

# **Aligning Perspectives on Health, Safety and Well-Being**

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# Workplace Innovation

Theory, Research and Practice

 Springer

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# Foreword

The book *Workplace Innovation: Theory, Research and Practice* is targeted at a broad group of readers, namely policy makers, scientists and researchers, as well as workplace innovation practitioners such as employers, employees and employee representatives. This is why we asked four prominent individuals from these various fields to shed light on the question ‘what is the meaning of workplace innovation for....?’, respectively, science, policy makers, employers and employees.

## Science and Research

### Psychosocial Value in Work and Political Economy

This book offers important practical contributions to solving a major set of new challenges in our global economy relating to psychosocial wellbeing at work. We can see how this could be the case by placing both these problems, and the book’s solutions, in a broad historical perspective.

These contributions—and in addition our recently developed Associationalist Demand–Control (ADC) model—both reflect a ‘New Bargain’ for the 21st century relating to the social structure of work and the wellbeing of individuals. They emphasize the ‘psychosocial value of work activity’, thereby outlining an alternative linkage between our most fundamental contemporary social institutions—work and the economy—and the wellbeing those are designed to create. This is a bargain to at least partially replace the material wellbeing Bargain #1 of the 17th–20th centuries that started in England with John Locke’s 1690’s formulations on property, and representative democracy. That bargain offered “everyman” actual control—in the form of “property rights” and new political processes—of the fruits of their labour, and was thus a major step forward for citizens whose property was otherwise always controlled by an absolute monarch with power theocratically legitimized in the western European countries of that era. It formed the platform for a broadly inclusive, albeit materialist, society.

Both this book and the new ADC model both go beyond that. “Bargain #2 offers—now—upon a social and psychological work organization platform—another pathway beyond Locke’s original materialist formulation, to further positive social progress for our current uncertain times. The first half of the Bargain #2 is a creative goal for life: growth of capabilities (skills) for active, living beings (and in a social context: collaborative capabilities from creative coordination). These are based upon new social dynamics to link users’ needs and workers’ capabilities in smart, adaptive jobs. The second half of the Bargain #2 offers health—reduction of stress-related disease—based on a personal maintenance of stable internal self-regulation, which at the social level supports the welfare state’s sustainability by reducing social costs.” (Karasek, R., Dollard, M., Östergren, P-O, Formazin, M., Agbenyike, W., Li, J., Cho, S-I, Houtman I. (submitted 2017). The Multi-level Job Content Questionnaire 2.0 (JCQ2) and the Associationalist Demand–Control (ADC) Theory)

This ‘psychosocial value of work’ was the platform for the original DC model, based on organizational sociology and psychology. Now, the recently developed Associationalist Demand–Control model goes further to address the political-economic challenges above, addressing three new important issues: explaining work stress effects in a multi-level work organization context; specifying multiple-level social relational processes that are allowing the needed organizational flexibility for stability-in-the-face-of-change; and explaining creative engagement and growth for both workers and organizations. Thus, the ADC model goes beyond the limits of single-discipline boundaries and describes multiple, linked levels of function in organizations where central control functions must coordinate the overall actions of sub-systems (for example: employees, departments) as they take integrated action in the environment. In summary, the ADC “model describes how systems can either organize themselves into higher levels of complexity (active hypothesis) or dissolve into systems with lower levels of complexity (strain hypothesis)—i.e. systems that grow and develop or systems no longer able to sustain their original complexity and capability. Thus the key issues are *coordination*, and the *association of parts*—rather than the physical reality of the parts themselves—moving beyond a purely materialist construction of reality.” (Karasek et al., submitted 2017) The ADC model can be measured by either the User Version of the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) 2.0 (for practitioners), or the Researcher Version JCQ 2.0 (both to be published soon).

The ADC model further evolves the original DC model’s ‘active work’ concept into the ‘conductive economy’, creating value for citizens in Bargain #2: producing the psychosocial wellbeing and social integration for healthy work that are otherwise missing in our market economy. On the ‘production side’ the ‘conductive economy’ contributes new ideas and innovation, and provides the new skills and training that are needed for future youth jobs in social policies for innovative economic development, also often missing in our conventional commodity-based economy.

Quite a number of authors in this book take the DC model as one of the foundations of their approach, developing it further or complementing it with other

approaches—and hopefully the ADC model will encourage additional steps in this direction. The rich workplace innovation content of this book also supports, in my view, the perspective of a ‘conductive economy’. Scientifically, I think the book is a valuable contribution to multi-level and multi-disciplinary theory and research in wellbeing and organizational performance. Moreover, the book shows a strong European research community that has been active for decades already and has been able to influence national and European policies several times. Those ‘good practices’ show the world how to take practical steps to insure a progressive and humane society in the future.

**Robert Karasek** is Director of Øresund Synergy and the JCQ (Job Content Questionnaire) Center and Emeritus Professor, Department of Work Environment, University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA and Emeritus Professor, Work and Organizational Psychology, Institute for Psychology, Copenhagen University, Denmark. He has received an American Psychological Association Lifetime Career Achievement Award for his work.

## **Policy Making**

### **Fit for the Future**

The nature of work has changed significantly during the course of human history. However, the pace of this change has accelerated in recent years, largely due to digital technologies. The future world of work will be different from the one we know. New technologies are already affecting job definitions and work patterns. They are transforming the relationship between employers and employees, the organization of work, and the types of business models used. Many of today’s jobs and skill profiles did not exist a decade ago, while routine tasks are often vulnerable to automation.

Success in the new industrial revolution of course requires that our industry uses the best available technologies. But in parallel we also have to focus on the human factor. This is our main resource in Europe and we need to make the best use of it. Workers and employees need to find a new place in smart factories. Companies need to anticipate changes to ensure that both the workforce and the workplace are fit for the future.

European companies need to adapt to rapid change. Advances in automation, digitization and advanced manufacturing represent enormous opportunities for both employers and employees. But too few companies are actually rethinking the way people work and collaborate. Too few companies are remodelling their internal organization to tap into the capacities of all their employees—not only in their R&D departments. To be a leader of the new industrial revolution means to look beyond technologies. It requires having workplace innovation at the very DNA of the organization.

With this in mind, the European Commission proposed a series of initiatives. In 2013 we started the European Workplace Innovation Network, EUWIN. Under this project we produced practical materials, tools and know-how gathered in the EUWIN Knowledge Bank. We have stimulated change and adaptation in many firms, and hope that you will use these resources and connections to start your own workplace revolution. We also launched the Digital Agenda to help European companies to better exploit the potential of Information and Communication Technologies and the new industrial revolution. Finally, we are also implementing A Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills to help Europeans find quality jobs in the offices and factories of the future.

**Antti Peltomäki** is Deputy Director-General of the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General (DG GROW), European Commission.

## Employer's Perspective

### **Social Innovation: “OUR” Future is “OUR” Responsibility**

**Entrepreneurship, creativity and passion** .... Three human characteristics which have driven evolution and growth from the beginning of mankind are a source of energy abundantly available in every organization.

**Competitiveness, flexibility, faster and faster time to market, continuous customized product innovation** .... Are the characteristics of our organizations' challenges.

**Working longer, urbanization, digitalization, mobility**, ... are some examples of the growing complexity of society.

Those organizations who have understood that product innovation and technology will not be sufficient to build the future AND who are able to bring “entrepreneurship, creativity, passion” of their employees together with the organizational and societal challenges are creating the most opportunities for growth, sustained bottom line results AND motivated people eager to contribute to the success of their teams and their companies.

I am very fortunate to live and lead a real-life example, proving that next to product- and technological innovation, social innovation (or workplace innovation) is an important pillar for success. This success is based on the conviction that: **“our” future is “our” responsibility**, a conviction which is enabling every employee to be part of the whole, which is empowering each team and every team member to make the difference.

Is there a secret recipe? No, but there are important ingredients to be understood and to be supported by ALL involved people: leaders, social partners and employees.



- ***We get commitment by involvement:*** Give time and room to employees to really participate and to contribute.
- ***Every process of change needs time:*** The grass is not growing faster by pulling it! We need to take care by making the change process tangible and visible and by stimulating the behaviour which is helping us forward.
- ***Be willing to question ourselves as leaders:*** Do we act and behave consistent with our messages, is our commitment “visible” on the shop floor, do we really give the others the ability to express their ideas and to implement them?
- ***Invest in training, coaching and continuous development:*** Answering the need for competences and capabilities on “all” levels of the organization.
- ***Invest in continuous communication in two directions:*** People cannot support what they do not know, what they do not understand. A “common” understanding of the objectives, the challenges, the need for help, the individual and team contribution is key next to celebrating success.

There is no secret recipe but sharing experiences and learning from each other has helped us to increase agility and to move faster. Therefore, it is an honour to write a foreword for this book and to thank the European Workplace Innovation Network for their successful approach in bringing organizations, politicians, unions and science together, supporting us in defining our “common” process of building “our” future.

Let’s keep the rhythm, with enthusiasm.

**Edwin Van Vlierberghe** is Global Head of Supply Chain End to End, Bombardier Transportation, Belgium.

## Employees’ Perspective

### We Need Work 4.0

Lately I’ve been studying, talking and even dreaming about the Fourth Industrial Revolution. There’s no question that we are in the middle of a major shift in the world before the digitalization of everything. We have already seen the emergence of new business and money-making models, which significantly disrupt the old working life we’re accustomed to. Technologies are not only revolutionizing one industry, but rather all industries as well as work tasks in a radical and exponential way.

The need for workplace innovation is obvious and enormous, but until now, it has mainly been excluded from the public, technology-driven debate. We have witnessed developments whereby industrial processes and the attitudes of people are changing more rapidly than ever. Employees are confused between the shining visions of new kinds of autonomous ways of working and the deep fear of losing their livelihood because of a lack of competencies or cheaper and noncomplaining robots.

It is evident that the Fourth Industrial Revolution also demands Work 4.0., where workplace innovations must play a major role. If even half of the companies would have the competencies for this, Europe would experience a higher level of wealth and prosperity.

Work 4.0 means a work community built on trust, partnership and open dialogue. Change-enthusiasm on the part of management is not enough for success; you need the whole company staff to back the change. Trust should be an important performance criterion for management. Workplace Innovation is doing exactly that.

Too few companies are rethinking the way people work and collaborate, or remodelling their internal organization to tap into the capacities of their employees. According to the European Company Survey, only 10 percent of companies achieve this kind of working community. That means 90 percent of companies constantly squander their possibilities to prosper!

What about the trade union strategies? There are factors that both block and support employees in being active development partners in companies.

One blocking factor is the rapidly changing labour market where unions are struggling for survival because of the declining membership rates. Unions are less visible in many workplaces and it is harder to get people behind cooperation initiatives. Secondly, the spreading polarization effect in the labour markets means that the traditional stronghold for the unions, the skilled worker with a permanent contract in industry and services, is shrinking. These developments may cause the unions to rethink or even abandon strategies based on trustful and cooperative relations with employers. On the other hand, unions are very well aware of these challenges and modify their strategies according to these pressures.

One supporting factor is that trade unions invest a lot in competence building, activity and involvement at work, improvement of work organization and quality of working life. Secondly, many trade unions realize that influencing via workplace innovations can be a sustainable part of union strategies, even if this has negative employment or wage effects in the short run. Usually, in the end, the benefits will be higher than potential losses. Workplace innovations are seen as a fair mechanism for managing change and securing the future.

**Leila Kurki** is senior adviser Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK and member of the Advisory Board of European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN).

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