

Time Incongruences and Wait Crafting

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Abstract: A lot of time and effort is put into reducing waiting times in organizational life. However, jobs can include phases of waiting. The aim of this conceptual paper is to analyze waiting on the job level and provide a theoretical rationale for individual management of waiting times of employees. Wait crafting is introduced based on (job) crafting and its advantages for individuals and organizations outlined. Steps towards integrating the possibility of job crafting and needs for future research are indicated.

Keywords: waiting; time; organization; time incongruence; wait crafting; employee; job crafting; job position

1. Introduction

Waiting is “an organizational process and (...) an individual experience” [1] (p. 589). A lot of time and effort is put into reducing waiting times in organizational life on the strategic and operative levels. Waiting belongs to the sphere of the uncontrollable, and the uncertain, and can lead to fear and stress [2,3]. However, it might also reduce the latter [4,5], be beautiful [6], enable cooperation [7], and be used to reflect on existence [8–10]. According to Pascal [9], however, true waiting is rare as humans tend to automatically fill it with activity to avoid realizing their finiteness. Nevertheless, when, by and in recognizing own finiteness, significance is ascribed to lifetime and ideally responsibility is taken for actively molding it [10,11].

In management, waiting is mostly seen as a problem of inefficiency that needs to be controlled and optimized. Time is seen as a commodity to be streamlined for maximizing output and revenue. Waiting is considered unproductive, which should be avoided [4,6]. For Brunelle [12], handling timing issues to achieve temporal fit is “the essence of management” (p. 2). Thus, a strategic fit could be defined as time congruence on the organizational level and the market or societal level. In waiting, however, time incongruence is encountered. As action is linked to sensemaking [13,14], waiting can be a deprivation of the possibility of creating and feeling sense, except in cases when waiting is considered (part of) a task. However, employees can make sense of waiting in case they have the option to autonomously design or craft the wait. Meaning creation in waiting therefore requires cognitively oriented, abstract, so-called detached–deliberate sensemaking by those concerned [15], for which this conceptual paper provides structural elements.

Introducing the employee as an active agent engaged in crafting allows for a perspective on solving the situation. Crafting is an active, systematic, intentional behavior and mindset to make use of a specific area of one’s life [16]. Job crafting [17,18], a topic in HR literature, is a creative way of designing and aligning job aspects to one’s own needs while accounting for existing and new challenges of the job [19]. According to job demands–resources (JD-R) theory [20,21], employees themselves can adjust their working conditions to specific demand–resource needs by engaging in job crafting. In general, this comprises increasing challenge job demands, increasing job resources, and reducing job demands [22]. Having the possibility of job crafting also qualifies as a resource. Nevertheless, it is not granted for all types of jobs. When working conditions imply long-term low demands that



Citation: Nöhammer, E. Time Incongruences and Wait Crafting. *Merits* **2024**, *4*, 159–172. <https://doi.org/10.3390/merits4020012>

Academic Editor: Wendy M. Purcell

Received: 14 February 2024

Revised: 8 April 2024

Accepted: 11 April 2024

Published: 2 May 2024



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cannot be changed by either the organization or the individual, these circumstances qualify as inherent characteristics of the job. In these cases, the job itself offers little potential for crafting.

Recent developments expand the idea of crafting to other life domains, mainly leisure and the home context but also life in general [16,23–25]. Always connected to meaning creation [24], this opens the question of how to integrate this into temporal spaces with limited options for meaning creation: times spent waiting. This perspective is not yet sufficiently developed [26], leaving options to improve potentially unsatisfying working conditions unexplored. The aim of this conceptual paper is thus to analyze waiting on the job level and provide a theoretical rationale for individual management of waiting times of employees.

2. Materials and Methods

As a conceptual paper, this text theoretically investigates time incongruences related to waiting in organizations. Based on the existing literature on waiting in organizations, waiting is characterized and differentiated to outline its complexities for the organization and the individual employee. Wait crafting is introduced based on (job) crafting and its advantages for individuals and organizations are outlined. By doing so, this paper combines the literature strands on employee waiting with those on crafting as theory adaptation and “resolving identified dilemmas (i.e., waiting; comment by the author) by introducing a new theoretical lens (i.e., crafting; comment by the author)” [27] (p. 22).

Following Jaakkola [27], the approach chosen is to define the focal phenomenon, waiting, as starting point to be outlined and to complement it with the concept of crafting on the individual level. Thus, the variables studied are the key concepts, waiting and crafting, which are integrated to enlarge the domain theory, crafting, to wait crafting. This is completed following the call for research on employee-driven development practices [28] and on investigating interfaces of temporal lenses [29], particularly between temporal fit and autonomy on the individual level.

3. Background

Waiting has been studied in general [1], in the context of strategy [4,30], strategy and culture [31], digitalization and cooperation [7], and regarding employees, specifically why females wait regarding self-promotion [32,33]. This range illustrates that waiting in organizations has been conceptualized differently as waiting for an event to occur differs from waiting to do something as in the case concerning self-promotion. In this paper, the focus is on the former aspect.

As for clients, their perception of waiting, e.g., in line or queues [34,35] is of interest. Having people wait can make sense from an organizational perspective. In complaint management or court proceedings, it may result in cooling down effects [4], and it creates time and slack for the organization [4,5], potentially resulting in innovation [36]. Moreover, it may be mandatory for safety reasons, e.g., regular breaks for lorry drivers.

Waiting can be analyzed from various standpoints as it occurs in all company types, hierarchical levels, and occupations. In start-ups, entrepreneurs wait for their enterprise to attract clients and establish itself in the market. In general, managers wait for strategies to produce results or invest capital to yield returns. Employees may wait for a promotion or an opportunity to change a job [37], and platform workers wait for new calls and projects to devote themselves. Often, the degree of choice whether to wait varies, just as the time horizon and individual expectation regarding waiting as part of the job. As outlined above, the focus here is on the job level and employees who experience a part of their job as time of various lengths spent waiting.

Reflecting on the responsibility of science [38], writing on waiting may be considered irresponsible in times of increased stress and strain [39,40]—and yet, even more important due to the many time incongruences between job types, and job alterations due to the SARS-CoV-19 pandemic, where lockdowns resulted in people waiting. Moreover, having

fewer clients and reduced business options (due to people staying at home and/or earning less money) might increase waiting times for those who still have jobs.

3.1. *Waiting vs. Pausing*

Employees are thought to experience various types of waiting depending on individual factors, characteristics of the wait, and the wider context [1]. Thus, waiting is not equal to taking a break. Based on the outcome for the organization and thus contributing to clarifying varying definitions, this article suggests further differentiating between (a) organizationally active pausing and (b) organizationally passive waiting. In pausing, one task is interrupted for some time to switch to another, whilst other organizationally relevant tasks and processes are still performed by this person. Waiting is conceptualized as forced idleness regarding set job-related tasks, which is organizationally passive. Ending with the beginning [41] of another job-related task, which is classified as meaningful again because it transcends the individual [42], waiting is a time between (organizational) meanings. There is also (c) stagnation, but in contrast to (b), the temporality is much closer to infinite, at least following traditional managerial logic of the here-and-now and regarding its unproductive but potentially wise end, namely some form of discontinuation.

While waiting, no organizationally relevant productive work is performed, but the time of course can be filled with activities by the individual. However, a waiting taxi driver reading a novel would not be productive, whilst washing the car would classify as pausing. Waiting thus reduces or endangers the objective time of and for the organization in case the individual(s) doing the waiting are paid in that time. The latter might also apply for (d) breaks depending on national laws and regulations. In any case, however, breaks have a clear temporal limitation (e.g., taking lunch, getting a coffee) and are designed as a resource to replenish for work, thus creating a win-win situation for the employee and employer. Temporal control is held by both—employee and employer—in taking a break, though skewed towards the latter. It slips both in stagnation and is contested in waiting and pausing. Taking temporal boundaries [43] into account, taking a break is a subtype of pausing, whilst stagnation qualifies as unfulfilled waiting since there is no new beginning [41].

In the following, waiting is analyzed regarding causes, characteristics and elements, and outcomes, which are intertwined. Moreover, options to distinguish those who wait from those who do not are explored, connecting this to the context [1] surrounding waiting as “(a)ny behavior or any other change in a psychological field depends only upon the psychological field *at that time* (italics in the original)” [44], (p. 294), while open and closed systems, historical developments and the present and the future have to be distinguished [44]. Thus, ownership and time incongruences are considered first.

3.2. *Ownership*

While “the unique nature of human capital defies simple legal categorization” [45] (p. 722), ownership can be defined as “the power to exercise control” [46] (p. 694). By “renting human beings” [47] (p. 598), i.e., employing them, an organization acquires rights regarding how they spend their (working) time. With ownership and transactions come responsibilities on both sides, so how working time should be controlled is debated. In Theory Y worlds [48], for example, the individual is no longer degraded by formal control and authority but given autonomy and flexibility within certain limits, temporal and spatial. Performance and staying within these limits, though, would still be subject to some form of control. Working time, location, and job tasks are standard elements of the legal contract, implicitly alluding that the organization (a) pays for both time and output, time is (to be) filled (b) in a certain space with (c) the tasks leading to the output, often at a defined (d) pace. Following managerial logic, time is thought irreversible [41] and therefore adequately calculated, not creating too much slack. However, a similar logic might be applied by the employee. How working time is spent depends on qualifications acquired in the past and not only has implications at the moment but also affects the future. Employees would,

provided there is a choice, opt for the organization that best aligns with their past regarding training, just as with current requirements (present), and plans (future). Thus, employees would be attracted to organizations with the highest perceived temporal congruence.

Proxies for that are not only the job and its conditions but also pay schemes. While qualification levels define the salary level, employees receiving training might be paid less—or agree to remain with the organization for a certain time to not have to pay back the expenses. The company in a sense buys a specific configuration of the future, but it could be bought back by the individual. For working time passed in strenuous contexts (dust, heat, noise, night, ...) which might harm present and future, additional pays are received. Thus, surcharges and deductions are very common depending on how the working time has been, is, and will be spent. Of course, the sum would also depend on the working hours agreed on. With salaries being time-dependent in all directions, past, present, and future, it becomes clear that ownership of working time is a complex issue.

According to Neal [49], what an organization is thought to be entitled to anticipate receiving from employees changed over time to include all so-called energies of the human known to organizations at that specific point in time. Beginning with physical strength for manual labor, this moved towards social and motivational aspects, and currently also comprises more transcendent qualities. This growing complexity [50,51] is reflected in the expectations of employees concerning the organization. The psychological contract comprises the mutual and reciprocal “implicit and explicit understandings that employees and employers bring to their jobs” [45] (p. 730) and postulates the employee as an emotional, cognitive, motivational, and temporal being. As such, they might reasonably expect connected needs to be met at the workplace, including their time to be spent in an anticipated fashion.

3.3. Time Incongruence

Organizations produce and exist in time incongruences. There is always a yet-to-(be)come, a future worked toward and waited for in positive or negative anticipation. Strategic fits [52] come with spatial and temporal aspects, suggesting that a certain degree of time congruence is crucial on an organizational level (e.g., with just-in-time delivery), and has to be planned for and worked towards, ideally considering agility [53,54]. Though outward-oriented, this is based on intra-organizational interdependence and thus co-dependes on time congruence on the individual employees’ task level and its aggregates [55]. Process management aims at optimizing temporal structures and the activities these are filled with, ideally coming up with elaborate charts defining process patterns and sequences [43], defining critical paths [56], facilitating pausing by depicting and listing activities that could be performed, and providing prioritization guidelines.

Pausing and waiting are both examples of time incongruences—the former in a hidden and rather automatically solved way due to task switching, the latter in an obvious sense. Time incongruences cannot be fully avoided as the future needs to develop and become. However, higher knowledge and/or more forecasting and scheduling facilitate pausing and active organizational ownership of the moment. As process management focuses on planning activities to fill temporal structures, it might overlook the human aspect that is much more apparent in hierarchical structures that are filled with posts and people. However, it is people who pause or wait. Since waiting is assumed as a temporal structure void of organizationally relevant activity, it is also a “not-being-in-time with others” [57] (p. 7): individually perceived time stops and thus lags behind the chronological socio-temporal structure [58]. Thus, waiting not only is a temporal incongruence between the experienced now and the expected future but also has social implications.

4. Waiting

Waiting combines future-expectation and present-attention [10], relating it to individual mindfulness and sense-making [59]. Challenging the acceleration hypothesis [60], waiting results from time incongruences, organizational procedures, managerial decisions,

and strategic requirements. It is a timeframe of in-betweenness that the waiting person must go through via adjusting, enduring, or crafting.

4.1. Characteristics and Elements

Being an in-between phenomenon [3,61,62] and externally caused [63], the meaning of waiting can only lie in the future as it is tied to the arrival or non-arrival of what is waited for, as highlighted by Crapanzano [64] reported in Hook [61]. According to Irvin [3], waiting is a limited time frame requiring a concrete end—either the aforementioned arrival or a set point when to qualify a not-yet-come as non-arrival. Thus, waiting is imposed timing, making it difficult to own the moment and for example, incorporate lingering [6]. Its future orientation might endanger living in the here and now, which for Pascal [9] is necessary for happiness. Thus, in addition to job-crafting [18], empowering employees to craft and adjust the waits' resources and demands to their needs seems necessary to align the individual and the organization [65].

The job–demands–resources model [20,21,66] posits that each job has a specific constellation of inherent demands and resources. Though waiting could be thought neutral since there is no organizational activity to be performed, it is a phase of time that needs to be gone through, thus qualifying as demand requiring resources. In addition, it could reduce resources in case it results in fewer opportunities for safeguarding employability [67,68]. As protecting resources is conceptualized as an individual aim [69,70], this would result in employees avoiding waiting.

However, waiting can also be turned into a resource in case it is used for engaging in reflexive practices [10], crafting behavior, or unwinding. Depending on (a) the job's demand–resource constellation apart from waiting, (b) personal characteristics (e.g., time style and waiting attitude), and (c) those of what is waited for (e.g., its valence, likelihood, and expected timing), waiting will therefore be experienced differently. Future-oriented employees might for example be very motivated [71] by the possibility of configuring waiting periods. As a further element of (a), the location is of relevance. Contingent on where the wait occurs spatially, different power structures govern the possibilities of wait crafting [58], all highly determining the resources available. Waiting in the organization is hypothesized to allow for fewer possibilities of individual shaping than outside of it.

4.2. People

For individuals, waiting is connected to feeling bored, a negative emotion to be avoided [72]. Due to the connection between slack and innovation [36], one might suppose being bored is a precondition of the latter. However, there are more requirements for innovation than time only [73–75]. Waiting can feel like being put aside, being invisible, unseen, depersonalized, a (human) resource only, conditions that have been shown to likely result in decreased motivation [76]. Having to or being forced to wait can be devaluating, defining the waiter's time as less important [77] and hinting towards structural inequalities [78]. People may want to escape from being perceived as waiting in an unoccupied fashion, signaling not being wanted for more important activities, by filling their wait with socially accepted and expected activities like engaging with the smartphone [72]. Though those affluent enough regarding resources would be in a better position for waiting, they are more likely to be waited on and/or pay others to substitute their wait [58].

Waiting is performed by organizational members, mostly those with lower status due to the relatively minor cost their inactivity results in, which nevertheless needs to be compared to the revenues generated during activity: “Whenever there is progress, there are also those who are left behind: the more tight-knit the schedules, logistics, and movements of a given society—or the more normative the social scripts governing a subject's biography—the bigger the impact on those who slip through these temporal realities” [58] (p. 1).

However, having organizational members wait is also a luxury. Though it creates slack, the question is whether this is required on the hierarchical level where it occurs. Thus,

waiting is estimated by the organization in monetary terms and subsequently optimized and outsourced if possible, by the following:

- Contracting services only when needed, employing platform workers, temporary workers (via agencies, to which the risk of waiting is externalized), etc., who then wait until contracted, but outside the organization, potentially crafting their wait via engaging in meta-pausing (i.e., they work for several organizations and switch between the task of organizations depending on the urgency and compensation chance of each);
- Streamlining stakeholder participation in the organizational processes via deadlines and appointments, assigning numbers, and having them wait or participate by doing parts of the process themselves;
- Laying those off who are perceived as being redundant.

Each of these organizational efforts aims to result in profitability via aligning or ending temporal structures to reduce waiting. Time incongruence cannot always be avoided, though, as some types of jobs require waiting. Drivers of ambulance vehicles, for example, must wait in or near the car to save minutes in case of an emergency. This organizational aim and job-related purpose also define the space of waiting and cannot be guaranteed in any other fashion. On-call duty may include waiting in case this is the sole activity requested. However, this is a known element of the job, and when pausing is not possible, on-call duty is typically not bound to a specific location and the wait can be crafted. Nevertheless, for highly specialized personnel, wait crafting would be much less connected to employability concerns but rather to avoid boredom. Being bored, however, does not necessarily present an evil [72] and may be required to actively seek out other occupations—to craft the wait.

4.3. Outcome

The outcome of waiting depends on the perspective of the rater and what this time is filled with. Amongst other criteria, the waiting experience depends on the context [79] and the perception of the alternative lost due to the waiting, for patients: see [80]. An opportunity cost approach can also be applied to employees who sense endangered employability as a consequence of waiting. Waiting as lost time has been reported by research on prisoners—time spent waiting for other things can be a punishment [81] and lead to quitting in the organizational context, just as too much stress (which might equal too little waiting). The true costs and benefits of waiting always depend on the person who is waiting, the time spent waiting, and the content this period is or can be filled with. However, people can also adapt to waiting and use it as downtime; though it has to be questioned whether those who would need relaxation have jobs with high waiting times [82,83]. “(I)t is only under exceptional circumstances that waiting can be seen as beneficial to those who wait” [58] (p. 9). Those who make others wait pay for the time and rate the outcome based on their expectations and aims, for example, to have the waiter available, when waiting is considered as some kind of storage, safety net, or strategic requirement. The organizational value of having these expectations and aims met is contrasted to the cost incurred, leading to the decision of how to proceed. On the individual level, long waits can be perceived as insulting [84], immobilize identity [58], and limit the capacity to actively shape the future [61,85].

4.3.1. Wait Crafting

Wait crafting is proposed should (a) the job include waiting, (b) one is free to frame and use this time, and (c) activities be feasible in this time to achieve own objectives. Wait crafting is doing these activities. This can be the case on any hierarchical level, results from plus in making sense of the wait [13,64], and requires the individual to be mindful of the context waiting occurs in, and how their own needs can be advanced there, gaining back temporal control. According to psychological needs theories [25,86,87], people would engage in wait crafting more likely when one or more of the needs are (a) likely to increase by crafting or (b) endangered by *not* crafting. Visibly being idle at work during a wait might

pose a risk connected to reputation (relatedness needs) or job security (existence needs). In contrast, actively engaging in personal development by using the wait would further growth needs. In addition, existence needs are promoted by enlarging job opportunities.

Wait crafting results in creating a temporal autonomous space [88]. For that, the individual has to draw and combine the times at their disposal, structure them [89] plus use them proactively for a self-determined end, employing a future orientation, a temporal culture of anticipation [90]. This is agency-in-waiting [91], reclaiming time to take matters of meaning into one's own hands and promote the perception of not only the latter but also identity [42] [though potentially without transcendence aspects, which the authors require].

According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory, individuals strive to guard and develop their resources [69], for example, employability. Together with a higher likelihood of promoting the fulfillment of basic needs, this increases the likelihood of beginning crafting behavior [92,93] because time, unlike other resources, cannot be conserved but only used. Thus, wait crafting would lead to an equilibrium of time structures and requirements of individuals and organizations, solving the time incongruence posed by the waiting situation. Wait crafting can also happen in stagnation and is even more relevant at this time, but it requires an endpoint to be chosen by the employee (i.e., quit the job to get a new one).

4.3.2. Critical Reflections and Limitations

Highlighting individual responsibility and considering that wait crafting would be demanded, especially from those in underprivileged positions with few resources, may be only trading organizational neglect [94] for self-control based on self-criticism, hoping to improve one's own situation, but not changing the game (e.g., by obliging organizations to provide resources for wait crafting). In addition, organizations might be much less interested in those who would profit from assistance. Wait crafting may not be required in all occupations including waiting, especially not in those who—though organizationally inactive during the wait—remain employable (e.g., doctors with on-call duty). As waiting only endangers those whose jobs and thus waiting are substitutable and/or poorly paid, the necessity of change is an individual problem at the forefront, but a societal value issue at its basis, both enacted in and around organizations. This duality is reflected in groups that form due to being stuck in waiting as collectives who may trigger societal change in the long run [95].

The feasibility of wait crafting depends on personal attitudes [10] and the socio-material context the waiting occurs in [96]. Low control over the job and waiting situation, just as already low employability, very likely lead to less well-being, a resource loss spiral, and feelings of lock-in [37]. Wait crafting might be even more important as an empowering strategy in these situations but might require assistance. Social aspects also include the required reflection on the recommended degree of visibly displaying or hiding wait-crafting behavior. In addition to socio-material conditions, temporal factors need to be considered as the wait must be long enough to engage in certain crafting activities. This may be difficult to assess as the end of the waiting time is only defined by the beginning of another activity, without explicitly knowing when this specific point in time occurs. Thus, estimations cannot be based on Gantt charts, etc. [43] but hope [10] or experience. Having to be lived in the moment, activities chosen for waiting thus may be interrupted (i.e., paused, but here only for the individual).

If waiting is imposed on the employee by the organization and impart devaluation, and thus be classified as neglectful behavior of the organization towards single employees, negative behavioral actions may be expected [94]. Though it requires a certain level of cognitive and emotional skills, wait crafting may be the individual-level counteragent in situations where no change is to be expected. By engaging in wait crafting, a subordinate opts for self-leadership [97,98] towards more pronounced employability [68] and self-care by leaving a previously undefined (neglectful) situation and reconstructing it as a temporal autonomous space [88]. The organizations' realm of passive control over the individual is

thus decreased by a deliberate act of the employee [65], and by partaking in control over the situation, ownership becomes shared.

However, the resulting freedom differs from temporal control over the arrangement of job elements, which is connected to job-based psychological ownership [99]. Psychological ownership is easier to acquire in jobs with high internal freedom (high personal control and little structure) [100]. Wait crafting likely enhances general psychological ownership [101] of the waiting situation via strengthening perceived control regarding positive outcomes. Though waiting may be a job element, it is a void one that needs to be filled, but not necessarily with a job-related task. Wait crafting is based on realizing the opportunities this time offers and using these in a future-directed way to improve employability.

4.4. *Crafting and Pausing*

Pausing typically occurs in occupations with many tasks. These may either have a sequential order or be rather flexibly arranged or streamlined. An organizational process can be partly independent of employee action, delegable or within the scope of another person's responsibility, freeing time for engaging in other tasks. Organizational processes and conditions lead to temporal structures that are "both shaping and being shaped by ongoing human action" [102] (p. 684). Switching between organizational tasks can be based on predefined sequencing of activities (process management), but also requires own attentiveness. Alternatively, a current task can be interrupted by a colleague or supervisor due to a pressing or perceived other organizational requirement to be attended to. While the former creates time resources and choice, the latter is a disruption. Certainly, some interruptions may be welcome, and choice is related to the burden of responsibility. However, interruptions of activities are discussed as inefficient [103,104] and potentially health detrimental for employees [105]—just as being continually available [106]—requiring pausing to be optimized.

Pausing is also a sense-making activity, especially when the aim is restoring the former activity that was interrupted [15]. Pausing as active temporal structuring activity is one of the consequences that can reinforce the pattern they originate from. However, following Orlikowski and Yates [102], this requires legitimization and approval, which can only be assumed for contexts where pausing is judged positive. Pausing can then be considered as an element of job crafting [18,107] and be especially used in the case of high employee autonomy and organizational trust levels. Otherwise, pausing is an element of an optimized and clocked outline of the working time, which is much easier to implement and predict than waiting. Depending on the degree of autonomy and organizational requirements (control), considerations of preference, feasibility, necessity, and efficiency are the most likely guides for choosing with which (other) task to fill the temporal gap the pause creates. Control is exercised by those in charge regarding prioritizing tasks, thus limiting the options for crafting. A broader choice of tasks provided for in the job design allows for more (interdependent) personalization [108]. However, this may also result in higher levels of stress and strain, highlighting the need to buffer with enough and/or additional resources [106,109,110].

5. Implications

Employees not only form the human capital of an organization but also often expect to enhance their own employability by working there. This can be limited by agreements not to compete but it is necessary since lifetime jobs have become very rare [45]. As Moss Kanter [111] in Stone (2002) [45] argues, firms may be attractive to employees by offering employability security as a substitute for the life-time job. Thus, depriving employees of the option to wait-craft could seriously endanger their employability, which would go against a no-harm principle [112,113]. Moreover, it would violate the expectations of the psychological contract [45], very likely lead to negative behavioral outcomes, and reduce well-being [112] and the possibility of fulfilling basic needs [86]. In addition, organizational

reasons must be questioned as no organizational task is to be performed in that time, and thus no confidential information or specific competitive skill is acquired.

As ownership is tied to control [46], time is owned by those who control it—actively or passively. However, working time cannot be separated from the person performing the work. Thus, ownership will always be shared, though the degree of control differs. In a sense, the company does not acquire time, but control over time, in employing a person. In case no job crafting occurs, the moment(s) in waiting are passively owned by the organization and the employee but remain without much sense except financial remuneration for the employee and a use-potentiality for the organization. Wait crafting, in turn, would be an active ownership by the employee and a passive one by the organization. This, however, does not qualify for a reduction in pay.

While the organization by contracting the employees acquires a legal right to their working time, “renting human beings” [47], the moral right of requiring them to leave waiting void would have to be questioned. The implied organizational attitude towards the employee would inflict harm on employability, but also potentially hurt emotionally, thus negatively affecting the present and future of the employees on the cognitive, social, and emotional levels. Just as health and safety regulations are in place to protect aspects of the future of the employee (here: physical health) and compensate for specific strains, allowing for wait crafting would thus be needed in case its inexistence could have a detrimental effect on employability. Thus, allowing for wait crafting will have varying impacts depending on the occupational type and level. It is crucial though to not only provide implicit consent for wait crafting but to make it clear to employees. Similarly, employees have a moral responsibility for their actions not only towards the organization but also themselves [114]. Thus, any wait crafting detrimental to the organization just as not engaging in positive wait crafting in case this is possible could be rated irresponsible.

There is mutual responsibility as the past, present, and future of the employee and the organization can influence each other—not only due to path dependency but also interconnectedness. The past of the employee, e.g., training received, determines which job can be taken on, the past of the organization has an impact on its reputation [115,116] and thus potentially also the social capital available for the employee. Current job design influences present performance, which in turn affects the organizational future—and individual chances of remaining in the job.

6. Conclusions

A classical element of organizing is the division and coordination of labor to increase efficiency [117–119]. In this logic, non-productive individual waiting as inefficiency needs to be reduced, except in case it is required as slack [120,121] (and/or cheap enough), thus equaling a solution to a potential organizational problem. However, individual consequences need to be examined, as well. To avoid that waiting turns into an individual problem, it can be defined as a task or possible element of working, and thus become a component for which arrangements can be taken. Crafting in general and in waiting creates, but also requires resources and skills. Thus, it may be unevenly distributed across occupations plus hierarchical levels and depend on educational backgrounds, training, and awareness. In addition, divergent needs for crafting open the question of whether crafting opportunity and enactment manifest, promote, or reduce inequality in the workplace.

To allow for performance, demands and resources at the workplace should at least be balanced. Ideally, resources should outweigh expected demands to provide latitude for spontaneously occurring challenges. As this is often not the case, reasons and solutions are investigated, providing valuable insights and suggestions to improve working conditions. Nevertheless, resources can also be drained by demands that are too low [22], leading to frequent breaks or waiting. However, this is typically much less investigated, see, e.g., Abubakar et al. [122] for burnout and its opposite, boreout. Depending on the duration of the under-challenge, an organization can traditionally solve a situation that is exhausting for employees due to a lack of challenge either by decreasing resources and/or by increasing

demands. Arguing for decreasing resources to intensify demands is not compatible with sustainable HR [113], but wait-crafting could stand that test. In practice, organizations could analyze which jobs include waiting, in which amount, and with which consequences for the individual employees and their career prospects. The outcome should then be discussed with those affected and ideas for wait crafting co-created. Already existing in-house activities can be checked for their applicability to the waiting times or adapted for these. To avoid the creation of inequality, organizations could then ascertain and act on the need for training people in detecting options for and engaging in wait crafting. Job crafting can be trained [123] and leads to positive effects on the team, e.g., through observational learning [124]. This makes it highly likely that wait crafting can be learned, as well, and result in spill-over effects.

Even in case the organization does not decide to play an active role in creating ideas, engaging in wait crafting must be officially permitted. Actively allowing for wait crafting can form part of sustainable HR practices [125,126] in a world where work is becoming more precarious [40] while personnel shortages call for promoting proactive employee activities [28]. This paper argues for empowering employees by better solving time incongruences. However, the organization still must ensure high enough individual motivation for work tasks, so that employees find the end of waiting phases attractive.

Future research should investigate which organizational communication strategies on allowing wait crafting are most credible and for what wait crafting is used by different groups of employees. Of further interest is how employees' perception of the employers allows for wait crafting changes and how employers profit from potentially higher motivation of employees due to their feeling seen in their time incongruences. The resulting strategies of wait crafting and motivational aspects by examining the hypotheses on basic needs, e.g., whether wait crafting is more likely to occur in situations with perceived existence needs, also require further investigation. In line with the literature on job crafting, motives and motivations [127], e.g., career outcome expectations of wait crafting, are a possible avenue for research [128]. Moreover, the success of wait crafting in qualifying for better jobs needs to be ascertained. In addition, the differences between pausing and waiting regarding their meaning for individuals and organizations should be considered, e.g., for sense-making [15]. Also, an extension of sensemaking to organizational non-activities is required. Regarding motivation, individual time orientation and wait crafting, the reflections in this article suggest that future-oriented employees would be those most interested in wait crafting. It might even be a personal strategy of alignment of "time perspective, goals, and performance" [71] (p. 239), improving the fit between individual, organization [65], and time, making the workplace more centered on the workforce [26,28].

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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