

## Abstract

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The work reported here focuses on models and strategies for organizational change and technical renewal in Swedish industry. The overall purpose of the thesis is to shed light on the experience of change processes in integrated development of production techniques and organization for competitiveness and good work environment. Five papers form the foundation of the thesis. They are all empirical studies, four of which were carried out in the manufacturing industry and one in three stores selling alcoholic beverages. The results are based on interviews, questionnaires and participative observations. **Paper I** focuses on change processes and leadership in turbulent circumstances and an adaptation of advanced production technology to human needs and capabilities. It is a case study, including 12 operators and 11 white collar employees in different positions. The findings shows that new technology can imply an opportunity to develop good working conditions, if the opportunity is indeed taken. In implementing new technology one must be aware of its impact on existing structures and make parallel development plans for the systems that are affected. Furthermore, the difficulty of considering all factors of importance increases with technical complexity. **Paper II** and **Paper III** focus on the relationship between psychosocial/physical stressors and musculoskeletal symptoms in industrial workplaces with technically complex production. Paper II comprises five industries and 30 operators working at robot stations. Paper III comprises three shops and all their employees (n = 45). The results of Paper II demonstrate that, in preventing work-related musculoskeletal symptoms among welding operators, attention should be paid to both the psychosocial and the physical workload. The results in Paper III show that the correlations between psychosocial factors and different measurements of physical workload in industrial settings are applicable in planning for a good work environment in other settings, that is in shops. It can furthermore be concluded that the relationships between psychosocial factors, physical work environment and perceived musculoskeletal discomfort are relatively complex and that there are no obvious or easy explanations. **Paper IV** focuses on the importance of considering organizations' requirements for change and the creation of crossfunctionally composed working groups. **Paper V**, finally deals with approaches to translating abstractions such as target-oriented group, integration, decentralized, continuous training into understandable tools and "physical hooks". These studies were carried out in one industry (Karlskrona Shipyard) and comprises 15 leaders and 122 blue collar workers in the plate and welding workshop. The result in Paper IV show that the management style at the shipyard was characterized by control and the issuing of orders. There was a resistance at the shipyard to change because people preferred the stability and security of what was familiar to them. On the basis of the results of the analyses of the state of the organization, one applied a "step-by-step" strategy, emphasizing the entitlement to training and acquisition of skills grounded in each individual's need, regardless of organizational level. In Paper V three "physical hooks" were developed to facilitate the change process; these were the operator's computer, the target board and the robot group office.

Further knowledge is needed about how we as individuals and a collective in organizations in fact are able to live in continuous change and what psychological consequences this has for individuals and organizations. It is also clear that greater knowledge is needed about what the different applications of lean production mean for work conditions and for change strategies in Swedish industry.

Keywords: Organizational change, change strategy, industry, applied research

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