

**Faculté des sciences économiques,
sociales, politiques et de communication**

**Job crafting: empowering
employees to achieve
work-life balance**

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Introduction

As the first sentence of the work of Pendleton, Derbyshire and Hodgkinson (2021) says it: “It is a poignant observation that nobody on their deathbed ever said, ‘I wish I’d spent more time at work’” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p.1). Indeed, in a world where work is taking up to 50% of our waking hours, work-life balance has never been more important to consider (Pendleton et al., 2021). Moreover, research have shown that increasing work-life balance helps improve an employee’s overall well-being (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Setting work-life balance as an important aspect of employees’ wellbeing. Further, work-life balance has become important for organizations themselves as it has been proved that an improved work-life balanced leads to high organizational performance, increased job satisfaction and a stronger organizational commitment (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). This shows why work-life balance is important to understand in today’s world.

Furthermore, today’s world has been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis on many levels. The world of work has not been spared by the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic crisis. Indeed, business have been affected and they have started to reconsider how and where work is done (Pendleton et al., 2021). Therefore, the idea that the pattern of work is changing raises the need of discussion and experimentation (Pendleton et al., 2021). Not to mention the rapid advance of technology that increase the possibility for work to be transformed (Pendleton et al., 2021). Indeed, work can now me done from anywhere and anytime as the literature review of Ajzen and Taskin (2021) mentions it. All those changes in the world of work also have a consequence on work-life balance and on how people perceive it nowadays.

Nonetheless, work-life balance comes with its backsides too. Indeed, work-life balance policies can have negative effects due to the work-family backlash that can be associated to multiple forms of work-life balance policies according to the work of Perrigino, Dunford and Wilson (2018). Moreover, the gender inequities that are perceived towards work-life balance policies can have a negative effect too as men experience the “*glass handcuffs*” phenomenon that prevents men from using work-life balance policies due to the fear to damage their career (Blithe, 2018). Meaning that work-life balance also has a role to play in terms of diversity and equality.

This master’s thesis focuses on one way to achieve work-life balance which is the concept of job crafting. This concept is derived from the way people experience work, and how work makes them feel, it also considers how work dynamics affect workers in their life (Pendleton et

al., 2021). Pendleton et al. (2021) also describe job crafting as the mechanism to achieve balance between the elements of work that bring joy to someone and those that reduce it. Moreover, job crafting is described as “unofficial techniques and activities that individuals use to shape their own work-life balance” (Sturges, 2012, p.1540).

Thus, this work will try to understand how enabling job crafting could lead to work-life balance on a gender perspective. To do so we conducted interviews with ten engineers that all worked within the department of engineering of a company.

The interviews conducted in the framework of this study took place in a Belgian company working in the space industry and responsible for the creation of the electronic core of satellites. The missions for those satellites vary between observation of the Earth to telecommunication and other purposes. The organisation also works together with NASA or the European Space Agency on different projects, placing the organisation as a leader in the space industry. Moreover, the company where the interviews were conducted employs 48% of engineers, most of whom are men since the company’s workforce is made of 70% of men for 30% of women.

In the first section of this work, we start by giving a literature review of work-life balance. We also present why work-life balance matters for employees but also for organizations. Then, we address the gender issues that relate to work-life balance. Finally, the literature review gives a large description of job crafting and describes each of its dimensions: physical crafting, task crafting, relational crafting, and cognitive crafting. This literature review finally leads to the problematic and the research question of this study.

In the second section of this work, we first explain the methodology used for this study and the approach of this work. Then, we detail the operations that took place along the study: the data collection, the analysis of the results that were obtained. Finally, we describe the context of the company of this case study.

The third part of this work gives a presentation and analysis of the obtained results. The results are structured according to the dimension of job crafting they relate to. Given the gender perspective of this study, the results of a dimension are structured whether they were obtained from a male or female respondent. Finally, the results tackle the notion of gender inequities themselves on a shorter note.

The fourth part of this work is the discussion of the results. In the discussion we go back on the aim of the study and confront the results to the literature. The discussion is divided in two main

sections that go back on the literature of work-life balance on one side and on the literature of job crafting on the other side. These parts are further developed and divided into different aspects of the results that were either confronting with the literature or on the contrary that were adding up to it. Indeed, we add the notion of caregiver to the gender issues according to the obtained results. Moreover, we confront the results of this study and the literature of Pendleton et al. (2021) to give some recommendations to enable job crafting and achieve work-life balance. Finally, this work ends on a conclusion eventually leading to new questions and further research on work-life balance and gender inequities.

Part 1: Literature Review

In the present part we start by developing a literature review of work-life balance. We explain why work-life balance matters and what work-life balance policies are. Further we address the gender issue that is related to work-life balance from the point of views of women and men. Later, we give a full description of the concept of job crafting and how it relates to work-life balance. Finally, we establish a problematic and a research question to the present literature review.

1. Defining Work-Life Balance

It has been said in the work of Wilkens, Cabrita, Jungblut and Anderson (2018) that work-life balance comes from the struggle people have with striking balance between their work and their private life. Work-life balance (WLB¹) is defined by Delecta (2011) as the individuals' ability to meet their commitments in both their private and work life as well as other non-work activities and responsibilities. However, many scholars have defined WLB in many ways. Clark (2000) defines WLB as “the satisfaction and good functioning at both home and work with a minimum of role conflict” (Clark, 2000, p. 349). Other authors define WLB as “the relationship between the institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour markets” (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea & Walters, 2002, p.56). However, Ayca, Eskin and Yavuz (2007) put the focus on the concept of “life balance” which is based on the idea that balance is achieved when fulfilling the demands in the three basic dimensions of life: work, family, and personal life (also called private). Further, the authors explain that support from work, from family or in self-management skills can help reach life balance in each of these dimensions (Ayca et al., 2007).

An important subject to address to define WLB is the principle of positive affect *spillover*. The idea here is that experience in work and nonwork may *spillover* and it can result into something positive or negative (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). The best example to illustrate a positive affect *spillover* is the fact that a positive mood can be transferred from one life domain to another and inversely, a negative mood can spill over from one domain to another (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). According to Sirgy and Lee (2017) the affect *spillover* transferring from work to family is stronger than the transfer from family to work. Moreover, Wajcman (2015) reveals that work-

¹ We will often use the acronym WLB when talking about work-life balance as it will be said multiple times throughout this work.

family *spillover* was more typical of men while family-work *spillover* was stronger among women.

Role conflict mentioned earlier is the degree to which role responsibilities in two different life domains are incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict as a type of inter-role conflict where the participation in one role makes it difficult to take part in the other role. So, to achieve WLB there needs to be little-to-no role conflict between social roles (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Sirgy and Lee (2017) also bring out the fact that role conflict emerges when resources are jeopardized (e.g., to meet the demand of one role in defiance of another). This model recommends that WLB can be strengthened when resources from one domain can help facilitate role performance in another domain (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). The idea of Sirgy and Lee (2017) is based on the theory of *the conservation of resources model* which suggests that people are motivated to look for and to preserve resources to meet the expectations in their different roles (Hobfoll, Shirom & Golembiewski, 2000). Role conflict can take different dimensions. Indeed, there is a life-to-work conflict dimension which is the idea that private life interferes with work and there is the work-to-life dimension, which is the opposite – work related issues interfering in the private life. The latter being stronger than the former (Reindl, Kaiser & Stolz, 2011).

Another important notion to understand WLB is the concept of *role engagement*. Nowadays, people tend to engage in multiple roles in life (e.g., father, employee, son, partner...), these roles can become complex, dynamic, and sometimes conflicting (Kossek et al., 1999 cited in Crooker, Smith & Tabak, 2002). *Role engagement* is according to Sirgy and Lee (2017) the second key dimension to understanding WLB – after role conflict. To achieve WLB, people must engage in social roles in their work life as well as in their nonwork life (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). The authors stated that a high level of engagement in work-related roles is a major requisite for WLB because it produces positive affect assuming that work-related goals are important for the individuals (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Further, Poelmans, Kalliath and Brough (2008) pointed out that WLB can be achieved by employees who are engaged in both work and nonwork life when; positive affect can transfer from one life domain to the other, or when the skills of one life domain can improve the role performance in another life domains. This focuses on “a successful transfer of positive skills, values from work-related roles to other roles in nonwork life domains” (Sirgy & Lee, 2017, p. 233). This is what we call *role enrichment* and is defined as the fact that skills and experiences from one role can enhance or even improve the performance or the satisfaction of another role (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Thus, work-to-family

enrichment relates back to the work experience, helping to increase the satisfaction in family life. Meanwhile, family-to-work enrichment relates to family experiences contributing to increase satisfaction in work life (Sirgy & Lee, 2017).

1.1 Why does WLB matter?

Organizations have recognized the importance of WLB by introducing arrangements that can satisfy both the organization and the individuals' needs to increase productivity and efficiency (Reindl et al., 2011). Work-life balance can bring many individual benefits. Indeed, WLB has physical and psychological health outcomes. In fact, studies have shown that work-life conflict is associated with depression, hypertension, and greater alcohol consumption (Reindl et al., 2011). Moreover, it has benefits on the individual's overall satisfaction (Reindl et al., 2011). Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) found out that people spending comparatively more time on family than work experienced higher quality of life than individuals spending more time in the work domain or people engaged in both domains equally. Reindl et al. (2011) also mentioned that WLB reduces stress.

The organization also benefit from WLB policies. Wilkens et al. (2018) noted that organizations recognize the importance of introducing WLB policies, flexible working time or teleworking. Moreover, they also argue that WLB policies are helpful to promote employment, productivity, gender equality and healthy workplaces (Wilkens et al., 2018). The first benefits that we will mention are the *intangible organizational benefits*. Studies have found evidence about organizational commitment. Reindl et al. (2011) stated that increased work-life conflict leads to a decreasing commitment to the organization. They found out that on the opposite, lower work-life conflict increased organizational commitment (Reindl et al., 2011). This idea is confirmed in the study of Wilkens et al. (2018) because they argue that WLB can help attract and retain workers, they also mention that practices such as teleworking or flexible working time must be considered by organizations as tools to improve WLB. Furthermore, they found that WLB initiatives improve employee productivity, and it can also improve the organization reputation and external communication. WLB policies can help for recruiting but also to communicate a broader message about the organization's consideration of employee's private lives (Reindl et al., 2011). Second, according to Reindl et al. (2011) there are *tangible organizational benefits* for the organization. These benefits are a reduced rate of absenteeism due to decreasing of stress, psychological and physical health problems, a higher rate of employee retention, better performance due to a reduced work-life conflict which increases productivity and recruiting advantages as mentioned above (Reindl et al., 2011). The literature

review of Yasbek (2004) also mentions an improved image of the organisation due to the implementation of WLB policies.

Another reason why work-life balance matters is because work-life imbalance has been measured by Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson (2004) and according to their work, work overload cost the Canadian health-care system billions of dollars per year, this involved a caregiver strain also worth billions of dollars (Higgins et al., 2004). Therefore, this study recognizes the indirect and direct costs that work-life imbalance can have on organisation and societies. Furthermore, WLB policies have benefits that extend further than on the organizational level such as flexible ways of working, including flexplace which can help reduce emissions from motorized vehicles and thus benefit the environment and thus, society in general according to the work of Peters (2011).

This idea relates to the work of Ajzen, Donis and Taskin (2015) who identified the motivations for organisations to implement flexible ways of working and new ways of working (NWOW). The work of Ajzen et al. (2015) compiles the results of 162 case studies on the subject, therefore it will be the only source for the following section. According to that work, motivations stem from four main motivational axes (Ajzen et al., 2015). First, they identify the economical motivation where NWOW are implemented to increase profits and organisational performance (Ajzen et al., 2015). Secondly, they identify the organisational motivation where NWOW are implemented to reduce potential obstacles or hindrances to efficient work organisation (Ajzen et al., 2015). Third is the social motivation – which is closely related to WLB – where the focus is to consider and value the human being at work, to grant more autonomy and responsibility (Ajzen et al., 2015). Finally, the authors mentioned an environmental motivation where NWOW are implemented to reduce the organisation's ecological footprint and to optimise a positive societal impact (Ajzen et al., 2015).

1.2 Work-life balance policies

Work-life balance policies are human resources policies used within organizations to give employees more control over the time, the place, and the way their work is conducted according to Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport (2007). These policies include on-site provisions, adoption assistance, parental leave policies and flexible ways of working. The three more common policies according to the literature review of Perrigino et al. (2018) are *on-site provisions*, *parental leave* in the form of maternal or paternity leaves and, *flexible ways of working (FWA's)* which represent flextime or flexplace where employees can work during nonstandard hours or

flexplace where employees are allowed to work off-site or in different locations. Although, these policies are sometimes viewed as “work-family policies” as they seem to be specifically designed for employees with family responsibilities these policies are made for all employees, in despite of family responsibilities (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). According to the work of Perrigino et al. (2018) WLB policies allow employees to maintain their own well-being which leads to an improved individual performance eventually leading to a better performance for the organization.

However, according to Perrigino et al. (2018), there seems to be evidence that the conception of WLB is overly optimistic but that a “dark side” exists, this evidence tends to be included in the term of “work-family backlash”. Perrigino et al. (2018) define “work-family backlash” as:

A gestalt-like term which describes a phenomenon reflecting the negative attitudes, negative behaviours, and negative emotions— both individual and collective—associated with multiple forms of WLB policies (on-site provisions, parental leave policies, and FWAs) and practices, including both the availability and use of these policies. (Perrigino, Dunford and Wilson, 2018, p.604).

According to the authors, “work-family backlash” is a complex phenomenon happening over time and spanning from different levels, either macro or micro. Furthermore, the phenomenon is considered as social because it involves multiple individuals and entities (Perrigino et al., 2018). Perrigino et al. (2018) have conceptualized four mechanisms through which “work-family backlash” happens which will be defined here according to their work. First, they define an *inequity-based mechanism* which corresponds to the individuals’ perception of unfairness in regards of WLB policies. Secondly comes *stigma mechanism* which focuses on the sanction encountered from WLB policies and the way these sanctions can have an impact on the use of WLB policies. The third mechanism is *spillover*, which, as mentioned earlier, is considered as the negative outcome of WLB policies in the nonwork domain, primarily in the family, where work can affect family and other nonwork-related spheres. Finally, they identified the *strategic mechanism* as the action organizations take which are in opposition to family-friendly practices (Perrigino et al.,2018).

2. Gender issues with work-life balance

In the last decades, men and women's family and occupational roles have shifted in Western cultures. Particularly with the growing entry of women into the labour market. As mentioned in Wajcman (2015) this results in dual-earner households that provide more working hours than ever to the labor market. This change has challenged the idea that women have to be primarily responsible for care giving in both the home and family. (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). This shift has an influence on the expectations for men's involvement in the home and as parents (Ranson, 2012 cited in McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). According to a literature review from Connell (2005), "*Aggregate and individual change has occurred over the decades, but less than was expected, and change in men's domestic work has practically stalled*" (Connell, 2005, p.370). Connell (2005) argues that women have a bigger load of housework and childcare. The author explains that women can make choices and that WLB policies are made to expand their options, however women rarely take these options. Moreover, women still hold themselves accountable for the state of the house and the welfare of the children (Connell, 2005).

2.1 Women and work-life balance

Furthermore, women's entry into the labour market has destabilized the breadwinning role of fathers however, mothers are more likely to adapt their working conditions their private life (Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013). However, when women enter the labour market, women still carry most of the responsibility for childcare and the home which is why women cannot be available at any time (Klein, Izquierdo, & Bradbury, 2013). The work of Wajcman (2015) reveals that today's mothers must juggle between their roles of worker and family caregiver. Blithe (2018) argues that women therefore spend a lot of time taking care of others (childcare, eldercare, or home care) which requires time off work. Blithe (2018) explains that women are responsible for the household in addition to their paid work, household care is referred to by the author as the '*second shift*'. Furthermore, other authors argue that even if women are being more and more involved in the economic and political spheres, comparable changes have not occurred within the home as men do not involve themselves more in the household. Indeed, household labour and childcare remain unequally distributed along gender (Mannino, & Deutsch, 2007). Despite all this, men remain less involved than women with childcare (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014).

In addition to the fact that women spend more time caring for children or for the house, studies have shown that women spend 41 hours per week more than men doing household tasks

according to the literature review of Blithe (2018). These numbers are nuanced in the work of Wajcman (2015) according to whom “working mothers’ combined time in paid and unpaid household labour typically exceeds fathers’ by five hours a week and non-employed mothers’ by nineteen hours a week” (Wajcman, 2015, p.68). Another study led by Wilkens et al. (2018) confirms that unpaid working hours of women are higher than men and their study also mentions the fact that after the birth of the first child, unpaid working hours increase even more, or women even exit the labour market. This work has shown that the allocation of time in the private and work spheres are not stable over time, they change according to the circumstances within the household (Wilkens et al., 2018). More recent studies have shown that women on average spend “35 hours per week caring for children or grandchildren (compared to 25 hours per week for men) and 18 hours per week doing housework (12 hours per week for men).” (Eurofound, 2020, p23). However, the Eurofound (2020) study explained that in Belgium, the gender difference in caring for children and grandchildren was just of 1 or 2 hours. Wajcman (2015) goes further by explaining that fathers are less likely to be responsible for the caregiving. Besides, Wajcman (2015) notes that mothers are more likely to reduce their working hours to cope with household and childcare, especially when the children are young. Wilkens et al. (2018) consider that:

Work–life balance policies must also create the mechanisms and conditions required to promote men’s participation in aspects of their private life, such as the care of children or elderly or disabled relatives. These should be defined and implemented in such a way that the rights are not only theoretically available but are also put in action. (Wilkens et al., 2018, p.61)

To go deeper into the difference between men and women and their experience of WLB, it seems pertinent to mention the notion of leisure. Indeed, Wajcman’s (2015) study has revealed that men and women do not experience leisure the same way. On one hand, men have more hours of pure leisure and 60% of their leisure time spent alone. On the other hand, half of women’s leisure is pure leisure, and their leisure is more likely to be interrupted by a child or by activities of unpaid work (Wajcman, 2015). The author argues that the home therefore represents a sphere of leisure, an escape from the world of paid for men while it represents a sphere of work for women (Wajcman, 2015).

Another issue for women is due to the intensification of work which results in women having to be multitasking according to Wajcman (2015). Multitasking is seen as an effective way to deal with interruptions by integrating them into workflow and therefore avoiding to waste time. However, mothers and fathers do not experience multitasking the same way as women tend to experience it as negative and stressful (Wajcman, 2015).

The Covid-19 crisis has also confirmed the idea that women struggle with WLB more than men, particularly if they have young children (Eurofound, 2020). The Eurofound (2020) study shows recent results on the matter, and they will be developed in this paragraph. First, the study has shown that women with children younger than 12 find it more difficult to combine work and private than men with children the same age or without children (Eurofound, 2020). On another note, the Eurofound (2020) study has also shown that when teleworking (during the lockdown) 24% of women find it hard to combine work and private especially when it came to feeling too tired to after work to do the household for 20% of men. These proportions changed when businesses re-opened after the lockdown: according to the study as 31% of women felt that way for 26% of men. Meaning that telework reduces the struggle to combine work and private. However, the Eurofound study (2020) has shown that 22% of the people with children younger than 17 years found it hard to concentrate on work because of the family when teleworking. Compared to 8% for those not working from home and 5% to those without children (Eurofound, 2020). Therefore, telework can be a tool to improve WLB but it also depends on your private life settings and gender according to the study.

2.2 Men and work-life balance

On the other hand, Suwada (2016) talks about a new model of fatherhood which has emerged in the last decade. According to Suwada (2016), the new father is no longer defined as the economical provider for his family and fathering becomes similar to mothering more than to the traditional fathering. Blithe (2018) explains that these men discuss challenges they met between their roles of 'providers' and their wish to spend more times with their children. This testifies for the desire of men to be involved and to achieve a balanced life (Blithe, 2018). However, Wajcman (2015) argues that even if fathers spend more time with their children, this time spent with their children is three times longer on weekends than on days when they must work, which implies that fathers leave childcare to their spouse on weekdays. Still according to Wajcman (2015), even if men are increasing their contribution in domestic work, they still do not spend as much time as women who keep taking care of the housework and children. Therefore, this represents a barrier to the equalizing of time use according to Wajcman (2015).

Blithe (2018) argues that 50% of working fathers find it difficult to manage work and family according to a 2013 study (Parker & Wang, 2013). Blithe (2018) goes further and explains that only few privileged employees manage to find balance between their work and their private life, and that most people struggle to maintain a balance between paid work and other life aspects where paid work is work done in exchange of a financial gain or reward. Though, many organizations have recognized the need for WLB policies to support their employees, they have been very slow to implement change (Blithe, 2018).

The focus on men can be seen as counterintuitive nevertheless, this focus is necessary because it is only recently that men have identified beyond their breadwinner roles (Blithe, 2018). Furthermore, men have shown interest in being involved in their children's lives however they don't hide the fact that they worry about the sacrifice it could represent for their economic stability and security (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2012). The difficulty for men to participate actively at home and their stress to sacrifice their security and stability is due to the lack of policies to assist men in balancing work and family (Blithe, 2018). This invisible mechanism which keeps men working and away from their family and other nonwork related activities is called the "*glass handcuffs*" metaphor according to Blithe (2018). The "*glass handcuffs*" metaphor is described by Blithe (2018) as the paradox in which men are encouraged to have a more active role in their family and to have more control of their well-being through WLB. Other authors argue "that the expectations placed on fathers and those they place on themselves are inherently gendered, with constructions of '*working fathers*' (and '*working mothers*') prevailing over those of '*working parents*'" (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014, p.3). So, despite the representations of "new fathers" that can influence the parents of today, the traditional representations of masculinity and fatherhood remains (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). Suwada (2016) argues that despite the changing gender roles men still concentrate more on paid work than women, this focus on paid work is related to the traditional parental roles and gender beliefs.

The following paragraph illustrates the reasons why men refuse to take leaves of absence according to the work of Blithe (2018). First, men cannot take a leave of absence because taking time off work would result in a financial loss. Secondly, even if some men can afford to take time off work, they would not take leaves of absence either according to the author. Indeed, the fear to lose the job is a reality because men think that their boss could replace them while they have time off work. Moreover, Blithe's work (2018) reveals that men think that their organizational culture was not supportive of leave-taking practices for men and that men taking

time off work were more vulnerable to layoffs or repositioning in the firm. This suggests that men think that taking leaves of absence is damaging for their careers and that such practice is to turn aside if men want to be successful. Another reason why men do not take leave of absence is because of virtual work. Indeed, virtual work allows men to take time away from their workplace without being off work. This practice of virtual work is seen as a factor increasing WLB.

Other studies have focused on how men experiences family life and their role as parents, as well as the factors they believe foster or hinder this involvement (McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). According to McLaughlin, Muldoon and Moutray (2010) even if changes have occurred in the last decades, gendered constructions of domestic and occupational roles remain resistant to change. They argue that even if fathers are more involved in their family lives, they don't disconnect from the breadwinning requirements of traditional fatherhood (Daly & Palkovitz, 2004).

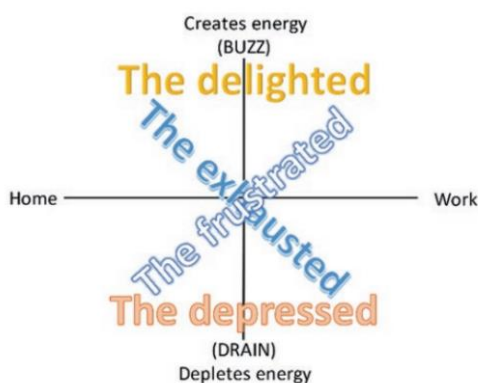
3. Job crafting as a central element of WLB

However, research has showed that offering WLB practices does not solve all problems. Indeed, employees avoid using formal WLB practices offered to them by their organization but rather craft their own approaches to WLB (Beigi & Shirmohammadi, 2017). Employees seem to create their own strategies to cope with stress and conflict according to the literature review of Jammaers and Williams (2020) on the ableist dimension of WLB. Job crafting is a mechanism used by employees to achieve balance at work between the elements that give us joy and those that destroy it (Pendleton et al., 2021). The idea of job crafting is “*to make the jobs employee have into the jobs they want*” (Pendleton et al., 2021). Pendleton et al., (2021) argue that seeking balance between work and life is impossible because works takes too much space in our lives. However, the authors mention that seeking balance in our work life or in our private life is possible. To achieve balance in either one of our lives, we should consider what we do, how we do it and how we feel about it by making choices at every level: career, annual or daily (Pendleton et al., 2021).

With job crafting, employees can re-engineer their roles into a format that better suits them by amending three key areas: what they do, who they do it with and why they do it. Job crafting allows employees to maximise their “buzzes” and reduce their “drains” (Pendleton et al., 2021). *Buzzes* and *drains* come from the idea that when working, people enjoy some activities more than others. Positive elements in an individual life will tend to give him energy while negative

elements will rather drain the energy, that is what is called *buzz and drain*. The different situations that can occur related to buzzes and drains are represented on the figure presented below (Pendleton et al., 2021). On the following scheme (Figure 1.1) the X axis represents home (as the private sphere) and work. The Y axis represents elements that create energy (*buzz*) and the ones that deplete it (*drain*) (Pendleton et al., 2021). This is how job crafting can lead to an improved well-being, motivation, happiness and engagement and other aspects (Pendleton et al., 2021).

Figure 1.1 Buzz and Drain by Pendleton et al., 2021, p. 79



Although the concept of job crafting is not new, interests in its application have only recently started. The following paragraph will be based on the work of Pendleton et al. (2021) mostly as it is a recent, complete, and reliable source when it comes to job crafting. The concept has gained considerable adhesion with leaders and HR practitioners and is being used in a wide variety of organization all over the globe (Pendleton et al., 2021). Job crafting is closely related to job design which is the way jobs are structured and executed. Jobs are designed for people who match a job description at first but at times, changes occur, and people end up not suiting with the initial job design. That is when job redesign needs to happen. Job redesign happens for one or two reasons: either to adjust to changing contextual requirements or to improve individual motivation and performance (Pendleton et al., 2021). Nowadays, practitioners admit that in a context of the ever-changing and complicated constellation of elements issued from contemporary jobs, traditional job descriptions soon become out-of-date (Pendleton et al., 2021). Indeed, roles evolve rapidly, and the initial job design and related job descriptions don't reflect the reality and become incoherent with reality over time (Pendleton et al., 2021). Though job crafting is different from job redesigning because job crafting is an employee-driven process (Pendleton et al., 2021). Indeed, job crafting “enables a subject expert to guide the job re-design process” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p.108). This idea is that the individual who is most likely to

understand the complex constellation of elements that form the job, the contextual challenges and changes faced in the role and the nature of the person completing that job is: the employees themselves. This method allows employees to take part in the reshaping of their roles and how they will perform. Therefore, job crafting exemplifies the principle of employee-ship by allowing employees to exercise ownership and responsibility over their roles and contributions (Pendleton et al., 2021). As the author explains, employees “are unlikely to receive any formal help from their employer to manage their work–life balance; if they want to strike any balance between work and their lives outside work, they must find their own ways of doing so” (Sturges, 2012, p.1540). Sturges (2012) tells us that employees adapt their work arrangements to suit their personal needs, this way employees engage in different unofficial behaviours that help them achieve the WLB they were seeking.

Other authors describe job crafting as an employee-initiated approach which allows employees to shape their environment in a way that it fits with their personal needs (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski (2008) explain that job crafting involves that employee must be actively making their own job designs in a way that can have many positive outcomes, such as engagement, job satisfaction, person-job-fit, empowerment and thriving.

In other words, job crafting gives the opportunity to employees to personalise their jobs in ways that are aligned with the own interests, strengths, and values (Pendleton et al., 2021). This way, employees turn their job into the job they enjoy. Job crafting happens with three key sources of motivation. First, the need for personal control. Then, the need to promote a positive sense of the self, and finally the need for interaction and connection with other people (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe, 2003). On the other hand, job crafting occurs at three key aspects of work as mentioned earlier. These include **task crafting** which is the structure of the employees’ roles. Then **relational crafting** which is the interactions people have at work and eventually, **cognitive crafting** which is the way individuals think about their jobs (Pendleton et al, 2021).

3.1 Task crafting

Task crafting is the idea that a job description can be fulfilled by taking additional tasks or even reducing the scope of tasks and even changing the way tasks are being done. This way, employees can use task crafting to incorporate their interests into the work they do but also demonstrate their strength which at the end, adds value to the business. Task crafting can also be used in teamwork by using everyone’s strength, interests, and values. This way, teams can

work together to evaluate and redistribute tasks and responsibilities to those whose values, strength and interests are aligned (Pendleton et al., 2021). The same authors (Pendleton et al., 2021) summarize this as the idea of questioning how people manage to modify their way of working to find a balance between work and life.

3.2 Relational crafting

The focus in relational crafting is to re-shape the social environment at work by modifying the relationships and interactions with others. In practice, employees must be aware of the relationships and interactions they encounter at work and reflect if they make them feel buzzed or drained. To be energised, people should increase interactions that make them feel buzzed and reduce the ones that make them feel drained (Pendleton et al., 2021). The authors insist on the fact that these actions don't need to be enormous, it can be something as simple as inviting someone to have a coffee together or even changing where somebody sits in relation to others. Besides, people can also engage in relational crafting using technology, employees can decide to minimise their face-to-face interactions and increase their non-direct methods of communication. In other words, there are many ways to relational crafting, the idea of relational crafting is that employee end up meeting like-minded colleagues and find a place where they can incorporate their interests into their work (Pendleton et al., 2021). For Sturges (2012), relational crafting involves “managing and using relationships at work and at home to secure and reinforce the kind of work–life balance that an individual wanted to achieve” (Sturges, 2012 p.1553). According to Sturges’ (2012) study, employee manage their relationships to achieve WLB. To do so, some participants in Sturges’ (2012) study mentioned that for example: a good relationship with one’s boss was important to have more autonomy which then allows employees to engage in temporal or locational crafting which will be defined later. Another example of practice for employees who manage their work relationships is that they avoid unnecessary interactions, or they manage to reduce their workload (Sturges, 2012). However, the author’s study reveals that some participants, “all of whom worked long overtime hours, reinforced their attitudes and behaviours relating to work–life balance by socializing and having relationships with people who worked similar hour” (Sturges, 2012 p.1553).

3.3 Cognitive crafting

Cognitive crafting is defined as the way employees change their attitudes towards their work and the way they feel and think about it but also about the meaning they find in it. Pendleton et al. (2021) argue that cognitive crafting is trending in the twenty-first-century workforce because of the growing interest related to how employee connect to their work, especially in terms of

motivation, happiness and meaning. According to Sturges (2012), cognitive crafting is related to the definition and the frame employees have of what work-life balance means and entails. In his study Sturges (2012) identified three forms of cognitive crafting.

First, Sturges (2012) identified that the definition of WLB is not the same for all employees. Indeed, Sturges (2012) found out that people don't have to same frame for WLB. Some people see WLB as being free on the weekend even if they had no free time during the week. Others think that WLB is being able to meet social engagement during the week (Sturges, 2012).

The second sort of cognitive crafting that Sturges (2012) identified in his study is the "*prioritization of work at the expense of life outside work*". This way, some people justified the fact that they spend more time than they should on their work (Sturges, 2012).

Eventually, participants in Sturges' (2012) study mentioned that sometimes making compromises and having to sacrifice WLB for a short period of time in return for potential future benefits.

3.4 Physical crafting

Sturges (2012) adds another key factor to job crafting. According to his research, employees that engage in job crafting do it because they aim to shape the 'physical' factors that affect their WLB, for instance, the time they spend on work, where work time takes place, what job they worked in and how much time they spent commuting to work.

First Sturges (2012) talks about temporal crafting which is the idea of managing the amount of time people spend at work to achieve WLB. For instance, people manage the length, timing, and temporal experience of their working day. The idea of temporal crafting according to Sturges (2012) is that people get to manage their time and finish work 'in time' in order to have enough personal and private moments afterwards. For example, employees wanted to leave their work 'on time' in order to fill their evening commitment with their family such as driving a kid to the theatre or even make sure they attend dinner with their family. On the other hand, in Sturges (2012) study, only a few people meant that temporal crafting was about restricting working hours to contracted working hours. For other participant of the study, temporal crafting involved controlling the workload they were assigned (Sturges, 2012). Thus, according to Sturges (2012) study, temporal crafting is not only about managing when work starts and ends.

Secondly, locational crafting which is explained by Sturges (2012) as where work time is spent. So, for example, people work away from the office to blend work and non-work activities or even to avoid lengthy commute.

Thirdly, Sturges' (2012) study mentions that some people chose their job depending on if they thought they could achieve a more satisfactory WLB in the organization or not. So according to this study, people made choices about work based on the amount of time they thought they would have to do or the location of the job or both (Sturges, 2012). So, in this case what matters is the job people choose in the first place.

Finally, Sturges (2012) study found out that only a small number of people crafted their WLB by moving closer to their job to reduce the time people have to commute.

3.5 Implications of WLB and job crafting on workers

The idea that workers can redesign their job and be able to engage in different roles relates to a study made in the UK which pointed out that the definition of WLB is viewed from a personal perspective for young people. Their definition of WLB tends to be based on the level of importance or relevance they give to WLB (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Lewis, 2011). Four types of patterns appeared from this study:

- **Balancers:** they want to have an equal 'balance' between their work and personal life. They want to achieve WLB in their early professional careers, but they anticipate it can be hard to achieve in early career. For them, WLB is regarded as an important goal! They prefer structured working hours because it allows to maintain the ideal balance (with boundaries), this way they want clear separation of work and personal life. However, some just mentioned the importance of having flexibility for managing their work and personal lives.
- **Careerists:** they think that WLB is a personal goal, and they anticipate the difficulty to achieve it in early career, so they think the establishment of their professional career is more important at the beginning of their working life. Others mentioned to put their personal life on hold for a temporary period to establish their career!
- **Career-sacrificers** for them personal life takes priority over and above work. The personal life comes before work.
- **Integrators,** they redefined the notion of balance by bringing together and merging work with personal life. Here, the idea to integrate the two domains was paramount to them. For them, 'balance' is about bringing work life and personal life together and

merging them. They have the idea that work can reflect personal values and interests and who they are as individuals.

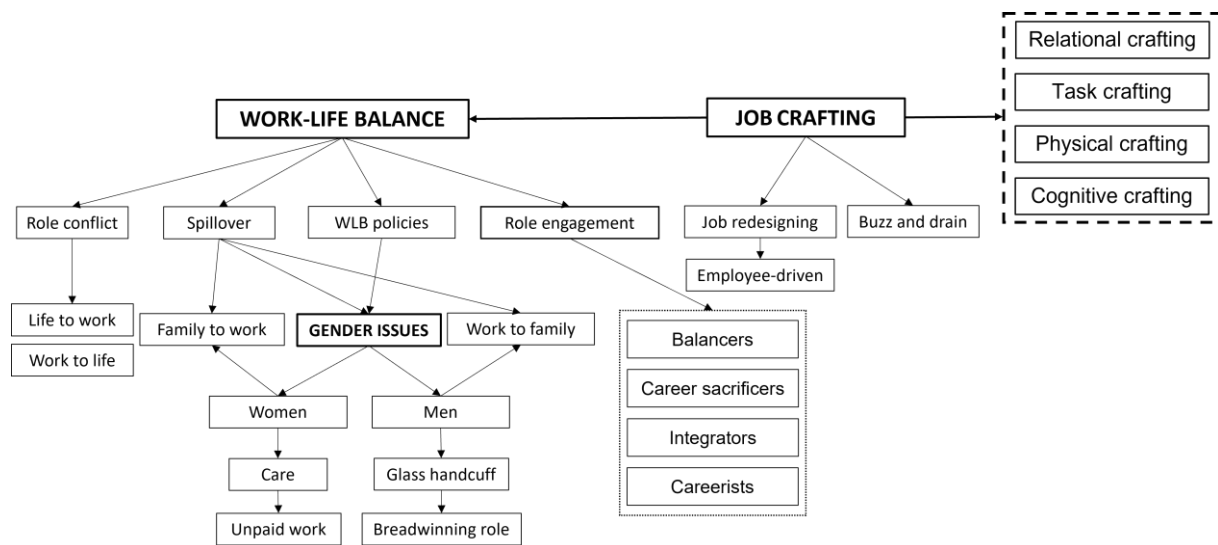
The results of this study imply that human resource professionals should be mindful of their WLB policies and the way they frame them. According to the authors it is also important to note that young people are conscious that their needs and values are dynamic and changing throughout their life course and across their career which is no longer the traditional pattern (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Lewis, 2011).

3.6 The importance of job crafting

First, research has shown that employees are already job crafting, and it is happening across all sectors even where employees are not allowed to. Moreover, large organisations are starting to adopt job crafting in their practices (Pendleton et al., 2021). For this reason, Pendleton et al. (2021) argue that we should care about job crafting. Secondly, the authors emphasize on the fact that it is a win-win process for employees and employers. This idea of a win-win situation is also mentioned in the work of Wilkens et al. (2018) where the authors explain that WLB policies not only increase well-being for workers but is also linked to more engagement from workers which results in an increase of productivity for the organization. According to Pendleton et al. (2021) findings show positive impacts for employees and the organization. Positive correlations between job crafting and employees' level of engagement, commitment, satisfaction, well-being, and performance have been discovered in cross-sectional analyses (Bakker, Tims and Derks, 2012; Ghitulescu, 2007; Leana, Appelbaum and Shevchuk, 2009; Van Wingerden & Poell, 2017). Furthermore, other studies show improvements over long periods in employees' level of engagement, self-efficacy, well-being and in role performance after engaging in job crafting. (Gordon et al., 2018; Van den Heuvel, Demerouti and Peeters, 2015; Van Wingerden, Bakker and Derks, 2017a; Van Wingerden, Bakker and Derks, 2017b). Finally, additional benefits have been found thanks to the narrative of employees engaging in job crafting (Pendleton et al., 2021). With job crafting, employees can bring their whole selves to work by incorporating their strength, values, and interests into their work. This is summarized by Pendleton et al. (2021) as incorporating who people are into what they do.

4. Problematic and research question

Figure 1.2 Overview of the literature review



In the literature review that has just been presented, we have seen that **work-life balance** can be understood through the notion of **role conflict**, **spillover**, and **role engagement**. The notion of role conflict relates to the idea that responsibilities from two different life domains can be incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The notion of spillover is related to the fact that experience in work and nonwork can spillover and result in something positive or negative (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). It has been revealed by the work of Wajcman (2015) that **men** experience more **work to family** spillover while **women** experience more **family to work** spillover. This shows that a **gender issue** exists in the field of WLB. This gender issue can also be seen as we look through the use of **WLB policies** which are not used the same way between men and women as mentioned earlier. Finally, the notion of **role engagement** can be related to the study of Chatrakul Na Ayudhya and Lewis (2011) which reveals that the notion of WLB can be viewed as a personal perspective giving the fact that some people tend to give more or less importance to WLB in their lives. Indeed, some people tend to engage more in a role than another which leads to the four types of patterns presented by the study: **balancers**, **career sacrificers**, **integrators**, **careerists**. Each of these group choose to engage more in their private life or in their working life or to find a balance. This WLB can be reached with **job crafting** whether it is **relational**, **physical**, **task** or **cognitive crafting** as mentioned earlier from the work of Pendleton et al. (2021). As job crafting enables **employees** to **redesign** their job into the job that brings them more **buzz** and less **drain** to achieve WLB (Pendleton et al, 2021).

Therefore, this literature review has allowed us to understand that WLB policies are available for all workers and that these politics have positive effects on workers but also on the organization. However, men tend to avoid using those WLB policies because they fear to lose their job and they still connect to their **breadwinning role** even though women have entered the labour market for some time. On the other hand, women tend to use these policies more than men to cope with the **unpaid working** hours they face every week. This shows that even though women have entered the labour market, equity is difficult to implement between genders. Finally, this literature review has led us to the following research question:

To what extent enabling job crafting may lead to work-life balance?

A gender perspective.

Indeed, the literature review which has just been presented has shown that job crafting can be a tool for WLB. Moreover, it has also shown that WLB policies are not used the same way among men and women. Therefore, the following study will try to understand to what extent enabling job crafting could lead to achieve WLB through a gender perspective.

Part 2: Methodology and context of the research

The following part presents the methodology and the approach of this study. This part also presents the sample group of this study. Further, we develop the steps that were taken to collect the data and the analysis of the results are described. Then, this part presents the context in which the study evolved. Finally, the limitations of this study will be described.

1. Methodology

1.1 Qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews

First, it seems important to explain that this research was based on semi-structured interviews which are part of a qualitative approach. Indeed, according to the literature review of Imbert (2010) qualitative research is adequate in the fields of education, sociology, anthropology, psychology, management, social work but also works at the border of several disciplines. This method fits with this work for several reason. First, we clearly address management, social work, and gender inequities thus, this work is related to adequate fields where qualitative research is often used for. Secondly, Muchielli (2009) explains that at the epistemological level, qualitative research approaches the object of study in a global, proximal, direct, and interpretative manner. This way, the research aims to explore the knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Muchielli, 2009). Moreover, *“The goal of qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of all the participants”* (Pope & Mays, 1995, p. 43). Therefore, the aim of the qualitative research as just defined relates to this study because this work addresses work-life balance and it is important that all participants can explain their experience and perception of WLB. In the words of Kohn and Christiaens (2014), we can conclude that a qualitative approach is a way of looking into a social reality. This approach seems to be relevant for this work because we want to understand how people use job crafting to achieve WLB and the effects it has on them. Furthermore, we want to understand how WLB policies could help reduce inequities between genders. Therefore, this study focuses on social phenomena that need to be studied under natural conditions with qualitative research.

For this research, semi-structured, face-to-face interview were conducted by the researcher with senior managers of a company working in the aerospace industry. The use of individual interviews aims to collect data by interviewing participants with conversational techniques

(Kohn & Christiaens, 2014). Therefore, a structured interview guide is done beforehand with all the open questions to ask the interviewee or the subjects to be discussed (Kohn & Christiaens, 2014). A summary was made to help make the interview guide, which included the problematic of this research in addition to the notion of job crafting and its four dimensions (Annex 1). The interview guide was then made as such: introduction, questions related to each dimension of job crafting and a question about the function of an engineer (Annex 2). The choice of one-on-one interview was made based on two reasons. First, because it is often easier for the interviewer to lead the dialog in a direction that will help the research (Brinkmann, 2014). Secondly, the study of dimension in people's lives which are private, personal, and sometimes sensitive should be done in a confidential setting to help create an atmosphere of trust and discretion (Brinkmann, 2014). As the subject of this research is focused on work-life balance, some aspects can be private or personal therefore one-on-one interviews seem appropriate for this study. Further, semi-structured interviews allow the searcher to keep a focus on the important issues in relation to the research question (Brinkmann, 2014). Moreover, semi-structured interviews also allow the interviewees to address whatever angles that seem important to them in relation to the subject of the interview (Brinkmann, 2014). This way, the interviewees will be able to address sensitive subject if needed in a confidential setting. Furthermore, the interviewer will keep a structure of the interview in mind to make sure all aspects of the research are being questioned, such as the dimension of job crafting for instance.

1.2 Limits of the method

The limits of the method are more related to the analysis which comes after the data collection. Indeed, according to Kohn and Christiaens (2014), the means and techniques for analysing qualitative data are not easy to describe. Still in the words of the same authors, this is due to the lack of standardisation and clear procedures. In fact, the way to analyse the data will depend on the design and the goals of the research (Kohn & Christiaens, 2014).

2. Data collection

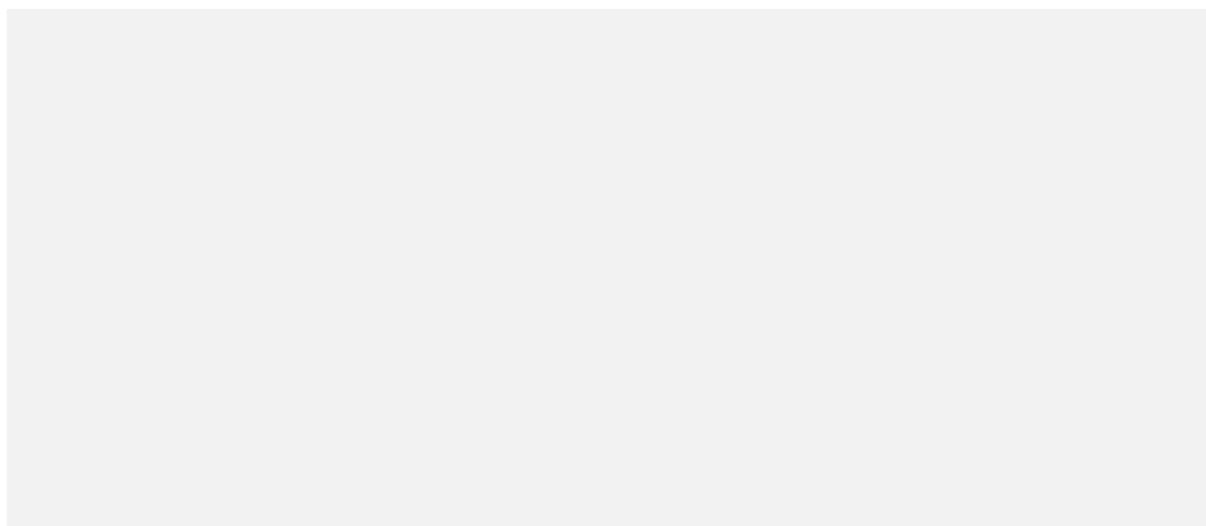
As mentioned in the previous part, semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior managers of the company. These interviews were done in French as it was the mother language of all interviewees except for one. However, that person said that the interview could be done in French and that maybe some English words would be used if needed.

Because the organisation where the interviews were conducted employs many engineers, the interviews were conducted with engineers only. Moreover, that company employs 70% of men

for 30% of women. Consequently, it was more complicated to find women willing to be interviewed than men. Thus, within the 10 engineers who were interviewed, 7 of them were men and 3 of them were women. Another information that seems important to mention is that three of the interviewees have a role of manager or even a role of director with a higher degree of responsibility. The 7 other engineers have been working for the company for at least one and a half year and have a status of senior executive.

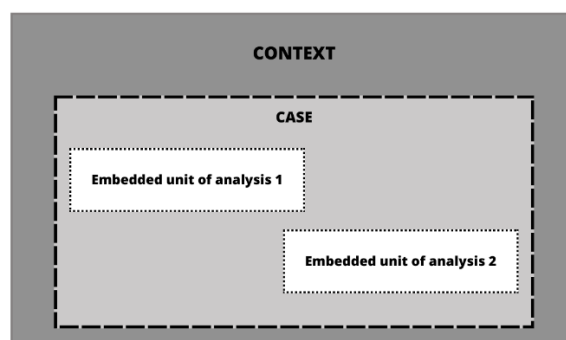
Further, the people who were interviewed all come from the same department. Moreover, all the executives were under the responsibility of either one of the Managers who both were under the responsibility of the director of the department as shown in the organigram below:

Figure 2.1 Organigram of the respondents



Further, the fact that all the interviews were conducted in the same organisational context, within the same department and in two teams of that same department allows us to describe this study as a case study. In fact, we can describe the study as an *embedded case study design* (Yin, 2014). Indeed, as the work of Yin (2014) on case study explains it: a single case study might involve units of analysis at more than one level, which is the case here. Further, “*this occurs when, within a single case, attention is also given to a subunit or subunits*” (Yin, 2014, p.53). This is the case of this study as we interviewed respondents from different levels of the hierarchy, from two different teams and within one department of the same company. This can be represented as Figure 2.2 on the following page according to the work of Yin (2014).

Figure 2.2 Embedded Case Study Design



The director of the engineering department and managers were first contacted to talk about the possibility to conduct interviews with members of their teams. The two managers were chosen because they had larger teams of engineers to manage. Thus, it would help find willing participant for the interviews within a larger amount of people. Once the managers agreed with the conduct of interviews, they asked their teams if some of them were willing to participate in interviews related to WLB. Later, the managers gave the names of the engineers willing to participate to the searcher. Consequently, every person was contacted by email and asked to participate in an interview about work-life balance in the frame of a master thesis study. No additional information about the subject of the research was given before the interview to avoid biased answers from the participants afterwards. Finally, 7 out of 8 of the executives that were contacted replied they agreed to be interviewed.

The following table gives all the information related to the interviews and the people that were interviewed for the realisation of this study:

Name	Gender	Seniority	Date	Function	Length	Private life settings

2.1 Structure of the interview guide

The making of the interview guide took place in two times. First, a summary of the problematic followed by a summary of the four dimensions of job crafting was made ([Annex 1](#)). This summary helped structure the interview guide in a second time ([Annex 2](#)). Indeed, the interview guide was divided in three parts: the introduction, the core questions, and a final question to conclude.

First, in the introduction, the interviewees were asked to introduce themselves, to explain about their function and to say how long they have been working for the organisation. Moreover, since this work is based on WLB, the respondents were also asked to frame their private life.

Secondly, the core questions were divided in four parts each of them related to one of the four dimensions of job crafting. Starting with physical crafting, then task crafting followed by relational crafting and eventually cognitive crafting. The notion of gender was tackled spontaneously during the interviews, but it mostly came up during the questions about tasks crafting.

Finally, the respondents were asked a last question which was related to their function. Indeed, the interviewee were asked “what is an engineer?” as all of them were engineers. The idea was to question their identity as engineers and see if it would bring additional data in the analysis afterwards.

2.2 Data analysis and results: methodology

The interviews were fully transcribed shortly after they were conducted. As the interviews were transcribed, the interesting verbatims and information about job crafting, gender inequities and WLB were all copied in a table. The table was structured as a double entry table. Each line of the table focused on a dimension of job crafting and the dimension of gender. The column gave the name of each respondent. This way, every relevant information for this study could be copied in a structured table according to the person and the dimension they related to. The structure of the table can be found in the appendix ([Annex 3](#)).

The results were all detailed in this work using the same structure. We addressed every dimension of job crafting which are: physical, task, relational and cognitive crafting and within each of the dimension we analyse and describe the results from the men who were interviewed in the first time and then the women who were interviewed in the second time. The final part of the results addressed the question of genders inequities. However, some verbatims and results found in the parts addressing the four dimensions of job crafting could be related to the question

of gender inequities. But to avoid repetition, the only verbatims used and analysed in that final part were the ones which focused on genders and inequities only.

The results of the question “*what is an engineer?*” have not been developed a lot through the analyse of this work even though the question was asked during the interview. Indeed, during the analyse of the results the answers given to that question did not seem too relevant with this research on work-life balance, and job crafting.

3. Presentation of the context of the research

3.1 Presentation of the company

The interviews were conducted in a company working in the space industry. That company is related to a bigger group which is a global technology leader and multinational company counting more than 70,000 employees around the globe. The group within which the company develops invests in digital and “deep tech” innovations. The multinational is present in several markets: digital identity, security, defence and security, aerospace, and transport.

In Belgium, the multinational counts 1000 collaborators across the different sites of the country. The organisation is known worldwide in the fields of telecommunication, earth observation, exploration, and development of orbital infrastructure. The company also is a Belgian leader for the space sector with a long experience in the country. Moreover, the organisation is one of the leaders in terms of power supply for satellites. The company also manufactures the electrical core of satellites.

This study was therefore conducted on one of the sites of the company which counts more than 600 workers with different profiles. Within these profiles 48% of them are engineers, 20% are operators and 32% are employees. At the time of the research, the company counts 70% of men for 30% of women as mentioned earlier. This makes the company a rather masculine company. Further, most workers of the firm are older than 40 years old, putting the average age at 47 years old.

3.2 Presentation of the work-life balance policy

More in terms of WLB, the organisation has recently worked on its work-life balance policy. The Human Resource Director has shared the WLB policy of the company to assist in the completion of this work.

First aspect of the WLB policy is the implementation of telework up to a maximum of 2 days per week (in reality, the company requires the employees to be present on site for at least 3

days). According to the human resource director, teleworking has been introduced in response to changes in society and the world of work. Still according to the HR director, it was also necessary to increase the attractiveness of the company because most candidates nowadays ask if it is possible to telework and refusing telework would cut the company off from many candidates who no longer wish to work full time on site. The organisation believes in the benefits of teleworking, except in exceptional cases (some employees find it very difficult to work from home - loss of motivation, lack of a separate office, ...). The HR director explained that it has been shown that well-deployed telework increases the company performance and improves work-life balance.

Another WLB policy available at that company is the system of purchasing additional leave of absence with the “C+ card”: employees and managers have the possibility, in return for a reduction in their gross monthly salary, to purchase additional leave to meet personal needs. An employee can therefore, with the agreement of his or her manager, purchase a maximum of 44 days of additional leave per year. Furthermore, the unpaid leave system for factory workers, where they can request unpaid leave to be taken in 2-hour increments.

Moreover, the organisation has implemented flexible working hours for employees and managers (40-hour working week up to a maximum of 8 hours per day with flexibility to work a little less on one day and a little more on another day); for factory workers, it is possible to start at 6.00 a.m. and finish around 2.30 p.m. In addition, the company’s working hours with "off" time between 12.30 and 13.30 and no meetings before 8am or after 17.30.

The HR director also mentioned the introduction of “*Easyday*” services which allow the employee to buy services (sports activities, car wash, laundry, ironing, etc.) and consumer goods (bread, organic vegetables, etc.) on site; the aim is to extend the services offered. In addition to those services, people have access to a quality company restaurant offering meals to eat on the spot but also to be taken away in the evening. This allows access to quality evening meals at a reasonable price.

Finally, the organisation is also working on a charter on the right to disconnect, which should come into force in 2023.

4. Limitations of the research

The first limitation that should be noted in relation with this research is that the interviews were conducted in French and the research was made in English. Therefore, during the analyse of the results some sentences and idioms had a stronger meaning in French than they did in English. However, to avoid losing the impact and the meaning of those idioms through translation, the French version was added as a footnote. This way, potential French-speaking readers can understand the exact meaning of what was said during the interviews. Although it should be noted that the searcher in charge of this work has a background in translation therefore, this loss of sense only happened rarely during the analyse.

The second limitation of this work would be related to the fact that only few women could be interviewed as the company counts 70% of men for 30% of women. Therefore, the sample was representative of the reality as it counted 7 men for 3 women. However, to tackle the notion of gender in a greater way, the sample could have counted more women, but this was not possible due to the reality of the organisation.

Finally, this research could be supported by a quantitative method testing a larger sample. However, this study had to be conducted on the place of the internship of the searcher. The idea to support this research with a quantitative method came up when doing the discussion as this case study only focus on 10 people out of one company.

Part 3: Presentation and analysis of the results

In this part of the work, we will present the results of the interviews that were conducted with the executives of a space industry company. The results will be presented accordingly to the dimension of job crafting to which they belong. Moreover, each dimension will be analysed by gender, starting with the men and then women point of view. Finally, the last aspect of the results will be about the gender inequities, and it will be made of the answer that were made spontaneously from the interviewees as there was no specific question about gender inequities during the interview but rather when it seemed appropriate, depending on the situation of the person.

1. Physical crafting

1.1 Men's physical crafting

1.1.1 Telework

Different aspects in physical crafting were mentioned by the respondents during the interviews. However, one of the subjects related to physical crafting that came along most interviews was teleworking. Indeed, teleworking is a tool used by most of the respondents for several reasons. For many male respondents, telework allows them to save time. Indeed, some of them avoid commuting to work therefore, saving up to two hours of their day when they telework. However, even when living close to the company, telework still helps saving time by doing the household chores that cannot be done when working on site. Some examples from our sample group are:

It is more of a personal comfort, in order to manage work-life balance, teleworking is useful. In terms of scheduling also, it is more comfortable as it saves me the time to commute to work and I'm lucky I'm less than an hour away for my whole day. It's more in terms of time. You get time back too. If we're at home, I'll have a coffee break, I can do the laundry or something like that. (Executive1)

I live rather far from here, in the region of Tournai. I come to work by train, and we have been able for a few years to work from home, which I must admit is really appreciated. (Executive 2)

Because I go back home on lunchtime, I get an hour back [when teleworking] and the 15 minutes for each trip but I don't necessarily finish my day earlier. (Executive 7)

When I work from home, it allows me to save two hours on my day and dedicate them to work, so I've used teleworking to get back time. So that's a long day, counting the trip, and my wife is more or less the same. She arrives a little earlier because she has a shorter journey, so she arrives at 7.30am. So, we save that time. (Director of the department)

However, one of the male respondents explained that commuting to work has its advantages too. Indeed, the idea of having two different environments for work and private is appreciated by that man. In addition to this idea, the respondent compared the idea of having two different places for work and private to the idea of having a private and a professional computer, as well as having two phones. He explained that his wife finds it difficult to disconnect from work because she shares one computer for both spheres, consequently impacting her WLB according to the respondent.

The fact that there are trips to go to work is interesting. We can talk about teleworking which is much more annoying on that point. But the fact that there is a place for work and then you go to another place there are two different worlds. That's practical. But the length of the trips whether it is 5 minutes or one hour, it doesn't change a thing. (Executive 6)

Further, the choice to commute is sometimes made because time was saved in other dimensions of someone's life.

It's a life choice. That's why I have an hour's drive. Because all that on the other side I earned it, because the schools were equipped with all the extra-curricular activities, and we didn't have to drive children. (Director of the department)

Another advantage of teleworking that was mentioned by many respondents is the idea that working from home can help focus on specific work and tasks. Indeed, many respondents explain that when they work from home, they avoid being interrupted in their work and some of them therefore feel more efficient when teleworking. The idea of being more efficient is also because teleworking allows workers to choose at what time they do their work, which is a real asset for one of the interviewees who works at times he feels more efficient when teleworking. Some respondents also explained that they feel more efficient because they spend more time working when teleworking.

Teleworking on Mondays is very good because I have a fast network. The other advantage, on Fridays nobody comes. Therefore, I can work at peace, without anybody coming to bother me. (Executive 6)

What I love about teleworking is that I don't have to work during office hours which I don't like because I'm a night owl. Teleworking allows me to work until 9-10-11pm and at that time I am much more efficient. (Executive 6)

It is good to have, from time to time, as I do, just half a day of telework to be able to work on subjects which are mine without being too disturbed. Because when I'm in my office here, it doesn't stop... I'm always attending meeting or I'm always... people come see me. To really focus on a task for an hour, here, it's impossible. So that is something telework allows me to do, you are less interrupted, and you can focus more on something. (Manager 1)

Since we introduced teleworking, we feel that we can do more things. In any case, I can do more things, but when you work in the private sector like here, at least for me... Eight hours of work is not enough. I don't start at 8am and finish at 5pm. I start at 8am and I often finish around 5.40pm because that's when my train leaves. And I've noticed that when I'm teleworking, it's even more difficult, it's later. (Executive 2)

Moreover, telework is also perceived as beneficial in terms of care. Indeed, the single father that was interviewed explained that he would adjust his teleworking schedule according to the needs of his children. As that man is a divorced father, he must take care of his children every other week. Therefore, he teleworks on the weeks his children stay with him. This way, he made a *compromise* to be present for his children but also for his work by picking up his children when school ends on the afternoons he teleworks. The other days, they stay at school later while he stays at work later. Except for Wednesday, he receives helps from his parents who take care of the children during their afternoon off.

On Mondays' afternoon and Fridays' afternoon, so every other week, I telework. Thus, basically, I limited teleworking to two afternoons every other week. (Manager 1)

However, for the man taking care of his ill wife, telework is used twice a week in addition to a proper WLB policy. Indeed, he purchased a C+ card which gives him 11 extra days off. Moreover, he intends to reduce his working time even more. Further, we should recall that man explained that telework would help him save time by not commuting to work on lunchtime to take care of his wife.

I took 95%. So, I go back home during my lunch break to help my wife to eat and take care of her a little. So, it makes the days long because I leave for an hour and a half at lunchtime. And I intend to get a 32-hour work week². (Executive 7)

Nonetheless, telework is not always perceived as adequate to use depending on the additional role people might have. Indeed, for the men who have a role as manager, they find it inadequate to telework because they want to be present for their teams.

I telework very few because my function demands a lot of support for the teams in change and transformation. It requires that I'm present for the teams, to have a physical contact, you know? (Manager 1)

I use the teleworking system more for... when I have an organisational difficulty, either with a delivery, or having to go to a doctor, or another. But otherwise, I don't use it much because for me it's very important to be with the teams and to be available. It often happens that I'm at home at 8 or 8.30 pm and I leave at 7 am. (Director)

² Translated from French: « je compte passer en 4/5° »

Further, one respondent explained that telework was not well perceived in his function. However, that man explained that telework allows him to achieve a better balance between work and private, thus he teleworks anyway.

In terms of teleworking, even though in my job I know that it's not always very well seen, unfortunately... But since the aim is to achieve balance, but in my job, it's not often very well seen... So, I telework on Fridays because it's the day before the weekend. So, in general, it's a day that we like. But in terms of work-life balance, I go to the hairdressers on Fridays because it lasts 20 minutes, so I always make my appointment on Fridays, and from time to time I also play tennis on Fridays and that allows me to start my day early, to leave a little later... I mean, to go at the end of the afternoon to play my tennis, and then I come back, and I complete my day, something like that. (Executive 5)

Sometimes the reason behind the fact they decide to work on site due to the work they do. As a matter of fact, some work cannot be taken home. As all interviewees work on projects related to the mechanical core of satellites, the materials, and projects they work on must stay on site.

However sometimes I can't do it because of my function, when we have an equipment in test it is sometimes hard to work from home. We must be on site. (Executive 2)

As it has been mentioned already, telework is perceived as a more comfortable way of working. Indeed, on this aspect of telework, one of the respondents explained that telework would allow him to take his mind of work when he is working from home.

What I appreciate is that on my lunch time break, I can have a break, I go for a walk in the street. Take some fresh air for 10 minutes. And that's something I really appreciate. And when I can't do it because they're some meetings at 12 O'clock, it bothers me. Thus, it is an improvement in life comfort. But I didn't see it in terms of work-life balance, at least I see it that way. (Executive 2)

1.1.2 Flexibility

Another point raised in the interviews was the notion of flexibility. Indeed, the company where the interviewees work offers them flexibility. Thus, workers can choose the time they arrive to work for instance and leave earlier if needed as long as they work their hours. Regarding that idea, one respondent explained that he takes full use of this flexibility as he tends to arrive very early to make sure he can enjoy the rest of his day at home. On one hand, the flexibility that is offered to the employee allows him to fit his perception of WLB. On the other hand, it allows him to work efficiently when fewer people are on site early in the mornings.

I like to come early, to leave early, so I can enjoy the rest of the day after my work. So, I come to work around 7am or 7:30am. So that's the first thing and the goal is to get home and not have: dinner, TV, sleep but still have some time. I've always had this way of working which is to come early because I leave early. Moreover, in the morning it is rather calm on site which allows me to work in an efficient way. (Executive 5)

An observation that is raised through the interviews is the way managers and people with higher responsibilities perceive work flexibility. They talked about how they see it for themselves but also how they apply it for their teams. When talking about the way they apply it to their teams, both men explained that it is something that goes both ways and that is based on trust.

Here, we offer a certain flexibility which is interesting, and it goes both ways obviously and I apply it that way for my teams too. (Manager 1)

What is important is what we deliver. It's true that there is pressure. It's true that there is a lot of activity. It's true that there are a lot of charges, but we won't forbid someone who has a fridge delivery one day from teleworking that day. He connects from home, and it goes well. I never say anything, and I don't want to say anything. I know that at that time they will compensate in an intelligent way, either by coming much earlier, or by having worked the night before until 11 o'clock, or by working on the weekend, to simply make up the hours. And so, I trust that. It doesn't bother me and so I call it a strong flexibility. I think it's appreciated regardless of the workload. (Director of the department)

Further, the engineering director said that having flexibility could help accept more constraints or burdens. This resonates also with something that another respondent mentioned during the interviews as he explained that being offered such flexibility was one less thing to worry about.

I think that when you have more flexibility to manage your own personal activities, you accept more constraints. You can also accept more constraints or more burdens, at a certain level. (Director of the department)

It is one less thing to worry about. It allows you to be relaxed on that point, at least it's something you don't worry about. It makes life easier. (Executive 6)

However, the flexibility that is offered some of the respondents have difficulties achieving balance. Indeed, the engineering director often works on the weekends and his wife does too because of her high responsibility job. Further, Manager 1 finds it hard to find time to do things for himself. Moreover, one of the engineers explained that WLB could only be achieved on the weekend.

We both manage more or less the same way. So, we try not to work in the evening during the week, even if we get home late. We don't work during the week [after working hours], except in exceptional cases... On the other hand, on the weekend, we often spend half a day or even a whole day working. (Director of the department)

I do quite a lot of sport, but let's say that sport today, I put it rather in the gaps. That means, if I get up early enough in the morning, I run in the morning before coming when I don't have the children for example. (Manager 1)

So, there you have it, the idea of work-life balance... I think that in a company where performance is demanded, it's, I don't think it's... It's only the weekend. (Executive 2)

Even though Executive 2 finds it hard to reach WLB outside the weekends, he does not use the two hours he spends on the train to work unless there is an emergency to deal with.

I travel with people who work in other companies, and we have sympathized. When there is something urgent, I do work on the train, or if there is a problem to solve in a short time, in these cases I do. (Executive 2)

1.2 Women's physical crafting

When it came to women to address physical crafting, the only working mother that was interviewed had many examples to give. These examples went beyond teleworking. Indeed, as her first child went to school, she decided to reduce her working time. Therefore, agreeing on a proper WLB policy with her management.

When my children went to school, I asked for a 36-hour work week to look after them at least on Wednesdays' afternoons and I have the chance to have young parents and when the kids were young, they could look after them every other Wednesdays and half of the holidays. So, because of this 36-hour work week I could balance all of this and not systematically send my kids to holiday camp (Manager 2)

Further, she and her husband work in the same company. Therefore, they decided to move closer to their workplace and their daughter's school when she started school. That decision was made for the well-being of their daughter. Indeed, they had already decided to put their children at day-care in the vicinity of their workplace. This way they would avoid a fifty-minute trip if anything happened to them as both parents work at the same place.

When she started primary school, we had to be closer and not impose her the trips which is 50 minutes. This is what made us move closer to the company, at a reasonable distance. (Manager 2)

We chose to put the children at day-care here in the vicinity of the company, so that we could be there very quickly if there was a problem and not have to drive 50 minutes. So, we wanted to avoid this stress too. And so, we took away this constraint by putting the children in the vicinity of our workplace for the nursery and school later. (Manager 2)

This shows that many decisions were taken for the sake of the children even if the fifty-minute trip was something that she appreciated. The road would help her take her mind off work and reduce stress.

The road, surprisingly, de-stressed me, it allowed me to concentrate on something other than work. During those 50 minutes, I was able to decompress, which is not necessarily the case when you live ten minutes away from work. I'm not saying that the stress was gone, but it was a bit less, which is not the case when you live nearby. (Manager 2)

When it came to talk about telework, the women who were interviewed had different point of view. Indeed, to go on with the working mother, she explained that she only started teleworking with the Covid-19 crisis because it was not adequate to her function. This resonates to what was said about telework, that some work cannot be taken home. Further, she only uses telework when she cannot take the afternoon of her 36-hour work week off. This way she is still available for her children.

Telework only started with the Covid-19 crisis because it was not in the culture and being in the fields of tests, I can't test the equipment from home so telework is very limited. (Manager 2)

I telework half a day on Wednesday's afternoons when I can't take my 36-hour work week afternoon off... So, I work from home to be able to drive my son to his tennis trainings when it's time and not have to leave work quickly. (Manager 2)

She also tackled an issue that had not been mentioned earlier, she explained that she has a lot of meetings every day and that telework allows her to reduce the amount of meeting she has on a day.

Being at home allows to restrict a little the number of meetings, even if we have them online, but to stay focus. (Manager 2)

Finally, it came to the two youngest interviewees to talk about physical crafting. It should be recalled that both live on their own and that both have been working for two years maximum. Therefore, both share similar private settings and opinions. Indeed, they prefer to work on site and do not like telework. They have different reasons to prefer working on site; they enjoy having interactions with their colleagues, the work they do cannot be taken home. Further, one of the women explains that her home does not represent a place to work but rather a place to relax which makes it hard for her to focus when working from home. This is the only respondent who described teleworking as unhelpful to focus. However, she sometimes uses telework when she needs to be at home for some reason.

I really like to be on site and have my colleagues around if I have to ask something or if I want to see somebody or talk about something in particular. (Executive 3)

I don't really like telework for different reasons. First, it is because I work on hardware so I work with electronics and sometimes I must be in the lab and talk with people to solve problems you know? And secondly, I find it difficult to focus at home, because my home is a place to relax. The way my brain works is with all small individual boxes, so at home, when I come back, I forget everything, at least I try. In the past it was not easy. But with time you learn how to separate things and forget. So now I almost never do telework unless I have something to do at home like a technician coming or so. (Executive 4)

The only times telework is used is for one of them to go visit her family on the weekend. This way she spends longer time with her family even if she spends one day working.

I almost don't do it. Eventually, when I go to France from time to time it can happen.
(Executive 3)

Beyond telework, both young women had different way to craft the physical dimension. Indeed, one of them explained that it was a necessity for her to live close to the company where she works.

So, I come by bike, or I walk to work. For me it is important to live close, to have easy trips to make. I see a lot of people commuting for an hour, that's not good, that's not a good quality of life to me. (Executive 4)

Further, the other young woman explained that she uses the flexibility that she is offered by the company to manage the amount of time she spends at work. Therefore, she often arrives late to avoid spending too much time at work and achieve a better balance.

I often arrive later in the morning, and it could be seen as an arrangement... But I know that I tend to leave late at night if I don't put any limits on myself. So, I tell myself, 'In return, I'm going to arrive a bit later because otherwise I'll have a hell of a day' and as in the evening, I like to finish what I've started. I'll tend to stay much later...
(Executive 3)

Although, none of them enjoy teleworking, they both find other ways to achieve the balance they want with the tools they have.

2. Task crafting

2.1 Men's task crafting

First, when addressing task crafting, some respondents kept the example of telework to illustrate their way of managing their tasks. They explained that teleworking has another advantage than the ones that have just been mentioned. According to them, teleworking allows them to do private tasks during their working day which results by saving time of their non-working time. However, they explained that it would be tasks that do not take long. Some respondents said that during their teleworking days, they can launch a laundry when they have a coffee break, or they can go grocery shopping on lunchtime. For the people who have a long time commuting it can be helpful to take some time during the day to do the chores. Indeed, one of the respondents explained that when he comes back from work, shops are already closed. Therefore, telework allows him to save time and to combine private and professional tasks on the same day.

If we're at home, we'll have a coffee break, I can do the laundry or something like that.
(Executive 1)

What's interesting is that for instance I can launch a laundry in the morning and on my lunchtime, I can hang the laundry, so it is done. But when I work, I can't do all of that. I can go for groceries shopping during the week, that way I get ahead for the weekend. (Executive 2)

Secondly, some respondents described task crafting as the way they choose what tasks they do when teleworking and the ones they do on site. According to the respondents, some tasks are easier to deal with at home than others. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, other tasks are not easy to do while teleworking. Therefore, they say that it is possible to organize weeks according to those tasks. This way, some of them keep the tasks they must deal with alone for the days they work from home.

I try to schedule all the easy things to do when working from home on Fridays, things that require concentration, or few interactions with others. I can plan in the agenda by putting a period where I'm busy. On that time, I will not accept meeting etc. I try to stick to that so that I can work harder the other days of the week and that way I am more relaxed on that day. It is possible to organise. (Executive 5)

It's two half days that I can dedicate my time to things I must do myself. (Manager 1)

The advantage is being able to focus on a task. I loved the 2020 lockdown, it was impeccable, but that's just because it was so appropriate. It just happened to fall beautifully at the time we were on lockdown, I had a huge computer program that I had to debug. It was perfect. So, for a month, I spent my time on this program, debugging it at peace, no one to bother me. It was great. On the other hand, if it fell now, it would be very annoying because now we're defining the needs of an architecture and seeing with the designers etc. So, it's the opposite, it would be very annoying. So, there are activities that lend themselves to it, and activities that don't. (Executive 6)

Thirdly, two men explained they had to take care of everything in their home. One of them because he is single and the other because his wife is sick and is not able to take care of the home anymore. This means that both have plenty of tasks to do when they come home, and they must combine their role of father and householder to their roles of worker. Therefore, they both find it hard to find time for themselves. As mentioned earlier, Manager 1 goes for his runs before work when his children are staying with their mother.

I do everything and it is extra job also because I have to take care of her. I have no time for myself. (Executive 7)

I take care of everything, the food, the laundry, the cleaning. (Manager 1).

Another interesting point that was raised in the interview of one of the respondents is the idea that tasks and moreover private activities had to change as he became a father. Indeed, he explained that he had to reduce his personal activities to be present for his daughter and partner.

I had to make an arbitrage in my activities, for instance, before I took language classes during the week. And when we did not have a kid, it was ok, and it gave me extra days off with the 'education days off'. But now, I had to choose between sport, family life, language classes and I stopped the language classes because it was not possible to keep it all. (Executive 2)

Finally, when men addressed task crafting, they mentioned the idea of priority. Many of them explain that they manage their tasks depending on their priorities. This is something interviewees with high responsibility said but also at the executive level. One of the managers explained once again that the flexibility he is given by the company helps him manage his tasks the way it suits him the best. Nonetheless, sometimes you must work after your working time if something urgent comes up.

I put the priority where it is needed. (Executive7)

When you're a manager, there are a lot of things to do and sometimes you must react quite quickly to certain things. So, when I come home in the evening, if I ever have something, for example, it's 6pm, I still have things to do. The children are old enough, I say, 'go to the shower' and they go. And I know how to continue working. (Manager 1)

I just go with the flow. You know? And if I have a last-minute thing that comes up. It's not a big deal, I just go with it. I organise myself. Either I do it in the evening, or during the day I blow up something and move it around to fit it in. Either I do it at lunchtime or I try to organise myself with some flexibility. And one of the keys, I think, is this flexibility. (Manager 1)

Further with the notion of priority, people with high responsibility jobs, sometimes find it difficult to manage. Indeed, from time to time, non-important things must be left aside to make sure the important ones are being dealt with. This is something that can be hard to do but it is necessary to *survive* according to the director of the department. To illustrate this, it should be noted that at the time of the interview, the director of the department asked if we could shorten the interview to 30 minutes. This way, he would save some needed time to prepare a meeting which came after the interview. This shows that it was important for him to prepare for that meeting therefore the interview needed to be shorter.

Then it's also sorting out your own activities and saying 'this is not important. Never mind, someone wanted it. But it's not important. I don't do it' that's all. So that's another thing you have to learn, which you're not always able to do. It's not easy to give up and say to yourself that there are things I won't do, and people will wonder why, but it's just because you've sorted it out. That's the survival mode, at some point you must make your own priorities, for my well-being and to just target the things that are useful for the teams, because if I do the non-priority things, I won't do the things that are important. (Director of the department)

2.2 Women's task crafting

2.2.1 Task crafting at work

A striking difference in terms of tasks across the interviews of the female respondents is the fact that being a mother involves carrying an additional role. Indeed, the two other women who were interviewed live on their own and mostly care for themselves. On the other hand, the working mother we interviewed must juggle between her two roles: of mother and engineer. Moreover, she has a high responsibility job. She explained that she finds it hard sometimes to be available in both roles. In fact, she explained that her son sometimes tells her that she “*never stops working*”. However, she explains that she has a job, and she must do her tasks.

We're here for a job, we have a task and I like my task to be done. Yes, I realize from time to time that I leave my kids behind in comparison with my job.

She explained that when both roles overlap on each other it can be difficult to manage. She illustrated that issue with the fact that sometimes she must stop a meeting because she has to pick up her son at school. Thus, on one side she must tell her son to wait and on the other side she tells her colleagues that she must leave.

Further with the idea that she “*never stops working*” she explained that this is since telework is available. Before teleworking, she never had her computer at home so if she wanted to work longer, she could only look at the documents she took home. Now, she has her computer, so any extra work activities can be dealt with from home after or even before her working hours. She also explained that because she has plenty of meetings in a day or she is interrupted, she cannot achieve her own tasks. Therefore, she finishes them or starts them at home.

I had documents that I printed or that I read at home, but it wasn't the same because I could read the document and write things down but after it was done. Now, I still do that kind of reading but if I see an email or something like that, I'll answer those actions even if I didn't plan to do it in the evening. (Manager 2)

when you get home, you work again or in the morning before leaving also because I have plenty of meeting and if I do not take that time alone, I cannot do my tasks, and the day goes by so quickly I cannot do them. (Manager 2)

The agenda fills itself now, it's not even me anymore who decide which meetings I am going to have and if I have 30 minutes without anything, people come see you and they take those 30 minutes, so you have one meeting after the other. (Manager 2)

Further with task crafting, a problem was tackled by women is the notion of priority. Whether the priority is about meetings or proper tasks, women struggle to identify what are the important things to do and the ones that can wait. Moreover, one of the respondents added the idea that

unexpected tasks come up and they must be dealt with, which makes it harder to know what the real emergency might be. Therefore, it makes it hard to manage her allocated tasks.

Sometimes I have three meetings at the same time, and I must choose the one I attend. It is not always easy. (Manager 2)

In fact, it depends because if I'm under a slightly lesser load, I'll manage to tell myself 'That day I'm doing this, I'm doing that'. But in general, and even in those moments, it's complicated because there's always a parasitic activity that will come up, or an emergency or something or a conflict between several activities, where everyone will tell me 'It's urgent' because everything is urgent here, all the time. Thus, to sort out which one is the most urgent from the rest and you are going to waste time trying to figure it out, contacting everyone (...). So yes, organizing my tasks within the limits of what is possible, because in practice, it will never correspond to what we planned because too many unforeseen events occur. (Executive 3)

Something that seemed particular to both young women about task crafting is the fact that they are still learning to organize themselves. One of them explained through her experience as a sponsor for a new colleague. Indeed, through that relationship, she sees behaviours in her young colleague, and she realises she used to manage as the newcomer does without noticing it was not the best way to manage tasks. The other one illustrated it through the fact that she is learning from her past mistakes. This idea will be further developed in the part about cognitive crafting, yet it shows that task crafting must be learnt and experienced. Even if they do not learn through the same mechanism, they both learnt to better manage and to understand what the best way is to proceed.

I see certain behaviours in her that I may have had at the time, and I tell myself that today I realize that you shouldn't do that like staying later when you have a fairly low load just because you want to finish your task, it's not necessarily a good idea. Because at the time, you say to yourself 'Yes, but I'm finishing my task and frankly, that doesn't create any stress for me, because I'm doing something that I'm finishing and that doesn't stress me' but it creates fatigue, and you don't realize it. You don't realize, but you have a stock of energy that is there and that you don't see diminishing until the moment when it's empty, and it can be emptied at a moment when you're going to be loaded. And you're going to lose it! (Executive 3)

Last year was just about work, but after December, it happened that I came in one day and I couldn't even look at my screen because everything was blurred. (Executive 4)

2.2.2 Task crafting at home

Through the interviews conducted with women, tasks were not only understood as the tasks related to their work but also as private tasks and chores. Indeed, when tackling task crafting one of the women started to talk about private tasks rather than working tasks. Still, the difference between the three women is whether or not they are mothers. Indeed, the mother that was interviewed explained that she has a heavy load of tasks to deal with in her personal life.

However, she explained that she was able to reduce her load a little by purchasing a service voucher for one of the chores.

There's everything to do and the cleaning, I'll say it's postponed most of the time and the weekend sometimes too... And it's everything: shopping, yes; cooking, yes. I often try on Sundays to prepare dishes for the week, to be a bit free. But Sundays are also to go say hello here and there. And that often, I realize that we let it go because now I must drive my daughter back to Brussels... And it's no fun. Neither for them nor for me to know that I only have them by phone... (Manager 2)

For example, I don't do the ironing here anymore. I've taken out a service voucher and I bring my laundry to be ironed. That has already relieved me of a lot of the work I have to do. On the other hand, the laundry is on the weekend, the washing, the meals as I said, the shopping. For the shopping, sometimes we go during the week, but it's rarer. (Manager 2)

For the younger women, private tasks take a different place in their life. They still must do them because they are living on their own. But they tend to organize it on their free time or even to postpone it if the task only involves themselves. However, one of the respondents has a boyfriend who comes visit her from time to time and she tries to plan to go grocery shopping with him because it is easier for her to do it with him and to share the chore with him. This way they both choose the meals and food they want.

When it's really going to be something private that only involves me... Typically, I'm having someone over a few days later and I must do the cleaning. I will tend to postpone more and more because I don't like to stop working early. (Executive 3)

I don't like to go grocery shopping often, I'm not the kind of person who does it every day, I do it every month, every two months sometimes. And often, I'll wait for my boyfriend to be there because it's often just at that time, because I can plan ahead. And so that way, there are two of us to carry the shopping. And it takes less time. (Executive 3)

And on the days that I don't go climbing, I'm cleaning the house or meeting some friends. So, I always, every day, I have things to do. (Executive 4)

Further with the idea of sharing tasks, the interviewed mother explained that she and her husband had arranged to drive the children to school and pick them up. However, she explains that she does most of the driving as she drives her children to their extracurricular activities. Indeed, she used to drive her daughter to her after-school activities classes which took 20 hours on her daughter's week, and she does the same for her son.

The objective was that my husband drove them to school in the morning and I would go pick them up in the evening. Because depending on our responsibilities, it's easier for me to leave earlier at the end of day than it is for him. And I know that being early in the morning doesn't bother me. (Manager 2)

Today, for example, I'm going to pick up my son, at 5.15pm. But we eat quite quickly because he has his tennis lesson starting at 7pm. You'll say yes, but 7pm isn't that early? No, it's not, but as it's in Mons, well, it's a half-hour drive. So that's it. And that's okay, it's because I want to. In fact, my son is quite talented as my daughter was, so he takes lessons in a second school to be pulled upwards. And yes, I do taxi, but it's so that he can blossom too. (Manager 2)

3. Relational crafting

3.1 Men's relational crafting

During the interviews relational crafting was perceived by the respondents as the way relationship at work might affect them. Indeed, many respondents explained that the relationships they have at work are very important for them. These can be relation with their manager or their colleagues. One of the respondents even explained that work and the interactions he gets from work have helped him getting through some tough time in the past.

The team's atmosphere is very good, there are a lot of young people, it is nice to have interactions with others. We laugh a lot. There's no policing of my colleagues. It's more in terms of objectives if there is trust and things are going well: no problem! (Executive 1)

Fortunately, my job, I mean, was rather comforting. That means that at the same time, I was supported by my colleagues, but also the fact that coming to work, took my mind off it. (Manager 1)

When we're on site we have the chance to be mobile and we can go directly to the other person's office, have a coffee... (Executive 5)

Nevertheless, one of the respondents explained that the interactions he has at work are different whether he interacts with people his age or younger people. Indeed, the interactions with people his age are very special to him as he can talk about many things, he can have very technical conversation with some of his colleagues and he really enjoys it. However, younger people are not very open to discussion according to that respondent.

I don't know if it's the age barrier or the way to communicate. But I have much less contact with young people. We ask them how they're doing, but they never ask back. So, I have more relationships with older colleagues, colleagues I've known for years, and I really enjoy working with, colleagues who are close because they know a lot of things. It's always very interesting to have discussions with them, when I see, for example, how we discuss technical solutions. They sometimes have ideas that I hadn't thought of, and you realise that they have a good grasp of things. And that is... Passionate people. It's always very interesting to discuss, whether it's about anything. (Executive 4)

However, interactions and relationship do not only bring *buzz* to the interviewees. As a matter of fact, some interviewees could give examples of situation that might *drain* them from time to

time. These situations are mostly due to the management but not always the direct manager. Indeed, sometimes people with a higher level of responsibility working on a common project might be responsible for that feeling. Sometimes, in this case, the mood they get from these situations follows them back home. In other cases, the lack of challenge and trust from the management in addition to the feeling of being manipulated by the direction leads to disengagement.

In fact, we have a technical manager, and he often works on many projects at the same time. He doesn't have time to review and when he does, he's always in 'push mode', and sometimes it's frustrating because everything depends on him. And when he makes comments, we say 'yes, but if you had taken the time to review, we could have saved time at work, we could have worked more efficiently'. Or he makes comments without rereading. In short, most of the time, it's this person who gets on my nerves a bit, and it's true that it's already happened to me... These meetings, they last very late... I leave work, I come back home, and I think about it again. I've already told my partner about it. So, on those days I tell her 'I had this at work, it got me angry'. I still think about it for half an hour and then it's fine, I move on. (Executive 1)

We have meetings almost every day like to make sure that people are really working (Executive 5)

We are mothered, well, I'm saying it a bit clash, but they take us for fools today. Sometimes, management comes up with things that we all know are not possible, that are unachievable. But they present it to you in management terms and I do have some experience. I've also done management training... So, to say that it transpires that... yes, but it doesn't fool anyone any more in fact. And that's the problem, it almost becomes manipulation. It's how it's perceived, except that it doesn't work at any level and so it becomes very shocking. I would rather have my manager come up and say "That's the challenge. That's the objective. We know it's not possible. But what do we do to get as close as possible? Or what do we put in place?". (Executive 5)

An interesting point that was made through the interviews was that relationships and interactions have changed along the years. Some respondents compared to a time that used to be and others compared it to the time before the Covid-19 crisis. On one hand, the interactions have changed before the Covid-19 crisis and the lack of trust and challenges have led one of the respondents to feel manipulated and polices on. On the other hand, others explained that the relation and interactions have changed after the lockdown. However, some use the pandemic to explain that they realised how important interactions at work are and that full time teleworking is not something that would bring them *buzz* or it is also something that makes interactions more complicated.

There was still a climate of trust, so we trusted what the colleague said. We had much deeper and richer discussions from a technical point of view. Today, it's: the planning, the money, the rest we don't look at and, as a result, I find that it doesn't make any

sense anymore. There was more solidarity. Today, by asking the impossible, my feeling is that there is a great deal of disengagement in the company. (Executive 5)

Since Covid, I think that relationships are less... visible... Less marked. (Executive 2)

The inconvenience with teleworking is that relations with colleagues, clean rooms, it's much harder. (Executive 7)

If I was 100% teleworking, I think I'd be a bit depressed, with a hybrid situation, I can still have interactions with others, and it cheers me up to have a little bit of both. (Executive 1)

On the contrary, one of the respondents who defines himself as unsociable, thinks there were no negative consequence to the Covid-19. Although it seems important to note that another respondent defines himself as an introvert, yet he really enjoys the interactions he gets from work.

The advantage of being relatively unsociable, Covid didn't have any fundamental consequences. (Executive 6)

I'd defined myself as an introvert. However, it is important for me to have a job where I am intellectually stimulated and where I meet interesting people whom I can interact with and feel good and useful. (Executive 1)

As we have just tackled the fact that sometimes interactions with managers might *drain* people. It could be interesting to understand how someone with a higher level of responsibility manages his interactions. Indeed, that man explained that he is empathetic to his teams and, but he won't allow himself to be affected and *drained* by issues that are not his. He explained that his divorce has strengthened him in that way. However, anger can sometimes *drain* him, but it never happens.

I'm pretty well shielded from this now since my divorce. So that means that I'm not going to be affected very much. I'm going to be very empathetic; but I'm not going to be affected by an emotional problem in someone else. I don't have many of those cases where I'd try to avoid something that's going to take energy from me simply because it's not going to take energy from me. What does take energy from me is getting angry. Which never happens, or maybe three times in 17 years. (Manager 1)

Finally, it can be interesting to mention that one of the respondents said he is able to make a difference between the professional and private issue. Meaning that disagreeing with someone on a technical issue does not affect the relationship he has with that person. Further, he explained that this might be the reason why he does not have many relationships that *drain* him because he is able to make a difference between a private and a professional issue. However, this is not something everyone can do.

I can tell the difference between a professional and a personal problem. I can be opposed to someone on a professional level about technical choices, etc., but that's not why I'm then like "oh, did you see that one..." and I have colleagues, they don't know how to do that. So, I don't need to look for moments that make me smile. No, I'm always happy actually.

3.2 Women's relational crafting

When it came to address relational crafting both young women that were interviewed shared a similar point of view. First, they both mentioned how important it was for them to feel good in the team they work in. This resonates to what has been noted already; that both young women prefer to work on site than from home. According to both young women, a good team environment and atmosphere is essential to help them feel good. Indeed, the *buzz* they get from their interactions with their colleagues can help them feel better at the end of the day even if it was a bad day. They also explained they enjoy the authenticity they feel within the team they work in.

In our team we have a good atmosphere, and I think it helps a lot in these situations because we'll laugh, talk from time to time and it helps taking some pressure off and if I did not have that, I'd would be very difficult. Some days it could have been a bad day but because we laughed and we evacuated, I'm feeling much better and I'm feeling normal. (Executive 3)

It is very important, because I like to be kind of friend with my colleagues, not about private things because work isn't the place for that, but it is important to laugh and speak honestly. With the colleagues from my office, we laugh, it's easy. I have two colleagues who are my friends outside of work and that is important to me because if I don't like the people I work with, I don't think I can stay for a long time. (Executive 4)

Further than the relationship they have with their direct colleagues they also tackled their relationships and interactions they have with their manager. They both explained that their manager trusts them and is available which is important for them to feel good. In that idea of trust, one the young women (Executive 4) said that her manager also trusts her with an additional role. In fact, he often sends her to deal with the clients because he trusts her communication skills. They also explained that they feel good about the fact that they can speak honestly to their manager.

With my boss is no problem, it has been easy since the beginning. If I feel unwell or stressed, he'll look at me and ask or I'll tell him "I feel stressed for these reasons". It helps because if one day I wake up and I feel dizzy, I'm a bit sick, I have a headache I know that if I go to work, I'm going to be useless. So, I'll text him and say, "is it ok to deal with that I need time to rest". And for me it's cool, I feel lighter. (Executive 4)

If I had someone policing me all the time, on the contrary, someone that would control, it would increase stress. (Executive 3)

Moreover, one of the young women talked about the relationship between her and her sponsor which can be considered as a formative relationship. This relationship has taught her a lot of things that are not taught at school. As a matter of fact, she insisted on the notion of work-life balance that she never heard of at university, yet she finds it important. This means that as a young worker, she is still learning to balance work and private and the relationship with her sponsor has helped her in that way. In addition to the technical help, he has brought her.

I find that in our school environment, we don't talk enough about work-life balance, I don't know how it is in Belgium, but I suppose it's a bit like in France and clearly, we don't talk about it at all. For people like me who are quite stressed by nature. I mean, in my everyday life, I can be stressed about things that are insignificant to some people, I think that would have been important. And I'm lucky because here we have, it's true that I didn't mention it, but here we have a sponsorship system that helps me a lot. My sponsor, he's already very well versed technically, but also in terms of life and work experience in the professional world... He knows a lot of things and in fact he could see himself through me and he's been through things that mean he's learnt his lesson completely. He understood he can't take too much. So, he calmed down. And he managed to do both, in a healthier way, to find balance. He's quite a formative person in that respect for me. (Executive 3)

Finally, the last woman that was interviewed tackled relational crafting in a nostalgic manner. Indeed, the woman has worked in that company for years and she explains that informal talks have been replaced by work and that times of discussion have been restricted to professional times. These changes result in a lack of interactions in that case leading to more *drain* than *buzz*.

Honestly, compared to a certain time, there are very few people whom I have small talk with because these moments, we don't have them. Because as I said, my days are full of meetings, I didn't have that much on my agenda before and it happened that we went have a coffee and talk for five minutes, but now, I fill my cup and I leave because I use these moments to reply to emails etc. (Manager 2)

I used to meet people because they were sitting at the same table during lunch even if I worked with another department, (...) but today, we lost that. We discussed things, organisation, politics, news, and all of that, at least for me, I don't have it anymore because the times when we have exchanges are now restricted to professional times. (Manager 2)

Further, the consequences of interactions also go beyond working time and can be taken home has some of them must be prepared and thought about beforehand. Moreover, these interactions might be dreaded and stressful for that person. Indeed, manager have to share feedback from time to time and sensitives subject can be addressed which requires to be prepared in advance.

There are sometimes subjects where you know that if you take that subject with a certain person, it will be complicated. And indeed if I have an appointment with that person and we must talk about it. I think a lot about how I'm going to tackle the subject

with a person without them getting angry without them saying nothing... It's true that I dread it, and it is true that the night before, I'll think about it. (Manager 2)

4. Cognitive Crafting

4.1 Men's cognitive crafting

The last dimension of job crafting that was questioned during the interviews was cognitive crafting. This dimension was more sensitive to address because of its connection to the meaning of work. Some people found no meaning in their work anymore while others found a lot of meaning in it. Here, we start with the people whose meaning as decreased along the years.

First, it is important to mention that for those people, meaning and purpose has decreased along the years, for different reasons. However, both men who do not find meaning anymore define the meaning of their job as the salary at the end of the month. Moreover, they both explained they have resigned to the situation. Yet, it has not always been that way. On one hand, changes in the company have led to change in the content of the job of one of the respondents. Further, the situation at home of that same respondent makes it hard to invest more time in work. Moreover, the advantages and the flexibility that he is offered are part of the reasons he stays working at that company.

What sense? It doesn't give me a... It just gives me food at the end of the month³. Before, in microelectronics, where I was, I was enjoying myself, intellectually too, in what I was doing and then I moved into the space industry. And well, I started learning. Then, I quickly went around. I tried to change branches to have other discoveries. That didn't go too well... There wasn't really a chance. I resigned myself, and that was that. (Executive 7)

I don't have time to invest in anything else either. If I didn't have that issue at home, I think I would've changed company a long time ago already. (Executive 7)

On the other hand, the other man whose meaning has been lost along the years explained that before, even if they did not have the flexibility they have today, he found purpose in his job. According to that respondent, the flexibility he received does not help him find purpose and meaning in his job anymore. Further, that respondent explained that he was advised by his doctor to take some time off work however, he kept going.

It's strange because I would say that before we had much less flexibility at work. There was no teleworking. Even though as a manager here, there has always been flexibility. So, there was no teleworking. But we could leave a little earlier. We could modulate these days. From that point of view, I'll say at least, at my level, I've never had too

³ Translated from French « *C'est alimentaire* ».

many worries. But yes, today there is a big imbalance. Before, work was part of life. Today, for me, work is what gives me food at the end of the month⁴. (Executive 5)

My doctor wanted to stop me before the holidays, for three weeks, telling me I needed a break. It was a month and a half before the holidays, so I didn't do it. How do I feel about it? Clearly, I let go. Now I've distanced myself, I'm trying to do what others do. (Executive 5)

Another aspect that both men have in common is their wish to reduce their working time in a near future. One of them already has a 95% working time arrangement has already mentioned. The other one is thinking about it. Meaning that they are ready to sacrifice a part of their salary to spend less time at work.

I'm looking at reducing my working time. For example, today we also have an advantage. It's called the famous C+ card. So, for two or three years I've been putting it off until tomorrow because I still have a few days off. (Executive 5)

I intend to get a 32-hour work week⁵. (Executive 7)

Secondly for the people who find meaning in their job, meaning is found at different level and in different aspects of their work. Some find it in their role of manager and leaders. The idea to manage change within a team is what gives purpose to one of the managers. Change management gives even more purpose now given to the changes and challenges the space industry is undergoing. Moreover, the idea to be able to move internally helps find meaning according to one of the team leaders. Finally, meaning can be found in the recognition managers get from the teams.

Accompanying the transformation is crucial to keep up with the market, which is very aggressive. Because today we find ourselves more and more in a kind of market like the aeronautics market. So, you see with the series a pressure on prices, on planning, which was not the case 20 years ago. Space was still a niche. There was time. Change is not easy to implement, to accompany. But for me it really makes sense because if we can't keep up with the market. Both the product market, the sales, what we sell and the resource market. There are different expectations from workers today compared to before. If we don't manage to accompany this and reconcile the two, we will slowly decline. (Manager 1)

It's also related to the fact that I change internally, I think that if I had been in the same job forever, there would be a certain routine. (Manager 1)

I've always wanted things to progress, to change, to evolve for the better. To be able to lead teams, to help people and so on. And so, it was in this sense that I took on these functions, because I wanted to be able to manage and organise it so that it would go as well as possible and try to bring everything I could, my contribution so that it would go better. And to help the teams. So that's what makes sense. The best reward is when

⁴ Translated from french « c'est ce qui me nourrit ».

⁵ Translated from french « je compte passer en 4/5^e »

I feel that people approve, that they appreciate it, that they tell me that it's great what you've put in place. (Director of department)

Further, the job it itself makes sense for the manager too, the people the company employs are worth fighting for according to one of the managers.

It really makes sense to keep our company, to keep the people. The people are worth it because there are a lot of good people here. (Manager 1)

Others find purpose in the concrete aspect of their job as they work on materials that will be part of a satellites and eventually gravitate into orbit. Further purpose can be found in the mission to which the satellites they work on will be used for. Therefore, the content of the job itself can give purpose and the industry in which it evolves. Indeed, the space industry can be source of meaning too.

I work on institutional projects so, projects that are requested by the European Space Agency, so rather all the observation missions. (Executive 1)

We also sell beautiful products. Space, apart from the satellite, which is ultimately a large mechanical box with electronics inside. Space is also something that I find fascinating. (Manager 1)

It's great to work here. We have things that will go into space, that will, etc. It's very concrete. It's not an abstract concept of a model that could be used to optimise... (Executive 6)

Nevertheless, it seems important to tackle a point that was mentioned by one of the respondents. That interviewee explained that the administrative heaviness of the space industry, makes it sometimes hard to keep focus and purpose along the way. That respondent illustrated that idea with the fact that he has been working at the company for eight years and it is only after so long that a satellite he worked on will be finally launched.

We are very slow and there is a certain administrative heaviness in the projects which means that, despite the fact that the thing is interesting, we can get lost along the way, that in the daily activities you can lose sight of it because the projects are already very long. (Executive 1)

Other interviewees explained that they would find purpose in other aspect of their work. One of the respondents explained that he does his forever dream job and that gives him purpose too.

To have a job where I am intellectually stimulated and where I meet interesting people whom I can interact with and feel good and useful. (Executive 1)

I was born, I said 'I want to work in a factory to build rockets' and I never changed my mind. (Executive 6)

Although even if the job gives purpose and it is the job a man has always wanted to do, sometimes motivation can be lost along the years. Indeed, one of the respondents finds his work purposeful and he enjoys doing it, he does not invest as much time in it as he once did.

Maybe I realised that there was an infinite amount of work anyway, so if I did twice as much it wouldn't make much difference. Maybe I got a bit tired of it too. And the total lack of possibility to get a promotion doesn't help to be motivated either. (Executive 6)

However, some respondents also mentioned that work was not their whole life even if they spend a lot of time at work, they have other things to cherish outside of work. Yet, one of the respondents mentioned that life would not be the same without work and that work is needed.

I have things on the side, I still want to enjoy my family, my partner, my daughter. (Executive 1)

If private life became normal and unique life, it would become boring. (Executive 6)

I spend more time here than at home even with teleworking. But as I say, the job is not an end in itself, you see, so there are other things afterwards, there are other things on the side. (Executive 2)

Still on this idea that work takes place in the interviewees' life, it can sometimes go beyond the working hours. Indeed, some people explained that some work issue could be taken home. However, one of the respondents explained that it only happened once for him that he got very bothered about work during his private life and he found a solution to stop work overlapping into his private life.

I never bring work problems home because there are other problems at home. So, if we bring the work problem home. Who will take care of my problem at home? Nobody. (Executive 2)

I remember, it was on the weekend, I was thinking about what bothered me. I was mowing the lawn. I stopped my lawnmower and thought, 'Oh, that bothers me. What can I do?' And it's not complicated, on Monday we had to finish a job, and then we had the meeting... I said, I'm going to go and find my boss, after this meeting, and tell him I'm not working on this project anymore. (Executive 2)

4.2 Women's cognitive crafting

When addressing cognitive crafting with the two younger female engineers, what came up was the amount of time they spend at work. That being said, it should be specified that both have a different perception of the place of work in their life. Indeed, out of the two young women, the one that has been working the longest has already challenged the place of work in her life. She came to a point where work was making her physically ill and since then she decided to put work at the same level as the rest. Further, she decided to enjoy life because she realises that

she will always have different goals but if she only focuses on them, she will forget to live. While the other young woman is still trying to achieve a certain balance because she thinks work takes too much place in her life.

Today, that's a big part of my life and I'd like to reduce it a bit in the sense that I don't want to work less or be less efficient, but just... I want to try to reconcile my private and professional life better, to be able to go home and have a break. The way I see it, it's something that's too important for my morale too and that I would like to succeed, to detach myself a little bit from the negative emotions, from work, from stress, especially stress. (Executive 3)

Now, my work, it is just my work, not my life, that's important to me, it is just my work. Now, everything is on the same level: my friends, it's on the same level as my work, climbing and so on... You know? For me that, I'm now on a point that, I mean, that's healthier. Now I realise that I have to enjoy life. (...) You always have your goals, but you kind of forget to live while you have goals. (Executive 4)

Apart from the place work takes in their lives, they find meaning in different aspects of their work too. Indeed, they find meaning in the content itself just like the men did. Moreover, meaning is also found in the formative aspect of their work as that job is their first one. Furthermore, meaning is also found in broader aspects. Indeed, the fact that they are women in a men's world gives them purpose too as they can inspire other women to do the same. Another broader aspect of their work that gives purpose is the idea that they work on projects that will help humanity in the future too.

I have to feel useful for something that has a much bigger meaning. Sometimes I don't, but now I feel that for me it is important to feel useful. For things that are going to help humanity at some level... So, my sense here is I'm a woman in a place, there are not many women... So, in engineering I'm the only woman working... Yesterday I was on a meeting with ten men, old. You know? So, for me... This is not my job, but it gives me meaning. My work is good because I do electronics for things that go into space, for science, science that investigates the earth and investigates global warming. So that's good. We are working for something that will help humanity in the future. But also, the meaning. That I'm doing a task today and I like it if I'm going to inspire other people to do the same thing. So, there are two kinds of meaning in my work and that's important. (Executive 3)

There is also a very big and very positive part of this job which is the training and the fact that I like what I do, clearly, I like it. My job is very technical, and I like that about it. It's always better to have a technical base, even if you're going to do projects or whatever. And so, it's something I really like. It's very varied in terms of activities, you can touch on all sorts of areas, interact with the theory of analyses and simulations, but also with practice because you can, you intervene a little during the tests. And it is quite concrete, we mix theory and concrete, it's fun. I know what I do, I know why I do it, the equipment beyond that, I know what they look like, I know what they're used for in the satellite, I know the mission they'll be used for. I know why I work and that's what I like too. It gives meaning to my work. (Executive 3)

Finally, the third woman who was interviewed has been working for much longer in the company and she explained that she misses a time when she had time to do her job. She explained that there is a lot of pressure nowadays and it can be hard to bear. She explained that the products her company sells are tailor-made for the customers and that the direction would like to make it faster which creates a lot of pressure on the teams. This pressure on the teams is also something that worries her as a manager. However, she finds meaning in the work she does and the products she works on.

It certainly wasn't the same stress. Today, it's always a race, projects start as late as possible and always end on the same date. Before, we had time to test. Today, we are always saying 'yes, but it's not normal that you have a problem'. And so, there is also the stress of doing your job well. There is a timing stressing you which is increasingly important. And this is a change which I think is negative in terms of the overall well-being of the teams.

We make things that are tailor-made for our customers. But it should be as fast as when it's ready-to-wear. And that's what we're actually asked to do today. And that's complicated.

It's something to be proud of, to know that we're working on things that we can talk about, that we can be proud of because then there's the feedback that comes after... When it's a project that's used to broadcast the Olympic Games (...). For all these things, it allows me to say that we have done things for someone, for a return... So that allows me to have a certain pride.

5. Inequities

As noted earlier in this work, the inequities were not tackled as a single question. First, it is important to disclaim that gender inequities are not only in the private sphere or the work sphere, but these are the two places this work has looked at. Furthermore, gender inequities were only tackled with the people it was appropriate to tackle it with. For example, someone who does not have children or wife and lives on his own is not concern by gender inequities in his private life at least and does not work with many women.

Now that this had been noted, let's see what the interviews have brought in terms of gender inequities. The first thing that comes to mind when thinking about what has been said about genders inequities during the interviews is the fact that a man who does everything at home said that you could consider him a woman. Meaning that managing the home should be dedicated to women.

You can consider me a woman because half of the week I do everything a woman does, whether it's managing the children or everything at home. But even though I'm with

somebody else, I'm still taking care of the food, the laundry, the cleaning, I keep myself busy as if I were on my own. (Manager 1)

In the case of a younger father, tasks seem to be better distributed. The young father explained that he is involved in his family, and he does the food for his daughter, or he goes grocery shopping when teleworking. Therefore, teleworking helps him being involved.

For example, we make the food for my daughter, we do them at lunchtime for example. Or things like that. So, if I want to do a little errand, go, and get a Collect&go, I do it at 12 o'clock. It is not something I could do if I were at work, so there are lots of little things that need to be done at home, that don't take so much time but it's still handy to have teleworking to do that. (Executive 1)

On the other hand, other men admitted to being less involved than their wives in the home. They also explained that the chores they have been assigned to are more irregular chores than their wives. However, they step in to help when needed and they see themselves as more involved in the family than their dads were.

I think that unfortunately, a wife as more... I must admit... has more work at home. For instance, my wife cooks. However, she has less flexibility than me but since she teleworks, she has been doing sports with our daughter, which she never did before. I don't know if it's all couples but, men, it is rather chores like... the garden, more masculine chores. But maybe we are doing it the old school way. My wife does the laundry, the cooking. I take care of the garden and fixing things, but it is true that cooking is every day and even if I have bigger chores sometimes, it is not every day. (Executive 5)

She does much more than I do, she probably does 80% of the chores. However, this week, I did all the cooking because she did not have the time for it. But I do much more than my dad did. (Executive 6)

Further, one of the respondents tackled the notion of mental load and said that when he understands that notion, he tried to involve himself more after. However, even if changes seem to occur between generations as just mentioned, one of the women interviewed did not share that idea and thinks that change will not occur so soon.

I'm not optimistic it'll change at least not my generation. (Executive 4)

When all respondents were asked “*what is an engineer*” the answers were different however all of them seemed to say that they are engineer every moment of the day, even when watching TV for instance, or fixing something that is broken. However, when the three women interviewed talked about their function of engineer, they insisted on the idea that they were working in a men’s world but that they are used to it, and they have adapted to it.

6. Intermediate conclusion

The results of the interview have shown that job crafting is used by all interviewees whether they realize it or not, whether they are men or women. The results have also shown that this job crafting ability might be possible because of the flexibility the company offers to its employees. We have also seen that for the interviewees who have a role of leader that same role has a lot of meaning to them and it seems to drive them. We can also learn from the results that the two young women who were interviewed have said things in common and they have similarities in their life settings but also in the fact that both have been working for a shorter time than the others. Both seem to be still learning about work-life balance and job crafting. On the other side, people who seem to distance themselves from their jobs like, don't see the purpose and the meaning of their work anymore and they would like to reduce the time they spend at work. Finally, for the fathers and mothers that were interviewed, it seems like their organisation of their working time and schedule is mostly based according to their children's needs.

Part 4: Discussion

In this section we go back to the literature and confront it with the results we obtained through this study. First, we should recall that this work aims to understand to what extent enabling job crafting may lead to work-life balance, on a gender perspective. Therefore, we will start with the aspects of WLB and genders that were developed in the literature review and confront them to the results of the study. Then, we will compare the literature concerning job crafting to the results. Finally, we will give some recommendations for the future.

1. Achieving work-life balance

As the literature about WLB mentioned, role conflict happens when two life domains are incompatible with each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This reflects to what the only interviewed mother said during the interviews. Indeed, she explained that she sometimes must leave a meeting to pick her son up at school, while he has already been waiting for some time. She explained that she does not feel good towards her colleagues, and she feels bad for her son who's waiting in this kind of situation. This shows that the two roles the woman is involved in – her role of mother and her role of manager – become incompatible at some point. She refers to these situations as “*difficult*” and “*not fun to live*”. This reveals that her balance cannot always be achieved and that sometimes she has to neglect one role for the benefit of the other.

Another aspect of WLB that was developed in the literature review is that achieving WLB can increase the overall satisfaction of workers (Reindl et al., 2011). This is relevant to what Executive 6 and the director of the department said about the flexibility they receive in their company. Indeed, giving flexible working time or flexible workplace to workers are tools to help them achieve balance (Wilkens et al., 2018). This flexibility was described by the director as something that helped workers “*accept more constraints and burdens*”. In this idea, Executive 6 said that “*this is one less thing to stress about in life*”. Meaning that the flexibility he receives from his employer helps him reduce his stress level. Given the fact that the director said that about the teams he leads, and that Executive 6 is one of the engineers under his responsibility, it means that what the director said is quite reflective of what is felt by the teams, and it confirms what the literature said about WLB. Further, the idea of using flextime and flexplace where employees are allowed to work at nonstandard hours according to the literature of Perrigino et al. (2018) is something that is clearly used in the company of this case study. To go further, we can look at the case of Executive 6. He said that he likes choosing his working hours so that he can work later at night and that way he feels “*much more efficient*”. This means

that the flexibility offered to the employees helps them being more efficient and it goes along to the idea that WLB initiatives help improve employee productivity (Wilkins et al., 2018). Moreover, this is a choice made by the employee to work at that time, therefore it does not bother him, on the contrary he prefers it that way.

On the other hand, the literature said that increased work-life conflict leads to a decreasing commitment to the organization (Reindl et al., 2011). However, this idea can be reconsidered according to some of the results obtained through the interviews. Undeniably, in the case of Executive 5 and Executive 7, they remain working at that company because of the flexibility they are offered. For instance, Executive 7 said that he “*would have changed company a long time ago*” if he could but, his wife needs him at different times of the day and the company allows him to go back home on lunch time to take care of his wife. In addition to the flexibility he is offered, the company is located nearby his home which makes it possible for him to go back home and take care of his wife during his lunch breaks. From the point of view of Executive 5, it is different as his case is more related to the lack of meaning from his work which we will develop this later. Nevertheless, Executive 5 stays working for that organisation because he knows he could easily take a C+ card and have more days off. Moreover, he can choose to come early and leave early, and he could easily take a different working time arrangement if he wanted to. This testifies that Executive 5 does not fear to use WLB policies if needed however, he has not used them yet.

1.1 Work-life balance policies: the example of telework

Another interesting point from the literature about WLB is the idea that the policies that are offered to the employees are viewed as “*work-family policies*” because they seem designed for the employees who have family responsibilities even if they are offered to all employees (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). The results confirm that idea in a certain way because most parents interviewed use WLB policies and tools however, this can be reconsidered. To illustrate this, we will use the example of telework as it is a tool that is used by all respondents but the reasons for its use vary from one another, and the regularity of its use does too.

For instance, Manager 2 changed her working time arrangement to be available for her children but when she cannot take the afternoon of her 36-hour work week off, she uses telework. This way she is available for her children even if she is working. Moreover, Manager 1 uses telework to manage his family life better and to be available when his children need him. Indeed, to avoid leaving his children every day at childcare when school finishes, he decided and telework two

afternoons a week when his children are staying with him. This way they only stay at childcare two days a week. This is what Manager 1 described as a “*compromise*” to achieve balance and be available for his children but for his work too. Further, Executive 1 uses telework to save time and help in the household too. The director of the department uses telework to save time as well, so do Executive 7 and 2 because they avoid commuting to work when teleworking, making them save up to two hours a day. Executive 5 uses it to balance his private and work spheres. Indeed, telework allows him to take a break during a working day and go play tennis while finishing his work after his game. However, Executive 3 and 4, both young women, who live on their own rarely use telework because they do not like it. In addition, they do not see many advantages to it unless they need to be at home for a delivery of some sort. Nevertheless, they both manage to use other WLB policies to achieve balance. Once again, the flexibility that is offered by the company allows both young women to achieve balance and to manage the time they spend at work. For instance, Executive 3 comes late to work to avoid spending too much time at work. On the contrary Executive 5 comes early to make sure he can leave work early. This will be further detailed and compared to the literature of job crafting and physical crafting. However, Executive 3 and 5 are allowed to organise their day how they want because of the flexibility they are offered by the company. Therefore, on one hand WLB policies are used by all employees but not for the same reason and on the other hand, people use the policies that will help them achieve balance personally.

On that count, the two younger women interviewed (Executive 3 and 4) prefer having interactions with colleagues rather than being alone at home, thus they avoid teleworking. Concerning the parents that were interviewed, they usually use it depending on their children’s needs. It has also been said that some people use telework to help stay focus on specific tasks, and this will be further explained when confronting the job crafting literature to the results.

1.2 In addition to the gender issue: the caregivers’ issue

When addressing gender issue and work-life balance, the literature said that women have a bigger workload of housework and childcare than men have (Connell, 2005). However, according to the results of the interviews, this can be understood in a different way, and it can be strengthened with another aspect.

First, the fact that women have more workload in the house has been confirmed by interviewees during the interviews whether they were men or women. Indeed, Executive 6 said that he considered his wife does much more than he does at home. However, he also said “*I do much*

more than my dad did” meaning that he does not let his wife do everything and he steps in when needed. This could also suggest that changes between generation are occurring however, as the literature mentioned it *“changes has occurred over the decades, but less than was expected, and change in men’s domestic work has practically stalled”* (Connell, 2005, p.370). Moreover, Executive 5 said that he might be doing it the *“old school way”*. Indeed, he admitted that his wife does much more chores than he does at home, and she does them more regularly too. This shows that Executive 5’s wife has more unpaid work than him according to the literature of Wajcman (2015). Something that has been noticed through the interviews is that when men have chores to do, these chores will often be more occasional while, their wives *“assigned”* chores are done daily. But what about the case of Manager 1 and Executive 7? Both are men, yet they take care of everything on their own.

Concerning Manager 1, he is a divorced father of two teenagers while Executive 7 must take care of his wife who suffers from multiple sclerosis. Both have a role of caregiver. They both mentioned that they had to take care of everything in the home, meaning all chores are theirs. On this aspect the divorced father said something interesting as he said: *“you can consider me a woman because half of the week I do everything a woman does, whether it's managing the children or everything at home”*. While this shows that the man does everything at home because he is alone it also testifies that according to him the tasks he does are supposedly assigned to women. On the other hand, Executive 7 must take care of everything because of the state of health of wife, which worsens. This shows that both men have many unpaid working hours. This aspect of the results testifies that WLB policies and flexibility should be available for all as every situation is different. Moreover, these policies should help *“create the mechanisms and conditions required to promote men’s participation in aspects of their private life, such as the care of children or elderly or disabled relatives.”* (Wilkens et al., 2018, p.61). In addition to this idea, these policies should be implemented in a way that is not theoretically available but achievable (Wilkens et al., 2018). Furthermore, this is even more important as family behaviour has been reshaped during the last 50 years in Europe with an increase of divorces (Sobotka & Berghammer, 2021). This means that men could increasingly have that role of caregivers. In this case study, it would be very interesting for the company to create such mechanisms and conditions as the company employs around 70% of men. Nevertheless, the WLB policies already seem to be available for all in the company. Furthermore, by doing this it would help reduce gender inequities because according to the literature review, WLB policies are helpful to promote gender equality (Wilkens et al., 2018). However, it does not seem to be

the reality of all the respondents as Executive 5 explained that he felt it was not well seen by peers to use telework in his function. This feeling creates the opposite climate than the one we just described. Moreover, it was also said by Manager 2 – who works in the same department – that telework was not appropriate in their function.

Another point concerning Executive 5, is that he explained he was advised to take some time off by his doctor as he came close to a burnout. However, he decided not to. This has nothing to do with WLB policies because it relates to well-being at work nonetheless, he refused. The only explanation he gave to his refusal was because holidays were coming, and he thought he would keep going until then. Even though, it is not the same as taking a leave of absence, this is a situation where a man refuses to take time off work, which is in line with the work of Blithe (2018). Indeed, the author mentioned that men think that taking a leave of absence could damage their careers therefore, WLB practices are turned aside by men (Blithe, 2018). The other men who were interviewed did not mention anything about taking a leave of absence, meaning that the interviews have not found confronting results to the work of Blithe (2018).

Still from a gender perspective, our results resonate with the work of Wajcman (2015) which explains that women are more likely to reduce their working hours to cope with household and childcare especially if the children are young. Indeed, this was confirmed by the only mother interviewed as she decided to reduce her working hours when she had her first child and it has been like that ever since, even if her children are older now (16 and 19 years old). This also relates to the idea that mothers are more likely to adapt their working conditions to their private life (Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013). However, the other person who decided to change his working hours is Executive 7 to care of his wife. This is consistent with the idea that being in a situation of caregiver whether it is for elderly people, children, or disabled people requires the caregiver to adapt his or her working hours if he or she is doing most of the care alone. On this point, it seems important to note that WLB policies can help mother to achieve balance but not only, they can help fathers and caregivers to achieve balance, and this is important for gender equality. Indeed, the more the policies will be available and achievable for all, the more people whether they are men or women, will use those policies.

1.3 The new father

Further with the idea of being a father in a world where the family behaviour has reshaped according to Sobotka and Berghammer (2021), we could link this to the notion of *new model of fatherhood* that was developed earlier in the literature review (Suwada, 2016). This notion

raised the idea that the father is no longer defined as the economical provider (Suwada, 2016). Moreover, the work of Blithe (2018) explains that men now discuss challenges they meet between their roles of providers and their wish to spend more times with their children and be involved in the family to achieve balance. These concepts can be understood through what Executive 1 said. Indeed, as a young father, he explained that he had to make compromises when his daughter was born. He also explained that his work matters but he “*still wants to enjoy*” his family, his partner, and his daughter. On that idea of new fatherhood, Executive 1 also explained that when he was teleworking, he used that time to prepare lunches for his daughter, or to run an errand. This shows that Executive 1 wants to be involved in the private sphere as much as in the professional sphere. This can be relevant also because he was the youngest dad interviewed for this study, meaning that he might identify as a *new father*. Thus, according to the literature review, the entry of women on the labour market has challenged the idea that women have to be primarily responsible for care giving in both the home and family (Wajcman, 2015.; McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). Therefore, change has occurred in the last decades, however less than expected as the work of Connell (2005) attests that “*men’s domestic work has practically stalled*” (Connell, 2005, p.370). Nevertheless, the situation of Executive 1 might testify that *new fathers* might be the hope for bigger change in the future. Although, such change is not to expect so soon according to Executive 4 who thinks that her generation will not be the one bringing change in terms of gender equity.

1.4 Work-family backlash

In the literature review, we developed the notion of *work-family backlash* which was described by Perrigino et al. (2018) as the phenomenon that reflects the negative attitudes, behaviours and emotions associated with different aspects of WLB policies and practices whether it is towards their availability or their use. Further, this phenomenon is divided into three aspects as mentioned in the literature review: inequity-based mechanism, stigma mechanism and spillover (Perrigino et al., 2018). Out of these three, we can confront two of them with the results of the interviews that were conducted. First, the *stigma mechanism* which focuses on the sanction that may be encountered because of the use of WLB policies (Perrigino et al., 2018). This can be confronted to what Manager 2 and Executive 5 said about teleworking. Indeed, they explained that it was not “*well seen*” to telework in their function. Secondly, Perrigino et al. (2018) developed the notion of *spillover* might be the most striking mechanism of work-family backlash as we can confront it to many examples received throughout the interviews. For instance, many of the respondents explained that when they telework, they tend to work longer

than when they work on site. Other respondents explained that telework would help them save some time because they would avoid commuting to work. However, if they do not have to drive to work, they will simply start their day earlier and finish it later. Meaning that private time is sacrificed for the benefits of work. Finally, according to the interviews, the *inequity-based mechanism* does not seem to reflect the reality of the company as no one mentioned that WLB policies were perceived as unfair (Perrigino et al., 2018).

1.5 The notion of leisure

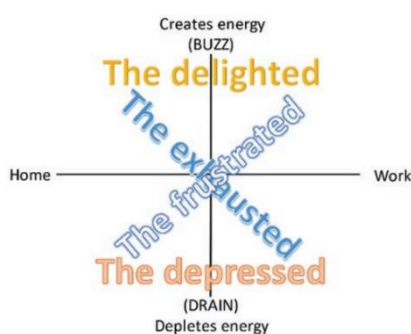
Finally, an aspect that was addressed in the interviews was the notion of leisure (Wajcman, 2015). In the literature we compared the notion of leisure between men and women, and we noticed they do not experienced leisure the same way (Wajcman, 2015). However, in this study, the only woman who said she did not have time for leisure was Manager 2 who is a mother. The other women interviewed were young and seemed to have time for leisure as they live by themselves and only have to care for themselves. For instance, Executive 4 said she allocates time to leisure as she goes climbing or she goes meet friends regularly. On the other hand, most of the men that were interviewed all mentioned they had leisure whether it is restoring a house, running, programming, tennis, language classes etc. They had leisure of any kind. However, the time they allocate to leisure depends on different aspects. For instance, Manager 1 explained that he likes to go running, however he plans it “*in the gaps*”. Meaning that he can do it when his schedule and his children’s schedule allow him to. Further, Executive 1 explained he had to choose between activities when he became a father because he could not do all the activities he used to do. Thus, his leisure has been modified after becoming a dad. Finally, Executive 7 said he has no time for leisure. This means that leisure does not only depend on gender but also on the fact whether you are a caregiver or not. Therefore, the idea that men and women do not experience leisure the same way might be nuanced with the idea that caregiver and non-caregiver do not experience leisure the same way. However, this does not mean that women do not experience leisure differently because Manager 2 clearly explained it was difficult for her to find time for herself and that she does not have time for leisure.

2. What about job crafting

First, the literature said that job crafting is an employee-driven mechanism used to achieve balance and work between elements that give joy and those that destroy it (Pendleton et al., 2021). We should also keep in mind that the concept of job crafting is based on the idea that an employee can make the job he has into the job he enjoys (Pendleton et al., 2021). The notion of

job crafting is therefore based on the notions of *buzz* and *drain* as mentioned in the literature review. According to the figure (Figure 4.1) of *buzz* and *drain* from Pendleton et al. (2021) and according to the results of the interviews, we could say that Executive 5's situation would find its place along the line called "*the frustrated*". Indeed, his private sphere (home) brings him joy and work drains him. We can place Executive 5 on this graph since he was very open and outspoken about how he felt towards work and towards his family. For the other respondents, the cleavage between work and family was not as strong therefore, it would be hard to place them on that figure.

Figure 4.1 Buzz and Drain by Pendleton et al., 2021, p.79



This idea of an employee-driven technique may suggest that job crafting could lead to the individualization of work. Although this work showed that respondents use telework and flexibility for personal purposes (e.g., care of the children, focus on professional tasks one their own), it has also shown that collective relationships remained strongly cherished and valued. Moreover, one the respondents illustrated this idea as he said that despite being an introvert, he would not want to be teleworking fulltime because of the lack of interactions that it involves. Moreover, other respondents explained that fulltime teleworking could be damaging for relationships as the respondents need to exchange with workers who only work on site (in the clean rooms) for some projects. Finally, all respondents work on their projects in teams, which requires collective work. This resonates with the work of Ajzen (2020) who showed that voluntary and collective dynamics of labour relations are still at work when it comes to teleworking. Further, it relates to the work of Ajzen and Taskin (2021) that testifies that flexworkers adopt changes in the workspace and find ways to reclaim space, collectively.

Something that was explained in the job crafting literature review is that an initial job design and related job descriptions can change over time and end up not reflecting the reality and start to become incoherent (Pendleton et al., 2021). This resonates clearly with what some of the interviewees said. Indeed, Executive 7 mentioned that he used to love the microelectronics job

he did before, but changes have occurred and when he switched to the space industry, he did not have the same feeling towards his job. This shows that by changing Executive 7's role, he lost motivation and purpose along the way. Therefore, changes related to job design should be employee-driven rather than forced upon employees. Otherwise, employees might lose purpose and motivation through changes if the job design does not fit with the job the employee wants.

Furthermore, job crafting was described as an employee-driven process in the literature of Pendleton et al. (2021). Further, it was developed that this employee-initiative approach allows employees to shape their environment in a way that fits their personal needs (Tims & Bakker, 2010). This is in line with the fact that employees from the studied company use WLB policies in a way that would help them meet their needs or their children's needs. However, what helps them achieve balance on that aspect is the flexibility they are offered by the company. Meaning that the flexibility in terms of place and time allows employees to organize their days and weeks the way they want to. This was illustrated by many examples during the interview as flexible time was used for different reasons: arrive early to leave early, arrive later to make sure not to spend too much time at work, going back home on lunch break etc. In addition, flexible workplace was used for different reasons too: to be available for the children, for the dogs, to avoid commuting to work or even focusing on specific tasks. Every respondent had a different way to craft, a way that fits with their needs. However, those examples are rather related to physical crafting, but job crafting goes beyond flexible time and place as mentioned in the literature.

2.1 Task crafting and physical crafting

Task crafting represents the idea that a job description can be changed in terms of tasks and that tasks can be added or taken of a job description moreover, the way tasks are being done can be changed (Pendleton et al., 2021). This idea means that employees can use task crafting to insert their interest into the work they do but also demonstrate their strength and add value to the business (Pendleton et al., 2021). During the interviews the notion of task crafting was rather abstract for the respondents however, after the analysis we can show that task crafting is used by some of the interviewees. Indeed, when we take the respondents who have a role of manager, they both explained that this role meant a lot to them. Further, according to the director of the department and both Managers 1 and 2, following teams through change is not something easy however they feel that they manage to do it in addition to their role of engineers. Therefore, the role of manager was crafted to their role of engineer, and it brings them *buzz*. No to mention the fact that they find purpose in that role too. Meaning that cognitive crafting is also a part of

that *buzz*. This shows that the dimensions of job crafting can be added to one another and related to one action.

In terms of taking an additional role, we could also use the example of Executive 4 who is often sent by her manager to meet clients because he knows she will be able to communicate with them. This is more of a commercial role which is crafted to her engineering role because her manager trusts her on that aspect. However, this answer given by Executive 4 during the interview was not given while discussing task crafting, but it was discussed while addressing her quality as a female engineer. This shows that all the answers the people gave were not entirely stuck to one dimension some were intertwined.

To go further in that idea of intertwined dimension we will use the example of teleworking. Indeed, during the interviews task crafting was often related to the way people manage their tasks. Some respondents expressed that they choose the tasks they would do on site and the ones they would do while teleworking because some tasks require more concentration. Most respondents explained that it was more difficult to focus on a specific task when working on site because some people could interrupt them while this does not happen when teleworking. On the other hand, some tasks aren't realizable from home as the products and materials are only available on site according to the respondents. However, this task crafting they talk about wouldn't be possible without teleworking according to our results. Therefore, we can say that the dimensions of job crafting are intertwined between each other because different dimensions can be used in one action. For example, Executive 6 works on site on Fridays because he knows he won't be distracted by many people as a lot of them telework on that day. Thus, this relates to relational crafting because he avoids interactions. Moreover, he chooses the tasks he does, the ones that can be done on site. This way, relational crafting and task crafting are simultaneously done.

However, concerning the idea of reducing the scope of tasks, this was not something that came out of the interviews. Indeed, the respondents mostly said they had heavy workloads and that it was sometimes hard to deal with the priority of each task as Executive 3 mentioned it.

Now, let's go further with physical crafting which according to Sturges (2012) can be separated into two dimensions: temporal and locational crafting. First, temporal crafting is related to the idea that employees can manage the amount of time they spend at work to achieve work-life balance (Sturges, 2012). This was clearly explained during the interviews, all respondents take advantage of the flexibility they are offered to manage their day. For instance, Executive 3

arrives later to make sure she does not spend too much time at work while Executive 5 arrives early to make sure he leaves work early and can enjoy being home after. Further, some use teleworking to save time as mentioned already or to adjust their planning to their children's needs. Finally, some take advantage of the flexibility to go back home during lunch break. All of these are proper example of temporal crafting confirming that temporal crafting is not only about managing when work starts and ends but also to control workload, working hours and to fill evening commitments (Sturges, 2012). Secondly, locational crafting which is defined by Sturges (2012) as where work time is spent can be addressed. The other example given by the author was the idea of teleworking to blend work and non-work activities or avoid lengthy commute. The latter being the example of the director of the department and Executive 2 who clearly said that telework helps them save time because they avoid a two-hour trip. The former being the example of several respondents who explained that when they work from home they can do the laundry, go run an errand, prepare meals for the children. Finally, something very specific to one respondent and her husband is the fact that they crafted their WLB by moving closer to their workplace which according to Sturges (2012) is something that a small amount of people do.

2.2 Relational crafting

Relational crafting is described as the reshaping of the social environment at work by the modification of the relationships and interactions with others (Pendleton et al., 2021). It also implies that employees should be aware of the interactions and relationships they encounter at work and reflect whether these relationships make them feel buzzed or drained (Pendleton et al., 2021). According to many respondents, what matters most in terms of relational crafting is the atmosphere within their team. Indeed, they said that their colleagues are great to laugh with or to have discussion with and that these relationships make them *buzz*. Further, Manager 1 said that his colleagues have been of great help during his divorce, bringing him *buzz* at work while his private situation was more difficult.

However, Executive 2 addressed a generational issue because he has more interactions with colleagues his age than younger colleagues. He explained that younger colleagues will “*never ask back*” if he asks how they are going. Therefore, he has more interactions with the colleagues he has known for years than the younger ones, and he enjoys working with his older colleagues. Executive 2 also explained that he has great conversations with these colleagues. This shows that he feels more *buzz* by interacting with his older colleagues than with the younger ones. However, he never said that interactions with younger colleagues would drain him.

As mentioned in the previous part, some respondents use telework to avoid interaction. Indeed, telework allows them to avoid being interrupted while working on tasks that require lots of concentration. Therefore, telework is used to reduce the interactions with the aim to focus more on work and be more “*efficient*” as Executive 6 mentioned it. Thus, the reason to avoid interaction is to be more efficient but not really related to *buzz* and *drain*. However, would you feel buzzed if you spend a day trying to focus on a task, but you keep being interrupted and you end up not finishing it? This could mean that feeling efficient might bring buzz.

Still concerning relational crafting, the interviews have shown that the relationship between an employee and his or her manager matters a lot. Indeed, the two youngest female engineers (Executive 3 and 4) explained that their manager trust them but also, they worry about how they feel and make sure they can express if they don't feel well. Furthermore, Executive 2 explained that he never felt like his manager wanted to control his work and that is also something that Executive 3 said. Both explained that being trusted and not controlled helped them feel good as well. Nevertheless, Executive 5 feels a lot of control and feels like he is being mothered which has a draining effect on him. Therefore, we could say that a manager who trusts his teams and avoids controlling them brings more *buzz* than *drain* to his teams. Another relation that can bring *buzz* to an employee is the relation a young worker might have with his or her sponsor. Indeed, Executive 3 explained that the relationship she has with her sponsor are of great help regarding WLB because he helps her setting barriers. She explains that with the fact that he does not want her to make the same mistake he did when he was younger and teaching her about WLB. Therefore, she enjoys interaction with him as she learns about things that “*aren't taught at university*”.

Finally, the interviews have confirmed that some interactions can *drain* people. Indeed, some respondents gave the examples of meetings that would irritate them or interactions with a person that would create stress and overthinking. This relates to the notion of relational crafting, but it also relates to the notion of *spillover* (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Indeed, some respondents explained that these interactions that would make them feel drained would also return home with them from time to time and have a negative impact (Perrigino et al., 2018). This is also in line with the notion of *work-family backlash* (Perrigino et al., 2018).

2.3 Cognitive Crafting

As defined in the literature cognitive crafting is the way employees change their attitudes towards their work and the way they feel about it and the meaning they find in it (Pendleton et

al., 2021). This view of cognitive crafting was clearly developed during the interview as most of the respondents found meaning in their job. However, two respondents explained that their work only gives them meaning because of the salary they get at the end of the month. They both explained that it was not the way they perceived their job before, but it became like that over the years and the changes that occurred. On the other hand, for those whose job is meaningful, they find meaning in different aspects of their work. For instance, Executive 3 finds meaning in her job because it is formative for her, and it is also very concrete, she knows what she does and why she does it. She also finds meaning in the interactions she gets through work, linking relational crafting to cognitive crafting. Executive 6 finds meaning in it because it is the job he has always wanted to do and because he does concrete things too. As mentioned earlier, the director of the department and Manager 1 find meaning in their role of manager and leader which gives them purpose too. The idea of leading teams through change is something both men find meaning in. Further, Executive 1 explained that the purpose of the missions he works on gives him meaning too, as he works on Earth observation mission. In addition, Executive 4 said that she likes the idea *“to feel useful for something that has a much bigger meaning”* and *“for things that are going to help humanity at some level”*. By this she meant the missions to investigate global warming she has been working on. Further, she explained that her role as a female engineer has a great meaning to her too and she likes the idea of being able *“to inspire other people to do the same thing”* as she does. The meaning the respondents can find through their work helps them feel *buzz* and therefore achieve balance (Pendleton et al., 2021).

According to Sturges (2012) cognitive crafting is also related to the definition and the frame people give to work-life balance. First, the definition of WLB is not the same to all employees according to Sturges (2012). This was clearly raised during the interviews as some people allocate time to work on the weekends while other refuse to. Further, some people explained that free time could happen during the week and on the weekend, while others explained that free time was exclusively possible on the weekend. This testifies that WLB is not perceived and achieved the same way by every employee, and it is in line with the work of Sturges (2012). Secondly, the author discovered another form of cognitive crafting as the *“prioritization of work at the expense of life outside work”*. This was not clearly mentioned by any of the interviewees. However, the director of the department mentioned that he often allocates time on the weekend for work, just like his wife. This shows that work is prioritized at the expense of life when he works on the weekend. Further, we could say that some people admitted working long hours or being told by their children that they *“work too much”* which could testify once

again that work takes over their private life. Nevertheless, on that aspect, Executive 4 explained that she changed her perception of work during her first year of work. Indeed, she explained that her health was impacted by the amount of time she spent on work in the beginning of her career and when she realised that it became unhealthy. Thus, she decided to put work at the same level as the rest. Meaning that work used to take over her private life, but she decided to change that and to spend less time on work. The way Executive 4 sees her WLB could also be linked to the notion of “*balancers*” that was developed in the literature review. Indeed, according to that theory, balancers want an equal ‘balance’ between their work and personal life (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Lewis, 2011). Executive 3, who is also in her early career, mentioned that work is “*a big part*” of her life and that she “*would like to reduce it a bit in a sense that she wants to try reconcile my private and professional life better*”. This clearly testifies that she thinks work is taking a lot of space in her life and that work takes over her private life which is not something she wishes on the long run. If we must link that to the notion of balancer, we could say that Executive 3 aspires to be a balancer, but she finds it hard to reach balance (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Lewis, 2011). Chatrakul Na Ayudhya and Lewis’ (2011) study was conducted on young worker in their early careers which is why it makes sense to make the connection with Executives 3 and 4 who were the youngest interviewees. Further, other respondents explained how they perceived WLB, and that work does not represent their whole life and that they have other things on the outside of work that matter a lot. Finally, Sturges’ (2012) study showed a third form of cognitive crafting where participants were ready to make some compromises and sacrifice WLB for a short period of time in return for potential future benefits. During the interviews this was not clearly explained. However, some interviewees who have been working for the organisation for some times explained that from time to time when urgent tasks come up, they are ready to work on the weekend if they must. But the idea of having “*potential future benefits*” was not the reason they would do it; they would do it to meet the deadlines.

2.4 Enabling crafting

Earlier, the literature review showed that job crafting is important for organizations and employees because it provides employees with the empowerment and ownership to shape the content of their work and their experience of it as it is employee-driven (Pendleton et al, 2021). Job crafting is something that is implemented top-down, managers and direction must create the conditions that will enable job crafting (Pendleton et al., 2021). Something that can be raised

after the interviews, is that the flexibility offered by the studied company to its employees allows them to craft, at least in terms of physical crafting.

According to Pendleton et al. (2021) there are two main aspects to succeed with job crafting, these are: perception and capability. The perception is the idea that “*employees must recognise the opportunities for change in their role, this is the ‘perceived opportunities’ to craft*” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p. 144). While the capability is the trust employees have in their capability to make those changes (Pendleton et al., 2021).

Before engaging in job crafting employees must perceived the opportunities to do so (Pendleton and al., 2021). The study from Chloe Hodgkinson (2018) has led to a four-step framework to create the conditions for job crafting which are the following:

1. “*Make sure employees know that they have **permission** to job craft*” (Pendleton and al., 2021, p.145). The permission to craft must be made at every level: top-down but also horizontally from colleagues (Pendleton et al., 2021). It is also important that the leaders communicate this permission explicitly and illustrate it implicitly through the culture and processes (Pendleton and al., 2021).
2. “*Create a culture where employees feel **psychologically** safe to experiment and take risks*” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p.145). This means that job crafting requires exploration, adaptation, and new ways of thinking without creating a disapproval from the *status quo* (Pendleton and al., 2021). Environment that are safe psychologically are easier to conduct change in and this kind of environment acknowledges potential risks and errors (Pendleton et al., 2021).
3. “*Give employees the **control** they need to craft through trust and autonomy*” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p.145). Workers must be in control of the way they want to experiment crafting, they need to feel trusted and be given autonomy to make decision about their work (Pendleton et al., 2021).
4. “*Ensure employees have the **capacity** to craft by promoting realistic workloads, clear role boundaries and protected crafting time*” (Pendleton et al., 2021, p.145). On one hand, job crafting requires energy and on the other hand it requires time to consider crafting activities (Pendleton et al., 2021).

In the company of this case study, flexibility is a strong asset they give to their employees, and it was recognized by all interviewees even the one who do not find purpose in their work anymore. However, one person feels mothered and controlled which is not the appropriate

climate for job crafting. The other respondents did not feel such control on them, on the contrary they feel trusted which is a feeling that will help enable job crafting according to the work of Pendleton et al. (2021). This testifies that **control** is perceived by 90% of the respondents. Furthermore, this shows that **permission** to craft is given through this flexibility. However, this is not a clear **permission** because some respondents also mentioned that teleworking for instance, was not well seen in their function.

Nevertheless, many respondents explained that they had heavy workload throughout the whole year and that sometimes many urgent tasks or meetings are to be done at the same time. This climate might lead to stress, meaning that in terms of **capacity** the case of the studied company might find better ways to help employees to craft. Further, we could think that the lack of **capacity** could lead to a lack of **psychological safety** because if the workloads are heavy and the tasks are urgent, it is harder to find time and take risks to craft.

Conclusion

Through this work we wanted to understand to what extent enabling job crafting could lead to work-life balance, on a gender perspective.

First this work has confirmed the fact that gender matters when it comes to WLB. However, this work has brought light on the notion of caregiver. Indeed, in a forever changing world, care is not only allocated to women anymore. This work has proved that being a single father or being married to someone with a disability meant taking care of the household or the children or both. The number of unpaid hours of a woman according to the work of Wajcman (2015) is bigger than the one of a man. However, when the woman of the household is not able to do it or when the woman leaves, men must take care of it themselves. In the context of the studied company, the men who find themselves in a situation of caregiver can fulfil their roles thanks to the flexibility the company offers them. The flexibility they receive allows them to craft their job to achieve a better balance. Concerning the other men, the ones who share a home and a family with a partner, some admitted to being less involved in the household chores than their wife, while a younger man explained he shares chores with his wife. Therefore, this work brings us to other questions. Is there a generational difference in terms of involvement in the home? Is there a bigger involvement in the household for men out of a younger generation? These questions could be answered with a quantitative search on the subject. Furthermore, the notion of caregiver could be further questioned too. This work has shown that the flexibility and ability to craft given by a company to its employees helps them achieve WLB. However, this case study has shown that WLB policies – in the context of the studied company – are clearly available for all and used by employees according to their needs. This could explain that the availability of these policies and the possibility to craft helps achieve balance but gender equality too. Nevertheless, differences keep being observed and some men do not separate from their breadwinning role according to the interview but also according to the literature of Blithe (2018). Still according to this work, men keep living in an “*old fashioned*” way. This has shown that gender equality is more of a cultural and social problem than a problem that could be solved in the world of work only.

Nonetheless, companies have a great role to play in terms of gender equality. Indeed, the idea that men are scared to damage their career if they use WLB policies, is due to the cultural and social idea that men have a breadwinning role to play in the home (Blithe, 2018). However, companies should show men that being involved in the home and family should not be a risk

for their career. Indeed, men have recently started to identify beyond breadwinning role (Blithe, 2018). Therefore, men should be encouraged by their companies to achieve balance and to go beyond that breadwinning role by offering them a psychologically safe environment to craft and eventually achieve balance through job crafting. Further, companies should encourage men and fathers to be involved in their private and professional spheres. This way companies would have an impact on how way men's involvement in both spheres is perceived and it would help gender equality. However, equality will only be reached with bigger effort on other aspects too. Indeed, the work of Fernandez (2022) testifies that in Brussel, in 2019, women working in the private sector earn 10% less than their men peers even if an evolution has been noticed during the two past decades. Therefore, to achieve gender equality, changes need to occur on every level, not only on the level of WLB policies. Nevertheless, every effort towards change will eventually help reach equity.

Further, in the context of the studied company where most workers are men, efforts towards gender equity are very important. Indeed, by encouraging men to reach balance and allowing them to craft and being involved in the home, the company could have an impact on these men's private sphere and the way they involve themselves in it.

Secondly, on the job crafting aspect of this work, we have been able to notice that in the context of this case study, crafting is mostly possible on the physical crafting dimension because of the flexibility the company offers its employees. This flexibility allows employees to craft and to reach the work-life balance each respondent wants. Indeed, as WLB is not defined and framed the same way for everyone, job crafting allows to reach balance through mechanism that fit someone's needs. However, the safety of the environment is very important to enable job crafting. Therefore, in the studied company should improve in terms of psychological safety and capacity to craft. As we have just explained, employees should be given the permission to craft and to discover what they could get out of job crafting in terms of WLB. Further, the importance to have time and to be allowed to take some risks to craft could be improved in the studied company as the workload is so heavy that people would not feel safe to try crafting. However, the flexibility offered by the company is a strong asset in terms of job crafting as people can choose the place and time they want to work at, which allows them to achieve balance. Further, it also allows them to manage the way they organize their tasks.

Moreover, this work has brought light on the idea that one dimension of job crafting can be used in addition to another dimension with a single action. Therefore, some people use telework

to balance work and family by taking care of the children for instance, but also to have to reduce interactions and concentrate on specific tasks. In this case, physical crafting is used through teleworking and relational crafting through the reduced interactions. Even if the main idea behind telework is to be available for the children, it is also used on another level as it improves focus and efficiency in the end. However, this could not be done without flexibility and without the possibility to try and learn how job crafting can help combine work and private at the same time.

Finally, this work shows that when job crafting is used appropriately, managed, and developed in a psychologically safe environment it becomes a useful tool to achieve work-life balance. Although job crafting is an employee-driven process, and it is used according to one's needs, this work has shown that job crafting does not tend towards the individualisation of work since interactions and collective work remain important when crafting. Furthermore, given the fact that work-life balance is defined differently from one person to another according to Sturges (2012), job crafting seems to be the most effective way to help employees achieve balance the way they define, and they perceive it. Therefore, conditions are needed to enable job crafting as explained earlier. Employee shall have the permission to craft and feel in control of their crafting. Further, they shall feel psychologically safe to craft and shall be given the opportunity and the capacity to do it. This way work-life balance could be reached. Moreover, men could feel safer to achieve balance and involve themselves in the private sphere, leading to a greater equality in terms of genders.

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Appendix

Annex 1: Problematic and summary of the four dimensions of job crafting:

Problematic:

As we have noticed in the literature review, work-life balance is experienced differently if you are a man or if you are a woman (Wajcman, 2015). For instance, men will tend to avoid using WLB policies to avoid risking their careers (Blithe, 2018). On the other hand, women will use these politics to be able to juggle between their role of worker and family caregiver for instance (Wajcman, 2015). Therefore, these politics tend to be in favour or in disfavour of the group a person belongs to. An important element which will allow us to answer the research question is the notion of job crafting. This notion relates to the fact that employee seem to create their strategies to cope reduce their *drain* and increase their *buzz*, meaning that employees avoid using formal WLB policies but craft their own approach of it. As we have seen in the literature review, job crafting has different dimensions: task crafting, relational crafting, cognitive crafting, and physical crafting. The importance of this study is to understand the different stakeholders' dynamics at work around the idea of job crafting. For this, we have to question the four different aspects of job crafting.

Task crafting	The idea of task crafting is that a team can work together to evaluate and redistribute tasks and responsibilities to those whose values, strengths and interests are aligned (Pendleton and al., 2021). This means that a worker can increase or reduce his scopes of tasks or even changing the way tasks are being done. Task crafting also considers the fact that it is important to incorporate a worker's interest into the work because it helps demonstrates their values and their strengths. Therefore, it is important to question how people manage to modify their way of working to find a balance between work and life.
Relational crafting	The notion of relational crafting relies on the idea of <i>buzz</i> and <i>drain</i> . According to the literature review, people should increase interactions that make them feel buzzed and avoid the ones that make them feel drained (Pendleton and al., 2021). It is also explained as the fact that people can decide to reduce their face-to-face interactions and increase non-direct methods of communication. The idea of relational crafting is that employee end up meeting like-minded colleagues and find a place where they can

	<p>incorporate their interests into their work (Pendleton and al., 2021). Relational crafting also implies to manage and use relationships at work and at home to achieve the balance someone wishes for (Sturges, 2012). Therefore, it is important to question how people manage their relation at work in order to achieve the balance they want. This can be a good relationship with their boss which results in more autonomy. Or less unnecessary interactions.</p>
Cognitive crafting	<p>This aspect of crafting is very important as it affects people and the way they connect to their work; the way people find meaning in it too. Indeed, cognitive crafting is defined as the way people behave towards their work and the way they feel and think about it (Pendleton and al., 2021). The idea of cognitive crafting is closely related to the idea of motivation, happiness and meaning at work which are crucial elements in today's working world (Pendleton and al., 2021). According to Sturges (2012), this dimension of crafting is related to the definition and the frame employees have of what WLB means and entails. Sturges' (2012) three forms of cognitive crafting should therefore be questioned. Therefore, we should question how people frame their idea of WLB, how people allocate the time they spend on work and finally, to what extent people are ready to sacrifice a part of their WLB for a short period of time?</p>
Physical crafting	<p>The last dimension of job crafting is the idea of physical crafting. According to Sturges (2012) workers tend to shape the physical factors of their work to achieve WLB. This clearly relates to the time they spend on work, where work takes place and how long it takes to commute to work. As mentioned in the literature review, Sturges (2012) refers to different types of physical crafting: temporal, locational. In this work, it is important to question both aspects of this physical crafting. Therefore, workers should be questioned about how workers manage the amount of time they spend at work but also the workload they are assigned in order to achieve WLB and where they spend that time.</p>

Annex 2: Interview guide

Introduction:	
<p>The person interviewed is questioned about his or her experience in the studied company of the case study, about the time they have been working for that company and their function. They are also questioned about their private life since the interview is related to work-life balance so, for instance; if they are in a relationship or not, living with their partner, if they have kids. Questions to have an idea of the private life of the interviewee.</p>	
Questions about physical crafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are questioned about how they manage the amount of time they spend at work - Workers are questioned about the workload they are assigned to achieve WLB and where they spend that time.
Questions about task crafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are questioned about how they manage to modify their way of working to find a balance between work and life? - How do you manage your daily or weekly tasks to achieve balance? Whether the tasks are private or related to work?
Questions about relational crafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are questioned about how they manage their relation at work to achieve the balance they want? - With good interactions (<i>buzz</i>)? - With bad interactions (<i>drain</i>)?
Questions about cognitive crafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are questioned about how they frame their idea of WLB? - What does WLB means to them? What meaning do you give to your work? - How do they allocate the time they spend on work? - And to what extent are they ready to sacrifice a part of their WLB for a short period of time
Questions about genders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These questions will be asked when the opportunity presents itself. For instance, most of the time when task crafting is mentioned. These questions also depend on the situations of the interviewee.
Question about engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is an engineer?

Annex 3: Table for the collection of verbatims

	Executive 1	Executive 2	Executive 3	...
Physical crafting	Verbatims of executive 1 on physical crafting: <i>« Donc je ne dirais pas que je suis plus efficace en télétravail, c'est plus un confort personnel et aussi dans ma fonction, je suis à l'équipement, donc je suis amené à interagir avec différents services clairement pour interagir avec ces services-là, je crois que je serais plus efficace d'être sur site et de parler avec les gens. De ce point de vue-là, je comprends très bien, mais on s'habitue vite au confort du télétravail. Et donc il y a cet aspect-là aussi qui fait que pour gérer justement cet aspect conciliation vie privée vie professionnelle, c'est le télétravail reste utile. »</i>	Verbatims of executive 2 on physical crafting...	Verbatims of executive 3 on physical crafting...	...
Task crafting	Verbatims of executive 1 on task crafting...	Verbatims of executive 2 on task crafting...	Verbatims of executive 3 on task crafting...	...
Relational crafting	Verbatims of executive 1 on relational crafting...	Verbatims of executive 2 on relational crafting...	Verbatims of executive 3 on relational crafting...	...
Cognitive crafting	Verbatims of executive 1 on cognitive crafting...	Verbatims of executive 2 on cognitive crafting...	Verbatims of executive 3 on cognitive crafting...	...
Gender	Verbatims on the notion of gender of executive 1...	Verbatims on the notion of gender of executive 2...	Verbatims on the notion of gender of executive 3...	...

Abstract

In a world where work takes up to 50% of our waking time, work-life balance matters more than ever (Pendleton et al., 2021). Moreover, our literature review raises that work-life balance can benefit more than just the worker, it can also benefit organisations. However, this work shows that work-life balance has its backsides and that men and women do not experience it the same way. Indeed, men tend avoid using work-life balance policies because they fear for their career (Blithe, 2018). While women use these policies but still end up with more unpaid working hours than men (Wajcman, 2015). Further with the idea of work-life balance, this work develops the notion of job crafting as employee-driven mechanisms to achieve balance at work between the elements that give workers joy and the ones that destroy it (Pendleton et al., 2021). Job crafting is divided into four dimensions: physical, task, relational, and cognitive crafting which all represent a different way how work can bring joy (or not) to a worker (Pendleton et al., 2021).

At the end of this literature review we therefore asked ourselves the following question: “To what extent enabling job crafting may lead to work-life balance? A gender perspective.”

To answer that question, interviews tackling job crafting, its dimensions and work-life balance were led. Indeed, face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten engineers from the same department and different hierarchical level within a company from the space industry. It is important to note that the company counts 70% of men for 30% of women, making it a rather masculine company. Therefore, the study was also conducted from a gender perspective.

First, the results of the interviews brought an additional dimension to the gender issue of work-life balance. Indeed, some respondents were in a situation of caregiver which led them to oversee everything in their private sphere. Therefore, the gender issue was confirmed by the results moreover, the notion of caregiver raised in our results strengthened the idea that caregiver have more unpaid hours than non-caregivers.

Secondly the results have shown that in the case of the studied company, job crafting helps improve work-life balance. However, enabling job crafting requires some conditions. These conditions were not all met in the studied company according to our results. However, it has been shown through this work that allowing work flexibility to employees helps them achieve balance. Nevertheless, heavy workloads and stressful environment do not create the optimal conditions to enable job crafting which requires a psychologically safe environment, control, permission to craft, and the capacity to craft.

Finally, this study has helped understand that job crafting can be a great tool to achieve balance if it is used appropriately. Moreover, the gender issues have been confirmed but we have brought the notion of caregiver which is important to understand nowadays as family behaviour has been reshaped during the last 50 years in Europe with an increase of divorces (Sobotka & Berghammer, 2021). Indeed, more and more single fathers might find themselves in a situation of caregivers, involving them to combine both work and private on their own.

Key words

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