leuk, maar er zijn zoveel dagen dat het niet regent en dat het mooi weer is.</i>
C-5	You don't have to start at 1pm. You've a lot of flexibility. <i>Je hoeft niet perse om 1 uur te beginnen. Je hebt heel veel flexibiliteit.</i>
E-4	I still like it. I do like walking. <i>Ik vind het nog steeds leuk. Ik houd wel van lopen .</i>
B-6	... and I thought it is a fairly relaxed. <i>...en ik dacht het is wel relaxed.</i>
A-4	And what I like about it, is working half days. <i>Maar wat ik er op zich leuk aan vind het is halve dagen werk .</i>
C-9	It is pretty easy, you don't have to think much. <i>Het is lekker makkelijk, je hoeft er niet bij na te denken.</i>
A-3	Working in your own neighbourhood, so you don't have to travel far to get their. <i>Postbezorger in je buurt, hoeft je niet ver te reizen.</i>
D-2	I just think it is nice work. I really enjoy the job. <i>Ik vind het gewoon lekker werk. Ik vind het gewoon leuk werk.</i>
A-7	And you also have contact with people. Especially in the working class neighbourhoods, there you have much contact with people. I like that as well. <i>En je hebt ook contact met mensen. Zeker als je in van die volksbuurten komt. Dan heb je wel contact met mensen. Dat vind ik ook leuk.</i>
E-3	Yes, yes, that's why I bring my colleague as practice model for my hairdressing classes. <i>Jaja, vandaar ik neem mijn collega mee als model voor mijn avondopleiding tot kapster.</i>
A-4	And what I like as well... so now and then you're spoiled with presents, vouchers, flowers and so on. <i>En wat ook zo leuk is ... je wordt af en toe doodgeknuffeld met kleinigheden, cadeaubonnetjes zus, bloemetjes zo.</i>
B-4	I have no problems with my supervisor. I can discuss everything with him. I've had worse bosses. He understands it. When I have something, I can always call him and he'll take care of it. <i>Ja, ik heb geen last van mijn teamcoach. Je kan hem alles voorleggen. Ik heb wel slechtere bazen gehad. Hij begrijpt het gelukkig. En als er wat is dan bel ik hem, [naam], ik kom er niet meer uit. Dan lost hij het op.</i>
C-10	And the advantage that I have, I've trained a lot of new people. And they've all said that I've trained them very well. <i>En wat het voordeel bij mij is, ik heb heel veel mensen ingewerkt. En zij hebben allemaal gezegd dat ik heel goed heb lesgegeven.</i>

Appendix C

Original and translated quotes as displayed in Table 4

Interview ID	Translated quotes (original Dutch quotes in italics)
B-3	Well, the salary....., according to me, 10 euro per hour is the salary that cleaners get... that [10 euro's] would be more reasonable. <i>Ik vind het salaris....., ik vind een tientje per uur, dat krijgen schoonmakers ook, dat zou ik toch wel redelijker vinden.</i>
A-5	The work is becoming increasingly heavier, especially Thursdays are just very heavy. <i>Het werk wordt steeds zwaarder, met name de donderdag is gewoon heel zwaar.</i>
A-4	The downside of this job, you can't get a full-time contract. It always remains part-time. <i>Het nadeel van dit werk, je kan geen fulltime baan krijgen, het is altijd parttime.</i>
A-1	But yes, sometimes the work is very simple. <i>Maar ja, af en toe is het simpel werk.</i>
A-2	Rain, that sucks! <i>Regen, dat is balen!</i>
A-2	We all work at different times, so we don't see each other that much. I regret that, it would be more fun if you were here with some colleagues. <i>We hebben allemaal andere tijden dus we zien elkaar niet zo gek veel... Dat vind ik jammer, het zou natuurlijk leuker zijn als je met een paar man hier bent.</i>
E-4	And now they deliver the post only at 11 am, and that sucks. And then it is not completely true that you can perfectly combine this work with school going kids and their school times. <i>En nu krijg je de post pas om 11 uur, en dat is wel balen. En dan gaat het niet helemaal meer op dat je het goed kan combineren met naar school gaande kinderen door de schooltijden.</i>
D-1	... that the post would be delivered at the depots more early. Because when I've days off from my other job, than I just want to start early. <i>... dat het eerder in de depots zou liggen. Want op de dagen dat ik vrij ben van het andere werk, dan wil ik gewoon vroeg beginnen.</i>
B-2	The bad thing is, with bad weather it costs you more time, but you only get paid the set amount. So you work one hour or half an hour for free. <i>En de slechte dingen is, met slecht weer jij doet veel tijd maar jij krijgt weinig. Jij werkt een uur of half uurtje gratis.</i>
B-5	Everything is mixed up. Now I'm at number 122, but I have 114, and here 120, and here 112, that's where we have been already. ... This also occurs too often. <i>Nee, alles zit door elkaar hier. Nu ben ik bij 122, nou heb ik hier 114, hier 120, en hier 112, daar ben ik net langs geweest. Dat gebeurt ook te vaak.</i>
D-4	And the communication is just really poor... when I write a remark in the report, then I get no response. <i>En de communicatie vind ik gewoon slecht ... dan schrijf ik dat op het rapportje, maar daar krijg ik geen antwoord op terug.</i>
A-7	Well, some things are unclear, the communication. <i>Toch wel dat sommige dingen onduidelijk zijn, de communicatie.</i>
C-1	According to me, they could show more appreciation for the people. <i>Ik vind dat ze meer een beetje waardering voor de mensen mogen hebben.</i>
D-1	I've called my team coach and I've told him. But then he start laughing out loud, so according to me he really don't get it. <i>Ik heb mijn teamcoach gebeld, en heb ik dat gezegd. Maar die gaat hard lachen, dus die snapt het niet volgens mij.</i>
B-7	Because everything is so messed up.. <i>Omdat het allemaal zo rommelig is.</i>
D-2	I do notice that the organization is becoming increasingly less personal. <i>Ik merk wel dat de manier, de organisatie, steeds minder persoonlijk werd.</i>
A-4	A real disappointment for me are the 'geo-routes'. What a mess is that.... your delivery route got totally messed up and was not sorted according the shortest walking route. <i>Maar wat ik echt een tegenvaller vond zijn die geo-routes. Wat een puinzooi is dat... Je route lag overhoop, het lag niet meer zoals het de kortste manier lopen was.</i>
C-3	I'm no driver anymore, they took me off that job too. Replaced by cheaper employees. <i>Maar chauffeur ben ik niet meer, want daar hebben ze me ook vanaf geknikkerd. Daar hebben ze ook weer goedkoper personeel ingezet.</i>

- C-1 ... there is no toilet. If you need to go to the toilet then you have to go to a community centre. Or take a public toilet.
... er is geen wc, als je naar de wc moet dan moet je naar buurthuizen gaan. Of zo'n publieke wc nemen.

Appendix D

Original and translated quotes as displayed in Table 5

Interview ID	Translated quotes (original Dutch quotes in italics)
D-2	Actually, as long as you're able to walk and able to read you can continue doing this for years. So how I see it now, I will keep doing this for years. <i>En in principe moet het volgens mij dan nog jaren kunnen. Als je nog kan lopen en kan lezen, dus wat mij betreft gaat dit nog gewoon jaren lekker door.</i>
E-2	I can see myself doing this job for a long time. Provided that the payment and all is just accurately carried out and that the walking carts remain. Let's put it this way, it should remain a job that you is able do. Instead of making it so difficult that it is not worth for what you get in return. The work itself I just really like, but if they take out the walking carts and let you use your own bike, yes, then it just stops! <i>Ik zie mezelf dit nog lang doen. Mits de betaling enzo allemaal gewoon goed geregeld is. En dat die karren blijven, dat het zeg maar een functie is die je kan blijven uitvoeren. Niet dat het je zo moeilijke gemaakt wordt, dat het te zwaar wordt voor wat het oplevert. Want het werk zelf vind ik gewoon heel leuk. Maar als ze zeggen we halen die karren eruit en je moet het op je eigen fiets doen, ja, dan houdt het gewoon op.</i>
B-2	At the moment I'm applying for other jobs. When I find another job for in the morning, for example early in the morning, 5, 6 am to 12am. Right now I'm applying for jobs in the production and others. <i>Ik ben nu bezig solliciteren voor andere baan. Als ik vind andere baan, in de ochtend bijvoorbeeld, begin ochtend 5, 6, uur tot 12 uur. Nu ben ik bezig solliciteren bij productie of andere.</i>
E-3	Yes, I'm looking for another job. [Why?] This is heavy. <i>Ja, ik ben op zoek naar ander werk. [Want?] Dit is zwaar.</i>
B-4	To be honest, I'm looking for something that I like. And as long as I haven't found such, I'll continue doing this because now I am used to it. <i>Om eerlijk te zeggen, ik ben wel op zoek naar wat ik leuk vind. En zolang ik dat nog niet heb blijf ik dit wel doen omdat ik er ondertussen aan gewend ben.</i>
A-7	For me I will just continue until I finish my studies and have found another job. <i>Voor mij gaat het gewoon door tot ik klaar ben met mijn studie en een andere baan gevonden heb.</i>

Appendix E

Original and translated quotes displayed in the framing category description

Interview ID	Translated quotes (original Dutch quotes in italics)
Framing category: Income	
C-6	Necessity, it is a matter of necessity. At a certain point you just need some money. And then you have to work somewhere. <i>Noodzaak, het is een kwestie van noodzaak. Op een gegeven moment moet je toch geld verdienen. En dan moet je ergens werken.</i>
B-8	[Do you like it?] No, currently not. Because I'm busy looking for another job. When I've found another job, then, maybe then, I can see this job as a sort of hobby. <i>[Vind jij het leuk?] Nee, tegenwoordig niet. Omdat ik ben bezig thuis om andere baan te vinden. Dus ben ik een beetje niet... zeg maar. Als ik een andere baan heb gevonden misschien, dan kan ik deze werk zien zoals hobby.</i>
C-6	As I find something else that pays better or what offers better working times, then I'll make the switch. <i>Als er wat anders is dat beter betaalt of wat betere werktijden heeft, dan ga ik daar naartoe over.</i>
Framing category: Part-time job	
D-1	No, not my main activity. I mean, the work at the crèche, I just like that work better. ...but I just do it as an side job, so to speak. <i>Nee, niet mijn hoofd ding, dat niet. Ik bedoel het werk van de peuterclub, dat vind ik gewoon leuker... maar ik doe het ook maar voor erbij, zeg maar.</i>
B-6	It takes quite some time. I live at some distance. In the beginning I thought it would be nice, having a nice bike ride to get you in good shape. But every day it is a ten to fifteen minutes ride and back. So yes, it [the job] often costs me four, five hours a day. So actually, it often costs me an entire day.

Het kost me toch wel heel veel tijd. Ik woon wat verder ik dacht dat is leuk, dan heb ik toch een stukje fietsen een beetje voor de conditie. Het is dan tien minuten kwartiertje fietsen, en terug. Dus ja, je bent er vaak toch vier, vijf, uurtjes mee onderweg. Dus eigenlijk kost het me dan vaak bijna heel mijn dag.

- A-7 For me, I'll continue till I've finished my studies and found another job.
Voor mij gaat het gewoon door tot ik klaar ben met mijn studie. En een andere baan gevonden heb.

Framing category: Pleasant job/activity

- B-9 A, it is an income for me. B, it is a physical exercise for me because I practice no other sports. But I'm always saying, it is a paid workout.
A. het is een inkomen voor mij, B. het is beweging voor mij, want ik sport verder niet. Nou, ik sport verder niet, ik fiets alles want ik kan geen autorijden, dus ik ben altijd wel in beweging. Maar dit is betaald sporten heb ik altijd gezegd.
- A-3 I wouldn't like to give up this job. My situation is like this, I don't know whether I should mention this or not, but there is no necessity for me to work. My husband is the breadwinner, so there is no real necessity. I always say: I do it for the fun.
Ik zou het niet graag missen. Het is bij ons zo, ik weet niet of ik dat erbij moet zeggen, ik moet niet perse werken. Mijn man is kostwinner, dus ik moet niet perse werken. Ik zeg altijd: ik doe het voor de lol.
- E-2 I can see myself doing this job for a long time. Provided that the payment and all is just accurately carried out and that the walking carts remain. Let's put it this way, it should remain a job that you are able to do. Instead of making it so difficult that it is not worth for what you get in return. The work itself I just really like, but if they take out the walking carts and let you use your own bike, yes, then it just stops!
Ik zie mezelf dit nog lang doen. Mits de betaling enzo allemaal gewoon goed geregeld is. En dat die karren blijven, dat het zeg maar een functie is die je kan blijven uitvoeren. Niet dat het je zo moeilijke gemaakt wordt, dat het te zwaar wordt voor wat het oplevert. Want het werk zelf vind ik gewoon heel leuk. Maar als ze zeggen we halen die karren eruit en je moet het op je eigen fiets doen, ja, dan houdt het gewoon op.

Framing category: having something to do/remaining socially involved

- D-2 I went in retirement at age of 55, in early retirement actually. I'm not the person to stay at home and get bored. So yes, that was why I applied for the job. ... And it is two folded of course, you also earn some money.
Ik ben op mijn 55e met pensioen gegaan. Althans met vervroegde uittrading. Ik ben niet iemand die binnen gaat zitten of gaat lopen te vervelen. En ja, daarom heb ik er eigenlijk op gereageerd. En zo is het balletje gaan rollen. En het is natuurlijk tweederzijds, je verdient er wat mee ook.
- C-5 I like it, you have flexibility. If you don't want to start at 13:00 o'clock, you don't have to. You have lot flexibility and you work outdoors. If I want to take a cigarette break I do, if I can't, I don't.
Ik vind het prettig, je hebt flexibiliteit. Je hoeft niet perse om 1 uur te beginnen. Je hebt heel veel flexibiliteit. Je werkt in de buitenlucht. Ik kan nu ook rookpauze nemen. Als ik niet kan roken dan rook ik niet.
- C-5 So to speak, as my Nepal project is cancelled, then I could do this job until I'm 60 years old because it is not really a job resulting in a burn-out.
Zeg maar bij wijze van spreken, als mijn projectje van Nepal niet gaat. Dan zou ik dit zeker tot mijn 60e doen. Omdat het, wat ik zeg, het is niet een baan waar je een burnout van kunt krijgen.

Framing category: having a 'normal' job

- C-1 An income, an honest job. I can go on holiday and I can come back, looking everyone straight in the face and say "yes, I've a good job". Some people say it doesn't pay well, that's bullshit, I don't mind.
Een inkomen. Een eerlijk werk. Ik kan op vakantie gaan en ik kan terugkomen. Ik kan iedereen in het gezicht kijken en zeggen ik heb een goede baan. En sommige mensen zeggen het betaalt niet goed, het is bullshit, ik vind dat niet erg
- B-1 ... I kind of like it. Of course, tastes differ, and many colleagues left because of the heavy physical demand. But hey, what should I do? I have no degrees or anything.
... ik vind het wel leuk. Smaken verschillen, er zijn er ook een hoop die zijn weg gegaan want die vonden het te zwaar. Maarja, wat moet je doen? Ik heb geen diploma's of zo.
- B-1 Yes, I do like the work. And I have a permanent contract, so they cannot easily kick me out like that.
Ja, ik vind het wel leuk. En ik heb een vast contract dus mij gooien ze niet zomaar eruit.
-