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Employee well-being and performance during times of change in the organization: a qualitative study to explore intervening mechanisms.

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STATEMENT SLIDE

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

Background and aims

- Organizations and their employees are frequently confronted with changes at the workplace[1-3].
- Experiencing frequent changes at the workplace can have an important impact on employees' well-being and performance [4-8].
- **Insight in the individual and contextual factors that underlie and influence the relationship between organizational change and employee well-being and performance** is crucial for the implementation of effective (preventive) interventions.

Studies investigating these mechanisms are:
- ➤ scarce and mainly quantitative,
- ➤ often not including the experience of organizational change from the perspective of the employee,
- ➤ mainly focused on structural changes (e.g., mergers, acquisitions) and on negative indicators of well-being.

This study aims at gaining a deeper and broader understanding of these mechanims by using qualitative methods.

[1]Brazzale, Cooper–Thomas, Haar, & Smollan, 2021; [2]Kumar, Murray, & Schetagne, 1991; [3] O'Connell, Russel, Watson, & Byrne, 2010; [4] Bamberger et al., 2012; [5]de Jong et al., 2016; [6]Loretto, Platt, & Popham, 2009; [7]O'Connell, Russel, Watson, & Byrne, 2010; [8]Pollard, 2001.

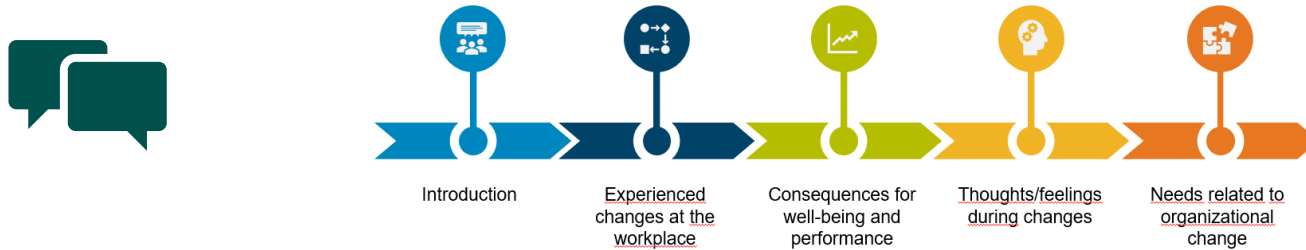# METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Nine focus group interviews (n=68) in five Belgian companies (April - June 2019)
  ➢ Five groups of employees (n=35)
  ➢ Four groups of supervisors (n=28)

Semi-structured interview schedule

| Introduction | Experienced changes at the workplace | Consequences for well-being and performance | Thoughts/feelings during changes | Needs related to organizational change |

Analysis by the Qualitative Data Analysis Guide of Leuven (QUAGOL) [9]

[9] Dierckx de Casterle, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2012

RESULTS

- Participants mentioned **negative as well as positive outcomes** of organizational change.

- Organizational changes lead to modifications in **job demands and resources**: increase of workload, less control over the work environment, change in perceived fit with the organization or the job, violations of psychological contract, experiencing insecurity or ambiguity, or work-home interference.

- Participants expressed **specific needs** when experiencing change:
  - ➢ _Organizational level:_ justice, voice, communication, change agents, a social consensus in the organization, a culture of well-being, practical support and being able to make errors at work.
  - ➢ _Individual level:_ several coping mechanisms such as acceptance, active coping, positivism, social support, and feeling employable.

- **Supervisors** experience more emotional demands and contradictory expectations at work during organizational change.

- **Health care workers** mentioned less variety in their tasks due to organizational change.

DISCUSSION

How employee well-being and performance is affected by organizational change depends on **several work as well as individual characteristics.** Although current literature mostly reports detrimental outcomes of organizational change, this study also illustrates the potential positive outcomes of change at the workplace.

The importance of having **active change agents** and a **social consensus about the change** in the organization has not been well documented in past research and needs further exploration.

When conducting organizational change, special attention should be payed to **supporting supervisors** as they experience higher emotional demands and experience more contradictory expectations at work.

Interventions that aim to modify these work and individual characteristics **both top-down (e.g., company policy) and bottom-up (e.g., at the individual or team level)** could be particularly useful in the context of organizational change.

The results of this study could be used in further research to **explore mediation and moderation effects** (i.e., explaining and influencing factors), using longitudinal quantitative designs.

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