

Department of Industrial Engineering and Management

Workplace Development Programmes as Institutional Entrepreneurs

Why They Produce Change and Why They Do Not

Tuomo Alasoini

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A doctoral dissertation completed for the degree of Doctor of Science (Technology) to be defended, with the permission of the Aalto University School of Science, at a public examination held at the lecture hall TU1 of the school on 11 March 2016 at 12 noon.

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Workplace Development Programmes as Institutional Entrepreneurs: Why They Produce Change and Why They Do Not

Publisher School of Science**Unit** Department of Industrial Engineering and Management**Series** Aalto University publication series DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 12/2016**Field of research** Working life research**Manuscript submitted** 24 September 2015**Date of the defence** 11 March 2016**Permission to publish granted (date)** 8 December 2015**Language** English **Monograph** **Article dissertation (summary + original articles)****Abstract**

This dissertation examines strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes, as well as the ability of such programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects and how this ability can be strengthened. The idea of workplace development programmes as institutional entrepreneurs forms the general framework of this study. The study builds on literature on analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes, the diffusion of innovations, learning networks, practice-performance links, and conditions for institutional and social change. The thesis comprises a summary and six research articles.

The empirical data concern workplace development programmes in ten European and East Asian countries and regions and 16 learning network projects conducted during 2004-10 as part of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme TYKES. The research data comprise an analysis of the literature, benchmarking of development activities and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The philosophical cornerstone is pragmatic worldview, flavoured with ingredients of social constructivism. This study is conducted using qualitative strategies of inquiry and qualitative research methods.

The scientific contributions relate to new knowledge that increases understanding of the nature of workplace development programmes, the context in which the programmes are conducted and their potential to act as agents of change. Using a revised version of a model developed by Naschold, the study reveals differences between the Nordic countries, other European countries and the East Asian countries and provides an explanation of their distinct patterns. In addition, the study produces a new, more realistic framework, inspired by neo-institutional theory and Geels and Schot's analysis of sociotechnical transitions, for analysing the possibility of working life change supported by workplace development programmes.

Regarding policy contributions, this study constructs a framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes, and describes the means by which a strategy utilizing learning networks can be implemented successfully. The framework, which perceives programmes as production and development systems, contributes to the understanding of critical success factors for programmes and the versatile nature of their outcomes. By making a distinction between two types of generativity, the study reveals the strengths and weaknesses of different modes of programme leadership for directing learning networks.

The methodological contributions include the elaboration of the role of programme theories in cases of complex objects for intervention and the modifications made to the Naschold model.

Keywords Development programme, institutional entrepreneurship, learning network, working life change, workplace development, workplace innovation

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Tekijä

Tuomo Alasoini

Väitöskirjan nimi

Työelämän kehittämisohjelmat institutionaalisina yrittäjinä: miksi ne tuottavat muutosta ja miksi eivät

Julkaisija Perustieteiden korkeakoulu**Yksikkö** Tuotantotalouden laitos**Sarja** Aalto University publication series DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 12/2016**Tutkimusala** Työelämän tutkimus**Käsikirjoituksen pvm** 24.09.2015**Väitöspäivä** 11.03.2016**Julkaisuluvan myöntämispäivä** 08.12.2015**Kieli** Englanti **Monografia** **Yhdistelmäväitöskirja (yhteenvedo-osa + erillisartikkelit)****Tiivistelmä**

Tutkimus kohdistuu työelämän kehittämisohjelmien vahvuuksiin ja heikkouksiin sekä ohjelmien kykyyn tuottaa laaja-alaisia pitkän aikavälin oppimisvaikutuksia. Tutkimus selvittää myös, kuinka ohjelmien vaikuttavuutta voidaan tältä osin parantaa. Työelämän kehittämisohjelmien tarkasteleminen institutionaalisina yrittäjinä on tutkimuksen yleisenä viitekehystenä. Keskeisenä taustakirjallisuutena ovat analyysit koskien työelämän kehittämisstrategioita ja -ohjelmia, innovaatioiden leviämistä, oppimisverkostoja, johtamis- ja organisaatiokäytäntöjen tuloksellisuutta sekä institutionaalisten ja yhteiskunnallisten muutosten edellytyksiä. Tutkimus koostuu yhteenvedosta ja kuudesta tutkimusartikkelista.

Empiirisenä aineistona ovat kymmenen Euroopan ja Itä-Aasian maan ja alueen työelämän kehittämisohjelmat sekä Työelämän kehittämisohjelman (TYKES) vuosina 2004-10 tukemat 16 työelämän oppimisverkostoa. Aineisto on koottu kirjallisuusanalyysien, benchmarking-analyysin sekä puolistrukturoitujen haastattelujen ja kyselyjen avulla. Tutkimuksen tieteenfilosofisina lähtökohtina ovat pragmatismi ja sosiaalinen konstruktivismi. Tutkimus on toteutettu laadullisen tutkimuksen strategiaa ja menetelmiä käyttäen.

Keskeisenä tieteellisenä kontribuutiona on uuden tiedon tuottaminen työelämän kehittämisohjelmista, niiden onnistumiseen vaikuttavista tekijöistä ja niiden edellytyksistä edistää työelämän muutosta. Käyttämällä kehiteltyä versiota Nascholdin mallista tutkimus osoittaa eroja Pohjoismaiden, Euroopan muiden maiden ja Itä-Aasian maiden kesken työelämän kehittämisen konteksteina sekä tarjoaa selityksen havaituille eroille. Tutkimus myös kehittää uusinstitutionaaliseen teoriaan ja Geelsin ja Schotin sosioteknisiä muutoksia koskevaan analyysiin perustuen viitekehysten, jonka avulla voidaan analysoida realistisella tavalla työelämän kehittämisohjelmien edellytyksiä saada aikaan muutoksia työelämässä.

Keskeisinä politiikkakontribuutioina ovat viitekehys kehittämisohjelmien dynamiikan analysoimiseen ja joukko keinoja, joiden avulla oppimisverkostoja hyödyntävää strategiaa voidaan toteuttaa tuloksellisesti. Viitekehys tarkastelee ohjelmia samanaikaisina tuotanto- ja kehittämisjärjestelminä lisäten ymmärrystä ohjelmien kriittisistä onnistumisen edellytyksistä ja niiden tulosten moninaisuudesta. Tutkimus osoittaa erilaisten ohjaustapojen vahvuuksia ja heikkouksia oppimisverkostoja soveltavissa ohjelmissa hyödyntämällä erottelua kahdentyyppisen generatiivisuuden kesken.

Keskeisinä menetelmällisinä kontribuutioina ovat ohjelmateorioiden roolin tarkentaminen kompleksisissa kehittämisinterventioissa ja täydennykset Nascholdin malliin.

Avainsanat Institutionaalinen yrittäjyys, kehittämisohjelma, oppimisverkosto, työelämäinnovaatio, työelämän kehittäminen, työelämän muutos**ISBN (painettu)** 978-952-60-6626-4**ISBN (pdf)** 978-952-60-6625-7**ISSN-L** 1799-4934**ISSN (painettu)** 1799-4934**ISSN (pdf)** 1799-4942**Julkaisupaikka** Helsinki**Painopaikka** Helsinki**Vuosi** 2016**Sivumäärä** 333**urn** <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-60-6625-7>

Acknowledgements

The summary of this dissertation was written in 2013–15 based on six articles that were published in scientific journals during the period 2006–14. My intention with this study is to provide a structured view on the potentials and limitations of workplace development programmes to act as agents of divergent change implementation. My research interest in this subject stems from the fact that I have worked on working life research since the early 1980s and on workplace development programmes since the mid-1990s.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Matti Vartiainen, for his encouragement, engagement and valuable advice during the process of writing the summary. The idea of building new bridges between research on workplace development programmes and neo-institutional theory derives from discussions with him. Through such bridging, I hope that my dissertation is able to demonstrate how sociological theorizing can contribute to practice. Seen from this perspective, my dissertation also forms a logical continuation to my previous doctoral thesis in industrial sociology that was passed at the University of Helsinki more than 25 years ago.

My preliminary examiners, Professor Csaba Makó and Professor Geert van Hootegeem, made many valuable comments to the summary. I highly acknowledge their professional advice which further enhanced the quality of my work.

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I was privileged to work in an inspiring and creative environment during the period 1996–2010 as Programme Manager and team member of the Finnish Workplace Development Programmes TYKE (1996–2003) and TYKES (2004–10) at the Ministry of Labour and Tekes. I would like to thank members of the TYKE and TYKES programme teams as well as Director Matti Salmenperä, who acted as chairman of the TYKE and TYKES programme management groups at the Ministry of Labour, for their cooperation, engagement and pioneering spirit.

Participation of the TYKES programme in the EU-funded WORK-IN-NET project (2004–10) was an important trigger for me to commence a systematic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes conducted in different countries. I am grateful to all active partici-

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Helsinki, 15 December 2015
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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

BSC	balanced scorecard
HR	human resources
ICT	information and communication technologies
QWL	quality of working life
R&D	research and development
R&D&I	research, development and innovation
RQ	research question
SHRM	strategic human resource management
TYKE	Finnish Workplace Development Programme (1996–2003)
TYKES	Finnish Workplace Development Programme (2004–10)

List of Publications

This doctoral dissertation consists of a summary and of the following publications.

1. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2009. Strategies to Promote Workplace Innovation: A Comparative Analysis of Nine National and Regional Approaches. SAGE Publications. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, volume 30, issue 4, pages 614–642. ISSN 0143-831X. DOI: 10.1177/0143831X09336556.

2. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2009. Alternative Paths for Working Life Reform? A Comparison of European and East Asian Development Strategies. Rainer Hampp Verlag. *International Journal of Action Research*, volume 5, issue 2, pages 155–183. ISSN 1861-1303. DOI: 10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2009_02_Alasoini.

3. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2006. In Search of Generative Results: A New Generation of Programmes to Develop Work Organization. SAGE Publications. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, volume 27, issue 1, pages 9–37. ISSN 0143-831X. DOI: 10.1177/0143831X06060590.

4. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2008. Building Better Programmes: Learning Networks in the Promotion of Workplace Innovation. Rainer Hampp Verlag. *International Journal of Action Research*, volume 4, issue 1+2, pages 62–89. ISSN 1861-1303.

5. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2011. Workplace Development as Part of Broad-Based Innovation Policy: Exploiting and Exploring Three Types of Knowledge. Roskilde University. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, volume 1, issue 1, pages 23–43. <http://rossy.ruc.dk/ojs/index.php/njwls/article/view/2334/651>.

6. Alasoini, Tuomo. 2014. Learning from Learning Networks: Experiences of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme. Rainer Hampp Verlag. *International Journal of Action Research*, volume 10, issue 3, pages 310–338. ISSN 1861-1303. DOI: 10.1688/IJAR-2014-03-Alasoini.

Author's Contribution

Publication 1: Strategies to Promote Workplace Innovation: A Comparative Analysis of Nine National and Regional Approaches.

The author is the sole author.

Publication 2: Alternative Paths for Working Life Reform? A Comparison of European and East Asian Development Strategies.

The author is the sole author.

Publication 3: In Search of Generative Results: A New Generation of Programmes to Develop Work Organization.

The author is the sole author.

Publication 4: Building Better Programmes: Learning Networks in the Promotion of Workplace Innovation.

The author is the sole author.

Publication 5: Workplace Development as Part of Broad-Based Innovation Policy: Exploiting and Exploring Three Types of Knowledge.

The author is the sole author.

Publication 6: Learning from Learning Networks: Experiences of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme.

The author is the sole author.

1. Introduction

The key concepts of this study include *working life change*, *workplace development*, *workplace development programme* and *workplace innovation*. Working life has been an object of development in many programmes conducted in Finland during the last 20 or so years. The objective of these programmes is to produce changes at Finnish workplaces that lead to simultaneous improvements in productivity¹, quality of working life (QWL) and employee well-being. These kinds of changes in management, organizational or other work-related practices are often called workplace innovations. Each of these key concepts is examined in greater detail in Chapter 2.

This study examines the conditions under which workplace development programmes can change working life for the better and the extent to which these conditions have been realized in programmes in recent years. It is interesting that this issue has rarely been seriously contemplated in public debate or academic research. Instead, a great part of what we know of the ability of workplace development programmes to produce changes in working life is based on evaluation studies of individual programmes that were conducted immediately after the programmes' completion. The underlying motive of these kinds of studies is typically to provide the requesting party – programme funders, programme owners or other stakeholders – with feedback about the success of the programme and about the results and impacts that are relatively easy to measure and quickly seen. Question setting in these kinds of studies is also typically linked closely with the special features of the programme in question and to the special interests of the party who requested the study. Studies are conducted using different conceptual frameworks, approaches and methodologies. Evaluation studies also tend to be tendered using the cost of the study as one of the key selection criteria, which does not usually encourage the requesting party to pursue more ambitious question setting. Consequently, the knowledge created by individual evaluation studies does not easily accumulate in an interconnected way.

In assessing the effectiveness of workplace development programmes, it would in principle be possible to use the large number of studies and other literature that have been published on project management. However, the project management literature focuses largely on project control and achievement

¹ The concept of productivity is used in this study as an umbrella concept that encompasses also other aspects of operational performance when applied to the company or workplace level.

of project objectives.² In this study, I am interested in *programme*-level issues, rather than the conditions for success of individual projects; *long-term* effectiveness of programmes, including broad-based and long-term learning effects; and, in particular, key conditions for the successful renewal of *working life*. The most important sources of inspiration and influence for the question setting of this study were comprehensive analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes that were conducted in countries with the longest history in this area, and neo-institutional approaches to institutional and social change. The idea of workplace development programmes as (potential) *institutional entrepreneurs* forms the general framework of this study, thereby building new bridges between research on working life change, workplace innovations and workplace development programmes and neo-institutional theory (e.g. Battilana et al. 2009; Dacin et al. 2002; DiMaggio 1988; Garud et al. 2007; Weik 2011).

This study is guided by the logic of *design science*. Design science aims to devise artefacts to attain goals, not to explain how and why things currently are, as in the case of natural science (Simon 1981). Natural science endeavours to understand reality, whereas design science attempts to create things – including concepts, models, methods and actual implementations – that benefit humans by asking questions such as “what is their value or utility?”, “do they work?” or “do they mean an improvement?” (March & Smith 1995). Building and evaluating artefacts, such as workplace development programmes, has design science intent.

This study is therefore interested in the conditions under which workplace development programmes can change working life for the better and the extent to which these conditions have been realized in such programmes in recent years. This general problem setting guides the actual research task and research questions. The research task is divided into two parts, the first of which relates to the strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes in various countries, with special attention to the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish programme-based workplace development relative to the programme-based workplace development of other countries. The second part of the research task focuses on how the ability of workplace development programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects can be enhanced. Here, too, special attention is paid to Finnish experiences. The research questions are presented in detail in Chapter 3.

My own research interest stems from the fact that I have worked on working life research for over 30 years, more than 20 of which focused on workplace development programmes. The first of these programmes, the National Productivity Programme, was launched in 1993. I belonged to the secretariat of the programme management group until 1998. During the period 1996–2010, I worked as Project Manager of the Finnish Workplace Development

² Within project management literature is a rising genre of studies that focuses on the management of complex projects and programmes and is increasingly detaching itself from conventional control theory-based thinking (e.g. Cavanagh 2012; Hass 2008; Remington & Pollack 2008).

Programme, first in the Ministry of Labour and then in Tekes (the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation). Since 2012, I have worked as Responsible Director of the Tekes programme called “Liideri – Business, Productivity and Joy at Work”. Over the years, I have written several books and articles on working life change, workplace development, workplace development programmes and workplace innovations. My intention with this study is not only to assemble the contents of my previous publications but also to provide a more structured explanation of the conditions under which workplace development programmes can change working life and the extent to which these conditions have been realized.

Having this kind of role in relation to the object of study can be either a strength or a weakness, depending on one’s perspective. It can be a strength in the sense that one’s active role in the object of study can enable a more in-depth view of the object compared with its observation only from the outside. The downside includes the risks that the object is viewed through a cognitively locked mind-set or that one seeks to legitimize – unconsciously or even consciously – one’s own activities in retrospect. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the means by which I have tried to reduce this risk and to ensure the trustworthiness of the research results. The philosophical cornerstone of the study is rooted in a pragmatic worldview, flavoured with ingredients of social constructivism. The study has been conducted using qualitative strategies of inquiry and using qualitative research methods.

Chapter 2 presents the key concepts of this study. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of ongoing working life change from a comparative perspective and discusses why and how working life change should and could be regulated by means of public intervention. In the second part of Chapter 2, the other key concepts – workplace development, workplace development programme and workplace innovation – are examined. The two last sections of this chapter provide my answer to the question of why workplace development programmes are a relevant object of study from both scientific and practical points of view and position the study in the existing field of research.

Chapter 3 describes the research design. It begins with a clarification of the philosophical worldview that guides the study, followed by an elaboration of the research task and questions. The relevance and background of the research questions and the conceptual framework used in the analyses are explained in separate sections. Finally, the research articles and research methods and materials are presented.

Chapter 4 presents the findings. This chapter first examines strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes conducted in different countries and regions in recent years, with a special focus on Finnish programme-based workplace development (research questions 1.1–1.3). The second part of the chapter focuses on prerequisites for workplace development programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects, with a special focus on recent Finnish experiences (research questions 2.1–2.2).

Chapter 5 includes the discussion and conclusions. This chapter presents the key scientific, policy and methodological contributions and provides some

suggestions for further research. These suggestions are examined in light of ongoing working life change and its underlying factors.

2. Key concepts and relevance of the research task

This chapter presents the key concepts of the study and justifies the research task. Each of the four concepts – working life change, workplace development, workplace development programme and workplace innovation – is examined in a separate section. The first section (2.1) considers working life change from different aspects, e.g. what do empirical studies tell us of trends in QWL, why is QWL important also from the viewpoint of innovation policy, why are the Nordic countries leaders in QWL, and what role could government regulation play in working life change? The second section (2.2) clarifies the concept of workplace development. The first part of this section examines what is meant by *workplace* development, whereas the latter part of this section focuses on what is meant by workplace *development*. The following section (2.3) defines the concept of workplace development programme, introduces the concept of institutional entrepreneur and reviews workplace development programmes that have been launched and conducted in Finland during the last 20 years. In the following section (2.4), the concept of workplace innovation is clarified with the use of a three-dimensional conceptual framework. Section 2.5 examines the relevance of the research task. The final section (2.6) positions this study in the field of research.

2.1 Working life change

2.1.1 Working life – for the better or for the worse?

Is working life changing for the better or the worse? This question has in recent years been the subject of lively debate in Finland, as well as in many other developed industrial nations. In his book *Rethinking the Future of Work*, Williams (2007) has identified three main theses in research literature that justify the claim that working life is changing for the better.

The *post-industrial thesis* takes structural change of the economy as its starting point. According to this thesis, industrial societies are becoming post-industrial, which leads to increasing knowledge intensity of work and an increase in the number of knowledge workers, which in turn causes a general upskilling of work tasks. The *post-Fordism thesis*, again, starts with changes in work practices. According to the post-Fordism thesis, Fordist mass production gives way to post-Fordist forms of production and work practices, which lead to multi-skilling and increased self-management of employees and work

teams. According to the third thesis, the *post-bureaucracy thesis*, bureaucratic forms of work organization will be replaced by post-bureaucratic forms. This change means that instead of detailed, rules-based steering and control, organizations increasingly seek a competitive advantage based on the commitment of their staff, indirect forms of control and "soft" human resource management practices.

Social and economic sciences have also a long tradition in the debate in which the positive views of each "post-thesis" have been challenged and overturned. According to the "post-Bravermanian" debate over the last two decades, globalization of the economy, deregulation and the domination of financial capitalism have led to "hyper competition" and "super capitalism", which have caused the deterioration of working conditions and poorer terms of employment for the vast majority of people. Notably, the views of many of the most influential writers on this subject (e.g. Beck 2000; Head 2003; Reich 2007; Rifkin 1995; Sennett 1998; Siltala 2004; Standing 2009) are not based on systematic analyses of representative empirical data. Nonetheless, several scholars, including Green (2006) and Kalleberg (2011), have conducted more comprehensive empirical analyses using representative data and have reached quite similar conclusions. Similarly, the results of the Eurofound's European Working Conditions Surveys do not support the positive views of the "post-theses", at least with respect to Europe as a whole (Eurofound 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2015; Holm & Lorenz 2015).

Green (2006) makes an important observation based on his analysis, according to which there are clear differences in the development of QWL among countries. Specifically, he finds that the Nordic countries form an interesting exception to the trend of deteriorating QWL that characterizes Anglo-American countries in particular. Many other empirical analyses also describe the Nordic countries as a special case that is distinguishable from many other countries due to the higher QWL in Nordic countries (e.g. Dobbin & Boychuk 1999; Gallie 2003; 2007; Oinas et al. 2012; Valeyre et al. 2009).

Dobbin and Boychuk (1999) argue that the Nordic countries represent a skill-governed employment system in the way their working life institutions have evolved. The logic of a skill-governed system that shapes the organization of work in Nordic workplaces differs in many respects from the rule-governed employment system that is characteristic of Anglo-American countries, in particular because it permits greater autonomy at all levels of an organization. Dobbin and Boychuk suggest that the national institutional structures embedded in these systems have strong, mutually supportive systemic properties. Megatrends, such as the globalization and networking of the economy and the development of information and communication technologies (ICT), percolate through these institutional structures in different ways, depending on the country in question. The new management and organizational doctrines concerning such megatrends thus do not have a mechanical influence but rather assume hybrid forms at the national level based on local (re)interpretations.

Gallie's (2003) *Employment in Europe* study material of 1996 also lends strong support to the claim that it is appropriate to speak of a special "Scandi-

navian model” of QWL, which is also characteristic of Finland, with certain reservations. Later, Gallie (2007) constructed more detailed groupings by which to better understand differences in QWL between countries. He has divided countries on the basis of production and employment regimes. In the previous categorization, the main difference between liberal and coordinated market economies is the process of skill formation. In the latter one, the main difference between market employment regimes, dualist employment regimes and inclusive employment regimes is, respectively, the role of organized labour in employment policy and the regulation of the labour market. Both divisions presented by Gallie have systemic effects on QWL. One can surmise that the inclusive employment regime characteristic of the Nordic countries produces a higher QWL and lowers the risk of polarization of the workforce.

Oinas et al. (2012) show in their time series analysis of the European Working Conditions Surveys that differences in QWL between the three Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and the other EU-15 countries remained in favour of the Nordic countries between 1995 and 2010. The authors use job skill requirements, task discretion and intensity of work as the three main indicators of QWL. The researchers make the interesting finding that the differences between the countries cannot be explained by differences in the workforce or economic structure. The researchers maintain that speaking of “Nordic exceptionalism” remains justified.

Previous analyses based on the European Working Conditions Surveys also rank Sweden, Denmark and Finland at the top of EU-15 countries in terms of the innovativeness of work organization (Valeyre et al. 2009). The innovative work organization index constructed by researchers to a great extent comprises indicators that are similar to those used by other researchers for measuring QWL. The composite index includes four indicators: learning new things on the job, problem solving on the job, autonomy in work and the number of employees working in autonomous team organizations as a percentage of the number of employees on all teams.

2.1.2 Enabling welfare state and learning economy – two sides of the same coin

A high QWL is not merely a luxury product that can be achieved through favourable economic growth or a generous welfare policy but also a considerable potential source of competitive advantage in an increasingly global economy. Company- and establishment-level data from countries such as Denmark (Laursen & Foss 2003; Nielsen & Lundvall 2007; Nielsen et al. 2012), the Netherlands (Beugelsdijk 2008), Belgium (De Winne & Sels 2010), Spain (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle 2008), Ireland (Fu et al. 2015), Great Britain (Shipton et al. 2005) and the United States (Messersmith & Guthrie 2010) show that advanced management and organizational practices and the increased ability to learn and exert influence at work engendered by these practices have a positive correlation with companies’ ability to generate product and service innovations. The production of innovations, on the other hand, is ideally an extensive organizational learning process that also fosters opportu-

nities to develop their work, and in their work, for those who participate in it. Moreover, according to contingency thinking, shortcomings in the ability to innovate can compel companies to seek a competitive advantage based purely on costs, which can have a negative impact on the development of work and QWL (Alasoini 2011). This chain of events can result in a self-perpetuating vicious circle. Regarding also innovation policy, the above-mentioned results of the European Working Conditions Surveys (Eurofound 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2015; Holm & Lorenz 2015) are cause for concern for Europe as a whole.

Arundel et al. (2006), for example, suggest that the bottleneck that impedes improvements in the innovative capabilities of European firms might be due not to the low levels of R&D expenditure, which are primarily determined by industry structure and are therefore difficult to change, but to the widespread existence of work contexts that are unable to provide a fertile environment for innovation. According to Arundel et al., “If this is the case, then the next step for European policy is to encourage the adoption of ‘pro-innovation’ organizational practice, particularly in countries with poor innovative performance” (ibid., 29). The authors’ views are also based on analyses that draw on the European Working Conditions Surveys.

Workplaces in the Nordic countries have in recent years modified their organization of work more than the rest of Europe has done. According to the 2010 European Working Conditions Survey, the proportion of employees who felt that substantial restructuring or reorganization had occurred in their workplaces during the last three years was clearly higher in Finland, Sweden and Denmark than in other European countries (Eurofound 2012a, 30–31). A positive interpretation of this result is that the Nordic countries have more workplaces at the forefront of the techno-economic upheaval compared with other countries in Europe. It has also been suggested that whereas the “first wave of productivity growth”, which was based on the breakthrough of ICT in the 1990s, had its roots in the application of new technologies to products, services and process streamlining, future productivity growth is more likely to be driven by business, management, organizational and institutional innovations that exploit new technologies. Thus, factors associated with organizations’ ability to collaborate, collaborative relationships and organizational culture have been identified as driving forces of the “second wave of ICT-based productivity growth”. (Gratton 2011; Heckscher 2007; Perez 2002.)

In the previous section, different explanations for the leading positions of the Nordic countries in QWL were offered. The explanations based on regime or system theories are flimsy in the sense that they operate with very rough classifications and seek explanations by referring to static, or “given”, regimes or systems. It is obvious that the positions of Finland and the other Nordic countries as forerunners of organizational change have been facilitated by special features of Nordic capitalism in a broader sense than indicated by these explanation models. Such features include advanced technologies, the high educational level of the labour force, cooperative industrial relations, the openness of the economy and a high dependency on exports. The special features of Nordic capitalism are also linked with the idea of an enabling welfare state;

however, the specific institutional forms of the welfare state differ greatly among individual Nordic countries. It has thus been argued that the most essential feature of Nordic enabling welfare state is not specific institutional forms but rather an institutional experimental nature, which also applies to the manners in which work is organized (Kristensen & Lilja 2011; Kristensen & Morgan 2012).

The idea of an enabling welfare state can also be linked to the rapid change of working life and high QWL through two similes (Figure 1). First, the enabling welfare state has offered people *safety nets* by evening out the risks in working life changes. Second, the enabling welfare state has served as a *springboard* that mobilizes people and work organizations to reform. This mobilization process has occurred not only through investments in skills and competences, learning, and creativity but also through investments that target participation in working life and increase consumption in more general terms. (Alasoini 2015.)

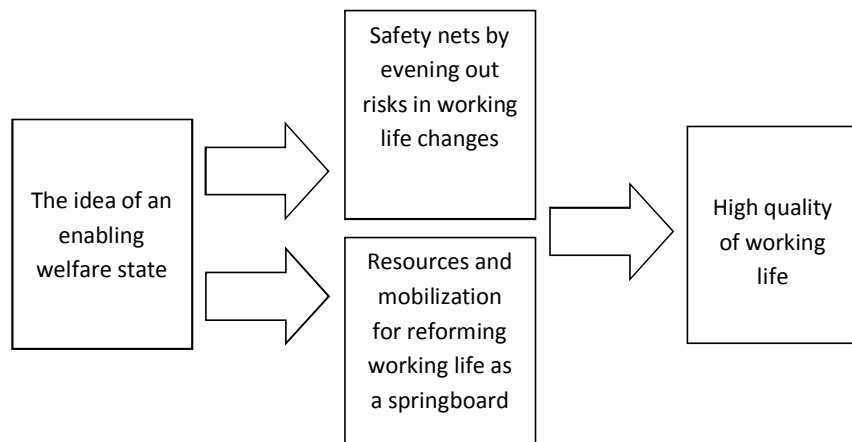


Figure 1. The idea of an enabling welfare state and a high quality of working life (Alasoini 2015, 47).

The idea of an enabling welfare state can be conceptually linked to Lundvall's (1996) view on a learning economy. Lundvall argues that an essential feature of a competitive economy during the ongoing technological upheaval is the ability to learn rather than knowledge intensity. A learning economy is characterized in particular by the following features. First, it is characterized by rapid change, through which old skills and competences become obsolete and new skills and competences are in constant demand. In addition, although a learning economy utilizes new ICT, it is more for growing knowledge than for increased efficiency in processing information. The third main feature is that a learning economy is not based so much on the knowhow of certain high-technology companies or highly educated individuals, but on the ability of companies and individuals on a broad front to learn and renew themselves. As

a consequence of the third feature, the concept of a learning economy can also be considered a strategy for the promotion of social cohesion within a society.

The learning economy includes a robust process of creative destruction in which unprofitable, low-productivity workplaces disappear and are replaced by new, more productive and more profitable workplaces. Indeed, creative destruction has accounted for one-third of the increase in labour productivity in Finnish industry in recent decades (Maliranta et al. 2010).³ Owing to the rapid ageing of the Finnish population, the supply of labour will decline significantly in Finland in coming years. Citizens in Finland are unwilling to increase their working hours from the current level, and in fact would prefer that their working hours decrease (Haavisto 2010). Therefore, the potential for economic growth in Finland will increasingly depend on productivity growth, the main sources of which are internal technological and organizational renewal of workplaces and creative destruction, i.e. restructuring at the plant or firm level.

It is thus not surprising that concern about people's ability to cope with and to adapt to rapid changes in working life has increased in Finland in recent years. This concern is not unfounded because the Finnish working life will be in a state of flux in the coming years too. Globalization, technological change, an ageing population and the sustainability gap are forcing companies and public-sector organizations to actively develop new products and services and new ways to produce them. The sharp decline in the Finnish working-age population in the near future indicates that a smaller number of people should be prepared to stay at work longer. Reconciling these requirements will create increasing pressure to improve QWL.

2.1.3 Hard vs. soft government regulation

Governments use regulation as a means to influence working life change. However, it is implausible that government regulation could have a significant effect on the progress of working life change in itself. Regulation mainly offers a means to reinforce desirable trends or to prevent undesirable trends. To achieve either of these goals, regulation must be guided by a visionary and insightful understanding of current trends and of the threats and opportunities inherent in these trends. In addition, effective regulation requires the ability to implement such promotive/preventive measures. Arguments that justify the use of public intervention to promote innovations include deficiencies of the market mechanism; system failures of existing institutions, networks or frameworks; and the various positive externalities, such as knowledge spillovers and network effects, of intervention and innovations (e.g. Edquist et al. 2001, 135–143; Takalo 2009; Veugelers et al. 2009, 24). For the most part, the same arguments also apply to government interventions in the reform of working life and the promotion of workplace innovations.⁴ As Rubalcaba et al. (2010, 551) argue, non-technological innovations “are as real as investments

³ Creative destruction refers here to productivity-enhancing restructuring at the plant or firm level through entry and exit and to resource reallocation among continuing plants or firms.

⁴ Regarding the concept of workplace innovation, see Section 2.4.

made in technological R&D, and it can be seriously questioned whether technological R&D&I and non-technological R&D&I can be treated separately, since most innovations today are multidimensional”.

Workplace development refers here to an activity whose aim is to promote specific desirable trends, such as improvements in labour productivity and QWL in their various forms, and to pave the way for innovations that renew working life. Such innovations and improvements in productivity and QWL can be seen as key outputs of workplace development. The justification for public intervention to develop working life is that companies (or other work organizations) are not sufficiently active in producing workplace innovations and improving productivity and QWL, and public authorities (in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders) have the ability to make a difference.

In workplace development and the promotion of workplace innovations, it is in principle possible to apply a wide variety of means. At the most general level, we can talk of *hard* and *soft* forms of regulation. The former concept refers to legislation and other binding norms, such as collective agreements or other more or less binding standards that are broadly applied. Soft regulation refers to non-binding persuasive policy intervention (Forsyth et al. 2006; Sisson & Marginson 2001; Trubek & Trubek 2005). Hard and soft regulation can be further divided into direct and indirect forms designed to promote working life reform and workplace innovations. Deregulation can be regarded as the third main approach (Table 1).

Table 1. Policy options in the promotion of workplace innovation (Alasoini 2011, 29).

<i>Hard/indirect regulation</i> legislation which focuses indirectly on workplace innovation through changes in some other policy area (e.g. product market or labour market)		<i>Hard/direct regulation</i> legislation which focuses directly on workplace innovation (e.g. organizational and management practices)
<i>Soft/indirect regulation</i> general policy frameworks and recommendations	<i>Soft/intermediate-stage regulation</i> information on “best practices” and the training and education of managers and employees	<i>Soft/direct regulation</i> advisory and consulting services, benchmarking tools, and grants and subsidies to companies
<i>Deregulation</i>		

The use of hard regulation has been rare in the promotion of workplace innovations; business management- or work organization-related issues are typically not regarded as targets of direct public intervention. It is also difficult to find empirical support for the view that deregulation would contribute to workplace innovation, rather than have the opposite effect (e.g. De Spiegelare et al. 2014; Vergeer et al. 2015). The most common means of promoting workplace innovations in different countries has been soft regulation in its various forms.

Soft regulation can be a useful means, particularly in the following situations related to workplace innovations. *First*, soft regulation is suitable in situations in which the objects (companies) of desired changes are very different. *Second*,

soft regulation may be considered compatible with cases in which the processes that lead to desired changes (workplace innovations) are very diverse. The *third* situation appropriate for soft regulation arises when the means available to produce changes (such as new work, organizational and management practices) are particularly sensitive in the sense that they are vulnerable to clearly different interests. (Trubek & Trubek 2005.)

Companies may face a variety of obstacles when attempting to generate workplace innovations. These obstacles are in principle similar to those that have been used to justify public intervention in innovation policy *in general*, namely, the market failure and system failure arguments (cf. Rubalcaba et al. 2010).

One such obstacle can be *a lack of information* about the significance of innovations or, in general, about the kinds of solutions that companies are required to implement in order to improve productivity and QWL. For example, the potential benefits of work organizational renewals, which often form the basis of workplace innovations, are often more difficult to assess – both before and after the innovation is implemented – than the benefits of technological renewals (Alänge et al. 1998; Coriat 2001; Steiber 2012).

A lack of competence is another potential obstacle. Companies may have adequate information regarding the significance of innovations but lack the ability to take necessary measures. The reason for this inability may be the lack of development competence in general, insufficient experience with cooperation in development between management and personnel or even more or less active resistance towards the innovation and subsequent changes on the part of some party.

Additionally, *a lack of motivation* may prevent innovation. Low managerial motivation to innovate may simply be due to the absence of pressure from customers, competitors or any other stakeholder group. For example, a study funded by the European Commission on obstacles to wider dissemination of team-based forms of work organization in the early 2000s showed that the most significant obstacles related to motivational factors (Business Decisions Limited 2002). For instance, new forms of work organization were not needed to meet customers' needs or did not fit the company's culture or strategy.

A high level of risk related to changes is also a possible barrier. Financial investments in productivity and QWL improvements can, at least in the short term, exceed the expected benefits. The markets may be so volatile that it is difficult for companies to determine an appropriate innovation strategy. In addition, actions taken to innovate may also create the risk of significant leaks, and the benefits might too easily flow outside the investing company – even to competitors – as a consequence of labour turnover or imitation, among other possibilities. Innovation processes, regarding also workplace innovations, are by definition unpredictable.

The viability of different regulatory measures depends on the main reasons for the low level of workplace innovation in companies. Indirect or intermediate-stage forms of soft regulation may help, if it is primarily a matter of lack of information or competence. However, if the major obstacle relates to a lack of

motivation or to the high level of risk of innovation, direct forms of soft regulation, possibly combined with indirect forms of hard regulation, may be necessary. Programmes to develop working life in many advanced industrial countries in recent years have been an important direct form of soft regulation to boost reforms designed to improve productivity and QWL. Workplace development programmes and their ability to modify working life is the object of this study as well.

2.1.4 Concluding remarks

It is difficult – or even impossible – to provide an unambiguous answer to the question of whether working life has changed for the better or the worse. Among other factors, the answer depends on the criteria, indicators, target groups and periods of time that are considered. However, the most commonly used indicators in QWL studies suggest that the positive promises of the “post-theses” have not been realized, at least for Europe as a whole.

The Nordic countries, including Finland, differ from the majority of other countries in Europe by virtue of their higher QWL. An explanation rooted in the special characteristics of Nordic capitalism and the idea of an enabling welfare state provides a more plausible reason for Nordic exceptionalism than the simpler regime- or system-based explanations. In its ideal form, the welfare state plays the role of an enabler in two ways: it contributes to rapid change of working life, first, by supporting employees’ survival (the safety net) and, second, by strengthening employees’ resources (the springboard) in the event of changes.

The state can enhance both the safety net and springboard effects through proactive regulatory measures. Various programmes to facilitate workplace development are one of the soft regulatory means used to enhance the springboard effect in particular. The question is what is needed for this type of regulation to succeed?

2.2 Workplace development

The concept of workplace development that is commonly used in Finland has not been widely adopted in the European debate, which instead has favoured the term *work organization* development and the promotion of new forms of work organization. Typical objects in recent European work organization development programmes include team-based organizational structures, such as self-managing teams and flattened hierarchies; flexible working practices, such as flexi-time, diversification of personnel skills and job rotation; and business practices based on trust and employee participation, such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and continuous improvement methods (e.g. Brödner & Latniak 2003; Business Decisions Limited 2000; Eeckelaert et al. 2012). The concept of *workplace* development adopted in Finland also includes issues concerning occupational safety and health and the work environment and questions regarding management and supervisory work. The first component can be explained by the traditionally strong position of research on

occupational safety and health and the work environment in Finnish working life literature (Kasvio 1991). The second component is due to the fact that an employer's entitlement to supervise work is no longer subject to ideological dispute in Finland, and has not been for some time (Kettunen 2001, 151–156). It is thus possible to discuss questions of management and supervisory work as issues of competence rather than questions of power with an ideological loading.

Objects of workplace development can be examined in greater detail by utilizing a division that is used in management and organization studies, namely, the division between doctrines that are based on *rational* rhetoric and doctrines that are based on *normative* rhetoric. Doctrines that are based on rational rhetoric view organizations primarily as machines or systems and consider humans to be rational individuals who appreciate the instrumental aspects of work. In contrast, doctrines based on normative rhetoric view organizations as value communities and emphasize the significance of shared values and social and cultural features as factors that motivate humans to perform well. (Abrahamsson 1997; Adler & Heckscher 2006; Barley & Kunda 1992; Guillén 1994.) This division can be applied to typical objects of workplace development (Table 2). In practice, the divergent concepts and conceptualizations of these two forms of rhetoric make a cross-boundary discussion regarding workplace development approaches between these two different doctrines difficult, as Engeström et al. (2010), among others, have aptly noted.

Table 2. Examples of objects of workplace development based on rational and normative rhetoric.

Rational rhetoric	Normative rhetoric
Organizational structure	Work community
Work process	Group and teamwork
Work method	Leadership
Job design	Work culture
Management system	Work atmosphere
Reward system	Social relations at work
Working hours	Involvement and participation
Physical work environment	Cooperation and collaboration

Although locating objects of workplace development according to Table 2 helps to outline the areas that are usually included under the concept of *workplace* development, it does not address the existing and potential role of the government and public policy in workplace development. Different actors may have very different views on whether public intervention in these issues is jus-

tified at all, and if so, the circumstances in which such intervention is warranted.

It is difficult to consider workplace development a legitimate area of public policy without a broadly accepted view of the role of the state as a *developmental state*. The concept of the developmental state in its narrow and perhaps most frequently used sense refers to an active state-led, nationalist policy designed to modernize the economy and industry, pursued in certain countries in eastern Asian, including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, in the latter half of the 20th century (e.g. Johnson 1982; Woo-Cumings 1999). However, the developmental state concept has also been used in a broader and more general sense, and the state-led modernization policy of certain eastern Asian countries is considered simply one historically specific form of the developmental state. For example, Bagchi (2000) considers the Netherlands of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the earliest well-known example of developmental state.

O’Riain (2000) describes the eastern Asian variant, where the objective of economic modernization and growth overrides political reform, as the authoritarian or bureaucratic version of the developmental state. He takes Ireland as an example of another kind of developmental state, which he describes as the “flexible developmental state”. In this case, too, the central government pursues an active modernization policy but plays a less interventionist role in the market (see also O’Higgins 2002; Smith 2005, 129–133).⁵ The Nordic enabling welfare state (see above) can be considered a third modern type of developmental state: the welfare-state variant of the developmental state. This developmental state is characterized by the active role of the central government in creating a favourable environment for R&D and innovation to promote productivity and secure economic growth, thereby ensuring the funding base for a comprehensive set of welfare services (Benner 2003). It can be assumed that the welfare-state variant, in which matters affecting QWL (such as employee opportunities for learning and development and exerting influence at work) have value in and of themselves (the springboard effect), creates the most favourable conditions for workplace development.

When working life and QWL are being *developed*, developers must have a vision of what may be called the criteria of development; specifically, how development can be achieved and measured. In Van Eijnatten’s (1993, 124–129) book on different approaches of sociotechnical systems design, he makes a distinction between approaches that primarily emphasize organizational *structures* that manifest democratic values and principles and approaches that primarily emphasize social (change) *processes* that manifest democratic values and principles. Development can thus be understood as the promotion of democratic structures and/or processes.

It is possible to plan workplace development activities starting with this dichotomy and then to make choices concerning the relative weights of structures (or, put more broadly, designs) and processes. Extreme emphasis on

⁵ In a similar vein, Block (2008) characterizes the United States as the “networked (and decentralized) developmental state”.

structures/designs would indicate “social engineering”, wherein the planning and implementation of new structures/designs would be based on solutions created by “benevolent” experts. In contrast, an extreme emphasis on processes at the expense of structures could be characterized as self-motivated “self-rationalization” by the workers themselves. In many workplace development approaches, such as sociotechnical systems design, the goal is participative democracy, in which both structures/designs and processes are democratic in a balanced way.

In management and organization studies, there is a long tradition of research that has attempted to explain differences in companies’ performance (financial or operational) and QWL based on differences in the management, organizational and work practices adopted by the companies. According to (1) the universalistic view, it is possible to find certain practices and underlying principles that can be applied to promote operational performance and QWL in a more or less consistent manner. In contrast, (2) the contingency approach is distinguished by its assumption that there are no such generally applicable structures or design-related principles or practices and that it is the *external* fit of these structures, principles or practices with the operating environment and basic strategy choices of a company that is relevant. According to (3) the configurational approach, attention must be paid not only to the external fit but also to the mutual *internal* fit of these practices. (Delery & Doty 1996.) If followed blindly, these three approaches would lead to very different implications for workplace development (for more details, see Alasoini 2011, 31–33). However, the three approaches need not be viewed as mutually exclusive; rather, they can also be viewed as frames of reference that supplement each other and operate to some extent on different conceptual and aggregate levels (Alasoini 2005a, 138–139).

One characteristic of the discussion on structures/designs in workplace development is that the desired structures/designs should either simultaneously facilitate both productivity and QWL or support the realization of the principles of “good work” in some other manner. As stated above, some more or less universal principles or practices cannot be regarded as self-evident starting points in workplace development. Empirical studies that have compared the hypotheses derived from the universalistic approach, the contingency approach and the configurational approach have not provided unambiguous results (e.g. Becker & Gerhart 1996; Cox et al. 2011; Delery & Doty 1996; Ennen & Richter 2010; Gual & Ricart 2001; Macky & Boxall 2007; Paauwe 2004). Taking any ready-made “good work” criteria as a guiding principle is equally problematic. For such criteria to be useful in workplace development, they should be sufficiently specific and detailed; however, lists of criteria are typically much too general for this purpose.

There are other problems with structure/design-oriented workplace development approaches. One such problem concerns the persistence of structures/designs. As the rate of change in working life increases, there is a danger that the functionality and usefulness of any structure/design will become increasingly short-lived. For example, Schienstock (1997; 1999) has proposed

that in the new production models, the organization of work should be regarded not as a fixed system and structure but as a flexible and open process – a kind of a “reflexive state of affairs” that is subject to continuous mutual interaction, redefinition and assessment by the local actors (management and personnel). In addition, the growing knowledge intensity and network-like nature of work narrows the possibilities of the structure/design-oriented approach. Consequently, the object of development expands and becomes more systemic and complex by nature. The object of workplace development has expanded during the last 40–50 years from traditional issues at the shop-floor, workstation and work-unit levels to issues involving entire work organizations, production systems and companies, and even company networks, industrial clusters, regional innovation systems and ecosystems.

An even more fundamental problem is the issue of who has the final right and legitimacy to set targets for the development of structures/designs. Pålshaugen (2009, 240) states, “For one thing, in a capitalistic system based on private property of the means of production, it is in the end left to those who represent the owners of the enterprise to decide *what* they want to obtain by the process of development or innovation”. Pålshaugen represents the position that emphasizes the importance of democratic change processes, even at the expense of democratic structures/designs.

In light of the above, one may well assume that the nature of the processes through which the (more or less) continuous redesign of work and work organizations occurs is becoming increasingly important to the development of working life. In conceptual terms, one can speak of a shift from the development of companies’ production systems or organizations towards the development of their *development systems or organizations* (Colbjørnsen & Falkum 1998; Pålshaugen 2000). In more concrete terms, in modern and rapidly changing working life, there should be increased emphasis in workplace development on enhancing companies’ capacity for anticipation and learning, introducing new tools and methods for development, and organizing development work in an efficient manner.

2.3 Workplace development programme

Development programmes have been a widely used soft form of regulation to promote the development of working life in different countries. A “workplace development programme” is understood here to mean three things: *first*, development is guided by a shared framework that applies to several work organizations simultaneously; *second*, the content of the framework has been accepted by the management and staff of the work organizations in question and by other major stakeholder groups, such as the central government (or other policy-makers), social partners, and researchers, consultants and other experts; and *third*, the involved work organizations engage in exchange of information, interaction and cooperation (Alasoini 2008, 63). This definition is quite broad, and programmes may differ significantly from one another with regard to these three key features, i.e. the conceptual framework, the number

of stakeholders and participating work organizations, and inter-organizational communication. Programmes may also differ from each other in many other respects (e.g. Gustavsen 2006).

“Development projects” are the typical tools of workplace development programmes which allow programmes to pursue their objectives. For example, project targets can include improvements in productivity and QWL and reinforcement of the development structures of participating organizations; creation of “good practices”; the introduction of new development methods; the emergence of new cooperative relations; or increased expertise in workplace development and working life research. However, the present study is *not* primarily interested in issues of the *project* level.

Different stakeholders have different roles in workplace development programmes. These roles can be examined using the triple helix concept, which is derived from innovation research. This concept refers to the view that the most effective way to generate new innovative solutions is based on learning and the enrichment of knowledge through cooperation between industry, universities and government (for more details, see Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000; Tuunainen 2004).

The triple helix concept primarily describes the industrial environment, with a focus on technological innovations. However, in the case of workplace innovations, a broader framework comprising more parties and more interactive relationships is usually needed. The *expanded* triple helix model that is characteristic of workplace development differs from the traditional, narrower model in at least four ways (Alasoini et al. 2005b; Ramstad 2005a; 2008; 2011). *First*, the expanded model includes not only companies but also public-sector workplaces and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Indeed, the public sector is on average ahead of the private sector in terms of adopting many new organizational and human resource management practices. *Second*, in addition to universities and research institutes, the expanded model includes other educational institutions and intermediate organizations, such as consultancies and development agencies. Workplace innovations are context-dependent, and their promotion depends on external experts that can commit to long-term cooperative relations with businesses and can communicate effectively with management and personnel on the basis of shared tacit knowledge. *Third*, the expanded triple helix concept includes labour market organizations as well as public authorities. The potential for promoting workplace innovations is crucially dependent on how institutionalized industrial relations are and how capable labour market organizations are to engage in open dialogue. *Finally*, whereas the traditional triple helix model discusses three types of relationships, the expanded model addresses the importance of a more varied range of relationships.

Workplace development programmes can at best play the role of an *institutional entrepreneur*. The concept of institutional entrepreneur refers to change agents who initiate changes that break with the prevailing institutional logic within a given context by actively participating in the implementation of these changes through the active mobilization of resources (Battilana et al.

2009; Garud et al. 2007; Weik 2011). Workplace development programmes represent a collective or distributed agency that typically comprises the parties involved in expanded triple helix cooperation.

In recent years, Finland has devoted more effort than most other developed industrial countries to workplace development. The increase in workplace development activities has been simultaneously promoted by several “push” and “pull” factors in Finland. One “push” factor is Finland’s long tradition in both bipartite cooperation between various labour market organizations and in tripartite cooperation between labour market organizations and public authorities. In the aftermath of the recession of the early 1990s, central employer associations and trade unions were well prepared to expand their cooperation with public authorities into workplace development issues. Another contributing “push” factor is the upsurge, beginning in the early 1980s, in working life research and in particular the increase of action-oriented working life research in universities and research institutes. The increased research in this area was a result of improved research financing opportunities coupled with the culmination of problems in QWL (e.g. low job satisfaction, poor work ability and early retirement), as well as the emergence of new approaches. New approaches included, for example, participatory action research, sociotechnical systems design, organization development (OD), developmental work research, process management and strategic human resource management (Kasvio 1991; Kauppinen & Lahtonen 1994; Ramstad & Alasoini 2006). A third “push” factor worth mentioning is the strong and prevalent conviction in Finland that research, R&D activities and high levels of education are key to a nation’s competitiveness. From an early stage, Finland took a systematic approach to adopting a national innovation system as the framework for its science and technology policies (Miettinen 2002). However, it was only in the 2000s that the promotion of workplace innovation became a generally recognized sector within mainstream innovation policy (Aho et al. 2008; Alasoini 2011; 2012; Van der Veen et al. 2012; Veugelers et al. 2009).

Certain “pull” factors also fostered the rise of workplace development in Finland in the 1990s. Specifically, this rise was not so much an attempt to improve QWL or workplace democracy as a “corrective measure” to improve Finnish companies’ poor economic performance in the aftermath of the recession. At this time, there was a motivation to find an explanation for companies’ productivity and competitiveness problems in their outdated operating practices. This view was reinforced by tougher international competition as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union market that had been perceived as “easy” for Finnish companies; incompetent investments in new technologies in the pre-recession years; and the breakthrough of process management. In particular, many principles of lean production, including the streamlining of processes, leaner and flatter organization structures, teamwork and continuous improvement (e.g. Womack & Jones 1996), fell on fertile ground in Finland. Application of these principles did not require significant investments by companies recovering from the recession. The rational rhetoric of lean production also meshed well with the Finnish management culture, and its eclectic nature

enabled the simultaneous promotion of goals that were also important to employees and trade unions.

From the companies' perspective, the legitimization of workplace development supported by public funding was enhanced by companies' increased focus on core competence as a result of the globalization of the economy and a desire to cut costs. Companies reduced expert resources that were not part of their core activities, which increased company interest in external research, development and training resources and cooperation. Management consultation thus experienced a period of rapid growth in Finland in the 1990s (Ainamo & Tienari 2002). The competence and willingness of universities and research institutes to work with companies also increased, as indicated above.

The National Productivity Programme that was launched in 1993 on the initiative of labour market organizations may be regarded as the first actual national-level workplace development programme in Finland. In 1996, the National Productivity Programme was complemented by the National Workplace Development Programme TYKE, which was launched by Prime Minister Lipponen's first government. TYKE was initially established for a four-year period, but Prime Minister Lipponen's second government extended the programme by an additional four years. TYKE and the National Productivity Programme were implemented in parallel until the end of 2003. Prime Minister Lipponen's second government also launched the four-year Well-Being at Work Programme in 2000. The Ministry of Labour was responsible for the practical implementation of all three programmes, together with the labour market partners and certain other ministries and providers of research funding. Programmes in effect in the early 2000s also included the National Programme for Ageing Workers (1998–2002) (although this programme was more in the nature of a campaign compared with the programmes cited earlier) and certain European Social Fund programmes, which to some extent also included workplace development.

To continue the work of the TYKE programme and the National Productivity Programme, the Ministry of Labour launched the new Workplace Development Programme TYKES in 2004. TYKES was initially established for six years but was later continued for an additional year. The TYKES programme concluded at the end of 2010. In March 2008, the implementation of this programme was transferred to Tekes (the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation).⁶ During 1996–2010, more than 1,800 projects were funded through the TYKE and TYKES programmes, accounting for approximately EUR 106 million of public funding. A clear majority of the projects (more than 1,500) comprised development projects started by workplace initiatives. Typical targets of these projects included work processes, organization of work, supervisory tasks, work community, working methods and business-to-business networks. The objective of the projects was to improve both labour productivity and QWL simultaneously at the workplace. Nearly 350,000 people took part in projects at workplaces, and projects were implemented in all sectors and at workplaces of all sizes across the country. Other national pro-

⁶ The Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation since the beginning of 2014.

grammes in the early 2000s that concerned working life development in Finland were the Veto Programme coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2003–07), which was primarily a follow-up to the National Programme for Ageing Workers and the Well-being at Work programme; the KESTO programme coordinated by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2004–07); and the Ministry of Education’s Noste Programme (2003–09). In addition, the European Social Fund continued to fund workplace development through some of its programmes.

In 2011, Prime Minister Katainen’s government decided to draw up a National Working Life Development Strategy for Finland. The strategy was prepared by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy in cooperation with other ministries and labour market partners. The strategy was completed in spring 2012, and its ambitious vision is that Finland will have the best working life in Europe in 2020 (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2012). The Ministry established the Working Life 2020 project in 2012 to promote the implementation of this strategy.

As part of this strategy, Tekes launched a new programme entitled “Liideri – Business, Productivity and Joy at Work” in 2012. Liideri is a programme for business development whereby companies renew their operations by developing management and forms of working and actively utilizing the skills and competences of their personnel. On the one hand, Liideri is a follow-up programme to the TYKE and TYKES programmes; on the other hand, the purpose of Liideri is to be a “next-generation” workplace development programme that represents an approach consistent with a broad-based innovation policy, i.e. the new innovation policy approach adopted by Prime Minister Vanhanen’s second government in 2008 (Alasoini 2012; 2015). At the project level, this indicates a link between traditional objectives and targets in workplace development, such as labour productivity, QWL and well-being at work, and objectives and targets related to the development of products, services and business operations. Other Tekes programmes in addition to the Liideri programme also include aspects of workplace development.

Even this short review suffices to show that Finnish working life has been the object of active programme-based development in recent years. Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany compose the group of European countries in which working life has been developed most actively and with the largest financial investments through various programmes implemented during the last 20 or so years. Other European countries whose national policies include workplace development or the promotion of workplace innovations or in which dedicated programmes or networks have emerged around these issues include Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, among others. Remarkable features of European-level comparisons include the clear division between the more active north and the more passive south and the scarcity or complete absence of development actions in the main part of the so-called new member states of the European Union. (Brödner & Latniak 2003; Business Decisions Limited 2000; Eeckelaert et al. 2012.)

2.4 Workplace innovation

The concept of innovation has been discussed thoroughly elsewhere in the research literature (e.g. Edquist et al. 2001; Fagerberg et al. 2005; Tidd et al. 2001). Commonly used typologies that are found in the literature include, among others, divisions between incremental and radical innovations; divisions between product, service and process innovations; and divisions between technological and non-technological (or social or organizational) innovations. These concepts may be used somewhat differently by different authors. However, this section addresses this discussion only to the extent necessary to clarify the concept of workplace innovation.

The concept of workplace innovation has been used in English texts in free form and in many different ways. It is often equated with concepts such as “high-performance”, “high-involvement” or “high-commitment” work systems/organizations. For example, the empirical research of Kalmi and Kauhanen (2008) considers self-managed teams, broad information-sharing, training paid for by the employer and incentive pay to be examples of workplace innovation. Beblavý et al. (2012) also provide a list of workplace innovations, including flexi-time; teleworking; alternative payment schemes; flat hierarchies; employee empowerment and autonomy; task rotation and multi-skilling; and teamwork and team autonomy.

Other researchers have endeavoured to give a more specific content to the concept of workplace innovation. Pot (2011, 404–405) defines workplace innovation as “the implementation of new and combined interventions in the fields of work organisation, human resource management and supportive technologies”. In a latter publication, he, together with a European group of experts, clarified his definition by characterizing workplace innovations “as strategically induced and participatory adopted changes in an organisation’s practice of managing, organising and deploying human and non-human resources that lead to simultaneously improved organisational performance and improved quality of working life” (Eeckelaert et al. 2012, 8). The concept of workplace innovation is thus defined clearly narrower than, for example, that of non-technological innovation or social innovation (for a more comprehensive discussion on the concept of workplace innovation in research literature, see Kesselring et al. 2014).

The concept of workplace innovation was used in the same spirit in the TYKE and TYKES programmes. In my view (Alasoini 2005b, 59–63), the most important aspect of workplace innovation is not a division between technological and social innovations or technological and organizational process innovations but rather the perspective from which the benefit of an innovation is assessed and the manner in which an innovation is expected to be achieved.

In my view, workplace development in general encompasses certain special fundamental values, which may not be emphasized in quite the same way in traditional technology-oriented innovation policy (*ibid.*). These values focus in particular on the objectives, implementation methods and publicity of the results of various measures, which are described below.

Concerning *objectives*, a simultaneous improvement in productivity and QWL is one of the fundamental premises of workplace development (i.e. the development objectives consider the interests of staff and management in equal measures). This premise is not as important in traditional technology-oriented innovation policy.

Concerning *implementation methods*, workplace staff should have opportunities to participate in the planning of development measures and in their implementation on equal footing with management. This participation is important for two reasons: first, it allows the staff to have an influence on the development objectives (see above). Second, many change processes in working life are not anticipated but emergent, i.e. the changes arise more or less spontaneously from local innovations within work communities. This premise is also not as important in traditional technology-oriented innovation policy.

Concerning *the publicity of results*, the results of measures are expected to be openly available in workplace development. Project results and the new practices generated based on them are not typically transferable from one workplace to another or immediately available for use by competitors because they are highly dependent on context. The knowledge required to successfully implement these practices cannot be formalized to the same extent as, for instance, new product or production technologies; rather, this understanding relies more on experience-based tacit knowledge. In traditional technology-oriented innovation policy, the results of measures related to product and production technology solutions at individual companies often come within the sphere of business secrets and consequently cannot be published without risking damage to a company's competitive position.

According to the definition provided in my earlier work (Alasoini 2011, 25), the concept of workplace innovation refers to collaboratively *constructed* changes in a company's organizational and management practices that lead to simultaneous improvements in productivity and QWL and that also support other types of innovation. Underlying workplace innovations may include, for example, technological changes, changes in the workplace's network relations, or changes in labour and employment relations, which are mediated through changes in organizational and management practices.

This kind of constructed view of innovation, which is adopted in this study, has been influenced by, among others, Pettigrew's (1987) contextual and processual approach to organizational change (see also Martens et al. 2006).⁷ According to this approach, workplace innovations should be viewed as three-dimensional phenomena (Table 3). Their *content* describes the features included in the new practice. The *process* describes how the new practice is created and who participates in its creation. For example, process describes whether a wide range of information sources and diverse knowhow were uti-

⁷ The approach adopted in this dissertation differs in two important respects from the approach adopted in the OECD's Oslo Manual concerning "organizational innovation" (OECD 2005, 51–52). First, the Oslo Manual does not require that organizational innovation leads to improvements in *both* productivity and QWL. Second, according to the Oslo Manual, the newly implemented methods in the firm's business practices, workplace organization or external relations are the result of strategic decisions by management.

lized in creating the new practice. The third dimension refers to the *context*, i.e. the purpose for which the new practice was created. For example, will the relevant actors adopt a shared view of the purpose of the new practice?

Table 3. The three dimensions of workplace innovation (Alasoini, 2011, 35).

Content (What?)	⇒	The new practice contains certain properties that enable improvements to the current state of affairs.
Process (How?)	⇒	The new practice was created in a process characterized by broad participation of personnel and, when necessary, customers, which enabled broad-based utilization of expertise in designing and implementing solutions.
Context (Why?)	⇒	The new practice was created in a context that through extensive interaction between management, personnel and, when necessary, customers, has enabled the emergence of a shared understanding of the purposes of solutions.

Traditional definitions of innovation have focused mainly on content, i.e. *what* has been created. However, the process is also of great importance, as explained above. Many empirical studies support the view that, for example, staff participation in change and the operation of middle- and lower-level management and labour-management cooperation in the event of change are often crucial to the successful introduction of new practices (e.g. Alasoini & Heikkilä 1999; Black & Lynch 2001; 2004; Coyle-Shapiro 1999; Nielsen & Randall 2012; Norrgren et al. 1996; Oudhuis & Tengblad 2013; Pot 2011; Ramstad 2009b; 2014).

The third dimension, the context, refers here above all to a shared understanding between management and staff regarding the reasons for the solutions. Shared understanding also refers to approval. For example, Nishi et al. (2008) show in their empirical study that employees' attitudes towards the same HR practices may vary depending on their perceptions of the motives for the introduction of such practices in workplaces. In their study, employee views affected both their actions and the perceived impact of the new practices. The impacts of new HR practices were viewed as more positive in cases in which employees believed that the practices were motivated by management's desire to improve service quality or employee well-being compared with situations in which management was perceived as being motivated primarily by cost reduction goals or the exploitation of employees.

It is easy to see that the questions of "how" and "why" are closely related. Beer et al. (1990) talk of a programmatic change strategy in which the attention is focused exclusively on formal structures and systems ("what" questions) and the implementation of the change and the introduction of new practices is guided by senior management's straightforward top-down control. The achievement of a shared understanding and acceptance by employees in such a

strategy is based mainly on dissemination of information to employees and/or their training. In contrast, in more inclusive strategies, a shared understanding and employee acceptance are facilitated by employees' role as an active agent in the change and in the subsequent process of learning that is an integral part of the change process itself. Beer et al. use the concept of the "fallacy of programmatic change" to explain why so many programmatic change strategies fail, i.e. because too little attention was paid to the important question of "why" (cf. also Biron et al. 2010; Coyle-Shapiro 1999; Greasley & Edwards 2015; Lundgren & Skott 2003; Nielsen et al. 2010; Norrger et al. 1996).

2.5 Relevance of the research task

Sections 2.1 and 2.3 described workplace development programmes and the government's opportunities to influence working life change through different regulatory means. Workplace development programmes are a widely used soft form of regulation, which generally utilize direct and intermediate-stage measures (see Table 1). This section analyses why workplace development programmes are important and why they are a legitimate object of research. This section is designed to explain why the research task is relevant. The relevance of individual research questions that relate to the research task will be examined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

The purpose of workplace development programmes is to promote desired lines of development in working life, such as improvements in productivity and QWL, and to produce innovations that renew working life in a planned, systematic and organized manner based on broad cooperation between different types of actors. Workplace development *programmes* do not basically aim (only) at micro-level (company- or organization-level) changes; it is possible to implement micro-level changes through individual workplace development *projects* as well. Clearly distinguishable positive externalities, which appear at best as cumulative innovations, can be considered minimum targets of any programme. Cumulative innovations can in turn lead to meso-level changes among a larger number of work organizations or, at most, to macro-level changes. Changes of the macro level can be examined, for example, through the concept of a "system" or a "regime".

This section presents a theoretical framework for analysing the possibility of working life change supported by workplace development programmes in three consecutive steps. *First*, I conceptualize working life as an institutionalized entity by using concepts and insights deriving from sociomaterialistic approach. *Second*, I combine these concepts and insights with neo-institutional theory. *Third*, I apply the multi-level perspective on transitions that distinguishes three analytical levels.

By using a framework developed originally by Hughes (Leonardi & Barley 2010; Shields 2007), it is possible to examine also working life (e.g. at the national, regional, sectoral or industry level) as an entity that comprises a number of "technological systems". These systems concern, for example, how work is led, managed and organized; how decisions about the terms and conditions

of employment are made; how employees' skills and competences at work are developed; how employees' health is protected; and how their well-being at work is promoted. The systems comprise a number of intertwining and complex cultural, social and technological phenomena whose mutual interaction aims at particular outcomes. Different institutions, organizations and professions play an important role in the development of technological systems. Technological systems are relatively open to changes in the early stages of their development but become increasingly institutionalized as they mature (i.e. as they grow and become more complex), making it increasingly difficult to reform them. Hughes describes "a technological momentum" phase, after which the system starts to function like material determinants of social reality. Technological momentum does not mean that there is not any more leeway within a technological system for different solutions at the individual work-station, workplace, company or company-to-company network levels.

It is possible to draw three main conclusions from the above sociomaterialistic framework (e.g. Abildgaard & Nickelsen 2013; Leonardi & Barley 2010; Orlikowski & Scott 2008) regarding the potential to change and reform working life. *First*, working life and all technological systems that influence it become increasingly institutionalized as they mature and begin to function like any material phenomenon. "Working life", which is here regarded as an object of change and reform, refers to working life that was developed according to the needs and logic of an advanced industrial society. For example, we can argue that in Finland the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s represent a period of strong institutionalization of the "working life of the industrial era". *Second*, a highly institutionalized working life and its technological systems enable very different manifestations. The lower the level of the unit in question, the greater the leeway. The *third* conclusion concerns the potential to change working life. The more mature the system, the more difficult it is to change the system from the bottom up. It is difficult to change a mature and institutionalized system from the level of an individual work organization or any individual actor or through individual projects.

To bring about a change in a highly institutionalized working life and its technological systems, there are two major strategic options available. The first of these is to build as large a coalition as possible, including key institutions and organizations, in support of change. A large coalition is in many cases necessary but not sufficient for success. As Leonardi and Barley (2010, 39) note, the institutional dynamics of mature systems typically strive to maintain the status quo rather than to change it (or at least to avoid radical change). Sociological research has distinguished different mechanisms of institutional isomorphism based on the collective rationality that encourages institutional actors (e.g. companies, public institutions, labour market organizations, research units, educational units, and professional or other expert networks) to act in a consistent manner and to rule out alternative manners (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Paauwe 2004). The second strategy is to construct a new competing solution to the existing technological system. This requires a paradigmatic re-thinking. For example, in the case of working life

change, this could entail a new conception of a new kind of “working life of the post-industrial era”.

Workplace development programmes can be considered means to change and reform working life that optimally combine both strategic options, i.e., the building of broad coalitions and the search for new paradigmatic solutions. Coalition building is essentially a *political* task. The programme owners must have the capacity to attract various stakeholders, for example, by creating new trust and cooperative relations or by developing existing relations. The search for new paradigmatic alternatives is primarily an *explorative* task in which research can play an important role.⁸

To effectively perform both the political task and the explorative task and to play the role of an institutional entrepreneur, a programme must solve, or at least avoid, what in social research literature has been called the “paradox of embedded agency” (e.g. Battilana et al. 2009; Garud et al. 2007; Weik 2011). This paradox refers to the tension between institutional determinants and agency. How can workplace development programmes, which typically include the parties involved in the expanded triple helix model and typically play a key role in the prevailing technological systems, become change agents that are capable and – more importantly – motivated to initiate changes that break with the institutional logic of these systems and to actively participate in the implementation of these changes?

Geels and Schot (2007) have developed a three-tier framework for understanding sociotechnical transitions that combines neo-institutional theory with structuration theory, evolutionary economics, and science and technology studies, among others. This framework distinguishes three levels of heuristic, analytical concepts: niche-innovations, sociotechnical regimes and sociotechnical landscape. Here, “sociotechnical” refers to the co-evolution of social and technological relationships. Sociotechnical transitions refer to changes from one sociotechnical regime to another. This framework is applied to working life changes below.

As described above, we can hypothesize that working life comprises a number of subsystems. By applying the framework of Geels and Schot, the cognitive deep structures that underlie these subsystems can be analysed as *sociotechnical regimes*. The sociotechnical regime concept refers to shared cognitive routines in a broad community of social groups and the alignment of activities and explained patterned development along sociotechnical trajectories (Geels 2011, 31; Geels & Schot 2007, 399–400).

Sociotechnical transitions occur through interaction between new niche-innovations, external pressures that landscape changes bring to bear on existing regimes, and internal tensions within the regimes. Under normal conditions, sociotechnical regimes provide strong structuration characterized by stabilized cognitive rules and established social networks, which makes it diffi-

⁸ In a similar vein, in their model of the process of institutional entrepreneurship, Battilana et al. (2009, 86–87) distinguish two crucial factors of divergent change implementation, namely “creation of a vision for divergent change” (which refers to the explorative task) and “mobilization of allies behind the vision” (which refers to the political task).

cult to deviate from mainstream practice. In contrast, niche-innovations experience weak structuration characterized by poorly articulated cognitive structures and small and precarious social networks. Competition between niche-innovations and their underlying networks and the prevailing sociotechnical regimes and institutionalized mainstream practices is based not only on the features of the niche-innovations and mainstream practices but also on the features of the institutional environments in which they operate. For this reason, it is difficult even for the most promising niche-innovations to develop into mainstream practices without simultaneous and favourable landscape changes and/or simultaneous opening up of the prevailing regimes to changes. According to Geels and Schot (2007, 406), the regimes are never fully impervious to change but can be described under normal conditions as “dynamically stable”.

Geels and Schot distinguish five alternative transition pathways of sociotechnical regimes (Table 4). The first of these is *reproduction*. In the absence of any external landscape pressure to change, the regime reproduces itself only through incremental changes despite the availability of advanced radical niche-innovation. The second line of development can be described as *reconfiguration*. This pathway differs from the previous pathway in that the available niche-innovations are in a symbiotic relation to the prevailing regime, which facilitates their adoption by the regime. However, their adoption requires changes in the regime architecture. In *transformation*, a gradual but permanent change in the landscape in the absence of an advanced niche-innovation forces the regime to renew itself. Change happens slowly, but as it matures, it leads to a distinctly new kind of development path. Although no single promising niche-innovation exists in transformation, the regime may nonetheless be inspired, albeit in a watered-down form, by niche-innovations that are still in their germ form (Geels 2011, 32). In *substitution*, the regime faces strong external landscape pressure in a situation in which radical niche-innovations are available. Consequently, a new kind of regime replaces the former. The fifth potential pathway is *de-alignment and re-alignment*. It differs from the previous pathway in that radical niche-innovations do not initially exist, but they develop through experimentation and competition. The former regime gradually collapses, and the new regime is able to emerge only after the period of experimentation and competition.

Table 4. Typology of transition pathways (adapted from Geels & Schot 2007).

	Reproduction	Reconfiguration	Transformation	Substitution	De-alignment and re-alignment
External landscape pressure for change	No	Low	Moderate	Much	Much
Availability of radical niche-innovation	Yes or no	Yes	No	Yes	Not in the beginning, but multiple competing innovations emerge
Possibility of breakthrough for such innovation	Little chance	Existing symbiotic innovations are adopted by the regime	No	An existing innovation breaks through	One of the emerging innovations breaks through after experimentation and competition
Regime transition pathway	Incremental change within existing trajectory	Substantial change in architecture	Cumulative adjustments and reorientation towards new trajectory	Replacement of the old regime with a new one	Erosion of the old regime, emerging of a new regime after a period of time
Key actors in transition	Regime actors	Regime actors and suppliers of the component niche-innovations	Regime actors and outside pressure groups	Suppliers of the niche-innovation	Suppliers of the emerging niche-innovations

The three-level framework helps to deepen our understanding of why the modification of practices in working life is so difficult through the actions of individual work organizations and other individual actors or even networks of these actors alone. In addition, this framework provides conceptual tools to increase understanding of the conditions in which change is possible.

Workplace development programmes can be considered a soft form of regulation that are usually launched and governed by key regime actors with an aim to support successful sociotechnical transitions. Programmes can play a variety of roles, depending on the type of transition pathway. Reproduction and reconfiguration do not necessarily require the support of an in-depth search for new solutions, which means that programmes can be very development-oriented. However, reconfiguration requires more active network building to support successful change compared with reproduction. In transformation, new development paths must be actively sought, which emphasizes the role of research and other forms of exploration. Successful transformation also requires a significant investment in the construction of networks and cooperative relations. In substitution, programmes may not play any role because niche-innovations break through regardless of the regime actors. Simi-

larly, in de-alignment and re-alignment, producers of the breakthrough niche-innovation are most active during the transition. However, regime actors may nonetheless be motivated to support experimentation with potential new solutions in cooperation with the underlying networks of these solutions in the event of the dissolution of the former regime.

Workplace development programmes operate at a different level than stand-alone workplace development projects do. This means that the effectiveness of workplace development programmes should be assessed according to different criteria. To better understand and enhance the social effectiveness of these programmes (e.g. to bring about cumulative innovations at the meso level and to promote change at the macro level), it is important to consider how programmes should be built and implemented to enable them to achieve these goals. This is also my justification for the scientific and practical relevance of this study.

2.6 Positioning the study in the field of research

This study is interested in programme-level issues, long-term effectiveness of programmes and key conditions for the successful renewal of working life through the implementation of programmes. As stated in Chapter 1, mainstream evaluation studies of individual workplace development programmes and mainstream research literature on project management only tangentially touch on the research questions of this study. Table 5 shows six fields of research that have made the most significant contributions to the research questions of this study and/or to which this study seeks to make a contribution.

Table 5. Linkages of this study to different fields of research.

Field of research	Selected key literature
Comparative descriptions and analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes	e.g. Ashton et al. 2003; Bamps & Beckmans 2005; Brödner & Latniak 2003; Business Decisions Limited 2000; Cole 1989; Den Hertog & Schröder 1989; Eeckelaert et al. 2012; Ennals & Gustavsen 1999; Gallagher 2001; Gustavsen 2007; Gustavsen et al. 2001; Naschold 1994a; 1994b; Sogge & Skulberg 2007; Totterdill et al. 2002; 2009
Comprehensive analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes in individual countries	e.g. Arnkil 2004; Brulin & Svensson 2012; Cole 1989; Fricke 1994; 1997; 2003; Gustavsen (several publications); Levin (ed.) 2002; Naschold 1993; Oehlke 2001; Qvale 2002; Riegler 2008
Studies on the diffusion of workplace and other innovations	e.g. Ansari et al. 2010; Arnkil 2008; Business Decisions Limited 2002; Cole 1989; 1993; Gustavsen (several publications); Kennedy & Fiss 2009; Lillrank 1995; Rogers 2003; Steiber 2012; Steiber & Alänge 2013
Studies on learning networks	e.g. Bessant et al. 2012; Bessant & Tsekouras 2001; Birkinshaw et al. 2007; Bottrup 2005; Ekman et al. 2011; Gustavsen (several publications); Knight 2002; Levin (ed.) 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Poell et al. 2000; Ramstad 2009a; Romano & Secundo (eds.) 2009; Tell 2001; Toiviainen 2003; Vesalainen & Strömmer 1999
Studies on practice–performance links	e.g. Becker & Gerhart 1996; Beugelsdijk 2008; Black & Lynch 2001; Cox et al. 2011; Delery & Doty 1996; Ennen & Richter 2010; Gual & Ricart 2001; Hesketh & Fleetwood 2006; Laursen & Foss 2003; Macky & Boxall 2007; Messersmith & Guthrie 2010; Nielsen & Lundvall 2007; Nielsen et al. 2012; Paauwe 2004; Pot 2011; Ramstad 2008; 2009b; 2014; Shipton et al. 2005; Van de Voorde et al. 2012
Studies on conditions for institutional and social change	e.g. Battilana et al. 2009; Beckert 2010; Dacin et al. 2002; DiMaggio 1988; DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Garud et al. 2007; Geels 2011; Geels & Schot 2007; Greenwood & Hinings 1996; Leonardi & Barley 2010; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Oliver 1992; Orlikowski & Scott 2008; Weik 2011

Various comparative presentations of workplace development programmes implemented in different countries over the years are often rich in content but thus far mainly descriptive in nature (see Section 3.2.1). Therefore, this study, with its focus on workplace development programmes and their ability to change and reform working life, does not have many predecessors in academic research literature. It is understandable that the previous literature and debate on the subject focused mainly on countries with the most extensive history of such programmes, such as Norway, Sweden and Germany. Comprehensive analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes conducted in these countries also form the most important basis for the goal setting of this study. The following is a brief review of the previous academic discussion on

the conditions under which workplace development programmes can become a vehicle for working life change.

Cole's (1989) influential work, *Strategies for Learning*, is not on workplace development programmes as such. Rather, it addresses the spread of small-group activities in three industrial nations between the 1960s and mid-1980s. Cole considers why the US companies moved more slowly and less effectively in adopting small-group activities compared with Swedish and, especially, Japanese companies. The problem setting and starting point in *Strategies for Learning* relate to those of this study in the sense that they adopt a profoundly macro-level approach that emphasizes the influence of the evolution of national infrastructures on the diffusion of organizational innovations such as self-managing teams and quality circles. According to Cole's analysis, the central organizational characteristics of national infrastructures that affected the diffusion of small-group activities in these three countries included top management support in companies; type of organization and structural form of the intermediary agency; mode of company participation in dissemination activities; the principal dissemination strategy; the role of consulting activities in support of dissemination; and the extent of engineering involvement.

Naschold's (1994a; 1994b) benchmarking study on six national workplace development strategies is still the most ambitious effort to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of national programmes using a systematic conceptual framework. Naschold's analysis draws heavily on his own experiences as an evaluator of Swedish and Norwegian development programmes in the early 1990s. With regard to observations and conclusions concerning certain other countries (e.g. Japan and the USA), he resorts mainly to Cole's analysis. Based on certain pre-given assumptions and empirical findings derived from the benchmarking study, Naschold constructs a "best practice" model of national development strategies that contains six items. A revised version of the Naschold model will be used as a conceptual framework for the comparison of national and regional workplace development strategies in this study (see Section 3.2.3).

Many of Fricke's writings have analysed reasons for the successes and, especially, failures of workplace development programmes, with a focus on German experiences (e.g. Fricke 1994; 1997; 2003). According to Fricke, the main shortcomings of German programmes over the years include a lack of democratic forms of participation guiding project contents, poor and obsolete strategies of transfer, and undeveloped mechanisms for policy learning. Three of Fricke's observations in particular have had a major influence on the launch and design of learning network activity in the TYKES programme and, as such, on research questions 2.1 and 2.2 of this study. First, for social sciences to play a role in change processes in working life, they should adopt a problem-driven, participatory and constructive approach rather than the prevailing "analytical-descriptive" approaches to reality. Second, transfer processes should be designed such that these processes are a component of the work reform project itself, and not separate processes that occur later. Third, programmes should promote innovative developments in networks and alliances that extend be-

yond the borders of individual companies. Other German researchers who have conducted thorough and critical, but to some extent less polemic, analyses of the successes and failures of German programmes include Oehlke (2001) and Riegler (2008).

Qvale (2002) provides a detailed analysis of the reasons why working life reform has not reached critical mass, even in Norway, which has the longest history of programme-based workplace development activities thus far. He summarizes a number of assumptions that guided workplace development in Norway at the outset, i.e. the 1960s, and highlights the importance of four central factors that he deems the main obstacles to wider reform. These factors include the less-than-expected “technology push” towards more flexible and decentralized forms of work organization; stronger-than-expected resistance from management to new forms of work organization; problems with the horizontal diffusion of field experiments through traditional transfer models; and the institutional rigidity of the educational system, as well as institutional tensions between the industrial relations system, industrial policy actors, and research and educational systems. Qvale also discusses potential tensions that exist in goal setting in workplace development reforms, which relate to the extent to which reforms are viewed as democratization efforts *vis-à-vis* productivity and innovation are viewed as superior objectives in the reforms.

Gustavsen has probably been the most influential and internationally best-known figure in Nordic working life development during the last 30 or so years, due both to his several publications on the subject and to his role as a leader and evaluator of many prominent Norwegian and Swedish initiatives. He has played an especially pivotal role in the development of participatory, dialogical and network-based approaches to overcome the “problem of diffusion”. Gustavsen has introduced several new concepts into the discourse of workplace development that have become widely known in Finland and have influenced the design of many Finnish workplace development projects and programmes. For example, Gustavsen’s views on “generative mechanisms” and the need to question the dualism between change (creation) and diffusion (reception) have served as important inspirations for the adoption of network-based forms of project activity in the Finnish TYKE and TYKES programmes (e.g. Gustavsen 1996; Gustavsen et al. 2001). In this way, the entirety of Gustavsen’s extensive publishing has greatly influenced the design of research questions 2.1 and 2.2 of this study.

Levin’s (2002) edited work *Researching Enterprise Development* includes one of the richest collections of descriptions and analyses of network-based projects that were conducted within a workplace development programme. In the work, researcher groups that participated in the seven “modules” (development coalitions) of the Norwegian Enterprise Development 2000 programme tell stories of researchers working together with a group of companies. The articles focus on the challenges of multi-actor interaction and cooperation between researchers and companies and between different fields of science *within* the coalitions, as well as the programme’s efforts to bring about genuine interaction and cooperation *between* the coalitions. The experiences

of the modules served as important sources of inspiration for the planning of learning network projects in the TYKES programme and as reference points for the monitoring and evaluation of these projects (e.g. Alasoini 2006; see also Section 5.1.4).

Brulin and Svensson (2012) examine the means by which public development programmes are usually conducted in their work *Managing Sustainable Development Programmes*. Focusing on the experiences of the EU Structural Fund programmes in Sweden, they present strong criticism of traditional programme implementation, which is based on linear programme logic and emphasizes top-down planning and short-term results. Much in the same spirit as previous Norwegian writers, Brulin and Svensson suggest a new framework comprising three mechanisms to improve the ability of programmes to produce more sustainable results. The authors' three mechanisms for sustainable change in programmes and large-scale projects are active ownership and steering, collaboration between different actors and the dynamics of developmental learning. Their work has acted as an important frame of reference for modelling workplace development programmes as dual systems (research question 2.1), as well as for analysing the results of learning network projects (research question 2.2).

Four other fields of research that have had the greatest influence on this study are as follows: the diffusion of workplace and other innovations; learning networks; the links between various company- or workplace-level practices and performance in terms of productivity, innovation and/or QWL; and conditions for institutional and social change. Research regarding conditions for institutional and social change is closely associated with the main task of the study, i.e. the identification of the conditions under which workplace development programmes can change and reform working life for the better. This study seeks to provide new insights to the discussion on working life change and the potential of workplace development programmes to act as agents of change based primarily on neo-institutional theory and research. Neo-institutionalism focuses on developing a sociological view of institutions. This approach starts with an assumption that institutions operate and interact with each other in an environment in which the main goals of an institution are survival and the establishment of legitimacy (Greenwood & Hinings 1996, 1022–1023). A neo-institutional perspective can be seen in this study, particularly in the discussions on sociotechnical transition pathways, mechanisms of institutional isomorphism, institutional entrepreneurship and embedded agency.

3. Research design

This chapter presents the research design. Research design comprises the plan for conducting the research and involves the intersection of the philosophical worldview that guides the study, selected strategies of inquiry and specific research methods (e.g. Creswell 2008, 3–21). In line with the design science intent of this study (see Chapter 1), the research is guided by a *pragmatic worldview*, follows qualitative strategies of inquiry and uses qualitative research methods. The choice of case studies as the primary means of research and the use of qualitative methods, such as interviews and analyses of the literature, derive from the nature of the research task and not from the commitment of the researcher to any one system of philosophy and reality. These choices are justified based on the scant existence of research of this kind on workplace development programmes, which calls for a better understanding of such programmes in the form of explanatory qualitative research. This study is also influenced by *social constructivism*. For example, the social constructivist worldview is seen in the concept of workplace innovation adopted in this study (see Section 2.4), the manner in which the external effects of development projects are discussed in the form of generative ideas (see Section 4.2) and the manner in which the concept of programme theory is used and understood (see Section 5.1.5).

In the first section (3.1), the research task and questions are set. The following two sections (3.2–3.3) describe the relevance, background and conceptual framework used in the analysis of the research questions. Section 3.4 presents the research articles. The last section (3.5) presents the research methods and materials.

3.1 Research task and questions

Following the logic of design science, this study seeks to understand, assess and create concepts, models, methods and actual implementations that help to improve the effectiveness of workplace development programmes. This study is interested in the conditions under which workplace development programmes can produce positive changes in working life and in the extent to which these conditions have been realized in programmes in recent years. Positive changes refer to simultaneous improvements in productivity and QWL. Good productivity and QWL are prerequisites for maintaining and further developing the Finnish welfare state (Alasoini 2011, 26–28). In Chapter 2, I ex-

amined the meanings of the concepts of workplace development (2.2), workplace development programme (2.3) and workplace innovation (2.4).

The research task is divided into two parts and five research questions, as follows:

The first part of the research task focuses on strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes conducted in various countries and regions in recent years, with particular attention to Finland. The specific research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ 1.1: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish programme-based workplace development compared to those of other countries in which programmes to develop working life and promote workplace innovations have been conducted in recent years?

RQ 1.2: Do Finland and the other Nordic countries possess certain features that are specific to programmes conducted in these countries, and should these features be regarded primarily as strengths or weaknesses in international comparison?

RQ 1.3: How does the European development context differ from the development context of the East Asian “bureaucratic developmental states”, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

The comparisons utilize a model developed by Frieder Naschold (1994a; 1994b) for making comparisons between national workplace development strategies. The Naschold model includes six key dimensions. The model was revised prior to its use in the empirical analysis. The TYKES programme is used as an example of programme-based workplace development in Finland for purposes of the comparison.

The second part of the research task focuses on the ability of workplace development programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects and on how this ability can be strengthened. As in the first part, special attention is paid to Finnish experiences. The study focuses on the programmes’ so-called generative results. Generative results indicate the extent to which the programme has successfully transformed the results achieved at individual workplaces that participated in the programme’s projects into benefits for other workplaces and stakeholder groups (Alasoini 2006, 10). Generative results have often proved to be the Achilles’ heel of programmes. The specific research questions are as follows:

RQ 2.1: How can differences in the effectiveness and in the achievement of generative results in particular be compared at the conceptual level between a traditional programme strategy that is built on demonstration projects and an alternative strategy that uses learning networks, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy?

RQ 2.2: How successful has the alternative strategy based on learning networks actually been in producing generative results, and what kinds of difficulties has this strategy encountered at the implementation stage?

A conceptual framework for analysing the effectiveness of different programme strategies is built in connection with research question 2.1. This framework (Alasoini 2006; 2008; 2011) is utilized when answering research

question 2.2. The main empirical data comprise learning network projects of the TYKES programmes.

3.2 Part 1: comparison of national and regional workplace development programmes

3.2.1 Relevance of research questions 1.1–1.3

Despite Europe's long history of programmes to develop working life and promote workplace innovations, systematic comparative analyses on the experiences of such programmes are rare. In addition to studies that evaluate individual programmes, our stock of knowledge on such programmes is based primarily on a number of (mainly) descriptive presentations and comparisons of programmes implemented in different countries (e.g. Ashton et al. 2003; Bamps & Berckmans 2005; Brödner & Latniak 2003; Business Decisions Limited 2000; Den Hertog & Schröder 1989; Eeckelaert et al. 2012; Gallagher 2001; Gustavsen 2007; Gustavsen et al. 2001; Sogge & Skulberg 2007; Totterdill et al. 2002; 2009). For the most part, these presentations either highlight the existing examples as showcases to be emulated by European, national or regional policy-makers or target criticism to the lack of activity by policy-makers in this area. Despite many ambitious joint projects in Europe that have united programme funding agencies and research institutes from different European countries, cross-national learning has been modest (Pot et al. 2016).

Analyses based on the Eurofound's European Working Conditions Surveys do not indicate that differences in QWL between different European countries have narrowed in recent years (see Chapter 2). This finding suggests that the QWL-related problems that are deemed relevant likely differ across European countries. In many countries, policy-makers' interest in learning from the experiences of workplace development programmes or other development interventions conducted in other countries has also been hampered by differences in institutional structures between countries; language and cultural barriers; the "not invented here" syndrome; and different views regarding whether it is generally appropriate to use public policy to address issues that relate to, for example, the management or organization of work of companies. Moreover, the programmes' own mechanisms for dissemination may have been weak, and their stakeholder groups may have lacked an interest in sharing information across national borders.

Nonetheless, it has been suggested (see Section 2.1) that the driving forces of the "second wave of ICT-based productivity growth" will not be new technologies as such but rather various business innovations, management innovations, workplace innovations and other social innovations that exploit new technologies. One may assume with good reason that this will lead to increased interest also in workplace development and the promotion of workplace innovations and will open up new opportunities for these activities. The capacity of workplace development programmes to promote innovations of this type during the "second wave of ICT-based productivity growth" will depend on the programmes' ability to reinvent themselves in a manner that enables them to

respond to challenges that will emerge during the transformation process. In times of turbulence, having access to new information, insights and visions, exchanging experiences and learning from solutions developed by others will become increasingly important. From this perspective, it is crucial that approaches, methods and tools are developed that will improve the understanding of programmes of different countries, allow systematic comparisons between such programmes, and make it possible to learn from the experiences of other countries.

3.2.2 Background

My motive to commence a systematic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish programme-based development for the promotion of workplace innovations in an international context originated in 2004 with the launch of the WORK-IN-NET project. The WORK-IN-NET project was conducted between 2004 and 2010 within the ERA-NET scheme, which was funded by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The aim of this project was to establish sustainable communication and cooperation channels in Europe between national and regional research activities in the area of work-related innovation issues. The key themes of the project included qualitative human resource management, corporate social responsibility and culture, and regional development alliances. Project participants comprised programme managers who worked in national and regional ministries and funding agencies. (Zettel 2010.) The number of participating countries and institutions varied somewhat during the course of the project. When the project ended in 2010, it had core and associated partners from 13 European countries. At the beginning of the project, the Finnish partners included the Ministry of Labour (through the TYKES programme) and the Finnish Work Environment Fund. From 2008 onwards, Finnish partners included Tekes (through the TYKES programme), the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and the Finnish Work Environment Fund.

Finnish participants were responsible for benchmarking activities. One subtask during this stage of the project was to conduct a comparison of the strategies and programmes to promote workplace innovations in the various participating countries and regions. This subtask was conducted in 2005. Data were collected on national programmes in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany and on regional programmes in North Rhine-Westphalia and Emilia-Romagna. The next step of this subtask was to extend the comparison to cover other interesting countries and regions that did not participate in the project. This part of the subtask was conducted in 2007 and 2008. The national programmes of Ireland and Singapore and the Flemish regional programme were selected as new objects for study. The research group that gathered data at different stages of the benchmarking study comprised, in addition to me, Elise Ramstad, Tiina Hanhike, Nuppu Rouhiainen and Maarit Lahtonen of the TYKES programme team. I supplemented the data in 2008 with new data on the national programme of South Korea. Therefore, the data concerning the

first research task were collected in 2005–08 and include ten national or regional programmes that have contributed to the promotion of workplace innovations.⁹

3.2.3 Conceptual framework

A model developed by Frieder Naschold was used as a conceptual framework for the comparison of national (and in some cases, regional) workplace development strategies (Naschold 1994a; 1994b; see also Davies et al. 1993; Naschold 1993).¹⁰ Naschold developed his model to assess the combined impact of national workplace development strategies on socio-economic performance at the micro and macro level. Socio-economic performance refers here to improvement in both productivity and welfare. Naschold's model was based on the view that there is a trend towards a homogenized, global frame of reference for national productivity and welfare strategies and that it possible to define a small number of universal functional "best practices" for these strategies (Naschold 1994a, 108–109; 1994b, 118). Regardless of certain inherent problems that are discussed below, the Naschold model remains a rare exception among the comparative presentations of workplace development strategies because of its analytical, systematic and comprehensive approach.

The benchmarking study of this dissertation was preceded by an analysis of the literature (see Section 2.6), which led to a revision of Naschold's original framework in two important respects, namely, the methodological approach used in benchmarking and the content of the model itself. The underlying motives to modify the model stemmed, first, from epistemological and policy learning-related criticism of a view based on the notion of "best practices" and, second, from a specific set of values that justifies workplace development. In practice, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between the modification of the model and empirical analysis. Certain critical remarks concerning the model were further confirmed or otherwise specified during the empirical analysis, especially at the workshop that was arranged as part of the first phase of the benchmarking study and through the interviews conducted later. In this sense, the first part of the research task, during which the conceptual framework took shape, also included features of abductive reasoning (e.g. Dubois & Gadde 2002; Timmermans & Tavory 2012). The criticism of the Naschold model and the modification of the model based on that criticism and for purposes of the empirical analysis can collectively be regarded as a key result of this study, although this was not an actual research question (for more details, see Section 5.1.6).

⁹ A list of the main publications can be found in Section 3.5.1.

¹⁰ In the 1990s, Frieder Naschold was the director of the Research Programme on Labour Politics at the Science Centre in Berlin. He became famous in the Nordic countries in the early 1990s, particularly as an evaluator of the Swedish LOM programme (Leadership, Organization and Co-Determination) and the Norwegian SBA programme (Centre for Better Working Life) (Davies et al. 1993; Naschold 1993). In Finland, he became well-known as an evaluator of public-sector modernization efforts, among other accomplishments (Naschold 1995).

The epistemological criticism of Naschold's original model related to the difficulty of validating "best practices" in this area of study. The six generic principles of the Naschold model were formed in the 1980s and 1990s on the bases of comparisons between six countries (Australia, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the USA) in a *unique* historical context. The principles were derived from a number of empirical findings rather than a specific conceptual framework with well-founded, theory-based premises (on the main explicit theoretical assumptions on which the model is based, see Naschold 1994a, 108–109; 1994b, 118).

The policy learning-related criticism related to the view that a mechanical search and adoption of "best practices" may narrow rather than broaden opportunities for mutual learning between different countries and regions by reducing variation among them. In addition, the adoption of "best practices" can at best only help certain individual countries or regions to be better than others in a manner that is *vulnerable to copying* or to prevent these countries and regions from being inferior to others. Only the kinds of signature processes that lead to unique solutions can help different countries and regions to find means to be better than others in a sustainable way. (For greater detail on the criticism towards the concept of "best practice" in management and organization research, see Gratton & Ghoshal 2005; Orlikowski 2002; Wareham & Gerrits 1999.)

The second underlying motive to revise the original Naschold model derived from the fact that workplace development in the Nordic countries, for example, has traditionally been based on certain more or less explicit values and principles to which all key parties (e.g. companies, researchers, developers, labour market parties and the government) have been committed. Naschold does not discuss these matters. This is a major shortcoming in his work, not the least because the first principle of his model in particular may undermine the traditional legitimacy bases of workplace development. According to the first principle, the strategic justification for a workplace development strategy should arise primarily from macro-level industrial policy rather than, for example, the system of industrial relations (see Table 6). However, it is obvious that questions relating to, for example, employee participation or QWL, which are of crucial importance in workplace development that arises in the context of industrial relations, have typically not been considered issues in traditional industrial policy (Alasoini 2012; 2013; Qvale 2002). To the extent that issues of this nature have been discussed at all in industrial policy, it may have occurred mainly in the context of frictionless change management, overcoming resistance by employees and making them commit to the adoption of new solutions developed jointly by management and various experts.

Concerning the methodological approach, the purpose of the study was not to make detailed mechanical comparisons between different countries and regions but to reveal similarities and differences among strategies and the functional correspondence among them, thereby furthering learning about differences and diversity. The primary use of Naschold's model was not as a tool for ranking the programmes or assessing their superiority but as a mirror

that made it possible to analyse strengths and weaknesses of programmes in a more versatile way, searching for “useful” rather than “best” practices. This approach was called *reflexive* benchmarking, as opposed to the more traditional *mechanical* benchmarking. (Alasoini 2008, 78–80; 2009b, 619–620.)

The content of the Naschold model is described in a greater detail elsewhere (Alasoini 2009a, 159–161; 2009b, 621–624). Table 6 summarizes the six generic principles of the model and the main remarks and revisions that were made when the model was modified for the benchmarking study.

Table 6. The generic principles of the Naschold model and their revision in the benchmarking study.

Generic principles of the original model	Main remarks and revisions
<i>Policy context:</i> The strategic justification for a workplace development strategy arises primarily from macro-level industrial policy issues rather than the industrial relations system or the research and development system.	This insight can be considered ever more accurate in light of the current rapid and unpredictable economic and technological change. However, workplace development issues cannot be subordinated as a component of industrial policy; rather, the content of industrial policy should become more broad-based. Although the system of industrial relations or research must not guide strategic goal setting, it is appropriate to involve actors from both domains to strengthen the social legitimacy (especially labour market organizations) and insightfulness (especially research organizations) of workplace development activities.
<i>Orientation:</i> At the programme and project levels, the aim is to attain an international or global standard, rather than settling for a national or local standard.	Instead of considering a particular model an international standard that is “hegemonic” in terms of its productivity potential and a reference when creating objects for development, it is more important to monitor developments elsewhere with an open mind and to select the most beneficial ideas.
<i>Participation:</i> In development operations, the aim is a type of indirect intervention that combines simultaneous design and process orientation and broad company-level or workplace-level participation as opposed to traditional design solutions provided by experts or centralized bargaining solutions by social partners.	The significance of employee influence and the inclusion of gender and age perspectives in the goal setting of project activities should be emphasized as elements of broad company-level and workplace-level participation.
<i>Infrastructure:</i> The development strategy is supported and guided by a strong national infrastructure that comprises a large number of experts.	First, strategies and programmes can also be used as a vehicle to strengthen the infrastructure. Second, in modern societies, there are usually several innovation centres, of which no centre can

	claim to have superior knowledge or monopolize knowledge indefinitely. In workplace development, innovation centres typically comprise, in addition to workplaces, R&D institutes, consulting firms and development agencies, labour market organizations, public authorities, professional associations and, in some cases, social movements.
<i>Horizontal networking</i> : The players are networked on the micro level (the company or workplace level).	This insight can be considered ever more accurate in light of the current rapid and unpredictable economic and technological change. The scope and diversity of participating companies and workplaces affects in itself the potential for mutual networking and learning.
<i>Aims vs. resources</i> : The resources and duration of the programme-based operations are adequate in relation to the aims of the programme.	In addition to material resources (financial resources, staff expertise and time), intellectual resources (programme visions, guiding principles and development concepts) and social resources (the capability to harness different networks and to use different mechanisms for dissemination of “good practices”) also play important roles in workplace development strategies and programmes.

3.3 Part 2: prerequisites for broad-based and long-term learning effects in workplace development programmes

3.3.1 Relevance of research questions 2.1–2.2

Evaluation studies of workplace development programmes have focused primarily on immediate changes in the work organizations participating in development projects in the programmes, such as improvements in labour productivity, work flow, work environment and job satisfaction. This study refers to these kinds of outcomes as *first-order results* of programmes (Alasoini 2008, 66). The focus of evaluation studies on first-order results can be explained by a variety of reasons. For example, first-order results are typically easier to measure and show in precise numerical form compared with results that emerge only in the longer term or results for which the object of measurement is something other than the participating organization. Another reason for this practice is that programme owners, funders, implementers and stakeholder groups often need immediate feedback on the implemented measures. Long delays can easily cause feedback information to lose its political relevance and interest. The third reason is related to the legitimacy of programmes. It is usually possible to mould first-order results into a form that is easily communicated to and understood by policy-makers and the general public. Providing quick and impressive one-off results is often the easiest way to create positive publicity for programmes. The fourth reason is that programmes typically achieve

fairly impressive first-order results. I will examine this issue in greater detail in Chapter 4.

However, many researchers who have conducted more comprehensive assessments of workplace development programmes have shown that the programmes are typically less successful in other areas, particularly in the areas of generative results, infrastructure results and policy learning. The use and benefits of the projects have spread poorly from the participating organizations to other work organizations. The extent to which the programmes have strengthened research and development expertise at the national, regional or sectoral level or have stimulated new, genuine and lasting cooperative relations between different actors is often unclear. Moreover, the outcomes and experiences of the programmes have not always been considered in the planning and implementation of “next-generation” programmes. Although these criticisms are based on the experiences of countries with the most impressive histories of workplace development programmes, such as the Nordic countries and Germany (e.g. Arnkil 2004; 2008; Brulin & Svensson 2012; Fricke 1997; 2003; Gustavsen 2008; Qvale 2001; Riegler 2008; Steiber & Alänge 2013), they may be generalized to programmes conducted in other countries as well.

Publicly funded programmes cannot maintain their legitimacy in the long term unless they produce not only first-order results but also more broad-based and longer-term learning effects in working life. There are different strategic options available to workplace development programmes to achieve this goal, as explained below. Nonetheless, discussion and accumulation of knowledge on the various options, including their pros and cons and experiential data, has thus far been surprisingly scarce in research literature.

3.3.2 Background

My interest in improving the ability of programmes to produce generative results was born of my experiences as Project Manager of the Workplace Development Programme TYKE since 1996. The TYKE programme conducted between 1996 and 2003 managed in its aim to produce simultaneous improvements in productivity and QWL by conducting development projects in individual work organizations (Arnkil et al. 2003; Ramstad 2005b; 2005c). The programme also sought to produce wider learning effects. In 1997, the programme’s management group decided to start funding also network projects that were larger entities and included several work organizations, which was a departure from traditional development projects (Alasoini 2005a; 2006). However, the TYKE programme evaluation study conducted in 2002–03 revealed a clear gap between the programme’s first-order results and its wider learning effects (Arnkil et al. 2003).

According to the evaluation study, the TYKE programme was “a forerunner of social and organizational innovations in Finland”, showed “clear evidence of sustainable results in projects” and possessed comprehensiveness, flexibility and local drive as its primary strengths (ibid., 18). However, the evaluation study criticized the TYKE programme (among others) for the weakness of its generative mechanisms and its lack of success in broadly disseminating fur-

ther even the best results obtained in individual companies or work organizations. The evaluation study raised serious questions regarding the extent to which an individual company or work organization was a sufficiently large unit to generate processes of change in working life. (ibid., 193–194.)

During the preparation phase of the new TYKES programme in 2003, the programme team conducted a survey among Finnish research units that are active in working life research. The survey studied the extent to which the units had experience with learning networks, the characteristics of these networks, the results they had produced, the kinds of problems encountered during the creation of the networks, and the extent to which the research units were interested in participating in these kinds of networks in the future. The survey gave strong support to the view that learning networks could be a means of enhancing the ability of the new TYKES programme to produce generative results. (Ramstad 2005a.)

The learning network project became a new form of project activity in the TYKES programme from the beginning in early 2004. As Project Manager of the programme, I actively participated in the planning, launching, monitoring and evaluation of the learning networks projects, as well as in the coordination of their mutual cooperation, together with Tiina Hanhike, Maarit Lahtonen, Elise Ramstad and Nuppu Rouhiainen of the TYKES programme team.

3.3.3 Conceptual framework

There was no ready-made theoretical framework available for the second part of the research task. Instead, the framework was constructed in three articles. The first article makes a distinction between workplace-level (first-order) and generative results, presents reasons for the gap between them and specifies the main premises of an “alternative” strategy based on the use of learning networks (Alasoini 2006). The second article presents a framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes and uses this framework to compare the abilities of three different types of projects to produce outcomes at different levels (Alasoini 2008). The third article supplements the previous articles by presenting a framework of alternative means for improving the capacity of programmes to produce generative results (Alasoini 2011).

The framework that was constructed in the three above-mentioned articles can be considered a *programme theory*. This concept refers to a plausible and sensible model of how a programme is supposed to function and produce the desired processes, leading to the desired outcomes (Dahler-Larsen 2001; Rogers 2008; Stame 2010). In this particular case, the programme theory assumes that an “alternative” programme strategy based on learning networks is more capable of producing not only generative results but also infrastructure results and programme and policy learning compared with a more traditional programme strategy that relies on the use of pilot or demonstration projects. Nevertheless, the concept of programme theory is used here in broad terms (an issue that will be addressed in greater detail in Section 5.1.5).

To answer research question 2.2, the perspectives and conceptual tools created in these three articles are utilized along with a number of other theoretic-

cal and empirical studies that examine learning networks and the broad-based and long-term learning effects of development programmes.

3.4 Research articles

The empirical part of the study comprises six articles. Articles 1 and 2 relate to research questions 1.1–1.3, and articles 3–6 relate to research questions 2.1–2.2. The following is a description of the key contribution of each article to answering the research questions.

Article 1: *Alasoini, T. (2009) Strategies to Promote Workplace Innovation: A Comparative Analysis of Nine National and Regional Approaches. Economic and Industrial Democracy 30 (4), 614–642.* This paper provides an analysis of strategies that aimed to promote workplace innovations in nine national and regional contexts in the 1990s and 2000s. The paper elaborates the conceptual framework used in answering research questions 1.1–1.3 and provides the basic empirical material for research questions 1.1 and 1.2. This material is also utilized in answering research question 1.3.

Article 2: *Alasoini, T. (2009) Alternative Paths for Working Life Reform? A Comparison of European and East Asian Development Strategies. International Journal of Action Research 5 (2), 155–183.* This paper expands the discussion on working life reform from the well-known European examples to include the recent developments in East Asia. The material and analysis included in this paper are used in answering research question 1.3. In addition, the material concerning South Korea is utilized in connection with research questions 1.1 and 1.2.

Article 3: *Alasoini, Tuomo (2006) In Search of Generative Results: A New Generation of Programmes to Develop Work Organization. Economic and Industrial Democracy 27 (1), 9–37.* This paper evaluates means of improving the ability of workplace development programmes to create and disseminate “good practices”. The distinctions in this article between workplace-level results and generative results and between the two kinds of programme strategies are utilized in answering research question 2.1.

Article 4: *Alasoini, T. (2008) Building Better Programmes: Learning Networks in the Promotion of Workplace Innovation. International Journal of Action Research 4 (1+2), 62–89.* This paper provides a generic conceptual framework to improve the understanding of critical success factors for the social effectiveness of programmes that promote workplace innovation. The conceptual framework presented in this paper for analysing the dynamics of development programmes is utilized to answer research question 2.1.

Article 5: *Alasoini, T. (2011) Workplace Development as Part of Broad-Based Innovation Policy: Exploiting and Exploring Three Types of Knowledge. Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies 1 (1), 23–43. (<http://rossy.ruc.dk/ojs/index.php/njwls/article/view/2334/651>).* This paper examines the possibilities created by a broad-based innovation policy recently adopted in Finland for the promotion of workplace innovations and the types of knowledge required in workplace development. The conceptual framework

developed in this article to compare different programme strategies for producing generative results is utilized in answering research question 2.1.

Article 6: Alasoini, T. (2014) *Learning from Learning Networks: Experiences of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme. International Journal of Action Research* 10 (3), 310–338. This paper conducts an empirical analysis of five learning network projects funded by the Finnish TYKES programme to examine the feasibility of a learning network-based strategy to improve the ability of publicly supported workplace development programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects in working life. The material and analysis included in this paper are used to answer research question 2.2.

3.5 Research methods and materials

3.5.1 Research questions 1.1–1.3

Articles 1 and 2 provide answers to research questions 1.1–1.3. Article 1 primarily answers questions 1.1 and 1.2, and article 2 primarily answers question 1.3. However, empirical material concerning South Korea that is included in article 2 is also utilized to answer questions 1.1 and 1.2. Empirical material on European programmes that is included in article 1 is also used to answer question 1.3.

Article 1 analyses programmes to promote workplace innovations in nine countries and regions. The data were collected in two stages. During the first stage of the benchmarking study, in 2005, data on four countries and two regions (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia and Emilia-Romagna) were collected through a literature analysis, a semi-structured questionnaire and a three-day workshop held in Helsinki in March 2005. A total of 23 people participated in the workshop, which applied dialogical methods in the spirit of reflexive benchmarking. The workshop participants had the opportunity to comment afterwards on the conclusions that were drawn based on analyses of the research materials. (Alasoini 2009b, 620–621, 624–625; Alasoini et al. 2005a.)

Data on three other countries and regions were collected in 2007 and 2008 through a literature analysis, on-site interviews and a search through the web sites and annual reports of various agencies. A visit to Singapore in May 2007 included five interviews at two state agencies. Two study visits were made to Belgium in 2007, the first of which was to Brussels in June and the second to Turnhout in September. In all, 12 people were interviewed in Belgium. When Ireland was visited in December 2007, the research group conducted a total of 14 interviews at eight institutions. The interviewed persons in these cases had the opportunity to comment afterwards on the observations and conclusions recorded by the researchers. (Alasoini 2009b, 621, 626–627; Alasoini & Ramstad 2007; Alasoini et al. 2008a; 2008b.)

Article 2 compares workplace development strategies in Europe and East Asia. The article uses the same material used in Article 1 but is supplemented by data on South Korea. The data from South Korea were gathered mainly in

2008 through a literature analysis and a visit to the country in October. The visit included interviews at three agencies and participation in an international seminar organized by the South Korean Ministry of Labour, the Korea Labour Institute (KLI) and the New Paradigm Centre (NPC). (Alasoini 2009a, 161–163; 2009c.)

A detailed description of the collection and analyses of research materials at different stages of the process is provided in Appendix 1.

Table 7 lists the programmes included in the analyses by country or region.

Table 7. Countries, regions and programmes included in the analysis.

Country or region	Programme(s)
Emilia-Romagna (E-R)	The programme “Health and Safety at Work” by the Institute for Labour Foundation (Ipl) on behalf of the Ministry of Health of Emilia-Romagna
Finland (FIN)	The Finnish Workplace Development Programme (TYKES) by the Ministry of Labour
Flanders (FLA)	The Flanders Synergy programme by the European Social Fund Agency of Flanders
Germany (GER)	The National Framework Concept “Innovative Development of Work – The Future of Work” by the Project Management Organization (PT) at DLR on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research
Ireland (IRE)	The Workplace Innovation Fund (WIF) by Enterprise Ireland and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCP)
North Rhine-Westphalia (NR-W)	The programme “Work-Oriented Modernization” (MWA) by the Organization for Innovative Employment Promotion (G.I.B.) on behalf of the Ministry of Economy and Labour Affairs of the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia
Norway (NOR)	The Value Creation (VC) 2010 programme by the Research Council of Norway (RCN)
Singapore (SNG)	- The People Developer framework by the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING) - The Innovation and Quality Circles programme by SPRING - The ADVANTAGE! scheme by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA)
South Korea (SK)	The New Paradigm Programme (NPP) by the New Paradigm Centre (NCP)
Sweden (SWE)	The Knowledge Platform “Learning and Health in Working Life” and the DYNAMO programme by the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA)

3.5.2 Research questions 2.1–2.2

As stated above, articles 3, 4 and 5 provide answers to research question 2.1, and article 6 provides the answer to research question 2.2. The conceptual framework that is created based on the first three articles is also utilized to answer research question 2.2.

Article 3 focuses on network-like approaches to develop work and work organizations and the capacity of these approaches to produce generative results. The analysis of the modules of the Norwegian Enterprise Development 2000 programme is based on a literature review (e.g. Gustavsen et al. 1998; 2001; Levin 2002). Descriptions of the network projects of the TYKE programme and the learning network projects of the TYKES programme are based on the programmes' project guidelines; project applications submitted to the programmes; project implementation and development plans; joint workshops; and, in the case of the TYKE network projects, project final reports and evaluation studies (Alasoini 2005a; Koivisto & Ahmaniemi 2001; Vesalainen & Kempas 2002).

Article 4 examines three types of projects in (workplace) development programmes. The conclusions are based on the results of a number of various programmes and their evaluation studies, as well as the personal experiences of the author during his 12-year tenure (since 1996) as Project Manager of the TYKE and TYKES programmes. The main focus of the article is on learning network projects. At the time this article was written, in 2008, the TYKES programme had funded learning network projects for approximately four years. Findings concerning learning networks were largely based on the project applications; project implementation and development plans; project interim reports to the programme; joint workshops arranged by the TYKES programme for these projects; and the materials from a joint book project (Alasoini et al. 2006).

Article 5 is a purely conceptual analysis that examines workplace development as component of a broad-based innovation policy. The findings and conclusions are based on an analysis of the literature and on the author's first-hand experiences while working as Project Manager of workplace development programmes (see above).

Article 6 contains an empirical analysis of five learning network projects funded by the TYKES programme between 2004 and 2010. There were two main criteria for network selection: first, the network was expected to produce a good level of generative results, and second, it would be possible to interview key persons who would have realistic opportunities to assess the learning impact of the network projects after their completion. The principal data collection method was key person interviews. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured theme interviews. The central themes of the interviews were as follows: the most important results of the learning network; the sustainability of the results (competence, cooperative relations and development structures); follow-up processes achieved by the network; the network's added value compared with traditional demonstration projects; the workability of the network structure; interactive forums; and the support received by the network from the programme. The key persons had the necessary knowledge to express opinions on all of these themes.

A total of 13 people were interviewed, including researchers, consultants, public officials and labour market officials. Of those interviewed, 11 participated in face-to-face individual or group interviews, each lasting 1–2 hours. In

addition, two phone interviews, each lasting about an hour, were conducted.¹¹ No one refused to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted between September 2013 and February 2014. The interviewer had access to exhaustive written material on each network, including the networks' project applications, project implementation and development plans, and the interim and final reports for the programme. Moreover, publications regarding the networks were available.

Appendix 2 contains a detailed description of research materials that were available for the TYKES learning network projects for articles 3–6.

Table 8 summarizes the main characteristics of the 16 learning network projects funded by the TYKES programme, i.e. name, duration, network coordinators, and the connecting objects of activity and related R&D tasks. The five networks selected as objects of analysis for article 6 are marked with an asterisk (*).

¹¹ Two additional individual face-to-face interviews concerning two other learning network projects were also conducted. However, the analysis of these two networks could not be included in article 6 due to restrictions on the maximum length of articles published in the journal in question.

Table 8. Main characteristics of the learning network projects in the TYKES programme (Alasoini et al. 2011a, 39–40).

Name (duration) * Included in article 6	Coordinator	Connecting objects of activity and related R&D tasks
Change Makers – Learning Network for Participatory Development of Operating Concepts (2004–08)*	University of Helsinki, Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research	Use of the Change Laboratory method in the development of operating concepts.
Poppi – Learning Network for Rewarding (2004–09)	Helsinki University of Technology, The Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership	Improvement of reward systems: to develop applications, which help to provide combined improvements in productivity and well-being at work.
STRADA – Learning Network for Strategy Practices (2004–06)	Helsinki University of Technology, The Laboratory of Work Psychology and Leadership	Development of interactive strategy processes, the related strategy practices and expertise on them.
TOIVO – Learning Network for Knowledge Management (2004–07)	University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education	Creation of models and methods, which can be applied in everyday work to serve the development of knowledge management.
COBTEC – Collaborative Business Networks and Technology Platforms (2004–07)	VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland	Developing the management of dynamic and technology-intensive enterprise networks in complex business environments.
The Hiisi Area Cluster (2004–09)*	University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education	Improvement of expertise related to environmental management and well-being at work. Provision of information on how trust and partnership can be built and learning takes place in a network.
Promotion of Working-Life Expertise in the Pirkanmaa Region (2004–09)	Pirkanmaa University of Applied Sciences	Development of a regional coordinating centre of expertise on working life, with a special emphasis on the transfer of experience-based knowledge, continuous skills development, anticipation of changes in working life, safety management and coaching in work ability issues.
OVE – Learning Network for Tourism Business in Eastern Uusimaa (2004–08)*	HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences	Development of the region as a “learning region” by strengthening its self-identity and enhancing networking between companies, the quality of their services and the role of the university of applied sciences in regional development.

SAKEA – Learning Network for Strategic Human Resource Management and Evaluation of Operations in Municipalities (2004–09)*	Innotiimi Consulting Company	Improvement of the effectiveness and performance of municipalities with the help of a SHRM- and BSC-based strategy and reformed systems of rewarding.
Combinno – Learning Network for Innovative Development Combinations (2005–09)	University of Tampere, Work Research Centre	Development and provision of customized tools as integrated development concepts that combine knowledge on workplace development and adult education for the use of companies.
TYHJÖ – Learning Network for Employee Well-Being and Work Environment Management in the North-Ostrobothnia Region (2005–10)	University of Oulu, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management	Development of mutual learning and exchange of information between different regional actors on the improvement of employee well-being and work environment management.
Learning Network of South Savo (2005–09)*	Anttolanhovi Rehabilitation and Research Centre	Development of methods and competences in collaborative, worker-oriented development in local workplaces and building up a network to facilitate regional cooperation in the development of working life.
Tuoteväylä – Building Business with Networks – Learning Network for Cooperation in Product and Business Development (2007–10)	Foundation of Finnish Inventions	Development of cooperation between public authorities and R&D personnel in companies involved in product and business development.
Empowerment through Enabling Network (2007–10)	Empowering Finland Association	Development of theories and tools, which facilitate activities, culture and management to make empowerment possible within work organizations.
OpenInno – Open Innovation Learning Network (2007–09)	VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland	Development of new open source-based approaches in innovation activities and for product development and the quality of working life.
PEERS – Learning Network for the Dissemination of Good Practices in Municipalities (2007–09)	The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities	Development of permanent infrastructure with various interactive tools, to facilitate dissemination of “good practices” within municipal organizations.

4. Findings

4.1 Comparison of national and regional workplace development programmes

Section 4.1 examines research questions 1.1–1.3. The task is to assess strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes conducted in various countries and regions in recent years, with special attention to Finland. The actual research questions are as follows: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Finnish programme-based workplace development compared to those of other countries in which programmes to develop working life and promote workplace innovations have been conducted in recent years (RQ 1.1)? Do Finland and the other Nordic countries possess certain features that are specific to programmes conducted in these countries, and should these features be regarded primarily as strengths or weaknesses in international comparison (RQ 1.2)? How does the European development context differ from the development context of the East Asian “bureaucratic developmental states”, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each (RQ 1.3)? The conceptual framework that was developed for the comparative analysis, as well as the profiles of the programmes of different countries and regions that were prepared using this framework, are shown in Section 4.1.1. Sections 4.1.2–4.1.4 provide answers to the research questions. This is followed by a summary (4.1.5) and an examination of the trustworthiness of the research results (4.1.6).

4.1.1 Evaluation framework and programme profiles

In the benchmarking study, the six principles of the original Naschold model were further divided into 18 sub-dimensions. Table 9 provides a thorough explanation of the sub-dimensions and of the abbreviations and symbols used in the heuristic map in Table 10, which compares the profiles of the ten countries and regions.

Table 9. Sub-dimensions and the abbreviations and symbols used in the heuristic map for comparison (Alasoini 2009b, 625).

1	Policy context
1.1	Who are the major and minor players and where does the strategic justification for R&D originate? (IP = industrial policy, IR = industrial relations, OHS = occupational health and safety, R&D = research and development)
1.2	Is the focus on the national (NAT) or regional (REG) level?
1.3	Is the focus on research (RES) or development (DEV)?
2	Orientation
2.1	What is the level of orientation with respect to the standards of programme and project activities? (REG = regional, NAT = national, INT = international)
2.2	Is there evidence-based data regarding the achievement of these standards? (YES/NO)
3	Participation
3.1	Is the focus of project activities on design-oriented (DES) or process-oriented (PRO) approaches?
3.2	How strong is the influence of workplaces on the content of project activities? (... = weak, +++ = very strong)
3.3	How strong is the influence of workplace employees on the content of project activities? (see 3.2)
3.4	How strongly is the gender perspective emphasized in the goal setting of project activities? (... = weakly, +++ = very strongly)
3.5	How strongly is the age perspective emphasized in the goal setting of project activities? (see 3.4)
4	Infrastructure
4.1	How strongly is researcher education and training included in programme and project activities? (see 3.4)
4.2	How diverse is the pool of expertise used in project activities? (... = not diverse, +++ = very diverse)
5	Horizontal networking
5.1	What kinds of workplaces form the core that participates in project activities? (ENT = enterprises, SME = small & medium-sized enterprises, ALL = all kinds)
5.2	How strongly is networking between workplaces supported by project activities? (see 3.4)
5.3	How strongly is networking between workplaces supported by other means (e.g. conferences, seminars, workshops)? (see 3.4)
6	Resources
6.1	What are the financial resources for R&D? (... = small, +++ = considerable)
6.2	What are the staff resources for R&D? (see 6.1)
6.3	What are the time resources for R&D? (see 6.1)

The comparative analysis summarized in Table 10 shows that there are clear and consistent differences in many important respects between the programmes.

In five out of the ten cases, *industrial policy actors* are major players in programme design, which accords with the “best practice” of the Naschold model.

The level of *orientation* differs greatly by context; in three cases, the orientation is primarily on the international level; in four cases, it is on the national level; and in the three remaining cases, it is on the regional level.

The dimension of *participation* contains several elements. Most programmes rely on a clear design-oriented approach, the most obvious exception to which is the Norwegian Value Creation (VC) 2020 programme, which is characterized by a radical process orientation and a strongly constructivist approach. Regarding employees’ opportunities to exert influence, in this benchmarking study, all European programmes are ahead of East Asian programmes. In only two of the programmes does the gender aspect play an important role in the goal setting of project activities; the same is true for the age aspect.

The dimension of *infrastructure* was examined by evaluating the role of the programme in researcher education and training and the diversity of the pool of experts used in the project. Researcher education and training is an explicit goal in only three of the ten cases.

Horizontal networking between workplaces is an in-built element of project activity in four cases; conversely, there are four cases in which this in-built mechanism for networking is completely absent. Nonetheless, all programmes apply at least some indirect means to promote horizontal networking.

Different programmes have different strengths with regard to *resources*.¹² Overall, resources are strongest in the German, North Rhine-Westphalian and Norwegian programmes, which is due in large part to the long-term perspective of these countries and regions.

¹² Conclusions concerning the adequacy of available resources in relation to programme goals would have required a detailed historical and contextual analysis, which was not possible in the benchmarking study. The focus here is exclusively on the resource side.

Table 10. Heuristic map of the profiles of the programmes in comparison (Alasoini 2009b, 631–632, supplemented with data on South Korea).

	FIN	GER	NR-W	E-R	NOR	SWE	FLA	IRE	SNG	SK
1.1A Major players	IR	R&D IR	IP IR	OHS IR (unions)	IP IR	IP R&D	IR	IR	IP	IP
1.1B Minor players	IP	IP OHS	...	...	R&D	IR	IP	IP	...	IR
1.2 National/ Regional	NAT	NAT	REG	REG	REG	NAT (REG)	REG	NAT	NAT	NAT
1.3 Research/ Development	DEV (RES)	RES (DEV)	DEV (RES)	RES (DEV)	RES/ DEV	RES (DEV)	DEV	DEV	DEV	DEV
2.1 Level of orientation	NAT/ INT	NAT/ INT	REG/ NAT	REG/ NAT	INT/ NAT	NAT/ INT	REG/ INT	INT/ NAT	INT/ NAT	NAT/ INT
2.2 Standard level evi- denced	YES	YES	YES	To some degree	YES	YES	To some degree	Not yet	Not available	YES
3.1 Design/ Process	PRO (DES)	DES	DES	DES	PRO	DES	DES	DES (PRO)	DES	DES
3.2 Workplace influence	+++	++	+++	++	++	+	+++	+++	+++	++
3.3 Employee influence	++	+(+)	++	++	++	+	++	+(+)	+	+
3.4 Gender perspective	+	+	++	+	...	++	...	...	...	+
3.5 Age perspective	+	++	+	+	...	...	+	...	++	+
4.1 Research- er education & training	++	+	...	...	+++	...	...	...	...	...
4.2 Diversity of experts	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+	+(+)	+	+
5.1 Workplace type	ALL	ALL	SME	ENT	ENT	ENT	ENT	SME	ALL	ALL
5.2 Network- ing: project activity	+(+)	++	++	...	+++	+	+	...	...	...
5.3 Network- ing: other means	++	++	+	+	++	+	++	+	+	+
6.1 Financial resources	++	++	++	+	++	++	+	++	++	+(+)
6.2 Staff resources	++	++	++	+	++	+	+(+)	++	++	++
6.3 Time span	++	+++	+++	+	+++	++	+	+(+)	++	+(+)

4.1.2 Strengths and weaknesses of Finnish programme-based development in the context of the Naschold model

Regarding the answer to research question 1.1, the analysis shows that Finland's strengths are most apparent in the participation and infrastructure dimensions. Horizontal networking and resources can also be considered strengths for Finland. In contrast, policy context and orientation are not strong areas for Finland (for more details, see Alasoini 2009a; 2009b).

Policy orientation

Finland, together with Germany, Flanders and Ireland, form a group in which the role played by industrial relations actors in programme goal setting is more prominent than that of industrial policy actors. Workplace development programmes in Finland emerged from cooperation between players in the industrial relations systems – labour market organizations and the Ministry of Labour – but the TYKE and TYKES programmes have also been justified by

broader innovation and industrial policy arguments. The problem lies in the divergence of the programmes' argumentation from the "standard" macro-economic and technology-oriented argumentation espoused by the key players in the policy sectors in question (e.g. Piirainen & Koski 2004). As a result of this divergence, workplace development is largely conceived as an activity that belongs within the scope of the industrial relations system.¹³

Orientation

Finland, together with Germany, Sweden and Singapore, form a group in which the orientation is primarily on the national level. Most cases that focus primarily on the national level, including Finland, or on the regional level have their secondary focus on the international level.

If interpreted mechanically using the Naschold model, this comparison suggests that workplace development in Finland has been plagued by a lack of ambition, or at least by obscurity, in goal setting. Finnish programmes have not set project-level goals based on standards of the international productivity frontier or on other similarly ambitious standards, such as the principles of "world-class production" or "high-performance work organizations", for example.

This can be explained by at least three factors: The first relates to the strong role played by labour market organizations, whose orientation is largely at the national level, in Finnish programmes. Labour market organizations are more concerned about whether the programmes benefit a great number of Finnish workplaces, in both the private and public sectors, than about the establishment of certain "ready-made" standards as a threshold for participating workplaces. Consequently, the TYKE and TYKES programmes have been remarkably large in terms of the number of participating workplaces. Second, Finnish workplace development programmes have been characterized by a configurational approach, which emphasizes "local re-invention" as a means to promote local learning processes and workplace innovations, rather than the transfer of "good practices" from one workplace to another (Alasoini 2006, 12–13; 2012, 251; Arnkil 2004, 270; Gustavsen 2007, 662). Third, in Finland, as in Germany and Sweden, where the primary focus is also on the national level, the domestic base of workplace development projects over the years is quite broad and thus provides an important frame of reference for subsequent programmes. Based on the European Working Conditions Surveys, one can surmise that many of the Finnish workplaces that participated in these projects represent the international productivity frontier (see Section 2.1).

Participation

Key features of the participation dimension of the Naschold model are realized fairly well in the TYKES programme. The TYKES programme is better balanced than other programmes are in terms of the relative weight of design and process orientation. With the exception of the Norwegian VC 2010 programme, the other programmes are more design oriented than the TYKES

¹³ The turnaround in Finnish innovation policy that occurred in 2008 is discussed separately in Chapter 5.

programme. The level of workplace influence on the content of project activities is highest in the cases of Finland, North Rhine-Westphalia, Flanders, Ireland and Singapore. In the TYKES programme, the opportunities for staff to influence the content of projects at workplaces can also be considered strong by international standards. However, in Finland overall, opportunities for employees to exert influence within projects have varied considerably, and the role played by management has often been much more prominent than that of employees, especially at the project planning stage (Ramstad 2009b; 2012, 42–52). However, the gender and the age aspects were not raised as special issues in the TYKES programme in the same manner as these aspects were raised in certain other programmes.

Infrastructure

Researcher education and training is an explicit goal only in Finland, Germany and Norway, and the leader in this respect is the Norwegian VC 2010 programme. The diversity of the experts that work on projects is highest in Finland, Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia and Sweden.

Finland also performs well on the infrastructure dimension compared to other countries. Knowledge resources of working life research and workplace development in Finland have clearly grown stronger since the 1980s; for example, the TYKES programme considers also support for further education of working life researchers to be an integral part of its operation (Ramstad 2008; see also Section 2.3). Another special feature of Finland in terms of international comparison is the close interaction and cooperation between researchers and consultants in development at the project level.

Horizontal networking

Horizontal networking between workplaces is an in-built element of project activity in Finnish, German, Norwegian and North Rhine-Westphalian programmes, although the scope of enterprises that participate in the Norwegian and North Rhine-Westphalian programmes is narrower than that of certain other programmes. The Finnish TYKES programme, the German framework programme “Innovative Development of Work – the Future of Work”, the South Korean New Paradigm Programme and the three Singaporean programmes that are included in the analysis differ from the other programmes in that they also support the development of public-sector workplaces.

The underdevelopment of horizontal networks to promote mutual learning between workplaces is one of the key weaknesses of workplace development programmes in various countries. In this regard, the mechanisms of the TYKES programmes to support horizontal networking – including both mechanisms that are built into the project activity itself and those that take place within the overall design of the programme, such as conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings among project participants – can be considered quite strong in international comparison. However, this relative strength does not say very much about the programme’s accomplishments in this area because, as stated above, horizontal networking in general can be considered the Achilles’ heel of programmes. The success of the TYKES programme in foster-

ing networking, especially with the help of learning networks, is examined in greater detail in Section 4.2.

Resources

The Finnish TYKES programme is strong in terms of funding, time structure and overall social capital. Financial resources for workplace development programmes increased significantly in Finland from the 1990s to the 2000s. The Finnish programme activity in general can be regarded as strong in international comparison precisely because of its greater financial resources and relatively long time span. Finnish programmes have also been backed up by strong social capital, which is particularly manifest in the close interaction among the labour market parties and in the generally low threshold for cooperation between key stakeholder groups in workplace development.

4.1.3 Special features of programme-based development in Finland and the other Nordic countries: strengths and weaknesses in international comparison

Regarding the answer to research question 1.2, the analysis shows that the most obvious common strengths of Finland and the other Nordic countries are infrastructure and dialogue (more than participation as such). The Nordic countries are also strong in horizontal networking and resources. In contrast, policy context and orientation do not distinguish the Nordic countries from other countries.

Similarities and differences between the Nordic countries

The Nordic countries are often regarded as one entity in European comparisons in terms of, for example, special features of working life, the labour market, the business environment, innovation systems, and welfare policies. However, significant differences exist between institutional arrangements of regulation in these countries. These differences stem from disparities between the countries' economic structures, political power relations, and historical and cultural features (e.g. Alestalo et al. 2009; Benner 2003; Bruun et al. 1992; FORA 2009; Gergils 2005; Kristensen & Lilja 2011). There are also significant differences in the history of programme-based workplace development between the Nordic countries.

Norway is the pioneer; its history of experiments in job redesign and efforts to enhance workplace democracy date back to the early 1960s. Sweden also has a rich history of innovative experiments with, for example, job redesign, group work, factory layouts and workplace democracy since the late 1960s. In contrast, the first actual national-level workplace development programmes in Finland were not launched until the 1990s. As explained above (see Section 2.3), the rise of workplace development in Finland was not so much an attempt to improve QWL or workplace democracy than a "corrective measure" to improve Finnish companies' poor economic performance in the aftermath of the recession of the early 1990s. The difference in the timing and context of the rise of workplace development between Finland and the other Nordic countries may partly explain why the tradition of developing work organizations

through sociotechnical or “human-centred” approaches, as opposed to lean thinking, is less robust in Finland than in the other Nordic countries (cf. Lorenz & Lundvall 2011; Valeyre et al. 2009). Although work organization development issues have also attracted much attention in Denmark since the 1970s, Denmark differs from the other Scandinavian countries in the sense that there have not been as extensive programmes at the national level. Indeed, Gustavsen (2007, 658–659) characterizes Danish national-level initiatives for the development of working life more as “campaigns” than “programmes”.

In Norway, the labour market parties have been key players in the background of workplace development programmes, whereas the role of the government has been less direct than in Finland, for example. Workplace development in Norway has been linked more closely to industrial and regional policy in recent years (for more details, see Gustavsen 2007; 2008; Hildrum et al. 2009; Qvale 2002). Signs of a similar development can be seen in Sweden, although Sweden has not implemented extensive workplace development programmes at the national level since the massive Work Life Fund programme (1990–95) ended. Since the early 1990s, R&D on working life in Sweden has undergone several reorganizations and institutional rearrangements, and the commitment of the private-sector employer association to tripartite cooperation at the central level has eroded. At the same time, workplace development has been integrated more closely with regional industrial and innovation policy. Based on regional partnerships and on the so-called third task of universities, Sweden has implemented network-based development in various projects involving universities, companies and regional stakeholders; these projects have also included public authorities and labour market organizations. An important milestone that reinforced the links of working life research and workplace development to overall innovation policy was the establishment of the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems VINNOVA in 2001 (for more details, see Abrahamsson & Johansson 2013; Brulin & Svensson 2012; Ekman et al. 2011; Håkansta 2014; Svensson & Nilsson 2008).

In Finland, the government’s direct role in workplace development and in innovation policy in general has been stronger than that in the other Nordic countries because Finland has deemed that both fields of activity call for *national*-level steering. The most obvious contrast to Finland is Denmark, where working life has been developed in a decentralized manner through local cooperation agreements among the labour market parties and through company-level development measures characterized by a significant level of employee participation. Denmark can be considered the leader in Europe in terms of employee participation in the development of products, services and ways of operation (for more details, see Gustavsen 2007; Kristensen et al. 2011; Kristensen & Morgan 2012; Rocha 2010).

In light of the above, is it appropriate to speak of “Nordic exceptionalism” in programme-based workplace development? The answer to this question may be positive or negative, depending on the perspective. There are significant differences in the historical and institutional context of programme-based development between the four Nordic countries. In this respect, speaking of the

“Nordic *model*” in the strongest sense of the term does not seem justified. Instead, we can speak of the “Nordic *mentality*”, a term that is not linked so closely to specific types of institutional arrangements. The latter concept can also be related to Gustavsen’s (1993) characterization of the search for “productive structures” as a unifying meta-idea in workplace development for the Nordic countries. According to him, the motivation for workplace development in the Scandinavian (or Nordic) countries has lain in the creation of structures that support the movement of a great number of companies closer to the global productivity frontier through cooperation between management and personnel within companies, between various companies, and between companies and action-oriented researchers. The objective has been to identify competitive national or regional productivity strategies based on broad cooperation and participation.¹⁴ Based on this starting point, the following section provides an answer to research question 1.2.

Nordic programme-based development in international comparison

The three Nordic participants in the benchmarking study were the Finnish TYKES programme; the Norwegian VC 2010 programme; and the Knowledge Platform “Learning and Health in Working Life” and DYNAMO programme of VINNOVA in Sweden. In 2005, “Learning and Health in Working Life” was one of VINNOVA’s four knowledge platforms, i.e. generic fields of knowledge that are meant to support and contribute to 18 defined growth areas, or sectoral innovation systems, in the country. However, in the search for an answer to research question 1.2, i.e. whether there are special features of Nordic programme-based development, it is appropriate to extend the analysis beyond the scope of the benchmarking study in certain respects.

Regarding the first two dimensions of the Naschold model – *policy context* and *orientation* – Nordic programmes are not systematically different from programmes in other countries and regions. Somewhat surprisingly, the same observation applies to the third dimension of the model, *participation*. The Norwegian and Finnish programmes are more process oriented than other programmes, and employee opportunity to influence the content of project activities can be considered strong by international standards. In contrast, the Swedish programme is design oriented and does not emphasize workplace-level initiative or employee opportunity to influence to the same extent as programmes in Norway and Finland. However, an inclusive approach is apparent in Swedish programme-based development; specifically, the promotion of gender equality is an integral aspect of development in Swedish programmes.

The lack of a more obvious difference between the Nordic programmes and the programmes of other countries and regions may seem surprising given

¹⁴ Gustavsen (2011a, 10) has also argued elsewhere that “To talk about a ‘Scandinavian model’ as if this is something resembling a ‘clockwork’ mechanism that ticks along identical lines in all the four countries is misleading. The reason why they can still be seen to constitute a bloc with some common characteristics lies in the organization of the learning processes as such.” Gustavsen’s argument can be linked with the above-discussed idea of an enabling welfare state and its institutional experimental nature through his emphasis on the great constructivist capacity of the Scandinavian (or Nordic) countries.

that, for example, the Nordic countries rank ahead of other European countries in terms of employee representation and organizational participation in the European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound 2012a, 64–65; 2013, 22–23). In addition, Ennals and Gustavsen (1999, 160) have argued that the Nordic countries are leading the rest of Europe in the spread of dialogical development approaches. However, the authors are referring more to openness and equality of dialogue between *all* relevant parties involved in development activities than to interaction and cooperation that is limited to workplace management and personnel in development. One might conclude that the term “*dialogical*” is a more accurate descriptor of Nordic exceptionalism in programme-based workplace development than the term “participation” is. A dialogical approach based on partnership is an apt concept to describe not only the Norwegian and Finnish programmes but also the Swedish programmes, as explained above.

The strength of the *infrastructure* in Nordic countries is significantly greater than that of other countries. R&D infrastructure is also historically strong in Germany, as Naschold’s (1994a; 1994b) analysis in the early 1990s indicates. Nevertheless, the dialectic between research and development does not seem to be as close-knit in Germany or the other countries and regions as it is in the Nordic countries; rather, in Germany and the other countries and regions, “development” (often in the form of consultation) and “research” appear as largely separate activities. This probably reflects the stronger role that action-oriented research plays in the Nordic countries (e.g. Aagaard Nielsen & Svensson 2006; Ekman et al. 2011; Gustavsen 2007; Lehtonen & Kalliola 2008; Svensson et al. 2002). Moreover, researcher education and training and reinforcement of the workplace R&D infrastructure appear to be explicit components of programme activities over the years only in the Nordic countries, including Sweden, although researcher education and training does not play an important role in VINNOVA’s programme activities. VINNOVA’s modest role in this area stems from a deliberate division of labour between VINNOVA and FAS (the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research).¹⁵ VINNOVA is a practically oriented agency that focuses on issues such as growth, innovation and regional dynamics, whereas the focus of FAS is on high-level academic research on working life. In Finland and Norway, such a clear-cut institutional division of labour does not exist with respect to these issues.

The countries and regions with the longest histories of programme-based development have also paid the greatest attention to the promotion of *horizontal networking* between workplaces. This attention is understandable because mutual learning between the projects and the wider dissemination of their results have become the Achilles’ heel of these projects. Programmes have lacked effective methods for horizontal learning and dissemination and have often lacked the necessary resources to achieve these objectives (e.g. Arnkil 2008; Gustavsen et al. 2001; Naschold 1994a; 1994b; see Section 4.2). Forms of project activity in which horizontal networking is an in-built element al-

¹⁵ The name of the institute is now FORTE (Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Social Welfare).

ready in the implementation of the project include regional main projects and modules in Norway, network projects and learning network projects in Finland, regional partnerships of different types in Sweden, combined projects, clusters and focus groups in Germany, and joint projects in North Rhine-Westphalia. However, it is difficult to assess with precision the extent to which the Nordic and German programmes have outperformed programmes conducted in other countries and regions in the promotion of mutual learning between projects and the broad dissemination of results.

The German, North Rhine-Westphalian and Norwegian programmes may be distinguished from the other programmes in terms of their greater *resources*. As stated above (Table 6), resources are understood here in a broad sense and include financial, staff, time, intellectual and social resources. However, intellectual and social resources were not measured in the benchmarking study in the same way that the other types of resources were. In the benchmarking study, Finland and Singapore were closest to the three leaders mentioned above in terms of resources.

Germany and Sweden can be regarded as leading countries in terms of the financial resources used for workplace development if the time horizon is extended to include the 1970s. Germany has the longest uninterrupted chain of successive programmes in workplace development, which began in 1974. Norway also has a long and nearly continuous history of programmes. In contrast, programme-based workplace development was fragmented in Sweden during the 2000s, when there were no major programmes at the national level. For its part, Finland caught up with these three countries in terms of financial resources in the 1990s and the 2000s.

Time resources are also important, for several reasons. Long time horizons in workplace development are linked to, for example, the accumulation of (both explicit and tacit) knowledge, the building of infrastructure and networks, and programme and policy learning. Several researchers have been very critical on how well Sweden, Norway and Germany have managed to take advantage of their rich programme history and programme evaluation studies and of the capacity of these countries to learn from past programmes when planning new workplace development measures (e.g. Brulin & Svensson 2012; Fricke 1997; 2003; Gustavsen 2008; Qvale 2002; Riegler 2008). This criticism suggests that the manner in which resources are mobilized, utilized and further developed in programmes is at least as important as the existence of these resources as such. Programmes should be prepared to build mechanisms at the outset to support the accumulation of knowledge and programme and policy learning.

4.1.4 Europe and East Asia as contexts of programme-based development: strengths and weaknesses

Regarding research question 1.3, the analysis shows that the strengths of the European development context relative to the East Asian context are participation and infrastructure, whereas the East Asian context can be regarded as

stronger in the policy context dimension. The strengths and weaknesses of the two East Asian countries manifest themselves in somewhat different ways.

In the same way the previous section asked whether the Nordic countries constitute a meaningful comparable entity in relation to the rest of Europe, one can ask whether Europe and East Asia can be considered meaningful objects of comparison in workplace development. The question contains two parts: Are there reasonable grounds for assuming that European and East Asian countries differ from each other as contexts of workplace development? Can it be assumed that the European countries, on the one hand, and the East Asian countries, on the other hand, constitute two sufficiently coherent groups for mutual comparison?

I answered the first question in article 2 (Alasoini 2009a, 156–157). According to article 2, there are both macro-level and micro-level reasons for possible systematic differences between workplace development strategies in European and East Asian countries and it is thus appropriate to make comparisons between them. First, there are differences between these two groups of countries regarding the institutional environment in which companies operate and labour policy is implemented. East Asian countries can be characterized as bureaucratic developmental states, whereas European countries have more features that are characteristic of the flexible or welfare-state variant of the developmental state. The second reason relates to differences in company-level factors. Although there are significant differences among European countries and among East Asian countries with respect to workplace-level industrial relations and human resource management practices, one could argue that these differences are overshadowed by the much greater differences in these areas between the two groups of nations.

As stated above, there are significant differences in macro-level and micro-level factors among European countries and among East Asian countries. In this study, the comparison between these two groups is justified in a pragmatic way. In this section, three groups of nations are formed and representative cases of these groups are selected. This grouping forms the basis for an analysis of whether it is possible to find systematic differences between the groups of nations that can plausibly be explained by institutional or other differences between the groups. The groups are compared with each other on the six dimensions of the Naschold model. The Nordic countries are represented by the Finnish and Norwegian programmes, the rest of Europe is represented by the German, Irish and Flemish programmes, and East Asia is represented by the Singaporean and South Korean programmes. Because the special features of the Nordic countries were analysed in the previous section, the following analysis focuses mainly on the differences between Europe and East Asia.¹⁶

For purposes of comparison, condensed descriptions based on existing materials were prepared for each country with respect to each dimension of the Naschold model (Tables 11–12).

¹⁶ For the sake of simplicity, I speak here of “countries”, recognizing that Flanders is not a country but a region and community of Belgium.

Table 11. Profiles of workplace development strategies of five European countries and regions.

	Finland	Norway	Flanders	Germany	Ireland
Policy context	Originally industrial relations, but increasingly linked to industrial policy framework through Tekes (since 2008)	Balanced industrial policy and industrial relations framework	Industrial relations, but also linked to industrial policy framework through the Pact of Vilvoorde	Industrial relations, but also linked to industrial policy framework through the Ministry's framework programme concept	Industrial relations, but also linked to industrial policy framework through the national workplace strategy and Enterprise Ireland
Orientation	Mainly national	Mainly international	Regional	Mainly national	Mainly international
Participation	Inclusive process-oriented approach with strong direct staff participation	Process-oriented approach with strong direct staff participation	Design-oriented approach with strong indirect staff participation	Inclusive design-oriented approach with strong indirect staff participation	Exclusive design-oriented approach with medium-level staff participation
Infrastructure I=industry C=consulting U=university	Fostering I-C-U cooperation in development; researcher education and training are explicit aims	Fostering I-U cooperation in development; researcher education and training are integral aims	Focusing on I-C cooperation, which is only indirectly supported by research data	Fostering I-C-U cooperation in development; researcher education and training are linked to programme activities	Focusing on I-C cooperation, which is only indirectly supported by research data
Horizontal networking	Direct (learning networks) and indirect (seminars, publications, data banks) support	Direct (regional main projects) and indirect (seminars, publications, regional coalition building) support	Comprehensive indirect (round tables, seminars, publications, data banks) support	Direct (combined projects, clusters, focus groups) and indirect (seminars, publications) support	Comprehensive indirect support, including training, case studies and campaigns
Resources	Strong in terms of funding, time structure and overall social capital in society	Very strong in terms of time structure and strong in terms of funding and overall social capital in society	Still rather weak but increasing in terms of funding, time structure and institutional basis	Very strong in terms of time structure and strong in terms of funding and staff resources	Strong in terms of institutional basis, but rather weak in terms of funding and time structure

Table 12. Profiles of workplace development strategies of two East Asian countries.

	Singapore	South Korea
Policy context	Exclusively industrial policy framework	Industrial policy framework, but also integrated with a holistic industrial relations-related mutual gains perspective
Orientation	Mainly international	Mainly national
Participation	Highly inclusive and design-oriented approach with low-level staff participation	Inclusive design-oriented approach with low/medium-level staff participation
Infrastructure I=industry C=consulting U=university	Focusing on in-house development that is supported by consulting if needed	Fostering I-C cooperation in development is an explicit aim; research data play an indirect supportive role
Horizontal networking	Indirect support through positive publicity for the winning of certifications and awards	Indirect support through New Paradigm Centre-sponsored club, case studies, project assessments and data banks
Resources	Strong in terms of funding, time structure and institutional basis	Still rather modest, but becoming stronger in terms of funding, time structure and institutional basis

These tables crystallize the key differences between the countries, which were previously examined in greater detail in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. Based on this comparison, the most significant and systematic differences between the European and East Asian countries are in the dimensions of policy context, participation and infrastructure.

The assumption that the different roles of the state in European and East Asian countries are reflected in differences in workplace development is confirmed by empirical analysis. In South Korea, the state is in fact the only key institutional actor in the New Paradigm Programme that was launched in 2004. The role of the state in South Korea is thus exceptionally strong in international comparison because consultants employed by a South Korean state institution, i.e. the New Paradigm Centre, participate in the change processes of companies. The role of industrial relations actors in workplace development in South Korea is diminished by a strong tradition of state intervention in recent years and little history of cooperation in development between management and staff, let alone between companies and trade unions. (Bae & Kwon 2008; Lee & Lee 2008; Shin 2014.) In Singapore, the directive role of the government is also particularly strong. Unlike in South Korea, tripartite cooperation between the government, employers' associations and trade unions is a long-standing tradition in Singapore, but labour market parties have long been integrated into the government machinery. According to Leggett (2007), the system of industrial relations in Singapore is in practice merged with the government-led system on manpower planning. No distinct agenda-shaping development seems to have arisen from Singapore's system of industrial relations in the three Singaporean workplace development programmes.

In South Korea, the advancement of workplace innovations and an improvement in QWL have only become items of political interest in recent years. There is a lack of consultants in this area in South Korea. The state-led New Paradigm Centre, for its part, fills this gap and, in addition to its own consult-

ing activity, it also trains consultants. In contrast, universities and research institutes have not been able to fill this gap because there is generally little R&D cooperation between these entities and companies in South Korea (Lee 2006). This makes understandable the lack of industry–university cooperation in the South Korean programme. The focus of the three Singaporean programmes is on in-house development that is supported by consulting only if necessary. The role of universities and research institutes in the programmes is virtually non-existent. The driving force behind workplace development in Singapore seems to be direct dialogue between government agencies and companies.

The main strength of both East Asian countries in light of the Naschold model is that working life reform is explicitly considered an aspect of a wider paradigm shift in the economy, i.e. an industrial policy agenda is guiding the goal setting of workplace development. This goal, combined with a strong “productivist” ethos, finds its utmost expression in the case of South Korea. The “old paradigm” of South Korea refers to companies seeking a competitive advantage through an intensive work pace, long hours and low pay. The “new paradigm”, which was spearheaded by the Yuhan-Kimberley company, refers to a development in which companies decrease work hours to create more free time for employees and more time for employees to learn and be trained at work, which in turn helps companies to increase productivity and their ability to create value. The new paradigm also includes an expanded view of learning. (Huang & Kim 2011; Lee & Lee 2008.)

Singapore has also adopted an active nationalist and government-led approach to workforce and workplace development in recent years as part of a broader strategy to promote a shift from an investment-driven growth pattern to an innovation-driven growth pattern (Koh & Mariano 2006; Low 2006). One characteristic of this approach is a reliance on “best practices” and numerous other standards for which certifications and awards are granted to both individuals and companies. Overall, Singapore’s investments in the development of a new kind of innovation infrastructure and the results achieved through these investments are impressive in many respects. (Alasoini 2009a, 167–169, 175.)

Compared with the “paradigm shift” approach of Singapore and South Korea, working life reforms in European countries seem less radical in terms of goals and are fairly fragmented, suffering from poor integration with broader strategies for industrial change and economic growth. However, the comparison also reveals obvious weaknesses in the strategies of the two East Asian countries relative to the European countries in the participation and infrastructure dimensions.

In the case of South Korea, the exceptionally prominent role of the state in workplace development at the expense of other actors, such as labour market organizations, R&D units and intermediary bodies, may hinder the search for alternative development paths and the development of radically innovative solutions in the longer term. Consumer products manufacturer Yuhan-Kimberley, whose reforms initially inspired policy-makers to establish the New

Paradigm Centre, is considered an icon of the “new paradigm”. The projects are conducted through a highly structured five-stage development process with the assistance of consultants from state-owned organization. At the time of this study, the Centre had started to bolster the workplace development infrastructure by educating new consultants, and there was an intention to expand the development concept inspired by Yuhan-Kimberley to a more general model for “high-performance workplace innovation”. However, South Korea still lags far behind the Nordic countries in other areas, such as labour-management cooperation and employee participation in development; the role of universities and research institutes in support of workplace innovations; and overall social capital in society.

The challenges of the approach adopted in Singapore are fairly similar. One may ask whether a highly design-oriented approach based firmly on following standards and “best practices” will work in an environment that moves faster, is less predictable and offers less continuity, when it is no longer enough to learn how to do “the same but better”. In such an environment, more constructive approaches that emphasize the need to learn from difference and diversity may be necessary. However, it is difficult to envision the adoption of a new approach based on a more constructive and more interactive concept of learning in an environment where the only institutional driving force of workplace development (in practice) is the government machinery. To date, one of the strengths of Singapore’s workplace development strategy relative to all other countries in the benchmarking study has been the superior ability of the government to mobilize institutions, organizations and individuals to act in accordance with the strategies it has laid out.

4.1.5 Summary of the research results

To answer to research question 1.1, this study shows that Finland ranks particularly high in the comparison in the dimensions of participation and infrastructure. Finland also ranks at the top of the ten countries and regions in the study in terms of horizontal networking and resources. In contrast, Finland’s rankings in policy context and orientation are poorer at least if we apply the Naschold model in a mechanical manner. However, with regard to policy context, Finland’s position has clearly changed since the evaluation was conducted (for more details, see Chapter 5). Section 4.1.2 discussed in greater detail the reasons why orientation in Finland was not at the international level to the same extent than in some other countries and regions.

The answer to research question 1.2, regarding specific features of programmes in Finland and the other Nordic countries and their strengths or weaknesses, was guided by the view that it is possible to talk of special features of the Nordic countries as indications of a “Nordic mentality” at the meta-level rather than a “Nordic model” that is based on certain institutional arrangements. The Nordic countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden) are most clearly distinguished from the other countries based on the infrastructure dimension. Another strong feature of Nordic programme-based development is in the participation dimension. However, the Nordic countries differ from the other

countries more in terms of dialogue than in terms of participation as such. In addition, programme-based development in the Nordic countries, as well as in Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia, ranks high in horizontal networking and resources. Policy context and orientation do not systematically distinguish the Nordic countries as a whole from the other countries and regions. Clear weaknesses inherent in the Nordic countries are not evident in the comparison.

Regarding research question 1.3, the most significant and systematic differences between the European and East Asian development contexts are in the dimensions of policy context, participation and infrastructure. The East Asian countries are strong in the policy context dimension but show obvious weaknesses relative to their European counterparts in the dimensions of participation and infrastructure. The manifestations of these strengths and weaknesses differ somewhat between Singapore and South Korea. Nevertheless, based on the dimensions of the Naschold model, it is appropriate to characterize Europe and South Asia as clearly different kinds of contexts for programme-based workplace development.

4.1.6 Trustworthiness of the research results

It is not appropriate to assess a study conducted using qualitative research methods based on the criteria that are used to assess quantitative research methods. There are several conceptual approaches, lists and blueprints for determining the strength of qualitative study (for more details, see Loh 2013). One of the best-known and most widely recognized approaches within the research community was proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in their work *Naturalistic Inquiry*. They suggest that instead of validity, reliability and generalizability, good qualitative research should consider “trustworthiness” as its umbrella concept. According to these authors, the trustworthiness of qualitative research should be assessed according to four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They also propose a number of techniques to reinforce the trustworthiness of qualitative research with respect to each criterion. These techniques constitute a general guideline that can be applied differently depending on the study in question. In this section, the framework of Lincoln and Guba is used to assess the trustworthiness of the results of this study.

In the literature on the trustworthiness of qualitative research, the object of study is often a local or workplace community. The nature of the object of this study, workplace development programmes, is quite different. In particular, the object of this study is quite abstract and key informants on the object are in professional positions quite similar to that of the author. In addition, the conceptual framework of this study (a revised version of the Naschold model) has strongly directed the collection of data from the outset. The study has also strived to attain a much more structured result (classification on the dimensions of the model) than is typical of studies that apply qualitative research methods. For these reasons, many of the techniques that Lincoln and Guba

mention are not particularly relevant for assessing the trustworthiness of this study.

To promote *credibility* (internal validity), three techniques were applied in this study. The first of these is triangulation. Information on workplace development programmes in different countries and regions was collected by a number of different means, including literature analysis, questionnaires, reflexive benchmarking and interviews, which demonstrates triangulation of data methods and sources. In addition, more than one person was usually involved in the collection of data (e.g. benchmarking activity and interviews); thus, the study also applied triangulation of investigators. The sole exception to this method of data collection was South Korea, where the data were collected by a single person. Another technique used in this study was peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was conducted through conversations within the research group, comparisons of observations and notes, and comments on written texts of the objects of the study. The third technique used in the study was member checks. All benchmarking workshop participants and a select group of interviewees had the opportunity to comment on draft texts regarding the programmes in question before publication. The texts were originally published in English as reports of the WORK-IN-NET project (Alasoini 2005a; 2008b). However, in the case of South Korea, the text appeared directly as part of a peer-reviewed research article (Alasoini 2009a).

The main technique mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to promote *transferability* (external validity) is a thick description of the research context. However, the issue of transferability is not particularly relevant in the case of research questions 1.1–1.3 because the study includes nearly all countries and regions in which major workplace development programmes were ongoing. For example, it would not have been meaningful, or even possible, to examine the strengths and weaknesses of programme-based workplace development in Finland in relation to any other country other than those that were selected for the study. Similarly, it would not have been possible to select any other country from East Asia for the comparison between European and East Asian programmes because no similar programmes were ongoing in any other East Asian country.

Key techniques to promote *dependability* (reliability) in qualitative research are, according to Lincoln and Guba, the triangulation of methods and a dependability audit, which makes it possible to trace how the data were collected and to assess their accuracy. The use of method triangulation in this study was described above. According to Lincoln and Guba, demonstration of the credibility of the study is often largely sufficient to demonstrate its dependability as well.

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the study, i.e. the results and conclusions are based on empirical findings and the researcher has not collected or made use of the data in a distorted manner. Objectivity also means that the researcher has not presented results or made conclusions on the basis of those results in a tendentious manner. All persons who participated in the benchmarking workshop or were interviewed were experts of the programmes in

their respective countries or regions and/or of the underlying strategies and policies. In the event that the draft texts included inaccurate information or the conclusions drawn were detached from this information, participants and interviewees had the opportunity to request correction. In practice, very few individuals made such requests.¹⁷

Means to promote confirmability include, for example, triangulation (once again), a confirmability audit and the researcher's own reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how his/her own thoughts, feelings, culture, environment and social and personal history inform the process and outcomes of inquiry (Etherington 2004, 31–32). The question of reflexivity is particularly important in this study because the researcher had a strong personal relationship to the object of the study, i.e. I worked as Project Manager and played a key role in influencing the content of the TYKES programme.

It is difficult to indicate in an unequivocal manner how reflexivity was realized in this study. The features of the Finnish TYKES programme were objects of the benchmarking study in the same way than programmes of other countries and regions were. Foreign experts that participated in benchmarking previously had basic information regarding the TYKES programme through the WORK-IN-NET project. In addition, other members of the Finnish research group participated in the benchmarking workshop, interviews and commenting on texts. All of these people had ample opportunity to criticize the results and conclusions regarding Finland in the event of obvious distortion. The benchmarking study, which was conducted as part of the WORK-IN-NET project, was not a "beauty contest" that searched for the "best programme". The comparison between the programmes was designed from the beginning in the spirit of reflexive (not competitive) benchmarking. The goal was not to rank the programmes but to reveal similarities and differences between them, thereby furthering learning about differences and diversity.

4.2 Prerequisites for broad-based and sustainable learning effects in workplace development programmes

Section 4.2 examines research questions 2.1–2.2. The task is to assess the ability of workplace development programmes to produce broad-based and long-term learning effects, with special attention paid to Finnish experiences. The actual research questions are as follows: How can differences in the effectiveness and in the achievement of generative results in particular be compared at the conceptual level between a traditional programme strategy that is built on demonstration projects and an alternative strategy that uses learning networks, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy (RQ 2.1)? How successful has the alternative strategy based on learning networks actual-

¹⁷ By far, the largest number of contributions to the texts were provided by individuals in Ireland. Most of these comments concerned the researchers' interpretations of the country's industrial relations system and the general context in which workplace development occurs in Ireland rather than actual factual errors in the text.

ly been in producing generative results, and what kinds of difficulties has the strategy encountered at the implementation stage (RQ 2.2)? Answers to the research questions are presented in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. This is followed by a summary (4.2.3) and an examination of the trustworthiness of the research results (4.2.4).

4.2.1 Framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes: a comparison of the traditional strategy and learning network-based strategy

Section 4.2.1 presents the conceptual framework that was created for analysing the dynamics of development programmes and for comparing two different kinds of programme strategies. At the end of the section, programme strategies and their typical project forms are analysed using this framework. The stepwise description of how the framework was constructed highlights the importance of the three theoretical insights that guided the building of the programme theory underlying the alternative strategy. The first of these insights concerns the distinction between different kinds of programme outcomes, particularly the distinction between first-order results and generative results (Alasoini 2006). The second theoretical insight is the dual nature of programmes as both production systems and development systems (Alasoini 2008). The third insight relates to various strategic options for producing generative results (Alasoini 2011). The conceptual framework, together with the above-described theoretical insights, forms the core of the programme theory that is utilized to answer research question 2.2 (cf. Section 3.3.3).

First-order results vs. generative results

Chapter 3 explained the respective meanings of first-order results and generative results. Chapter 3 also highlighted the reasons why workplace development programmes and their evaluation studies have traditionally focused largely on the achievement and measurement of first-order results. These programmes have typically been less successful in producing other kind of results. The situation can be considered perverse in the sense that even good first-order results of the workplace level cannot provide a strong argument for public intervention in the development of working life and the promotion of workplace innovation. A much stronger argument for public intervention in innovation policy is the generation of positive externalities, e.g. knowledge spillovers, network effects or cumulative innovations (Takalo 2009). The same argument can be generalized to workplace development as well.

Rogers (2003) has identified five perceived attributes of innovation that affect its rate of adoption. These are as follows: the relative advantage of an innovation; its compatibility with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters; its simplicity; its trialability; and its observability. On general note, it can be argued that based on these five attributes, the diffusion of workplace innovations according to the linear model poses a number of challenges (cf. also Alänge et al. 1998; Steiber 2012). Usually, the higher the level of abstraction of the innovation, the more difficult it is for potential adopters to understand and use the innovation, experiment with the innova-

tion (even on a limited basis), or visualize the results of the innovation. Generally speaking, simple management or organizational techniques and tools are easier to transfer than, for example, general management or organizational principles (cf. also Lillrank 1995). In the light of the constructive concept of workplace innovation adopted in this study (Section 2.4), only the content of workplace innovation is transferable.

The experiences of many programmes indicate that the pilot or demonstration projects that they support are generally successful but that the “good” or “best practices” that they create spread poorly. Table 13 summarizes key reasons for this poor dissemination by comparing the divergent conditions for project success between piloting workplaces and “second wave” adopters (for more details, see Alasoini 2006, 16–21). It is even possible that first-order results that are “too good” can lead to unrealistic expectations and undefined and under-resourced programme strategies for the achievement of generative results, i.e. in certain cases, the success of pilot or demonstration projects can partly explain the failure of their diffusion! (Alasoini 2014, 312).

Table 13. Conditions for project success: piloting workplaces vs. “second wave” adopters (adapted from Alasoini 2006).

	Piloting workplaces	“Second wave” adopters
Resources to implement the project	Exceptional resources provided by the programme in terms of funding and expertise	Depends on the financial situation and the extent of management commitment of the adopter
Opportunities for tailor-made solutions within the project	Extensive target-specific tailoring possible	Depends on resources given to the project and the development expertise of internal or external change agents
Development level of the workplace	Progressive workplace that often has experience with both self-motivated development and cooperation with external experts in development	Typically a follower or a laggard that has less experience with self-motivated development and cooperation with external experts in development
Commitment of participants to implement the project	High legitimacy and “transparency” of the project and high level of commitment from participants to implement project as well as possible	“Programme boost”, which would enhance legitimacy, “transparency” and high level of commitment from participants, is lacking
Motivation of the participants to rate the project as successful	Hawthorne effect possible: participants improve their performance and/or give positive evaluations of the project because they have received special attention	Hawthorne effect missing: depends very much on realization of the process (how?) and context (why?) dimensions of innovation

Based on the concepts of “generative result” and “generative idea”, this study tries to conceptually take over problem setting related to the spread of work-

place innovations and new management and organizational practices (which in many cases form the core of workplace innovations). The generative result concept does not refer to “ready-made” practices or to more abstract underlying principles that other workplaces or programme stakeholder groups may consider beneficial. Rather, this concept refers to the fact that a project has produced certain practices or principles that can serve as generative ideas (i.e. sources of inspiration and encouragement) for certain workplaces or stakeholder groups not involved in the project (Alasoini 2006, 19; cf. also Wareham & Gerrits 1999, 47). Further development of generative ideas into innovations requires “local re-invention” in terms of the content and/or adoption intensity of the practice in a new context (e.g. Ansari et al. 2010; Kennedy & Fiss 2009). Local re-invention is a local learning process. This process is not merely a matter of “adoption” or “implementation” of some principle or practice but rather entails “reconciling”, “fine-tuning” and sometimes even “creative misunderstanding”.

Development programme as a production system and a development system

Figure 2 displays the framework that was developed in the article *Building Better Programmes* (Alasoini 2008) as a tool for analysing the dynamics of development programmes. Construction of the “production system part” of a programme and its basic elements (role and function, orientation, resources and tools) in this framework was inspired by an innovation systems benchmarking study by Frinking et al. (2002). As a *production system*, a programme should produce outcomes at four different levels: first-order results, second-order results, generative results and infrastructure results. Second-order results demonstrate the durability of the improvements attained by companies or workplaces that participated in the project. Infrastructure results describe the extent to which programme measures can produce broader impacts on the development infrastructure as a whole. Typical infrastructure results include national, regional or sectoral enhancement of knowledge and knowhow and new types of useful multi-actor cooperative relationships.

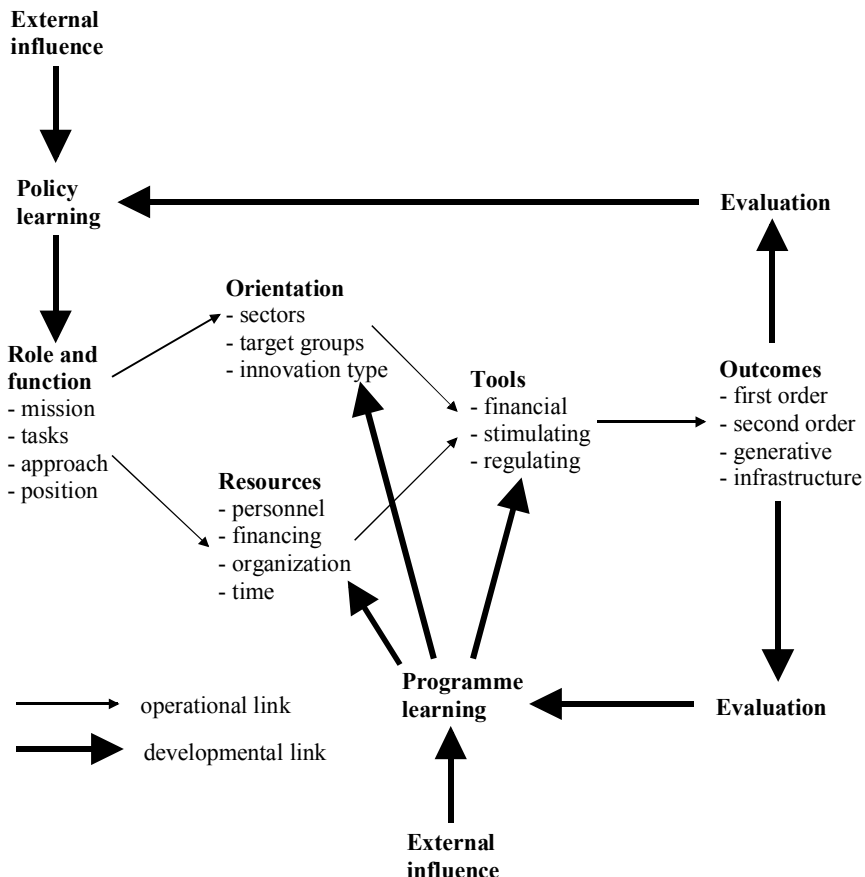


Figure 2. Framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes (Alasoini 2008, 65).

According to this framework, every programme is both a production system and a development system. This division was primarily inspired by an article of Colbjørnsen and Falkum (1998) in which they analyse employee participation in three different systems (production system, bargaining system and development system) of a firm. All three systems follow a different logic of operation. As a *development system*, a programme should produce programme learning and policy learning. *Programme learning* refers to learning that occurs “inside” the programme during its implementation, whereas *policy learning* “transcends” the programme and extends to the role and function of the next-generation programme. The subjects of learning, as seen through this framework, are the programme implementers and the policy-makers.

As Figure 2 shows, the framework perceives a programme as an open and dynamic system that in its ideal form produces positive “outward” effects at four different levels, is capable of renewing itself (programme learning), and is capable of contributing to the improvement of programme activities in a broader context (policy learning). According to the logic of systems thinking, the inability of a programme to produce the desired effects derives from faults in its individual elements or mutual incompatibilities between the elements.

Different strategies to produce generative results

The article *Workplace Development as Part of Broad-Based Innovation Policy* (Alasoini 2011) supplements the framework by examining in greater detail different programme strategies that rely on the utilization of pilot or demonstration projects to narrow the chasm between first-order results and generative results. The strategies differ in terms of the methods utilized to improve the various phases of the processes that lead to innovation (creation – transfer – reception) and in the manner in which they define the phases' temporal relationship. Table 14 displays four such strategies. The fifth strategy, which uses learning networks, derives from an alternative programme strategy that differs from programme strategies that resort to the utilization of demonstration projects.

Table 14. Different strategies for improving the capacity of programmes to produce generative results (Alasoini 2011, 37).

Strategy	Relation between creation, transfer and reception	How to improve creation?	How to improve transfer and reception?
More efficient use of means of transfer	Sequential	No change	Selective and tailor-made use of means for targeted groups of potential adopters
Shift of resources from creation to reception	Sequential	More focused approach	Increased support for “second wave” adopters
Elaborating causal mechanisms of demonstration	Sequential	Greater research input	More convincing evidence-based argumentation
Enriching knowledge from demonstration	Partially overlapping	Broader base for validation	Bridging the social and cultural gap between creation and reception
Using learning networks	Parallel	Mutual learning within the learning network through interaction and co-creation improves creation and forms a broader and more valid basis for transfer	

The first strategy is based on the idea of deploying various means of transfer more efficiently within programmes. The second alternative is to shift programme resources from the “over-resourced” innovation creation stage (i.e. the stage at which “good practices” are created in demonstration projects) to the “under-resourced” reception stage. The third strategy endeavours to improve the capacity of programmes to provide generative results by enhancing the knowledge provided by demonstration projects. This is achieved through a more rigorous analysis of causal mechanisms and the interdependencies between different phenomena, such as links between adopted management/organizational/work-related practices and organizational performance, as well as links between the adopted practices themselves (e.g. Hesketh &

Fleetwood 2006; Martens et al. 2006). A shared feature of all three of these strategies is that they are based on the idea of temporally separate phases of creation, transfer and reception.

The fourth strategy is based on the idea of enriching the knowledge provided by demonstration projects by rendering this knowledge more interactive and easier to adopt by other workplaces. Within the programme, “good practices”, including emotional aspects and examination from multiple perspectives, are substituted for traditional “passive” and formal presentations, case banks or other kinds of descriptions. For example, the interactive nature of “good practices” may be enhanced through the use of narrative methods or methods that produce different kinds of emotional experiences. Here, particular attention is paid to the distinct learning styles of the different potential adopters (Arnkil 2008). The fourth strategy represents a partial departure from the idea that creation and reception are two completely separate phases of the innovation process.

The fifth strategy for creating generative results, i.e. utilizing learning networks, corresponds to an even more radical blurring of the tendency to think in phases. The idea behind the use of learning networks is to bring together, within programmes or large-scale individual projects, several actors who share an interest in sufficiently similar development issues but have a sufficiently broad diversity of complementary expertise. Several parallel experiments are ongoing at the same time and learn from each other by exchanging information or joining forces to achieve something together. The production of generative results is thus an in-built objective of using learning networks. Such networks can function not only within the context of a programme as a forum for the exchange of information between project participants but also as an intermediate-level structure that might facilitate the broader exchange of information, both within programmes and beyond their boundaries.

Strengths and weaknesses of different types of projects

Project funding is a typical tool used in development programmes. The logic of systems thinking embodied in the framework in Figure 2 implies that choices concerning project contents not only affect programme outcomes but also influence the learning processes employed in the programme. This section uses the framework and, based on the article *Building Better Programmes* (Alasoini 2008), provides a systematic comparison of the ability of three different types of projects commonly found in workplace development programmes to produce results at different levels and to generate programme and policy learning.

A *user-oriented project* is typically initiated by the management of a workplace. The management, usually in cooperation with personnel and, if needed, with external experts such as consultants or researchers, specifies the goals of the project and the manner in which it will be implemented. The project must also support the goals of the programme and conform to its project funding criteria. In programmes that utilize such projects, the funding criteria are typically broadly defined, allowing for adjustment based on company needs and the local context. The programme supports the project financially by, for ex-

ample, paying consultation, training or research-related costs, paying personnel compensation or providing investment financing.

A *method-based project* entails the application of pre-determined development methods approved or provided by the programme in a specific context. Such methods may be standardized, or the project may involve further development of an existing method or the testing of a completely new method. An essential aspect of a method-based project is that project funding is restricted to those actors – companies, consultants and researchers – who are committed to the usage of specific methods. In some cases, the programme may have an auditing procedure that restricts the use of the method to experts approved within the programme.

A *learning network project* is not as firmly committed to specific pre-determined goals or methods. As explained in the previous section, the learning network project is based on the idea of assembling actors who share an interest in sufficiently similar development issues but have a sufficiently broad diversity of expertise and engaging these actors in long-term interaction with the aim of creating potential for innovation. A learning network is a network created specifically for learning. Here, learning is not simply a “by-product” of the sharing of experiences, which occurs in all networks; rather, the explicit and primary function of the network is to produce learning events (regarding different empirical and theoretical types of learning networks, see Bessant & Tsekouras 2001; Knight 2002; Poell et al. 2000). In addition to interaction, the generation of learning events requires the use of methods and tools that facilitate the creation of shared objects for discussion and action between the members of the network.

Table 15 summarizes the differences between project types in terms of their potential for producing results at different levels, programme learning and policy learning (for more details, see Alasoini 2008, 67–77). These are ideal types, which may appear in endless variations in different programmes. The table should not be construed as claiming that it is impossible to achieve significant infrastructure results in programmes relying on, for example, user-oriented projects. The table simply notes the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each project type without commenting on what other kinds of programme tools (e.g. other financial, stimulus or regulatory tools) might be used to compensate for these weaknesses.

Table 15. Three types of projects and their capacity for producing different kinds of outcomes, programme learning and policy learning (Alasoini 2008, 74, supplemented with 75–77).

	User-oriented project	Method-based project	Learning network project
First-order results	Good potential	Fair potential	Some/Fair potential
Second-order results	Fair/Good potential	Some/Fair potential	Some/Fair potential
Generative results	Some potential	Fair potential	Fair/Good potential
Infrastructure results	Some potential	Fair potential	Fair/Good potential
Programme learning	Requires laborious supporting activities by the programme	Fair/Good potential, provided that chosen methods/ thematic areas have real policy relevance	Fair/Good potential for quick learning, provided that development remains within the overall programme guidelines
Policy learning	Requires laborious supporting activities by the programme	Fair/Good potential, provided that chosen methods/ thematic areas have real policy relevance	Fair/Good potential for radical policy learning

The profile of *user-oriented projects* is clear in the sense that the most obvious strength of user-oriented projects is the production of first-order results. The ability of user-oriented projects to produce second-order results depends on whether the programme takes a realistic view regarding artificiality of the context producing the first-order results and the extent to which the project has strengthened the development system of the workplace implementing the project. However, user-oriented projects are clearly at a disadvantage in producing generative and infrastructure results.

The utilization of information produced by user-oriented projects in support of programme and policy learning involves three critical factors. First, such information is typically spread out over individual, often very heterogeneous and small projects and thus must be compiled. Second, good project results are often achieved in an environment that is artificial in many respects. It is difficult for other workplaces to achieve similar success by adopting and applying practices developed in projects because the other workplaces do not have the same kind of support. Third, the results of the projects tend to be context-specific, which requires a good understanding during the transfer phase of the extent to which the success of a project was due to features that are unique to its context and the extent of customization required for the solutions to be useful in other contexts.

Method-based projects have a more even results profile. Although they are not as effective as user-oriented projects in producing first- and second-order results, they provide a more favourable environment for the production of generative and infrastructure results. In method-based projects, the critical

learning-mechanism issues are very different than those of user-oriented projects. Method-based projects are based on a more normative approach, and their thematic range is typically narrower. This makes it simpler to compile experiences from the project and enables the accumulation of profound new information in selected thematic areas. The essential issues for programme learning and longer-term policy learning is the relevance of these thematic areas and the means by which we can determine or ensure their relevance.

In *learning network projects*, programme funding is allocated primarily to the promotion of interaction between the participants rather than to the support of micro-level change processes run by individual actors. For this reason, learning network projects are usually less effective than the other two project types in producing first-order results. Because learning network projects are more explicitly focused on improving the development competence of participating actors than the first two project types are, the risk of a gulf between first- and second-order results is relatively low in learning network projects. In fact, many learning network projects focus more on improving participants' development systems than on improving their production systems. The strength of learning network projects relative to the other two project types is their ability to produce generative and infrastructure results.

Learning network projects represent a sort of middle ground between user-oriented and method-based projects in terms of how normative the underlying approach is. Learning network projects require a greater concentration of programme resources on specific chosen themes compared with user-oriented projects but provide more room for experiments within projects compared with method-based projects. One challenge faced by programmes using learning network projects is ensuring that the development undertaken remains within the overall guidelines of the programme. Compared with the other two project types, learning network projects can produce learning events more quickly because learning networks produce critical evaluations of the development work of the participating actors at a rapid rate – ideally, immediately upon the project's inception. For the other project types, most of this type of information is usually not produced until towards the end of the project.

Another area in which learning network projects can be assumed to have an advantage is in the achievement of radical changes in policies by redefining or re-contextualizing the agenda for development. In user-oriented projects, this is particularly difficult because the results produced are disparate, the new information they contain is difficult to accumulate, and there is a risk that the delay in communicating the accumulated information to policy-makers will be long enough to render the information partially irrelevant. In method-based projects, it may be difficult to depart from the chosen normative approach, which often has a strong affinity with existing policies. Learning network projects are better able to avoid both of these problems. They are governed by dialectic process theory (see Van de Ven & Poole 1995), which incorporates an aim to pose new kinds of questions, which may even extend to questioning the object of the existing development work. Redefining the object requires the learning network project to be able to transcend existing organizational

boundaries, combine different kinds of expertise and nurture new forms of cooperation between different actors.

4.2.2 Learning networks as a vehicle for producing broad-based and long-term learning effects

The inclusion of learning network projects in the TYKES programme as a new form of project activity from the beginning of 2004 was based on the evaluation study of the previous TYKE programme and the experiences of its network projects; a survey conducted by the TYKE programme team; and the experiences of previous Nordic programmes on network-based development (see Section 3.3; Alasoini 2006). The TYKES programme initiated 16 learning network projects built around various themes, methods, business sectors and regions (see Table 8). Total funding allocated by the programme to learning network projects between 2004 and 2010 amounted to €7.6 million, which mainly supported the work input of network coordinators, researchers and consultants and the organization of interactive forums. The participants included a group of researchers and developers with a shared interest and workplaces whose development was supported by cooperation with external experts. The total number of workplaces participating in the networks was approximately 350, and the total number of researchers was 110, representing 30 units of universities and other research and educational institutes with a wide variety of disciplines.

The learning networks tended to be remarkably open. In addition to a compact core group, various forms of network activity were undertaken, either casually or more actively, by dozens of representatives of several organizations. In many cases, network participants varied during the project. The purposes of the networks were to increase the developmental expertise of the participants; to create and experiment with new forms of development cooperation between R&D institutes and workplaces; and to generate new and innovative solutions for Finnish working life. At the forefront were networks that aimed to create new knowledge and expertise related to workplace innovation; endeavoured to learn at several different levels (individual, team, organizational, inter-organizational and network levels); comprised a large number of different types of R&D units and work organizations; and showed obvious potential for development. Learning networks were intended to be long-term (3–6 years) meeting forums, rather than projects that progress in a “linear” fashion based on traditional “project logic” and whose implementation is guided by a plan based on this logic according to a precise timetable.

In this section, I examine the effects of learning networks in the TYKES programme using the framework developed above (Figure 2) and the comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of projects (Table 15). Certain conceptual redefinitions and adjustments to the original framework were made for this analysis. *Local sustainability*, which corresponds to second-order results, refers here to new competences, cooperative relations or other development structures that are created by learning networks and the existence of which can be verified among the core members of the network after the

programme funding has ended. The time span of this analysis is 4–5 years, depending on the network. *External generativity* refers to networks' generative results in terms of competences, cooperative relations or other development structures. External generativity benefits actors outside the network, whereas the *internal generativity* of learning networks describes the extent to which network activities assist actors within the network to learn from each other's experiences.

The analysis focuses on the experiences of five learning network projects whose key persons were interviewed in 2013–14. A detailed description of the materials that are available on these projects is provided in Appendix 2. In addition, the analysis makes use of reported information regarding the experiences and effects of a number of other TYKES learning network projects (e.g. Alasoini et al. 2006; 2011b).

Local sustainability vs. external generativity

Learning networks of the TYKES programme experienced greater success in the area of local sustainability than in external generativity. The networks were particularly well qualified to produce new competences: they had exceptional financial resources, they were able to operate over a long time-frame and the terms and conditions of the programme funding provided ample freedom of action. It was possible to identify genuine co-creation processes in all five projects on which this research focused. (for detailed descriptions of the success of the five learning networks in different areas, see Alasoini 2014, 321–331.)

The networks' most important means of promoting external generativity was by training researchers, researcher-developers, consultants, in-house developers and students. The role of certain networks may be regarded as significant in this respect. However, the networks were less able to disseminate innovative work practices or new learning methods outside of the networks. In addition, few core actors in the networks were interested in more extensive information exchanges, much less cooperation, with other networks. One important reason for this lack of interest was the diversity of goals, themes and approaches among networks. The networks were experimental, which gave them operational freedom of movement but also separated them and hampered their capacity for mutual cooperation.

From the viewpoint of the networks' core actors, the orientation of the networks towards local sustainability at the expense of external generativity was understandable. In many cases, network coordinators had their hands full in assembling the network, helping various parties to find shared targets of development that linked them together, maintaining the trust that is required for cooperation between the parties, mastering change situations during the course of the project, and managing the diversity inherent in the networks due to participants' divergent interests and backgrounds. The TYKES programme did not have adequate resources to implement methods that would have enabled a better balance between local sustainability and external generativity in the networks. The programme also lacked a systematic process to create a joint development agenda through which it would have been possible to bring about genuine mutual dialogue, shared learning targets, and development and co-

creation processes based on these dialogues and targets. Without a common development agenda, mutual communication among the networks remained for the most part at the level of discussion and exchange of experiences.

Despite the many differences between learning network projects and user-oriented or method-based projects, there are similar tensions within them between different actors and types of outcomes. In publicly funded projects, the rapid disclosure of first-order results is always important. Although the pressure for first-order results in learning networks is not necessarily as great as in the two other project types, it is clear that the commitment of work organizations in learning networks is nonetheless also greatly dependent on them. Some of the TYKES learning networks responded to this pressure by resorting – to a greater degree than originally intended – to traditional development methods. In doing so, these networks were better able to meet individual work organizations' immediate development needs and thus better able to maintain their legitimacy in the eyes of participating work organizations. However, this practice often occurred at the expense of a longer-term accumulation of knowledge that would have taken place in an inter-organizational context through reflexive benchmarking processes or the launch of joint explorative activities within the network.

The tension referenced above crystallizes into tension between work and expert organizations and is related to the relative importance of the network's first-order results and other results. Another tension prevails among the network's expert organizations and the programme agency/owners. As mentioned above, it is in the network coordinators' and researchers' mutual interest, especially during project implementation, to orient the network towards reinforcing local sustainability rather than strengthening external generativity. Obviously, it is in the researchers' interest to author scientific and other publications, but this typically occurs only after the project's completion – the same as in traditional development projects. However, this is not the solution to the problem of disseminating the results of workplace development programmes; that solution requires faster interaction based on more rapid cycles, both among the networks and between the networks and the outside world.

Generally speaking, the TYKES learning networks did not transform into innovative type of breakthrough activity that could have improved, in a decisive manner, the programme's ability to achieve generative impacts. In this sense, the experiences resembled those of many other Nordic development programmes (e.g. Brulin & Svensson 2012; Davies et al. 1993; Engelstad & Gustavsen 1993; Gustavsen et al. 2001; Levin 2002; Naschold 1993). The characteristics of the learning networks' most significant impacts were "more local", and the means used and project logic followed were in many respects more traditional than originally anticipated. The broad operational scope permitted by the programme funding proved to be a double-edged sword: although it made local experimentation possible, it did not provide many opportunities for the programme to direct the contents of these experiments.

Infrastructure results

As stated above, 110 researchers, representing 30 units of universities and other research and educational institutes from a wide variety of disciplines, participated in the 16 learning network projects. Approximately one-third of the researchers were doctoral students preparing their theses based on project material. Scientific research was conducted in nearly all of the networks, resulting in a number of scientific articles, development tools and guidebooks, and some 20 completed doctoral dissertations by the beginning of 2014. In addition to a researcher school for doctoral students, several networks conducted extensive training of researchers, researcher-developers, consultants, in-house developers and students in the use of different research and development methods.

Although there were difficulties in mutual cooperation *between* the networks, the learning network mode of operation encouraged the core actors to engage in dense and long-term cooperation *within* the networks. The experiences of all interviewees regarding their own role in the learning network were very positive, indicating that, compared with more traditional project forms, a learning network can yield greater tacit accumulation of participants' knowledge. We can assume that working in learning network environments necessarily involves more encounters between different worlds of competence and experience than in traditional project forms, thereby creating ample potential for the emergence of radically new ideas and insights.

Programme and policy learning

I assumed above that a learning network type of project has fair/good potential for quick programme learning, provided that development remains within the overall programme guidelines. It was also assumed that learning networks have an advantage over the other project types in terms of bringing about radical policy learning by redefining or re-contextualizing the agenda for development.

The programme's learning networks were arenas of learning, particularly for the core network actors and the TYKE programme team. As projects, the learning networks were broad and complex entities and were open to redefinition during the implementation of network activities. The process of monitoring and coordinating learning network activity entailed continuous learning by the programme team who, more often than in simpler and more traditional project forms, had to intervene to address practical problems that were encountered in the projects (see also Alasoini et al. 2011a, 41).

The potential for learning networks to produce fast programme learning and radical policy learning was not realized in the desired manner. This failure was influenced in part by clear differences in the importance attributed to various targets between the programme, on the one hand, and the networks and their core actors, on the other. The network coordinators were much more likely than the programme team to emphasize the achievement of concrete improvements in workplaces achieved through the learning networks, as well as interactive forums for shared learning and co-creation processes within the networks. In contrast, the programme team placed greater weight than the

projects themselves, besides network-level interactive forums and co-creation processes, on the project objective of strengthening the overall national, regional or sectoral development infrastructures through networked cooperation. (ibid., 43.)

4.2.3 Summary of the research results

Research question 2.1 was divided into two parts. The first part asked how differences in effectiveness and in the achievement of generative results in particular can be compared at the conceptual level between a traditional programme strategy that is built on demonstration projects and an alternative strategy that makes use of learning networks. A framework that examines programmes as open and dynamic production and development systems was built for comparative purposes. As production systems, programmes produce outcomes at four different levels. As development systems, programmes produce programme learning and policy learning. Special attention was paid to different means of producing generative results in the programmes.

The second part of research question 2.1 focused on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the traditional programme strategy and the alternative strategy. The conceptual analysis made a distinction between user-oriented projects, method-based projects and learning network projects. According to the analysis, the traditional programme strategy has an advantage over the alternative strategy in the generation of first-order and second-order results, whereas the learning network-based strategy has an advantage in the generation of generative and infrastructure results. In the area of programme and policy learning, the learning network-based strategy has more potential than the traditional strategy to generate quick programme learning and radical policy learning.

Research question 2.2 asked how successful the alternative strategy based on learning networks has been in producing generative results in practice and what kinds of difficulties have been encountered at the strategy implementation stage. Local sustainability, generative results (external generativity), infrastructure results, and programme and policy learning effects of the TYKES learning network projects were examined separately. The learning networks succeeded reasonably well in the area of local sustainability, particularly with respect to producing new competence, whereas the results concerning external generativity clearly fell short of the target. The success of the TYKES learning networks in producing results at the infrastructure level were partially counterbalanced by their more modest impacts on programme and policy learning. A major reason for the shortcomings on the part of the programme was that the programme did not create a systematic process to generate an agenda that would have compelled the individual networks to actively promote not only their *network*-level aims but also broader *programme*-level aims.

4.2.4 Trustworthiness of the research results

This study sought an answer to research question 2.1 through a purely conceptual analysis. The analysis was based on the author's long-term involvement in management, organization, evaluation and working life research and on literature on workplace development. Another important factor that guided the analysis and influenced its content was the author's long-term experience as Project Manager of workplace development programmes. In contrast, research question 2.2 was examined based on diverse qualitative empirical data. As in Section 4.1, the framework of Lincoln and Guba (1985) is applied below to assess the trustworthiness of the research results presented in Section 4.2.

The most important means used to promote *credibility* (internal validity) was triangulation of data methods and sources. Two to three persons were interviewed to obtain information on each of the five learning networks. Interview data were also mirrored in a systematic way to available written materials on these and other networks (Appendix 2). Other learning networks acted as kinds of mirrors in the analysis of the five learning networks in question; the researcher also sought to assess the extent to which similar findings already existed. In this way, it was possible to clarify the credibility and generalizability of the conclusions drawn based on the analysis of the five learning networks in question. The interviews were conducted by a single person, which means that triangulation of investigators was not realized at this stage of the study. However, triangulation of investigators had been used at a previous stage, when written materials on the TYKES learning networks were analysed and conclusions based on that analysis were drawn (e.g. Alasoini et al. 2011a).

Problem setting related to *transferability* (external validity) was described above. The five learning networks were not selected randomly; rather, these networks were selected on the grounds that they were expected to produce good generative results and because it was possible to find interviewees who would have realistic opportunities to assess the learning impacts of the networks after project completion. The five selected learning network projects lasted on average approximately one year longer than the other learning network projects (cf. Table 8). In addition, they were on average more open to new members and to a variety of development methods (cf. Ramstad 2009a). The five selected learning networks also placed greater emphasis on the strengthening of national, regional or sectoral development structures in their target setting compared to the other networks, according to an assessment conducted in 2008 by the TYKES programme team regarding the target setting of each learning network project (cf. Appendix 2). These differences support the view that conclusions concerning, for example, differences in the relative emphasis placed on local sustainability and external generativity by the networks would not be very different, although the networks that were subject to closer scrutiny would have been selected otherwise.

The most important technique to promote *dependability* (reliability) in this study was triangulation of methods. As mentioned above (Section 4.1.6), demonstrating the credibility of the study is often largely sufficient to demonstrate its dependability as well.

With regard to *confirmability* (objectivity), the most important aspects of the results of Section 4.2 are triangulation and the researcher's own reflexivity. It is important that the results and conclusions are based on empirical findings and that the researcher has not collected or made use of the material in a distorted manner. In this case, the researcher has a thorough knowledge of the learning networks funded by the TYKES programme for many years. There also existed an abundance and variety of available materials on the learning networks. Each of the five learning networks is described in depth and in an updated manner based on the interviews presented in article 6 (Alasoini 2014). The descriptions seek to identify causes for the successes and failures of the networks in achieving different kinds of results.

The issue of the researcher's reflexivity is also important to the analysis of the learning networks because I played a significant preparatory role when the decision was made to include this project form in the TYKES programme. As Project Manager of the programme, I also actively participated in monitoring, coordinating and steering learning network activity. It is difficult to indicate unambiguously how reflexivity was realized. One condition of reflexivity is that the researcher is aware of how his/her own work history is linked to his/her object of study. This condition was met during the study, and it was not my intent at any stage of the study to legitimize my own actions or the role of the TYKES programme in supporting learning networks afterwards. According to my own view, a few years break, during which time I did not have active communication with the networks or with any other activity that originated from the networks, has reinforced my capacity for reflexivity.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter discusses the scientific and practical significance of the research results. Section 5.1 highlights the six main contributions of this study, each of which is considered separately. The two key *scientific contributions* are a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of national workplace development strategies and a more realistic view of the potential for working life change with the support of workplace development programmes. The two key *policy contributions* of this study are the modelling of workplace development programmes as dual systems and a better understanding of the dual nature of generativity. Finally, the two key *methodological contributions* are the elaboration of the role of programme theories in cases of complex objects for intervention and the revision of the Naschold model from the perspective of learning. In Section 5.2, some suggestions for further research are presented.

5.1 Scientific, policy and methodological contributions of the study

Figure 3 summarizes the research task, the research questions and the scientific, policy and methodological contributions that will be examined in greater detail in Section 5.1, and how the contributions are linked to the research questions.

The *scientific contributions* of this study are primarily related to new knowledge that increases our understanding of the nature of workplace development programmes, the context in which the programmes are being conducted and their potential to act as agents of change. The study produces a significant amount of new information in a field that has been the subject of scant academic research thus far. The answers to research questions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 (articles 1–2) show clear differences between the Nordic countries, other European countries and the two East Asian countries as contexts of workplace development. Based on the empirical findings of this study, Section 5.1.1 takes a closer look at the strengths and weaknesses of the Nordic and East Asian approaches and provides an explanation of their distinct patterns. Section 5.1.2 considers conditions for working life change supported by workplace development programmes on a more general level based on the findings of all six articles and viewed through a neo-institutional theoretical framework.

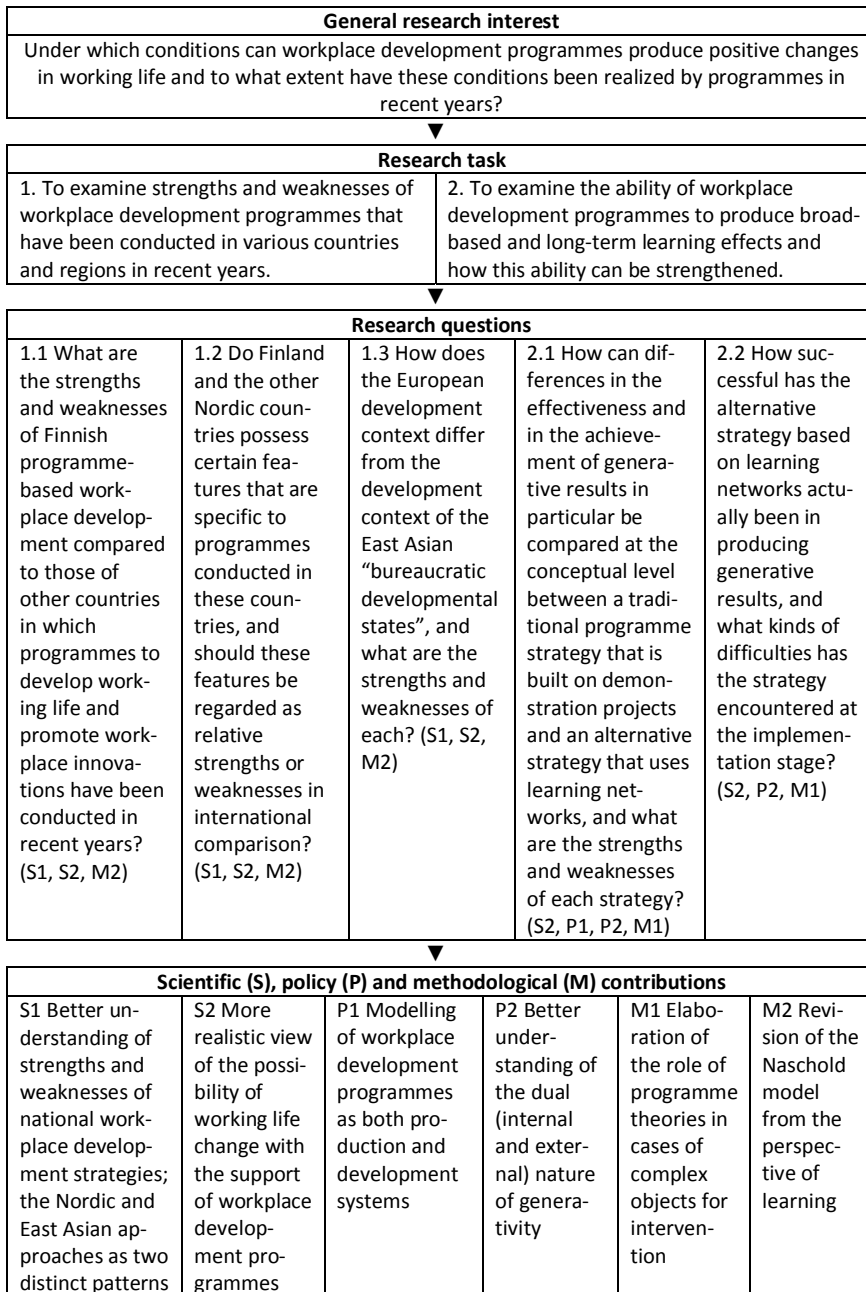


Figure 3. Research task and questions and their connection to the scientific, policy and methodological contributions of this study.

The *policy contributions* of this study are related to the construction of the framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes and a discussion of the means by which an alternative strategy that utilizes learning networks to enhance programmes’ capacity to bring about generative results can be implemented successfully. The answer to research question 2.1 produces a framework that perceives programmes as both production and develop-

ment systems and in this way enhances the understanding of programme dynamics and the versatile nature of programme outcomes (Section 5.1.3). Based on the framework (articles 3–5) and empirical findings concerning the TYKES learning networks (article 6 and research question 2.2), it is possible to increase understanding of the conditions necessary for successful operation of a learning network-based programme strategy. Section 5.1.4 investigates the dual (internal and external) nature of generativity and the strengths and weaknesses of different modes of programme leadership for directing learning networks.

The *methodological contributions* of this study are twofold; the first concerns the role of programme theories in interventions for working life change, and the second is related to comparative frameworks for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of workplace development programmes. Section 5.1.5 discusses the role that programme theories can play in cases of complex objects for intervention based on the framework that was constructed in articles 3–5 and on the empirical findings of the TYKES learning networks in article 6. Section 5.1.6 summarizes the major modifications and additions that were made to the Naschold model during the course of this study based on articles 1 and 2.

5.1.1 National workplace development strategies: the Nordic and East Asian approaches as two distinct patterns

The key questions in assessing national workplace development programmes and the underlying strategies are why workplace development programmes are implemented and what they intend to achieve. As mentioned in Section 3.1, the “positive changes” at which workplace development programmes are aimed relate to simultaneous improvements in productivity and QWL. Section 2.5 explains that workplace development programmes do not aim (only) at micro-level changes; rather the programmes also aim to bring about positive externalities, which appear as cumulative innovations at the meso level and, ideally, as macro-level changes. In the same spirit, Naschold states as follows: “The aim of the Workplace Development Movement is not only to bring about improvements – in both welfare and productivity terms – at the micro level, but also to induce spin-off and linkage effects leading to improvements in social welfare and productivity at the macro level” (Naschold 1994b, 121).

Goal setting of workplace development programmes comprises two main dimensions: productivity–welfare and micro–macro levels. The usefulness of programmes and the underlying strategies can therefore be assessed in the light of two criteria (Figure 4):

- 1) The strategies must include elements that will help to improve productivity and QWL (or welfare) simultaneously – or, preferably, in a mutually supportive way – at both the micro and macro level.
- 2) The strategies must include elements that will facilitate bridge building between the micro and macro levels, such that micro-level changes will lead to macro-level effects.

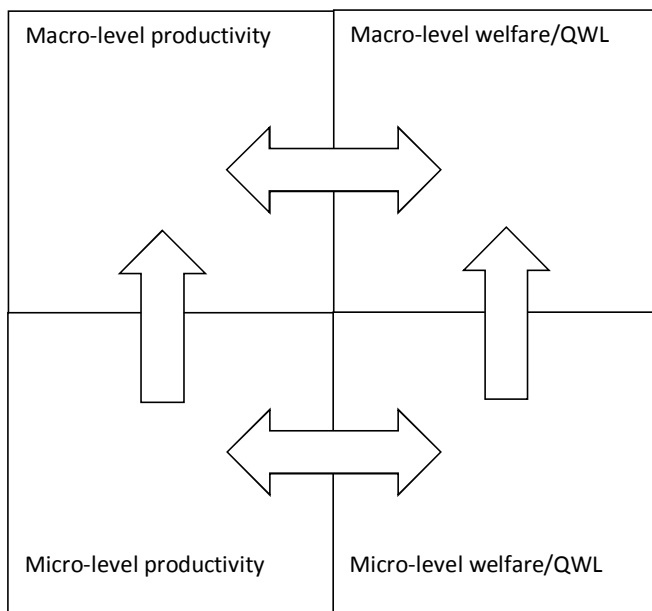


Figure 4. Key linkages of workplace development strategies.

The benchmarking analysis describes two clearly distinct approaches in programme-based workplace development, each of which has strengths and weaknesses. Strengths of the *Nordic approach* include dialogue and infrastructure, as well as the bridging of the productivity–welfare dimension in development. In comparison, strengths of the *East Asian approach* include policy context and the bridging of the micro–macro dimension in productivity development (Figure 5). Weaknesses inherent in the approaches are largely mirror images of each other. Approaches of other European countries and regions are closer to the Nordic than to the East Asian approach, but their strengths are not as distinctive.

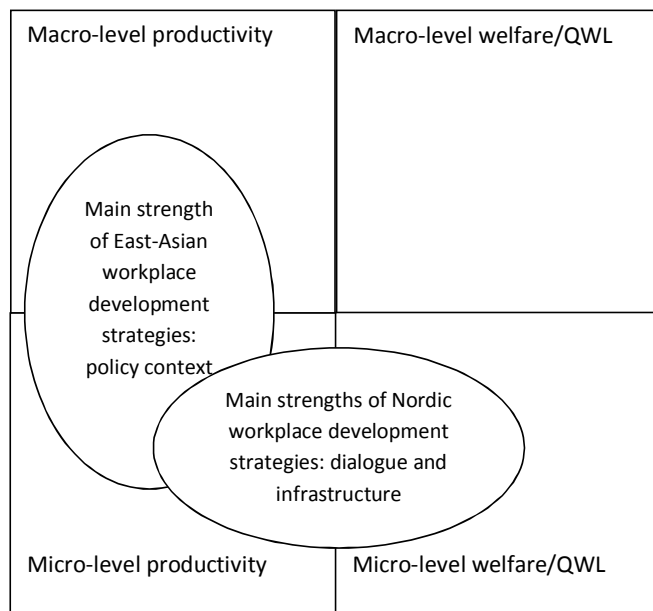


Figure 5. Main strengths of Nordic and East Asian workplace development strategies.

This study has referred to “Nordic exceptionalism” in the previous chapters through different conceptualizations, such as “enabling welfare state”, “welfare state variant of the development state”, “constructivist capacity” and “Nordic mentality”. A continuing theme throughout the study has been that “Nordic exceptionalism” should not be equated with certain unambiguous institutional arrangements, which runs contrary to many models of capitalism and classifications that are based on such models (for criticism of such models, see Bergholm 2009; Crouch 2005; Kettunen & Petersen 2011). Dialogue as a special character and strength of Nordic workplace development strategies may be derived from an idea of a special type of social citizenship rather than a particular feature of institutional arrangements or the underlying “narrow” model of capitalism. Kettunen (2012) suggests that a particular form of social citizenship has evolved in the Nordic countries wherein interests rather than rights are central. This concept includes two intertwined modes of thought and action: first, the idea of symmetry between workers and employers and, second, the idea of a virtuous circle between divergent interests. Although neither of these ideas are exclusively Nordic, Kettunen argues that they could be realized further in the Nordic countries than elsewhere as a component of social change and reform. Interests are less pre-given than rights; there is thus the need for continuous (re)negotiation. The reconciliation of the interests of two symmetrical partners in a manner that does not result in a zero-sum game requires dialogue.

Perceiving the idea of social citizenship in this manner also helps us to understand other features of “Nordic exceptionalism” in workplace development. For example, it makes understandable the heavy emphasis on QWL in addition to productivity in Nordic workplace development programmes over the years

and generally explains the great investments made in the Nordic countries to improve QWL.¹⁸ The high priority given to QWL in programme target setting reflects the respect shown by one labour market party (the employers) to the interests of the symmetric party (the employees). Simultaneous development of productivity and QWL can also be seen as a virtuous circle that stems from the reconciliation of different interests. In modern Nordic thinking, the development of QWL has a close link to the diffusion of “learning-oriented forms of work organization” that promote favourable development of productivity (e.g. Gustavsen 2007; Kristensen 2011, 23–25).

The understanding of employees as autonomous subjects and major contributions to the development of QWL have also contributed to the fact that working life research has become a recognized area embodying certain “Nordic traits” in the field of research in all Nordic countries (e.g. Hasle & Sørensen 2013). The infrastructure of working life research has included large, internationally well-known institutes and universities. Working life researchers in different Nordic countries have strengthened their identity through national and joint Nordic journals, associations and events devoted to working life research. Nordic working life researchers have participated in development programmes and, in general, in development cooperation with workplaces more actively compared with researchers elsewhere, and certain workplace development programmes have included the explicit goal of strengthening the working life development infrastructure, such as further education for researchers.

Nordic and other European workplace development programmes have been less successful in transcending the gap between the micro and macro levels. This relative failure is due to the fair level of fragmentation in working life reform efforts in the Nordic and other European countries and the poor integration of these efforts with broader strategies for industrial change and economic growth. In Finland, this challenge has been addressed by, among other measures, the integration of workplace development into a new “broad-based innovation strategy”, particularly since 2008. In Sweden, workplace development has been more closely integrated with regional industrial and innovation policies during the 2000s. In Norway, the most distinct trend of the 2000s has been the attachment of workplace development to regional development; in addition, the link between workplace development and regional industrial and innovation policies has been strengthened. (Alasoini 2012, 246–248.)

However, in the Finnish case, we still lack hard, generalizable data on the value added by the integration of aspects of workplace development into the broader concept of innovation policy and on whether this integration has helped to enhance the social effectiveness of workplace development activities. In Sweden, numerous rearrangements of public research institutes and research funding organizations, as well as a decline in the priority of working life research in government policies in recent years, have undermined the poten-

¹⁸ The terminology may have varied between different countries and at different times. QWL is used here as an umbrella concept that covers, for example, the work environment, occupational safety and health, and well-being at work.

tial for workplace development to act as an engine for comprehensive working life change (Håkansta 2014). Workplace development has also lost some of its former momentum in Norway due to the diminished role of action-oriented working life research in the regional innovation programme that follows Value Creation 2020 (Hildrum et al. 2009).

Bridges that cross the gap between the micro and macro levels in the Nordic programmes have been narrow thus far, and the diversification of working life will make it increasingly difficult for programmes to act as promoters of comprehensive change in the future. By utilizing the typology of Geels and Schot (2007) to categorize different transition pathways, the role of the Nordic programmes can be described as primarily reproductive. Note that this characterization does not mean that the Nordic programmes would not have been capable of producing macro-level effects at all. Important macro-level effects of the Nordic workplace development programmes include increased expertise in research and development, the creation of new forms of network and cooperative relations, and the emergence of a discursive space in which it is appropriate to discuss and approach working life-related issues – including issues related to QWL and well-being at work – from a variety of perspectives.

As highlighted above, the economically most advanced East Asian countries do not form a homogeneous group to the same extent as the Nordic countries do, neither on the bases of their business systems and industrial relations systems nor on their social values. Nevertheless, the relative strengths of these countries in influencing the development of working life manifest quite similarly in both Singapore and South Korea, as well as in Japan (as examined by Naschold).¹⁹ In particular, in each of these three countries, the working life reform strategies are highly productivity driven and closely associated with goal setting derived from industrial policy.

The Japanese quality movement is a good example of an activity that is linked to supporting the achievement of the country's industrial policy-related objectives and based on a nation-wide mobilization of companies and their employees to improve quality, productivity and competitiveness. This approach has succeeded in crossing the gap between the micro and macro levels (for more details, see Cole 1989; 1993). However, the mass mobilization of workers to achieve these improvements has been based on "controlled participation" (Cole 1993, 131), thus lacking the dialogical element that stems from the idea of symmetry between the interests of workers and employers and is characteristic of Nordic approaches to workplace development.

In Singapore, workplace development has been guided by a strategy characterized by strong and even aggressive investment in skills and workplace development. This strategy is aimed at creating a new type of competitive "innovation infrastructure" to replace the former "efficiency infrastructure" in Singapore (Koh & Mariano 2006). Mass mobilization in Singapore has been coupled with a stronger focus on social inclusion compared with the Japanese

¹⁹ I include Japan in my analysis, although, as Cole (1993, 128) argues, it is not justified in the case of Japan to speak of "workplace development" or "programmes" in the sense of publicly supported innovation or development initiatives at the firm level.

quality movement. The role of the state in Singapore is also greater than that in Japan, whereas the roles of various intermediary organizations are less prominent in Singapore compared to Japan.

In South Korea, workplace development has been guided by the idea of a “new paradigm” based on the Yuhan-Kimberley model. At the time the research was conducted, the intention was to develop the “new paradigm” model further towards the Korean “high-performance workplace innovation” model. Although South Korea has not succeeded in achieving the same level of mass mobilization of companies and employees for working life reform as in Japan and Singapore, the country’s strategic orientation towards a paradigm shift can be considered, in relative terms, the strongest element of the South Korean strategy according to the Naschold model. If the transition pathway of the Nordic strategies and programmes can be characterized as primarily reproductive, the transition pathway of each of the three East Asian countries can be described as reconfigurative, or even transformative.

It would be incorrect to say that workplace development measures in the East Asian countries have not contributed to the improvement of welfare and QWL, in addition to productivity, in these countries. For example, the South Korean “new paradigm” expressly includes the objectives of decreasing the long working hours that are typical of the country and reducing work intensity (Huang & Kim 2011; Lee & Lee 2008). The difference between the East Asian countries and the Nordic countries is that this improvement has not occurred as a result of a reconciliation of the interests of the two symmetric parties – employers and employees – but is based on a more or less one-sided definition crafted by the state and/or employers. The reasons why employees and their organizations have thus far failed to influence the goal setting of national-level development measures in the East Asian countries to the same extent as in the Nordic countries vary by country. In Japan, this failure relates to the overall decrease in the trade unions’ organizational strength at the national level and the trade unions’ primary orientation towards enterprise-level issues (Fujimura 2012); in Singapore, it is due to the fact that the trade union movement has largely merged into the state apparatus (Kuruvilla 2007; Leggett 2007). In South Korea, particularly in large companies, this failure stems from a lack of trust and cooperation – or even outright hostility – between employers and trade unions; in smaller South Korean companies, it stems primarily from the weakness of trade unions or the lack of employee unionization (Bae & Kwon 2008; Lee & Lee 2008; Shin 2014).

5.1.2 The possibility of working life change through workplace development programmes

Significant improvements in productivity and QWL in individual work organizations have been achieved with the assistance of publicly supported development projects (e.g. Gustavsen et al. 1996; Keuken 2010; Lee & Lee 2008; Oeij et al. 2014; Ramstad 2009b; 2014). As explained earlier, there are many factors that may explain the good success rate of pilot or demonstration projects in publicly funded workplace development programmes (Alasoini 2006); how-

ever, the legitimacy of publicly supported intervention in innovation policy or workplace development cannot be based primarily on this success but rather must be justified by a variety of positive externalities produced by the intervention (cf. Takalo 2009). Workplace development programmes in various countries have generated new and wide-spread knowledge, given rise to new cooperative networks, and increased awareness of the possibility of alternative solutions, which in turn has contributed to increased public awareness and discourse on working life change and development. Gustavsen (2003; 2004) speaks of the need for such programmes to work as mechanisms that can be used to catalyse social movements aimed at making working life more democratic. The challenge is thus to generate parallel and interactive processes of change in a great number of companies and workplaces. In Gustavsen's view, the growth or strengthening of such a movement can in itself be considered an indication of a programme's success.

Figure 6 classifies various levels of external effects of workplace development programmes. Gustavsen's characterization of programmes as mechanisms for social movements implies that programmes should be able to produce – either directly or indirectly – mutually supportive cumulative innovations; in other words, programmes should have clear generative effects. At best, programme impacts occur as changes at the level of regimes or even changes of regimes at the national, regional, sectoral or industry level. Changes *at* the level of regimes refer to reproduction and reconfiguration pathways, whereas changes *of* regimes refer to substitution and de-alignment and re-alignment; transformation represents some kind of middle ground between these two types of change. Changes of this nature refer here to changes in cognitive deep structures that in turn direct changes in working life, not necessarily or primarily to visible or measurable system-level changes in institutional infrastructure (cf. Geels 2011, 31). Changes at the level of regimes or changes of regimes can appear, for example, as new kinds of doctrines in management and work organization, new ways of working, new paradigmatic approaches to workplace health promotion or new kinds of normative expectations concerning employees' opportunities to exert influence at work.

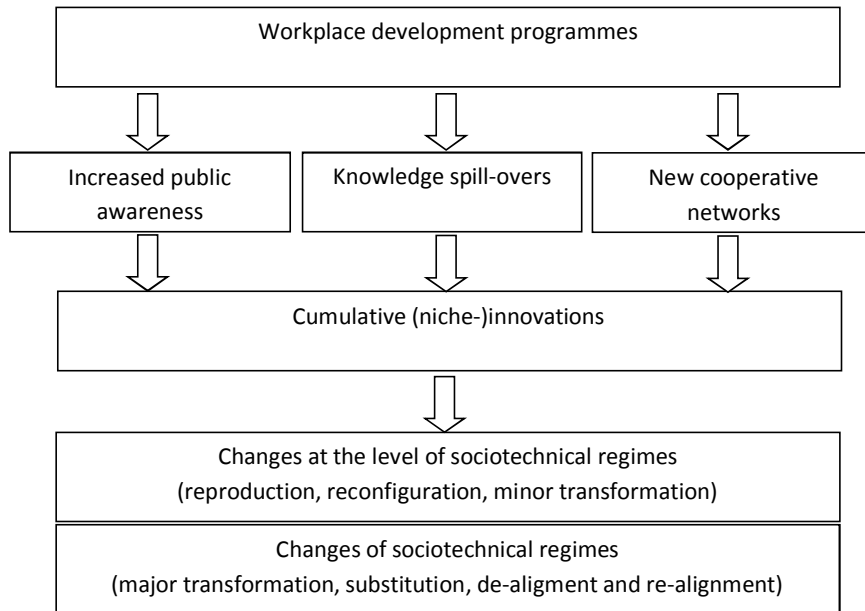


Figure 6. External effects of different levels of workplace development programmes.

The ability of programmes to produce changes at the level of regimes or changes of the regimes themselves is affected not only by the characteristics of the programmes per se but, according to the three-level framework, also by external pressure brought to bear on regimes by landscape changes and internal tensions within regimes. The possibility of breakthrough for programme-supported niche-innovations is dependent, among others, on economic, operational, social and other benefits produced by these niche-innovations and the extent to which these niche-innovations support or instead call into question the premises of the prevailing regimes. For example, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have identified three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism that can act as significant converging forces for work organizations and thus prevent a wider breakthrough of niche-innovations and the evolution of such innovations into new mainstream practices (Table 16). Underlying this view is a belief that organizational life is driven not only by economic rationality but also by powerful tendencies to strengthen the organization's political and institutional legitimacy and to demonstrate its social fitness.

Table 16. Three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism and key actors (adapted from DiMaggio & Powell 1983 and Paaue 2004).

Mechanism	Source	Key actors
Coercive institutional isomorphism	Results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on work organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations of the society within which work organizations function.	Governments, labour market organizations and work councils
Mimetic institutional isomorphism	Results from standard responses to uncertainty and from following trends and hypes which, when applied, demonstrate that the work organizations in question are at least trying to improve their operation.	Competitors and other companies and workplaces
Normative institutional isomorphism	Results from the professionalization of occupations as part of their collective struggle to define the conditions and methods of their work and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy.	Educational and training institutes and professional and occupational associations and networks

It is interesting that all the same institutions that are mentioned in Section 2.3 as key actors of the workplace innovation-promoting expanded triple helix model may under certain circumstances also act as significant impediments to workplace innovation activities. In her analysis of the expanded triple helix model, Ramstad (2008, 26–36 and 103–125) discusses thoroughly how the different parties can find shared goals and join forces to achieve them but largely ignores the *inherently contradictory* relationships of the various actors towards the development of workplace innovations. Although governments and labour market organizations may be active funders and promoters of workplace innovations in workplace development programmes, the labour legislation and collective agreements supported by these actors may include stipulations that seriously discourage innovative behaviour in working life (an example of *coercive* institutional isomorphism). Work organizations within the same industry may be important sources of learning for each other, but in certain cases, rather than promoting the emergence of novel, unique and innovative solutions, this learning may result in the spread of increasingly consolidated industry-wide “best practices” (an example of *mimetic* institutional isomorphism). Universities and other educational institutes may enhance the skills and competences of company managers and other key occupational groups in different functional areas, which may ultimately have the effect of increasing the normative pressure among these groups to think alike and decreasing the incidence of deviant behaviour (an example of *normative* institutional isomorphism).

Regarding the effectiveness of workplace development programmes, there is a need in the future to better understand not only the factors that are favourable to the occurrence of workplace innovations but also the dynamics and structures that can act as obstacles to the spread of workplace innovations. Neo-institutional organization theory and research can provide new perspectives on this issue. Neo-institutional theory and research have not only sought to identify obstacles to changes and to the dissemination of innovations but have also sought to find explanations for why changes occur despite these obstacles, to identify factors that create conditions for diversity between organizations and to identify factors that cause certain organizations to adopt solutions that deviate from the mainstream (e.g. Battilana et al. 2009; Beekert 2010; Dacin et al. 2002; Garud et al. 2007; Greenwood & Hinings 1996; Oliver 1992; Weik 2011). To date, even the most comprehensive and ambitious analyses of workplace development strategies and programmes (see Section 2.6) have not made much use of this branch of research.

With respect to the identification of conditions under which workplace development programmes can contribute to working life change, we must first specify the levels of change. This section provides a three-level breakdown (see Figure 6) that can be applied to monitor and assess the external effects of programmes. Another key contribution of this section is the suggestion that the possibility of working life change should be analysed as a dynamic interplay of three mechanisms.

The first such mechanism is the pressure to change that is brought to bear by workplace development programmes and their various external effects, including, above all, their generative results. This study, together with many other previous studies that have analysed the results and causal mechanisms of workplace development programmes and in particular the conditions for networked activities in the programmes, have increased understanding in this area. Nevertheless, attempts to build systematic conceptual frameworks for assessing workplace development programmes' capacity to produce effects of different levels based on this knowledge are few and far between. By making use of neo-institutional theory and empirical findings deriving from research on institutional entrepreneurship, it is possible to enrich our view on enabling conditions for programmes to play the role of an institutional entrepreneur (e.g. Battilana et al. 2009; Garud et al. 2007; Weik 2011).

The second factor that influences the possibility of change is pressure that is brought to bear on the regime as a result of (economic, technological, political, social, demographic, legislative, etc.) changes in the external (exogenous) environment, and the third being the internal dynamics of the regime itself. Four major attributes of external change can be distinguished: frequency, amplitude, speed and scope of change(s) (Geels & Schot 2007, 403–404). Different combinations of these four attributes create different conditions for working life change and niche-level workplace innovations to gain ground.

The susceptibility of sociotechnical regimes to changes can be analysed, for example, by making use of the summary of Battilana et al. (2009) on field characteristics that create favourable prerequisites for actors to become insti-

tutional entrepreneurs. Building on previous research they identify two characteristics of crucial importance, namely degree of fragmentation and degree of institutionalization. Regarding sociotechnical regimes, the former concept refers to the extent to which the cognitive deep structures that underlie the regimes include mutually incompatible or even contradictory elements. For example, it is possible that certain established practices in working life are basically results of compromises between different influential actors. Degree of institutionalization refers to the extent to which the prevailing cognitive deep structures are institutionally rooted, for example, in the form of regulative rules and normative roles. By ranking regimes high or low on these two dimensions it is possible for programme designers and implementers to identify ideal-types of regimes, to assess the susceptibility of regimes to changes and to plan more effective programme strategies.

5.1.3 Workplace development programmes as production and development systems

The third main contribution of the study has been to increase the understanding of key factors that are critical to the success of workplace development programmes using the conceptual framework presented in Section 4.2.1. The framework perceives programmes as open, dynamic and learning production and development systems. From this perspective, the framework is linked to recent debates on developmental evaluation and the so-called fifth-generation evaluation of programmes and projects (e.g. Brulin & Svensson 2012; Patton 2010).

According to the framework, learning takes place through two mechanisms. First, evaluation of the programme outcomes is of critical importance as a feedback mechanism and as an “internal” source of learning for the implementers of the programme. Evaluation does not refer here only to separate external evaluation studies but also to ongoing evaluation and joint knowledge formation processes undertaken by the actors that participate in the programme or its projects. Second, external influences generate learning effects. Such influences may include the observation of new types of social problems or new research findings outside the programme.

As previously mentioned in Section 4.2.1, the failure of a programme to produce the desired effects derives from faults in its individual elements or from mutual incompatibilities between the elements. One example of a fault in an individual element is a contradiction between the programme mission and the administrative and organizational position of the agency that is responsible for steering and implementing the programme. For example, the mission may be too ambitious relative to the low administrative status of the programme implementation agency. An example of mutual incompatibility is a set of programme tools that is unsuitable for producing the desired generative or infrastructure results. For example, it is difficult to achieve large-scale infrastructure results with the exclusive use of traditional user-oriented demonstration projects.

These two perspectives examine programmes primarily as production systems. If we take a broader view of programmes by examining them as development systems as well, the efficiency of evaluation-based learning processes and the speed of learning cycles emerge as the third critical success factor. Programme learning in particular calls for fast feedback cycles through which it is possible to implement necessary revisions to the orientation, resources and tools of a programme. The fourth critical success factor, according to the framework, is reflexivity and openness of a programme to new stimuli that come from the external operating environment.

It is difficult to find similar systemic frameworks that are designed specifically for the analysis of *workplace development programmes* in the previous research literature. Naschold's (1994a; 1994b) model is a "best practice" model that focuses mainly on the policy and strategy levels, although it can also be applied to the mutual comparison of development programmes. Brulin and Svensson (2012) have distinguished three mechanisms that can be applied to assess the capacity of programmes or large-scale projects of sustainable development work: active ownership and steering, collaboration between different actors and the dynamics of developmental learning. Brulin and Svensson recognize the dual nature of development programmes (i.e. they talk of "production logic" and "developmental logic") and the interconnections between the three mechanisms, but theirs is not a systems model any more than Naschold's model is. These authors do not refer at all to Naschold's model – another indication of the poor accumulation of knowledge in this area! Ramstad's (2008; see also 2011) innovation generating model has features of a scalable systems model but she does not apply the model as a framework for analysing the dynamics of the programme level.

5.1.4 The dual nature of generativity

Articles 3–6 addressed learning networks and the conditions that would be necessary for these networks to contribute to improvements in the ability of programmes to produce generative results (Alasoini 2006; 2008; 2011; 2014). Several critical prerequisites for the operation of learning networks were identified, including adequate resources (which include an appropriate time-frame of network activity and trust between network participants); network composition; the motives and expectations of participants; rules that guide the network's operations; and the organization of the learning process and the tools and methods that are available to support it. This understanding of the critical success factors of learning networks was based on a large number of empirical studies and other published literature on learning networks (see Section 2.6).

The empirical analysis of article 6 showed that the TYKES learning networks were more successful in achieving local sustainability than in producing generative results. In retrospect, one can argue that the factors mentioned above as critical prerequisites for the operation of learning networks relate more to the networks' *internal* generativity than to *external* generativity. In particular, these prerequisites describe how the network will be able to conceive shared objectives for the parties, how network-level processes will work and how the

network will operate to achieve common goals. External generativity refers to different kinds of issues. Specifically, external generativity describes the extent to which network activities help actors outside the network to benefit from network activities. Paradoxically, this matter was paid far too little attention to in the articles. According to article 4, the production of generative results is “an in-built objective in learning network projects. Such projects can function within the context of a programme not just as a forum for the exchange of information between participants but also as an intermediate-level structure which can facilitate a broader exchange of information within programmes. As the number of learning networks in any programme is limited due to their resource-intensive nature, it is easy to bring them together and thereby create opportunities for the exchange of information between projects” (Alasoini 2008, 73). However, as article 6 (Alasoini 2014) shows, the internal generativity of a learning network is not automatically transformed into external generativity.

This study, as well as other previous analyses and summaries of the TYKES learning networks (e.g. Alasoini et al. 2006; 2011b; Ramstad 2009a), have increased understanding of principles, concepts and practices that are necessary for learning networks and their interactive forums to function. To realize expectations that are set for learning networks with regard to external generativity and, more generally, to help workplace development programmes to improve their effectiveness, a better understanding of principles, concepts and practices that promote external generativity will be necessary in the future. The existing literature does not provide any clear assistance in this regard. For example, the principles presented by Naschold (1994a; 1994b) and Brulin and Svensson (2012) are at too general a level for this purpose. Ramstad (2009a, 195) has proposed that networks should be constructed in a manner that better includes each of the three parties involved in triple helix cooperation; for example, in the case of the TYKES programme, policy-makers (e.g. regional authorities and labour market parties) were represented among the core actors in only six of the sixteen learning networks. However, without a common development agenda defined at the programme level, this alone was too weak a method for significantly strengthening those networks’ generative capabilities.

To operate in an externally generative way in development programmes, learning networks must be capable of at least four things. *First*, they must be internally generative; in other words, the interactive forums of these networks must be functional and produce learning events that are regarded by network members as beneficial. *Second*, development that takes place within the networks must remain within the overall programme guidelines. *Third*, the networks must be open to external influence and be ready for dialogue and cooperation with other networks and parties. *Fourth*, the networks must be capable of producing learning events online, i.e. at a rapid rate and in close interaction with each other and the outside world.

Levin and Løvland (2002) have identified three different modes of leadership – pressure, monitoring and developing – that will facilitate the efforts of programmes to direct research in the desired direction. Levin’s and Løvland’s

division of leadership into three different modes can also be applied to the guidance of learning network operations. Table 17 shows examples of the characteristic means included in each mode.

Table 17. Three modes of programme leadership for directing learning networks (adapted from Levin & Løvland 2002).

Desired outcome	Mode of leadership		
	Pressure	Monitoring	Developing
Interactive forums work well and produce benefits to network participants	Setting strict rules on eligible structural properties of the networks and the forums	Visiting forums and counselling network coordinators on successes, pitfalls and development proposals	Collecting experiences from different networks, with a view to developing functional forum concepts for joint use
Development takes place within the overall programme guidelines	Setting clear-cut boundaries for eligible designs and processes that guide development in the networks	Monitoring development in the networks and intervening in cases of clear and persistent deviations	Discussing with the networks to create a common understanding of the guidelines
Networks are open to external influence and ready for dialogue and cooperation	Imposing financial or other sanctions on the networks if they do not seem adequately active in dialogue and cooperation	Arranging events to achieve a sufficient level of network-to-network dialogue and cooperation	Working out shared objects of development between the networks to boost dialogue and cooperation
Networks are capable of producing learning events beyond their boundaries during operations	Requiring the networks to engage in external communication on a regular basis	Encouraging the networks to provide information on innovative developments on their own initiative	Getting the networks to internalize the programme's need to produce both fast learning and generative results

The three modes of leadership in the table are ideal types, and programmes may be forced to resort to each mode when the situation so requires. Each mode of leadership has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Pressure is the most traditional way to direct research (or, in this case, learning network operations) in the desired direction, but it creates the risk of catalysing instrumental and ritualistic activity on the part of the networks. In the long term, the success of this kind of leadership mode can be hindered by the incompatibility of its ideological premise (coercion) with the nature of desired network behaviour, which is characterized by transparency, dialogue and cooperation. It is thus seriously questionable whether programme activity based entirely – or even primarily – on pressure can successfully lead to the production of generative results by learning networks.

Overall, *monitoring* is the mode of leadership that presents the least amount of risk. Unlike pressure, monitoring does not pose a great danger of creating an atmosphere of distrust between the programme and the networks. Compared to developing, monitoring requires less work input by the programme. Monitoring is a relatively light-handed mode of leadership, which is nonetheless based in principle on building trust and cooperative relations with the networks. The critical question regarding monitoring is whether it is alone sufficiently strong to produce the desired generative results. For example, in the case of the TYKES programme, monitoring can in hindsight be described as the programme's most important means of directing learning network activity. In this case, the level of mutual cooperation between the networks and production of generative results generally fell short of the aim.

Developing is the most demanding mode of leadership. Its successful application requires a high skill level and significant work input by the programme. Another critical issue in developing is the extent to which the networks and their actors (including network coordinators and researchers, in particular) are open to close cooperation with the programme. For example, researchers may feel that their academic freedom is being threatened. Network coordinators may fear that cooperating too closely with the programme will demand too much of their work input, thereby reducing coordinators' opportunities to contribute to the internal operations of the network. Mutual competition between the networks for project funding can also hinder the open exchange of ideas between networks. Nevertheless, developing provides the greatest potential opportunities to improve a programme's ability to produce generative results through a learning network-based strategy.²⁰

None of these three modes of leadership can be considered a "best practice" as such. In practice, the choice of leadership mode is affected by a number of factors, including the expertise and resources of the programme agency, the duration of programme activities, and the similarity/dissimilarity of the networks. It is nonetheless important that programme implementers are aware of the different leadership options, make judicious choices among them, and act on them consistently.

5.1.5 Elaboration of the role of programme theories in cases of complex objects for intervention

What can be deduced in more conceptual terms from the failure of the TYKES learning networks to achieve all of their goals? Theory-based evaluation studies make a distinction between "theory failures" and "programme failures". Theory failure refers to a situation in which programme intervention does not produce the desired intermediate results and/or desired outcomes despite the implementation of the programme as planned. Identifying a clear case of theory failure is often difficult because reality seldom provides optimal conditions

²⁰ In his paper reflecting on the experiences of the TYKES learning network projects in Finland, Gustavsen (2011b) talks of the need to create shared concepts that link the networks and the social research they produce to central discourses that shape society. Otherwise, in his view, local efforts can hardly be sustained over time.

for testing programme theories. In contrast, programme failure indicates that the programme was *not* implemented as planned. However, finding a clear case of programme failure is also often difficult. For example, very few programmes that address complex phenomena can be implemented fully “as planned”, i.e. in accordance with pre-existing guidelines and protocols. The implementation of such programmes and interventions usually calls for significant iteration, reflexivity and online learning on the part of the programme staff. (e.g. Dahler-Larsen 2001; Ling 2012; Rogers 2008; Stame 2010.)

The TYKES learning networks can be characterized as complex phenomena²¹ for multiple reasons. Specifically, these networks comprised multiple actors and agencies, their functionality depended on the successful building of multi-actor partnerships and network governance structures, and the change process theory underlying the learning network projects could be described as dialectic rather than teleological (Alasoini 2008). Therefore, the concept of “programme theory” that can be tested must be understood here only in broad terms (cf. Rogers 2008, 38–45).

Bearing this reservation in mind, it is possible to argue that in the case of the TYKES learning networks, the programme theory was inadequate in at least one important respect. As indicated above, a distinction between the two types of generativity (internal and external) was not properly made. This “theory inadequacy” (if not “failure”) contributed to the lack of a systematic process to create a joint development agenda for the networks and the inadequacy of resources to achieve a better balance between local sustainability and external generativity. Monitoring was implicitly adopted as the most important mode of programme leadership for directing the learning networks. Nonetheless, the main “programme inadequacy” (if not “failure”) was not the adoption of monitoring as the most important mode of leadership in itself. The main inadequacies were, first, that this was not based on an *explicit* and deliberate choice and, second, that programme learning in the TYKES programme was not rapid enough to “fix” inadequacies in the programme theory during the course of the implementation of the learning network projects.

Where does this leave us with regard to the programme theory that justifies the adoption of learning network projects as a form of project activity in workplace development programmes and, in more general terms, the role of programme theories in cases of complex objects for intervention? In such interventions, it is difficult to test what could be called the “truth value”, or even the key idea, of the given programme theory. For example, attributes of the programme staff, including their skills and competences, level of commitment and ability to learn, as well as many contextual factors, can have a significant or even decisive impact on the programme outcome. As Dahler-Larsen (2001, 343) argues, “the truth value of a given programme theory is an emergent property of a constructed social reality.”

²¹ The term “complex phenomenon” should not be equated here with the term “complicated phenomenon”. These two terms refer to somewhat different aspects of complication with regard to the phenomenon in question (Ling 2012; Rogers 2008).

Workplace development programmes require the commitment of and cooperation between many actors. Programme theories should thus be judged more on the basis of their *social* value than on their *truth* value. This requires not only that a given programme theory is normatively acceptable and desirable but also that it includes inspiring and encouraging elements that help to create and maintain commitment among the actors and to persuade them to join forces for achieving shared objectives. The extent to which the programme theory succeeds in this task can be considered the actual acid test in workplace development programmes.

5.1.6 Revision of the Naschold model from learning perspective

The revised version of the Naschold model was used as a framework to answer research questions 1.1–1.3. The study not only modified the model for the empirical analysis but also shaped the model further in accordance with abductive reasoning (Dubois & Gadde 2002; Timmermans & Tavory 2012) based on the analysis and its empirical findings and theoretical insights. Development of the model can thus be considered a primary methodological contribution of the study, although it was not an actual research question.

As stated above (Section 3.2), our stock of knowledge on workplace development programmes is based mainly on a number of tailor-made evaluation studies of individual programmes as well as descriptive presentations and comparisons of programmes implemented in different countries and regions. The Naschold model is a rare exception among these comparative presentations because of its analytical, systematic and comprehensive approach. For this reason, it is surprising that there have been no serious attempts to develop the model further since then, despite the widely recognized need for policy learning regarding workplace development across national borders (e.g. Brödner & Latniak 2003; Business Decisions Limited 2000; Den Hertog & Schröder 1989; Eeckelaert et al. 2012; Riegler 2008; Zettel 2010).

Critical debate on the Naschold model has focused primarily on the fact that in Naschold's empirical analysis he does not make a sufficient distinction between issues of different levels, such as overall development of industrial cultures, policy frameworks and individual programmes (Cole 1993; Gustavsen 2008). The core of the criticism has been directed more to Naschold's application of his model to empirical analysis than to the methodological approach and content of the model, in contrast to what was done in this study. Section 3.2 previously explained how and from which points of view the model was modified for the benchmarking study.

The underlying motive to develop the Naschold model was not to improve the ability of the model to reveal programmes' causal powers in accordance with the "successionist" conception of causality. Rather, it is more realistic to talk of this model in terms of a "generative" approach to causation. According to this perspective, it is not the programme itself but rather the underlying reasons or resources that are provided by the programme to the subjects that generate change (Pawson 2002, 342). The six generic principles of the model form the programme theory of "generative mechanisms" underlying the possi-

bility of change. Whether these generative mechanisms are actually triggered depends on the context, i.e. the characteristics of both the subjects and the locality of the programme. Causation is contingent on the context.

Naschold himself presented his model as a “best practice” model. However, in this study, the model was used and further developed primarily as *a model for learning*. Learning refers here to both programme learning and policy learning (regarding these concepts, see Section 4.2). During the course of the study, many modifications and additions have been made to the model. The following is a summary of the four most important contributions of the study to the content of the model:

Policy context: It is reasonable that industrial policy (as Naschold argues) or innovation policy forms the main strategic basis for workplace development. This is particularly important with respect to bridging the gap between the micro and macro levels. Nonetheless, the involvement of industrial relations actors is also important for purposes of safeguarding and strengthening the social legitimacy of activities and, in particular, the link between improvements in productivity and QWL (or welfare). In addition, the inclusion of research as a component of policy context is a means of reinforcing both the reliability of the new solutions and the insightfulness of activities in general. Figure 7 depicts the different roles played by the three policy domains and their mutual interaction.

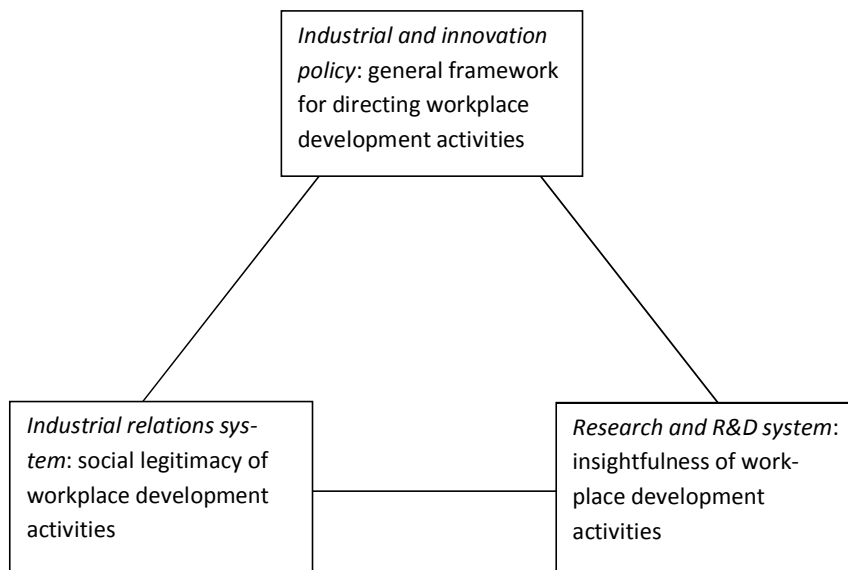


Figure 7. Desired policy context of workplace development programmes.

Orientation: When using the model as a learning model rather than as a “best practice” model, it is reasonable to shift the focus from “hegemonic” international or global standards to “useful practices”. In addition, instead of orientation, it is more appropriate to talk of learning orientation. This term refers to

the readiness of programme implementers to monitor developments elsewhere with an open mind and to adopt the ideas that most benefit local re-invention. Orientation as the setter of target levels, as in the original Naschold model, is thus only one element of the broader concept of learning orientation.

Participation: Naschold refers to participation as, above all, "a matter of the level". He emphasizes the significance of workplace- and company-level participation, as well as the general participation of groups other than experts and the top elites of organizations and institutions, in the goal setting of programmes and projects. This aspect describes participation mainly as workplace- or company-level *mobilization*. In the benchmarking analysis that was conducted as part of this study, this dimension was supplemented by considering participation also from the viewpoint of *social inclusion*. This perspective brought gender and age into account as important aspects of the goal setting of programmes. The empirical analysis further suggested that *dialogue* – rather than participation (only) as mobilization – was a special feature of the Nordic programmes (see also Section 5.1.1). Dialogue as a feature of a workplace development programmes refers in particular to the openness of different partners to each other's views and to the operating environment and changes in it; in this way, dialogue refers to an openness to a variety of experiments and re-definitions. It is thus appropriate to divide the dimension of participation into at least three sub-dimensions (Figure 8).

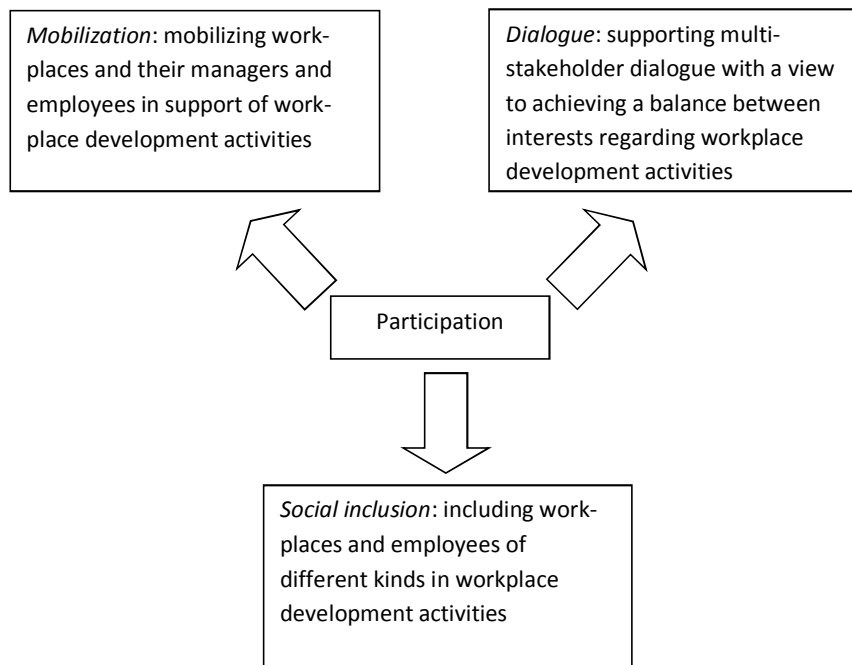


Figure 8. Three dimensions of participation in workplace development programmes.

Resources: By resources, Naschold means material resources, such as the financial, staff and time resources of the programme. During the benchmarking

analysis, this dimension was supplemented by considering the significance of more intangible resources, such as intellectual and social resources. Just as the significance of intangible capital has increased in recent years as a source of growth for the national economy and for companies (e.g. Corrado et al. 2005), it has also increased as a success factor for workplace development programmes. In the case of workplace development programmes, intangible capital and intangible resources refer to the visions, guiding principles and development concepts of programmes, as well as their capacity to harness different networks and use different mechanisms for dissemination of "good practices". The essential element is thus not only the existence of the resources but also the manner in which the resources are actually used in the programmes.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

Programmes to reform working life originated in the 1960s and 1970s from the efforts of progressive researchers, trade unions, employers and policy-makers to make working conditions more humane, increase workplace democracy and develop methods of organizing and managing labour that provided alternatives to the Taylorist and Fordist doctrines. Key motives for reforming working life were the decline in the productivity potential of the mass production mentality, workers' dissatisfaction with their working conditions and the difficulties experienced by employers in recruiting labour for fragmented industrial work. Over the years, targets related to work humanization and workplace democratization have been diluted and shifted into the background of programmes; these traditional targets are also increasingly supplanted by productivity- and competitiveness-related targets.

Technological advancement, globalization of the economy, actualization of environmental concerns, and demographic, social and cultural changes will together shape working life in many ways over the next several years. For example, networking of the economy, distribution of work and management, expanded possibilities related to the interactive Internet and social media, the entry of the net generation into working life and the individualization of work orientation will call into question many of the ideas of work and its organization that were inherited from the industrial era (e.g. Gratton 2011; Meister & Willyerd 2010). The reshaping of working life will also present a significant challenge to many time-honoured methods of developing working life and to the premises on which workplace development programmes have previously been built.

Working life will not change in a deterministic, straightforward or smooth manner. Rather, the features of the new working life will manifest themselves differently in different sectors, industries, organizations and tasks. These features will not completely displace the old features but instead will be deposited as new historical layers upon them. Gratton (2011, 11) notes that while the working life of the future is already here, it is unevenly distributed. In other words, practices, models and logics of the new working life can already be found today in multiple guises in the various phenomena of our time. Howev-

er, speculations about working life that reach into the future have scarcely been extended into the area of workplace development. Debate regarding the pressures that will be brought to bear on the basic assumptions and methods of workplace development by the trends of working life change given that what we have been able to anticipate has thus far been scarce.

Below, I briefly mention four major challenges that will emerge during the ongoing transformation of work and call into question some of the basic assumptions that have thus far guided the design and implementation of workplace development programmes in different contexts. For workplace development programmes to continue to play the role of institutional entrepreneur in the future, additional research and discussion concerning how the programmes can respond to these challenges and how programmes should be “reinvented”, if necessary, is needed.

First and foremost, the definition of the term “workplace” in the future will become increasingly vague, especially in situations where the work is virtual, mobile and distributed; services are produced in various types of networks; development takes place in projects involving variable consistencies and different organizations; or staff serving a number of different employers work at the same physical workplace. We could well ask whether an individual company (or workplace) with a more or less hierarchical organization is still the most fruitful environment for innovations in working life. In the future, will loose, reflexive communities and networks capable of flexible adaptation move to the core of innovative development?

Another important topic for consideration is the meaning of QWL in an environment where work is more knowledge and service intensive, people’s work orientations are more individualistic, and changes at the workplace are more frequent. In the future, it will be increasingly difficult to set generally applicable, concrete criteria for a good QWL that lend themselves to objective measurement. This difficulty is in part because a good work performance in knowledge- and service-intensive work typically requires a stronger mental commitment than that required in traditional manual work. The possibility of making such a commitment and thus achieving experiences of success in this type of work is also a key factor in producing subjective well-being. The preconditions for this factor are to a great extent determined by individual situations and dependent on the personal work orientation of each employee. In addition, in environments where change is more or less continuous, it will be increasingly difficult to try to develop QWL primarily through structural features of work, many of which will become unavoidably short in duration. Opportunities for the employee to exert influence and feel inclusiveness in the context of changes that concern her/him will likely emerge as an increasingly important precondition for a good QWL. Does all of this mean that in the future the concept of “good work” or a “good working life” should be increasingly defined in terms of subjective, instead of objective, and processual, instead of design-related, aspects of work?

Third, the traditional roles of management and staff may become partially confused in the new working life. The dualism of management and staff, which

has in particular directed development driven by the tradition of industrial relations, will partially disappear and be reshaped by methods of working that are increasingly network-based, project-like and communal or based on shared management and self-management. In organizations, which compete based on flexibility, customer-orientation and agility, the management, supervision and organization of work will no longer be tasks that belong exclusively to people in managerial and supervisory positions, nor will they continue to be limited to a single organization. Rather, increasing amounts of responsibility for these tasks will be shifted to non-managerial employees and to the teams and communities they form. As self-management becomes more common, many traditional forms of representative participation will unavoidably seem as rather slow, and many traditional forms of direct participation as rather weak, means of exerting influence in the eyes of the employees. Accordingly, new forms of participation, cooperation and partnership will be needed. For example, although the spread of social media will not necessarily make traditional forms of employee participation obsolete, it could challenge workplace development programmes and projects to search for novel, innovative solutions to problems related to the involvement and mobilization of employees in support of change; the creation of dialogical relationships between management and staff in more networked organizations and communities; and the production of generative results.

Finally, and as stated above, targets concerning work humanization and workplace democratization have been increasingly supplanted by productivity- and competitiveness-related targets in workplace development programmes in various countries in recent years. In Finland, for example, the implementation of the TYKES programme was transferred from the Ministry of Labour to Tekes in 2008; since that time, workplace development has been increasingly integrated into a “broad-based innovation policy”. Generally speaking, it is easy to agree with Naschold’s (1994a; 1994b) view that responding to the challenges that will emerge during the ongoing transformation of work will require a dialogical relationship between workplace development and innovation policy. A lack of dialogue would cause workplace development activities to be sidetracked from challenges faced by companies themselves and to become excessively entangled in problem settings that arise from the industrial relations or R&D systems. However, excessive integration of workplace development into problem settings of innovation policy creates the risk of transforming workplace development into only an instrument of owner- or management-driven enterprise development. An important aspect of workplace development that gives it special status as part of broader innovation policy is the idea that employees, in addition to management, have legitimate interests and that both employees’ interests and the crucial role employees play in change and innovation processes should be *explicitly recognized* in innovation funding. The formation and maintenance of a dialogical relationship between workplace development and innovation policy will depend on the capacity of both areas for reinvention and for finding novel approaches to tackle emerging challenges

and to take advantage of the new opportunities that are opening up during the ongoing transformation in business and working life.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Stages in the collection and analysis of research materials on workplace development programmes in 10 countries and regions.

Country or region	Activities
Emilia-Romagna Finland Germany North Rhine-Westphalia Norway Sweden (Year 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An analysis of the literature, selection of the Naschold model as the conceptual framework and revision of the model. - Collection of up-to-date information on the various programmes through a semi-structured questionnaire that examined the issues included in the Naschold model. → first-order data bank - Reflexive benchmarking workshop in Helsinki: The participants met in open forum, where each sub-theme was discussed in an agreed manner and in an agreed order, making use of the first-order data bank. Each sub-theme was introduced with a review of the solutions and experiences of one of the participants. The choice of participant for each presentation depended on whose solutions and experiences could best function as a mirror for the other participants. When dialogue seemed to be exhausted, a second and even a third mirror were in some cases introduced to continue discussion of the sub-theme. Each sub-theme was discussed in this manner. The researchers (Alasoini, Hanhike, Lahtonen, Ramstad, Rouhiainen) and an outside consultant (Arnkil) guided the discussion and took notes. At the end, the notes were compiled into a summary for the participants, and participants were polled for their views on the summaries and on how well the method works and how successful the meeting had been. → second-order data bank - Preparation of a report by Alasoini, in which different programmes were systematically assessed and compared by using the Naschold model. - Revisions made to the report by Alasoini, based on comments made by the co-researchers and workshop participants. - Publication of the report (Alasoini et al. 2005).
Singapore (Year 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An analysis of the literature and a search through the web sites and annual reports of two state agencies. - A study visit to these agencies in Singapore and interviews of key persons involved in three Singaporean programmes by the researchers (Alasoini, Ramstad). - Preparation of a report by Alasoini, in which the three programmes are systematically assessed by using the Naschold model. - Revisions made to the report by Alasoini, based on comments made by the co-researcher and interviewed persons. - Publication of the text as part of a summary report (Alasoini et al. 2008b, 10–31).

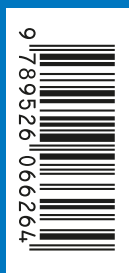
<p>Flanders (Year 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An analysis of policy documents, research reports and information bulletins. - A study visit to Brussels and interviews of key persons involved in the Flemish programme by the researchers (Alasoini, Hanhike, Ramstad). - A second study visit to Turnhout to participate in a “big round table” organized by the Flemish programme (Alasoini). - Preparation of a report by Alasoini, in which the programme is systematically assessed by using the Naschold model. - Revisions made to the report by Alasoini, based on comments made by the co-researchers and interviewed persons. - Publication of the text as part of a summary report (Alasoini et al. 2008b, 32–47).
<p>Ireland (Years 2007–08)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An analysis of the literature and a search through the web sites, strategy documents and annual reports of various agencies. - A study visit to these agencies in Dublin and interviews of key persons involved in the Irish programme by the researchers (Alasoini, Hanhike, Ramstad, Rouhiainen). - Preparation of a report by Alasoini, in which the programme is systematically assessed by using the Naschold model. - Revisions made to the report by Alasoini, based on comments made by the co-researchers and interviewed persons. - Publication of the text as part of a summary report (Alasoini et al. 2008b, 48–71).
<p>South Korea (Years 2008–09)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An analysis of the literature. - A study visit to three state agencies, interviews of key persons involved in the South Korean programme and participation to an international seminar “Workplace Innovation for the Improvement of Competitiveness” in Seoul by the researcher (Alasoini). - Preparation of a report by Alasoini, in which the programme is systematically assessed by using the Naschold model. - Revisions made to the report by Alasoini, based on comments made by the interviewed persons.
<p>Overall summary (Years 2008–09)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing and publication of two articles based on the materials (Alasoini 2009a; 2009b).

Appendix 2. Research materials on the TYKES learning network projects.

Type of material	Main contents of the material
Project applications and project implementation and development plans	<p><i>Project application form</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of the project - Applicant of the project - Summary of the project development plan - Names and tasks of the experts working in the project - Cost estimate of the project - List of workplaces participating in the project <p><i>Project implementation and development plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active participants involved in the network and their development needs - Operation of the network so far and the role played by different participants - Short-term and long-term development targets of the network - Modes of operation of the network and resources that are needed to implement the project - Dissemination of new knowledge and expertise emerging from the operation of the network
Interim and final project reports for the programme	<p><i>Interim report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting point of the project - Progress of the development process - Interim assessment of the project <p><i>Final report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting point of the project - Progress of the development process - Results of the project - Assessment of the project - Development proposals and further development measures that are taken or needed
Target profiles of the learning networks	<p>Analysis of target profiles of the learning network projects, based on assessments by the TYKES programme team and self-assessments by the network coordinators (February 2008 – May 2008).</p>
Workshops	<p>Agendas, presentations and written summaries of nine joint workshops arranged by the TYKES programme for the learning network projects between 2004 and 2009, focusing on experiences of the projects and different themes that were considered important for the operation of the networks.</p>
Joint publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles on general prerequisites for the operations of learning networks, modes of operation of learning networks and objects of development in learning networks, based on experiences of nine TYKES learning network projects (Alasoini et al. 2006). - Articles on structuring of learning networks and co-creation and learning in innovative networks, based on experiences of eight TYKES learning network projects (Alasoini et al. 2011b).
Other written materials	<p>Several articles and other publications and unpublished conference, seminar and workshop presentations by researchers and network coordinators, based on experiences of the TYKES learning network projects.</p>

Key person interviews	<p>15 thematic interviews of key persons of seven learning networks (September 2013 – February 2014), focusing on themes such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The most important results of the learning network- Sustainability of the results (competence, cooperative relations, development structures)- Follow-up processes achieved by the network- The network's added value compared to traditional demonstration projects- Workability of the network structure and interactive forums- The programme's support to the network
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This thesis is interested in the conditions under which workplace development programmes can change working life for the better and the extent to which these conditions have been realized in such programmes in recent years. The idea of workplace development programmes as institutional entrepreneurs forms the general framework of the study. The empirical analyses focus on national and regional workplace development programmes and learning network projects conducted as part of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme TYKES. This thesis shows clear differences between the Nordic countries, other European countries and the East Asian countries as contexts of workplace development and provides an explanation of their distinct patterns. A novel framework for analysing the dynamics of development programmes is constructed and the means by which a strategy utilizing learning networks can be implemented successfully are introduced.



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