Pekka Varje

Cracks in the mirror

The ideal worker and the labor process in Finnish working life after the Second World War

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Työsuojelurahasto
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Contents

Tiivistelmä

Tarkastelen tässä väitöskirjassa ideaalityöntekijän muutosta fordistisen organisaation rationaalisesta ja kurinalaisesta alaisesta kohti jälkifordistisen organisaation emotionaalista ja yksilöllistynyttä subjektia suomalaisessa työelämässä 1940-luvulta 2000-luvulle. Vertailen ideaalityöntekijän julkisia representaatioita työntekijöiden omiin kokemuksiin samalta aikakaudelta. Tavoitteenani on arvioida kriittisesti stereotyyppisiä kuvia fordistisesta ja jälkifordistisesta organisaatiosta.

Artikkelimuotoisen väitöskirjan kahdessa ensimmäisessä artikkelissa tutkin ideaalijohtajan muutosta Helsingin Sanomien työpaikkailmoituksissa 1940-luvulta 2000-luvulle. Kolmas artikkeli käsittelee työelämäkuvausten muutosta julkisissa työterveyskeskusteluissa. Neljäs artikkeli keskittyy teollisuustyöntekijöiden kokemuksiin toisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Suomessa. Viidennessä artikkelissa vertailen johdon ja työntekijöiden erilaisia käsityksiä johtamismallien muutoksesta Suomen Työväen Säästöpankissa 1980-luvulla.

Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että työtekijän tunteiden ja persoonan roolit ovat kasvaneet ideaalityöntekijän representaatioissa vuosikymmenten aikana. Työpaikkailmoitukset ovat vähitellen keskittyneet yhä enemmän sellaisiin ominaisuuksiin kuin yhteistyökyky, innovatiivisuus, motivaatio ja joustamiskyky. Myös julkiset työterveyskeskustelut ovat alkaneet painottaa työpaikan sosiaalisia suhteita, tiimityötä ja jaettua innostusta 1980-luvulta alkaen. Toisaalta teollisuustyöntekijöiden kokemukset sotien jälkeisen Suomen työpaikoista osoittavat, että nämä työpaikat eivät olleet ollenkaan niin rationalisoituja ja joustamattomia kuin stereotyyppiset kuvat fordistisesta organisaatiosta antavat ymmärtää. Lisäksi pankkityöntekijöiden kokemukset osoittavat, että vastakkainasettelua byrokraattisen ja joustavan organisaation välillä saatettiin käyttää ideologisena välineenä organisaatiomuutosten läpiviemiseen.

Yhteenvetona vaikuttaa siltä, että käsitykset fordistisen organisaation rationaalisuudesta ja jälkifordistisen organisaation joustavuudesta osittain perustuvat myyteille. Nämä myytit voivat piilottaa historiallisia jatkuvuuksia ja luoda ideologisesti värittyneitä mielikuvia organisaatiomuutosten suunnasta. Ne legitimoivat managerialisista vallankäyttöä ja korostavat työntekijöiden roolia työmarkkinoiden yksilöllistyneinä subjekteina.

Abstract

In this dissertation I examine the transformation of the ideal worker from a rational, rule-abiding subordinate of the Fordist organization to an emotional and individualized subject of the post-Fordist organization in Finland from the 1940s to the 2000s. The dissertation takes a comparative approach, setting the public representations of the ideal worker against worker experiences from the same period. The aim is to critically assess the stereotypical images of the Fordist and post-Fordist organization.

In the first two of the five empirical research articles, the analysis focuses on the changing images of the ideal manager in job advertisements from the 1940s to the 2000s. The third article examines the changing definitions of workers and workplaces in public occupational health discussions. The fourth article focuses on the shop-floor experiences of Finnish industrial workers during the post-war period. The fifth article compares the managerially produced narrative on the transformation of the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland in the 1980s to the employees' experiences of the same transformation.

The results show that in the past seven decades, personal qualities and emotional skills have indeed begun to define the public representations of the ideal worker. Gradually, job advertisements have increasingly stressed skills and qualities such as cooperation, innovativeness, motivation and adaptation. A growing emphasis on social relations in the workplace, teamwork and shared enthusiasm for organizational success was also evident in occupational health discussions from the 1980s onwards. However, the experiences of industrial workers from the Fordist period show that their workplaces were far less rationalized and more flexible than stereotypical images would suggest. The experiences of the bank workers show that the dichotomy between the bureaucratic and the flexible organization can be used as an ideological tool for implementing organizational changes.

In conclusion, it appears that the image of the rational Fordist organization and the flexible post-Fordist organization is partially based on myths. These myths may hide important historical continuities and sustain ideologically laden images of organizational changes. They legitimize managerial power and emphasize workers' roles as individualized subjects in labor markets.

Original articles included in the thesis

I. Varje, Pekka, Turtiainen, Jussi & Väänänen Ari (2013). Psychological management: Changing qualities of the ideal manager in Finland 1949–2009. *Journal of Management History* 19(1): 33–54.

II. Varje, Pekka, Anttila, Erkko & Väänänen, Ari (2013). Emergence of emotional management: Changing manager ideals in Finnish job advertisements from 1949 to 1999. *Management & Organizational History* 8(3): 245–261.

III. Varje, Pekka & Väänänen, Ari (2016). Health risks, social relations and class: An analysis of occupational health discourse in Finnish newspaper and women's magazine articles 1961–2008. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 38(3): 493–510.

IV. Varje, Pekka & Turtiainen, Jussi (2017). More than just hands: Workers' experiences of industrial work in Finland during the Fordist period. *Management & Organizational History* 12(4): 357–373.

V. Varje, Pekka & Väänänen, Ari (unpublished manuscript). Emotionalising organisations? Contradictory narratives on managerial change in the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland.

In the text, the original articles are referred to by the roman numerals given above.

Foreword

I came across the subject matter of this thesis for the first time in April 2010. I was close to finishing my master's studies in Finnish and Nordic history at the University of Helsinki, when I was recruited as a research assistant for an ongoing research project at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). The research project in question was not a typical FIOH study. Rather than analyzing the health outcomes or changes in wellbeing related to specific occupational risk factors, the project aimed to understand the changing character of the ideal worker from a broad social, cultural and historical perspective. Situated at the crossroads of history and sociology, the project offered an ideal environment for a novice researcher to learn the ins and outs of the field.

My association with the research project outlasted the original three-month internship, and in spring 2011, the project leader suggested I continue working with the subject in a doctoral dissertation. This thesis is the result of that suggestion, casually made at lunch. It has been a seven-year project, with long hiatuses due to other research activities. The process has been filled with moments of frustration and despair, and looking back, I can now easily understand the slightly gleeful amusement of an experienced graduate student sitting at that same lunch table in 2011. However, the process has also been a highly rewarding experience, with many moments of success and joy. Among the finest moments have been the final acceptance of the individual research articles as scientific publications.

The thesis at hand is an article-based doctoral dissertation, which seems to be a relatively rare form in the discipline of history. The decision to write the thesis in this form arose from the publication plans of the research projects with which it was associated, and has had both advantages and disadvantages. Among the downsides has been the inability to update the published articles in accordance with new findings and theoretical premises. Therefore, the thesis reveals traces of an incomplete research process, especially in the earlier articles. For example, the relatively central concept of "myth" was introduced to the research process at a relatively late stage, and therefore appears in only one of the articles. Among the upsides, however, has been the ability to concentrate on the specific aspects of one highly complex question at the time, gradually building a versatile image of a study subject of which every detail can never be fully examined.

The thesis comprises four published journal articles (I–IV) and one unpublished manuscript under review (V), associated with two different research projects conducted at

FIOH. The themes and methodological approaches of the research projects significantly influenced the content of the articles, especially that of the first three. Due to the close collaboration within the research projects in developing the original study design and inserting ideas into and making additions to unfinished manuscripts, most of the papers were published through joint article authorship with the project leader, which is the common practice of modern research teams. However, the primary responsibility for analyzing the research material, developing the interpretations and writing the manuscripts strictly remained with the first author.

My sincere gratitude goes to several other people who contributed to the thesis over the years. These include all those who read through the unfinished manuscripts in the research seminar of Finnish and Nordic history, and particularly the designated commentator Päivi Uljas, PhD and the seminar chairs Prof. Juha Siltala, Prof. Markku Kuisma, Adj. Prof. Panu Pulma, Prof. Niklas Jensen-Eriksen and Prof. Anu Lahtinen. I thank Adj. Prof. Anu-Hanna Anttila for the opportunity to present my final results in public for the first time, and Prof. Antonio M. Jaime Castillo for hosting my visit to the University of Málaga in 2015 and for commenting on my manuscripts. Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of several other fellow students and colleagues from FIOH who have helped me in different ways during the writing process, as well as the anonymous reviewers of the article manuscripts who showed great care for the quality of the publications. I would like to thank Timi Nikkilä for the cover art of this thesis. Special thanks go to Alice Lehtinen, who has served as the English language editor of all my manuscripts.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude for the aid and support provided by my family and loved ones: my father Markku, my adorable children Justus and Ester, my ex-wife Minna without whose encouragement and patience this thesis would not have come together, and my beloved girlfriend Carina who helped me through the last phases of the writing process.

Helsinki, 14 November 2018

Pekka Varje

1 Introduction

> "[…] among the workers who moved from farming to factory work, the differences in experiences, personalities and habits were eliminated from the labor process. The worker had to discard not only their brains but also their habits and emotions when putting their nose to the grindstone."[1]

> "The modern worker no longer sells their labor power for a certain time period, to be used, for example, in the everyday grind of the factory, but more and more often they sell their whole person, the very thing that they are."[2]

According to a widely accepted view, during the last few decades the role of emotions and personal qualities of the worker has grown significantly in the labor markets of developed countries. The argument is that many social changes have generated a new need for workers to show innovativeness, drive, commitment, self-direction, cooperativeness, social skills and emotional intelligence to thrive in their jobs.[3] In the new work regime, managers consider the thoughts and emotions of workers to be key elements in enhancing organizational productivity.[4] Workers are expected to "be fully present as a person occupying a particular organizational role such that one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are accessible within the context of role performances".[5] Work requires more dimensions of the self, and conversely, work performance itself gains characteristics from the performer.[6] In this process the "self" becomes an asset for workers.[7]

In sharp contrast to this image of the new workplace, in the preceding decades work was associated with notions of "rationality" and "bureaucracy", which left workers with few opportunities to employ their personality and emotions in the labor process.[8] According to this notion, labor in old work consisted of physical toil and repetitive performances predefined by management, and workers were more or less reduced to the role of a machine part.[9] In this

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[1] Holvas & Vähämäki 2005, 41–42.
[2] Holvas & Vähämäki 2005, 16.
[3] Bailly & Léné 2013; Baumeler 2010; Julkunen 2000; Korvajärvi 2001; Warhurst & Thompson 1998.
[4] Barsade & Gibson 2007; Fineman 2000; Hughes 2005; Imdorf 2010; Nickson et al. 2005.
[5] Kahn 1992, 322.
[6] Julkunen 2008, 122.
[7] Mäkinen 2012, 13–14.
[8] Baumeler 2010; Julkunen 2008, 144.
[9] Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007, 249; Clarke 1992; Holvas & Vähämäki 2005, 41–43.

work environment, the emotions and thoughts of workers were mostly regarded with suspicion. Such "irrational" elements were associated with interference and disorder, thus reducing the productivity of the work organization.[10] Unlike work in the contemporary period, which requires workers to employ their "whole person" in the labor process, workers were only expected to sell their "hands" to the employer.[11]

This perceived historical rupture in the world of work is the starting point of my research. The study's origins lie in a research project named *Crafting the Ideal Employee*, which was conducted at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in 2008–2011. This project focused on the changing cultural images of "workership" and the ways in which the character of the "ideal worker" has evolved in the period after the Second World War.[12] It was built on the presumption that the many important socio-economic and cultural changes in Finland have framed the characteristics of the ideal worker in a new way, shifting the focus from physical and technical qualities towards social, emotional and psychological qualities.[13] Accordingly, my personal contribution to the research project was to analyze the changing definitions of the ideal worker as found in Finnish job advertisements from the 1940s to the 2000s.[14]

However, as I researched this subject for my doctoral thesis, new study materials related to the experiences of the workers themselves began to change my approach. Instead of studying only the level of ideals and representations, I widened the scope of my research to also cover the organization of work and the shop-floor experiences of individual workers. Influenced by labor process theory, which seeks to develop an understanding of managerial control and the utilization of labor in the production of profit,[15] I began to analyze the conflicts and inconsistencies between worker experiences and managerial ideals. Consequently, my research questions are as follows: 1) How have the representations of the ideal worker changed in Finnish working life during the past seventy years? 2) According to worker experiences, what roles have emotions and personality played in the labor processes during the same period? 3) What do the representations and worker experiences reveal about the emergence of the contemporary ideal worker and the emotionally focused management models?

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[10] Baumeler 2010; Rafaeli & Worline 2001; Sieben & Wettergren 2010.
[11] Julkunen 2000; Järvensivu 2010, 102; Warhurst & Thompson 1998.
[12] Väänänen & Turtiainen 2014a.
[13] Väänänen & Turtiainen 2014b.
[14] Varje 2014.
[15] Bolton 2005, 29; Thompson & Newsome 2004.

As I explain in more detail below, the personal and emotionally involved ideal worker represents a relatively new field of research in history and sociology. Working life studies within these disciplines have long been dominated by a focus on social structures, corporations, labor organizations and labor market conditions, with little interest in the labor process and ordinary work on the shop floor.[16] This study builds on two traditions that both originate from the 1970s and 1980s. On the one hand, interest in the history "from down below" increased; in trends such as microhistory, oral history and the history of everyday life, which provided new value to the experiences of the common worker.[17] On the other hand, sociological interest in the labor process and the role of workers' thoughts, feelings and beliefs in it also increased.[18] The aim of this study is to combine the two approaches and incorporate them into the analysis of the changing ideal worker. This historical and sociological approach also offers an opportunity to engage in conversation with critical organization and management studies.

Something about the subject matter perhaps attracts the attention of contemporary audiences more than that of the audiences of previous decades. According to Ronald Inglehart, the increase in physical and social security in Western societies during the post-World War II period has been accompanied by a decreasing focus on material questions and heightened concern over questions of self-expression and emotional wellbeing.[19] Some also claim that in recent decades the role of individualistic values has increased at the expense of more collective values.[20] Given that this concern with emotions and the individual coincides today with a widely shared belief that in order to remain employable people need to regard themselves as special resources to be utilized in the labor market[21] and that this need is expected to even further increase in the future,[22] the questions this thesis asks may be seen as particularly topical in the contemporary period.

While the empirical research in this thesis focuses on Finland, the subject matter is not particularly national. Finnish discussions have largely borrowed the theoretical concepts that dominate the discussions on the emergence of the emotionally involved ideal worker, such as Fordism, post-Fordism and flexible capitalism, from international venues, making only small adaptations to national particularities. It has been assumed that Finland either represents

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[16] Parikka 1999; Teräs 2001, 21.
[17] Kalela 2006; Teräs 2001, 21–22.
[18] Bolton 2005, 29–33, 48–55.
[19] Inglehart 1997, 35–43; see also Roos 1985, 33; Roos 1988, 63–64.
[20] Helkama & Seppälä 2006.
[21] Brown & Hesketh 2004, 32–39.
[22] Alasoini et al. 2012, 29–30; Oksanen 2017, 31–32.

a typical case of the general developments in other Western countries or that international trends at least point in the direction that Finland is following, even if the realities of Finnish and other labor markets are not perfectly comparable.[23] Such assumptions are not without evidence, as Finnish management thinking, for example, has always closely followed international currents with little nationally produced, original concepts.[24]

This thesis uses the Finnish context to challenge some of the concepts drawn from international literature and point out limitations in the ways in which they can be applied to the question of the changing ideal worker. At the same time, it engages in international discussions, as evidenced by the journal publications of the individual articles. In this way, the history of Finnish working life is used as an example of the general Western experience.

The structure of this summary is as follows: Chapter 2 offers a literature review on previous research related to the subject matter. Chapter 3 introduces the main theoretical concepts used in the research articles. Chapter 4 offers an introduction to the aims and methods of the individual research articles, and Chapter 5 summarizes their findings. Finally, Chapter 6 draws together conclusions from the findings and discusses their contribution to working life studies. The summary offers an opportunity to elaborate on the historical context of the study and the theoretical points of the thesis, which due to strict word limits may remain relatively vague in the research articles.

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[23] Julkunen 2008, 15–18.
[24] Seeck & Kuokkanen, 2010; Seeck & Laakso, 2010.

2 Earlier research on the subject

In this chapter I outline the main characteristics of earlier research on the emergence of the personal and emotionally involved ideal worker. This earlier research has greatly influenced the research questions and the structure of the arguments presented in this thesis. During the last few decades, the role of worker emotions and personality in work organizations has become the subject of many intense debates. However, many of these debates have involved sociologists, management scientists and psychologists, who have little interest in historical research. Furthermore, the field has been split into different paradigms that often lack mutual interaction. Therefore, few attempts have been made to construct a comprehensive overview of the subject, or to highlight the contradictions and paradoxes that this literature involves.

As the thesis focuses on questions of management, labor processes and working life in general, it omits much of the literature on emotions. This is particularly evident in terms of the academic literature on the "history of emotions". This literature could expand the discussions on how emotions play an important role in making history and how the perceptions of human emotions change in history.[25] However, so far, this literature has had a surprisingly small influence on working life studies. Overcoming this limitation could significantly benefit both academic traditions.

2.1 The emotionally involved worker as an emerging research area

The emotions and psychological characteristics of workers have been a subject of study since the early 20th century. The development of industrial and organizational psychology started in the 1910s and 1920s, creating a new kind of interest in social relations at the workplace and the psychology of the individual worker.[26] During the following decades, psychologists and management scientists made many significant contributions that emphasized the connection between organizational efficiency and worker motivation and satisfaction. The researchers developed increasingly sophisticated models of the occupational and environmental factors affecting workers' motivation and wellbeing, and integrated these models into management theories and leadership models.[27]

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[25] Boddice 2017.
[26] Koppes & Pickren 2007.
[27] Latham & Budworth 2007; Seeck 2008, 104–126; Wren 2005, 323–327.

However, the interest in the worker as a personal and emotional agent of the labor process took a new turn around the 1980s. As Sharon Bolton argues, during this period, emotions and human needs stopped being regarded as something to be satisfied in order to prevent interference and problems in organizational efficiency, and began to be seen as a vital resource for the success of the organization.[28] Management literature placed a whole new emphasis on the individual worker striving for "excellence"[29], and the managerial models and organizational cultures that could empower workers in terms of commitment and emotional competence.[30] An example of this strand is offered by Daniel Goleman, who popularized the concept of "emotional intelligence"[31] as being key to top-level performances in the workplace.

The psycho-emotional characteristics of labor and the worker also caught the attention of sociologists in the 1980s. In a seminal work published in 1983, Arlie Hochchild analyzed the role of emotions in the work of flight attendants. She paid particular attention to the part of their job she called "emotional labor", which referred to the controlling of one's own emotional signals and affecting other people's emotional states.[32] Hochshild also stressed the ways in which emotional labor can be subjected to external controls and managerially imposed feeling rules which may conflict with workers' personal feelings and create psychologically harmful emotional dissonance.[33] These arguments have greatly influenced later studies on interactive work, which have often used the concept of emotional labor either to understand the nature of work and workplaces in service jobs or to analyze the emotional and health-related consequences of interactive work for the individual.[34]

Social scientific research on the psycho-emotional aspects of work and organizations continued to expand in the 1990s and 2000s. Stephen Fineman paid attention to the relatively narrow ways in which organizational emotions had been understood in the past, and sought to enlarge the scope of research to different emotional arenas of the workplace in his book *Emotion in Organizations* published in 1993.[35] This kind of understanding of organizational emotions was not limited to customer interaction and the organizational sources of success, but covered all kinds of emotions such as fear, nostalgia and aggression.[36] The rise

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[28] Bolton 2005, 13–14.
[29] Peters & Waterman 1982.
[30] Bolton 2005, 34–36; Brevis & Jack 2009; Fineman 2010; Juuti, 2006.
[31] Goleman 1998.
[32] Hochschild 1983, 7.
[33] Hochschild 1979; Hochschild 1983, 89–90.
[34] Wharton 2009.
[35] Fineman 1993.
[36] Flam 1993; Gabriel 1993; Hearn 1993;

of similar research interests in the 1990s was also evident in Finnish literature. Matti Kortteinen, for example, analyzed the ways in which the struggle for honor affects the work of machinists and bank tellers,[37] and Tapio Bergholm conducted historical research on the masculinity and aggression of Finnish longshoremen.[38]

Another influential approach to the subject originating from the 1980s and 1990s has been the study of "governmentality", which focuses on the relations between power and subjectivity.[39] Students of governmentality have largely built on the thinking of Michel Foucault, who, instead of direct dominance, stressed the ways in which power can be used to structure the possibilities available to people and direct them to take up behaviors and ways of living according to their own will.[40] This strand of research has included contributions that have both taken a relatively positive approach to the production of new kinds of worker subjectivities[41] and adopted more pessimistic views on the totalitarian control systems that such power can sustain.[42] These approaches are examined in more detail below.

2.2 Explaining the rise of the emotionally involved ideal worker

The increasing interest in the psycho-emotional aspects of the workplace during the 1980s and 1990s was accompanied by a recognition of the "myth of rationality"[43] which had prevented feelings from gaining attention in organization theory throughout most of the twentieth century. It was argued that organizations had never been as rational as different managerial representations may have suggested.[44] In gender studies, for example, it was claimed that the assumed rationality of management thinking in the early 20th century did not mean a total rejection but rather a hierarchical appraisal of emotions. "Feminine" feelings such as empathy may have been treated with suspicion, but certain "masculine" qualities such as aggression and competitiveness were embraced, even if they were so naturalized in their context that they were not considered emotions.[45]

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[37] Kortteinen 1992.
[38] Bergholm 1994.
[39] Wilkinson 2010, 53.
[40] Foucault 1982.
[41] e.g. Miller & Rose 2008; Rose 1999.
[42] e.g. Ezzy, 2001; Willmott 1993.
[43] Putnam & Mumby 1993.
[44] e.g. Albrow 1992; Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Fineman 1996; Hearn 1993.
[45] Fondas 1997; Metcalfe & Linstead 2003; Rafaeli & Worline 2001.

Nevertheless, the debates around the psycho-emotional aspects of work and the workplace generally seem to assume that the role of emotions has indeed increased in work organizations in recent decades, and that labor processes increasingly rely on workers' "whole persons" rather than merely their physical labor power. Several attempts have been made to give an historical explanation for this change. The different interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and several historical trends may be recognized as potential explanations. However, the various interpretations also have important differences, and some contributions have taken a far more critical stance towards the subject than others.

One important approach takes an evolutionary view of the development of management thinking. This literature presents the history of management thinking as a series of innovations and insights that have gradually revealed an increasingly complete view of the worker as a cultural and emotional personality.[46] Following Frederick Winslow Taylor, whose system of "scientific management" (alias Taylorism) in the early 20th century took an explicitly rational view of work and workers, and attempted to minimize all personalized aspects from the labor process and motivate workers primarily with monetary compensation, a line of management paradigms in the 20th century first revealed the relevance of the individual workers' emotional motivation and wellbeing, shifted their attention to the crucial role of social relations in the workplace, then focused on the overall culture of the organization and finally on the multiple ways in which the organization can foster creativity, passions and individual achievements among its workers.[47] Similar evolutionary developments have been recognized within specific fields of management theory such as leadership, personnel management, workplace training and teamwork.[48]

The evolutionary view of the development of management thinking is typically characterized by a positive stance towards its subject. It is assumed that by incorporating psychological knowledge into management practice, it is possible to unleash previously untapped human resources in work organizations, and simultaneously improve both organizational productivity and worker happiness.[49] This argument, it should be noted, has characterized psychologically-oriented management thinking throughout its history.[50]

However, within critical histories on the development of management thinking, concerns have arisen over the questions of social power and worker agency. According to

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[46] Jacques 1996, 14–15.
[47] Koppes & Pickren 2007; Kurki & Wilenius 2018; Pollitt 1993.
[48] Day & Zaccaro 2007; Kraiger & Ford 2007; Luoma 2006; Salas et al. 2007; de Wolff 1994.
[49] e.g. Luthans and Youssef 2007; Bakker et al. 2008
[50] Stewart 2009, 131–136.

Stephen Barley and Gideon Kunda, the increasing focus on emotions, group affiliation and personal experience in management thinking since the early 20th century represents an attempt to promote managerial control to reduce unwanted behavior and to secure productivity. For them, the emerging management models represent a form of "normative control", which subjects the thoughts and emotions of workers to managerial power.[51] Under normative control, membership in a work organization becomes not only an economic transaction but an experiential transaction in which "symbolic rewards are exchanged for a moral orientation to the organization"[52]. Critical thinkers such as Hugh Willmott have expressed concerned about the totalitarian power regimes that the forms of normative control may potentially achieve.[53]

The discussions on normative control have also included debates about the harmful effects that overtly demanding normative control may have on worker wellbeing. Gideon Kunda, for example, argues that high-commitment management practices may cause internal conflicts for workers, undermine their sense of an autonomous self and potentially lead to burnout.[54] These concerns have triggered further discussions on the subtle means that workers can use to resist normative control and retain a sense of independence despite the "designer cultures"[55] and "engineered cultures"[56] that attempt to "shape employee attitudes, emotions, sexualities, values, thoughts, bodies, appearance, demeanour, gestures and even humour and laughter"[57].

The different approaches to the evolution of management thinking tend to regard the increasing focus on emotions and psychology as a response to the internal dynamics of work organizations and corporate business life. Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, however, adopt a wider perspective, which traces similar developments in all areas of life such as family life, health behavior and education. The increasing application of psychological knowledge to these areas does not only transform values, attitudes and emotions, but produces whole new subjectivities among those for whom a sense of achievement and emotional satisfaction are personal goals.[58] In working life, transformed employees increasingly rely on emotional gratification, self-realization and the intrinsic joy of achievement, while also being more

[51] Barley & Kunda 1992.
[52] Kunda 1992, 11.
[53] Willmott 1993.
[54] Kunda 1992, 204–214.
[55] Casey 1996.
[56] Kunda 1992.
[57] Collinson 2003, 542; see also Fleming & Spicer 2007.
[58] Miller & Rose 2008, 8–10; Rose 1996, 157–158.

sensitive to psychological adversities and interpersonal conflicts.[59] Questionnaires on Finnish workers have indeed shown that in recent decades the content and quality of work, social support at the workplace and opportunities for self-development have become increasingly valued aspects of wage work.[60] According to Frank Furedi, this development represents a largescale shift in Western countries towards a "therapy culture" which unashamedly revolves around questions of emotional sensibility and psychological vulnerabilities, and attempts to define how people ought to feel.[61]

Although these contributions enlarge the context in which the development of management thinking has taken place, their analysis remains within a relatively loosely defined cultural framework. The analyses of the transition to "flexible capitalism", "post-Fordism" and neoliberal political regimes offer a more explicit economically and politically oriented historical context. According to the broad categorization offered by David Harvey, the Fordist form of capitalism that developed during the first part of the 20th century was a solution to the problems of capital accumulation created by rapidly developing industrial mass production. Fordism combined bureaucratic control mechanisms and rationalized production systems with mass consumption, steady employment and labor market corporatism. This proved to be a highly successful combination during the post-war period, creating a period of unprecedented economic growth and improving living standards and social status for the majority of the workforce in Western countries.[62]

However, the internal conflicts and rigidity of the system had produced a new crisis of capital accumulation by the early 1970s. According to Robert Brenner, the development of industrial overcapacity in the core economies of the western world caused a fall in prices and profit rates, increasing global economic competition and turbulence already before the oil crises of the 1970s.[63] Following the first oil crisis of 1973, significant attempts were made to overcome the rigidities of Fordism and increase the flexibility of capital accumulation. The new system included solutions such as leaner and decentralized organizations, greater emphasis on innovation, marketing, retail and customized services, financial deregulation and more direct control of organizations through the financial system.[64]

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[59] Rose 1999, 248–249.
[60] Sutela & Lehto 2014.
[61] Furedi 2004, 1, 197.
[62] Harvey 1989, 122–140; see also Alasoini 2018.
[63] Brenner 2006, 99.
[64] Harvey 1989, 141–164; see also Siltala 2004, 77–82.

According to critical views, there was a shift in the power relations of the labor markets, with organized labor losing its bargaining power in relation to international investment money.[65]

The transition to flexible capitalism has been associated with political and cultural shifts that affect the character of the ideal worker. Neoliberalism, the political ideology that has dominated the era of flexible capitalism, has been characterized by an emphasis on individualism and entrepreneurship, which is hostile towards the collective values of the previous era.[66] According to Beverley Skeggs, the new ideology embraces the ideal of the "enterprising self", which incorporates the values of individualism, self-actualization and a positive attitude towards capitalistic social relations.[67] Workers are expected to use their individual selves as a competitive advantage in the labor markets and thrive by expanding their psychological capabilities.[68] Society as a whole encourages achievement and a constant drive for self-development.[69]

The new ideology has also had an impact on work organizations and management practices. According to Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, the development of emotionally focused management practices and the de-bureaucratization of organizations from the 1970s onwards was not only an attempt to overcome the problem of falling profitability but also a deliberate answer to the militant trade unionism, strikes and popular reformist social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s.[70] The aim of the new models was to offer a suitable environment for more individualized workplace relationships and thereby replace the collectiveness and political activity of the Fordist period.[71]

The transition towards flexible capitalism has also affected the organization of work in more direct ways. Richard Sennett argues that the financial control of corporations has meant a shorter time span of activities, a greater emphasis on short-term profits and constant reorganizations. Alongside the new means of rapid communication, this has put employees in a situation in which they need to operate in rapidly changing environments, shift their attention to several simultaneous tasks and communicate with constantly moving networks.[72] Work has become less physical than before and consists of communication and virtual tasks performed

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[65] Siltala 2018.
[66] Julkunen 2003; Saastamoinen 2006.
[67] Skeggs 2011; see also du Gay 1996, 119; O'Flynn & Petersen 2007; Walkerdine 2003.
[68] Scharff, 2016; McDonald & O'Callaghan 2008; Skeggs & Loveday 2012; Walkerdine 2006.
[69] Han 2015.
[70] Boltanski & Chiapello 2007, 167–177.
[71] Ezzy 2001; Smith & Thompson 1998; Wainwright & Calnan 2002, 126.
[72] Sennett 2006, 37–51.

in front of a screen.[73] The workmanship that during the Fordist period developed through a long learning process of specific tasks has been disappearing, and is being replaced by a new emphasis on constant learning, transferable skills and the kind of self-presentation that suits teamwork and a corporate culture.[74]

On the other hand, not all changes in work tasks and the organization of work can be explained by the transition to flexible capitalism. The development of labor markets and technology in recent decades has eliminated many traditional physical and routine tasks, and the share of non-routine tasks related to information management and human interaction has increased.[75] Moreover, the share of workers employed in the service sector and information economy has increased and the role of service tasks and information work has expanded even within traditional manufacturing, fostering the need for social and complex cognitive skills.[76] According to some claims, emotional labor, as described by Arlie Hochschild, has become a part of almost any job.[77]

Furthermore, not all contributions support the idea that the increasing role of psychology and emotions in management thinking represents neoliberal ideology or expanded control of workers' hearts and minds. On the contrary, Cas Wouters argues that the growing emphasis on emotional and psychosocial skills represents increasing social equality and the consequent informalization of human interaction. He claims that social relations in Western countries have become more democratic and more complex, which has made expressions of inequality less acceptable. Instead of predefined behavioral codes, individuals are supposed to rely on their emotional expressions and social sensitiveness in human interaction.[78] In Finland, for example, the dissolution of traditional class boundaries in the 1960s and 1970s coincided with the loosening of the social rules that required the use of the polite V-form when addressing people of a higher social status, increasing the role of more personal forms of interaction.[79]

Building on this perspective, Wouters is critical of the claims that the need to show complex emotional skills in service roles unequivocally represents alienating managerial control over workers. He argues that such a need characterizes practically all social interaction in contemporary culture, and therefore the difference between social interaction in private and

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[73] Snyder 2016, 7.
[74] Casey 1995, 139; Sennett 1998, 65–66; Sennett 2006, 94–98.
[75] Autor et al. 2003; Spitz-Oener 2006; Väänänen et al. 2018.
[76] Berman et al. 1994; Jokinen & Saaristo 2006, 87–97; Lavikka 2000; Pyöriä 2003.
[77] Brotheridge & Grandey 2002.
[78] Wouters 2007, 184–191.
[79] Kalela 2005b; Laitamo 2003.

commercial situations is much smaller than that assumed by, for example, Arlie Hochschild. Wouters maintains that there is no great risk of managers colonializing the emotional worlds of their subordinates by requiring certain types of emotional expressions of them.[80]

3.3 Critical views

While most contributions in this field support the view that the role of psycho-emotional skills in working life has actually increased during recent decades, some contributions also offer reasons to doubt this basic premise. The growing attention that psychological and managerial literature is paying to the psycho-emotional qualities of the worker and the workplace – as explained above – is itself often seen as a significant indicator of this process, and historical analyses of the subject have had a certain propensity to use these texts as a key source of the changes in working life.[81] However, the juxtaposition of prescriptive managerial texts and management practices in work organizations is not unproblematic. First, as argued by Pauli Juuti, instead of direct and comprehensive, the impact of management theory on management practice has been mixed and conflictual.[82] Managerial practitioners have adopted, adapted and rejected the theories based on needs and values, often building on their own view of what efficiency means in their organization.[83]

An even more serious problem in the juxtaposition of management theory and practice is that management theory cannot be seen as only an objective description of work, workers and workplaces; it includes characteristics of an ideology. According to the critical view of Matthew Stewart, management theory represents an attempt to legitimize authority and hierarchies in a democratic society by claiming to have scientific answers to questions that are essentially moral and political by their nature.[84] Roy Jacques offers an example of this by arguing that the development of managerialism in the 20th century gave birth to an "employee" whose interior would be analyzed and controlled by experts, using special knowledge not available to the lay person. To legitimize control and social order in the workplace, the employee became defined as an ignorant, childlike creature whose development into an autonomous subject required the help of the knowledgeable, adult-like professional expert.[85]

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[80] Wouters 1989.
[81] Thompson 2003.
[82] Juuti 2006.
[83] Kuokkanen 2015, 104.
[84] Stewart 2009, 11–12.
[85] Jacques 1996, 80–82.

Similarly, Stephen Pattison questions the scientific nature of managerial knowledge and introduces managerialism as a religious faith that offers managers legitimacy and a sense of self-importance – even in cases in which the basic premises of their doctrines are quite detached from the realities of the organization and the effect of the management practices is downright harmful.[86] New Public Management, which is in some way a version of flexible capitalism specifically designed for public institutions, offers an example of this. According to its promoters, it is supposed to empower public sector workers and improve efficiency and customer experience, but according to critics, it mostly achieves the opposite results, reducing the autonomy and resources of service providers.[87]

Another reason to doubt the increasing role of psycho-emotional skills in working life is offered by discussions on the decreasing value of formal credentials. According to Juha Siltala, the oversupply crisis that has curbed global economic growth since the 1970s has also curbed the growth of middle-class jobs and increased the competition for high-end jobs requiring educational credentials.[88] With the educational level of the workforce rising faster than the number of jobs available for educated job applicants, the value of education has suffered inflation, and the role of other forms of "suitability" has increased.[89] Päivi Naumanen directly links this development to the contemporary emphasis on personality and psychological testing in employee recruitment, as employers find it more difficult to make distinctions between candidates on the basis of only their education.[90]

The important aspect of this argument is that the increased focus on the psycho-emotional skills of the workers is more a result of changes in the recruitment process than in work processes. Phillip Brown and Anthony Hesketh claim that while most job applicants in the labor markets who have adequate credentials probably possess the psycho-emotional skills actually needed in working life, the oversupply of applicants has prompted employers to rely on overtly strict and methodologically dubious selection processes to justify their choices and to bolster the egos of those selected.[91] As Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb argue, using the language of psychology to explain social boundary-drawing in work organizations contains a mystifying element; it offers an aura of objectivity towards forms of selection not justifiable

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[86] Pattison 1997, 152–156.
[87] Siltala 2013; Yliaska 2014, 500–517.
[88] Siltala 2017, 36–62; see also Aro 2014.
[89] Jackson et al. 2005; Kivinen & Rinne 1998; Naumanen & Silvennoinen 2010.
[90] Naumanen 2004.
[91] Brown & Hesketh 2004, 187–188, 194–196.

simply by merit.[92] With the increasing democracy of education, psychological uniqueness and superiority have come to offer the elite another means of justifying their position above the "masses" and to resist the disappearance of social status differences.[93]

A third kind of criticism can be directed toward the assumption that the bureaucratic control models of the Fordist period reduced workers to mere "hands" and treated them as machine-like objects. Roy Jacques dismisses this notion of how workers were treated during the development of the bureaucratic organization, as this would have made the role of the emerging manager utterly pointless. Rather, throughout the early 20th century, the development of managerialism was associated with the recognition of workers as psychological and emotional subjects who possessed a subtle knowledge of the production process that could not be fully controlled by the management.[94] Richard Edwards also argues that it was specifically the development of bureaucratic control models during the Fordist period that expanded managers' attention towards the overall demeanor and affections of workers instead of mere external conduct and physical discipline. This departed from earlier models that had left the informal culture of workers largely untouched. The bureaucratic system stressed the development of workers' behavior and personality and rewarded them for displaying the right kind of cultural affiliation.[95]

A fourth kind of criticism targets the role of psycho-emotional skills in contemporary organizations, and typically stems from the labor process theory. Building on Harry Braverman, who argued that the fundamental characteristic of capitalist development in work organizations is the separation of conception and execution and the growing managerial control over each step of the labor process and its mode of execution,[96] different studies have analyzed the role of psycho-emotional skills, especially in modern services. George Callaghan and Paul Thompson, for example, examined call center workers who, according their employer, had to employ their personality and their ability to work autonomously, communicate and negotiate with customers, and learn constantly. However, in the end it appeared that the labor process, including interaction with the customers, had been heavily routinized, leaving workers with little autonomy and few possibilities to actually use the above-mentioned skills. A far more important skill was the ability to tolerate fatigue and endless routines.[97]

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[92] Sennett & Cobb 1972, 155–157.
[93] Lawler 2005.
[94] Jacques 1996, 88.
[95] Edwards 1979, 147–148.
[96] Braverman 1974, 112–120.
[97] Callaghan & Thompson 2002.

A common conclusion of these studies is that the managerial rhetoric of empowerment and increased customer orientation is often accompanied by the further intensification, standardization and bureaucratization of the labor processes that undermine the increased flexibility potentially achieved by the new management models.[98] One potential explanation for this is that there seems to be a conflict between the soft, human-centered view of the workplace and the requirements of the modern intensive competition and high-paced work environment.[99] Another explanation emphasizes the characteristics of modern managerialism. According to Sirpa Wrede, even sincere attempts to improve flexibility and worker autonomy can be stifled by managerialist attempts to increase the "manageability of work" through subordinating work performances to measurable and documentable evaluations.[100]

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[98] see e.g. Frenkel et al. 1998; Knights & McCabe 1998; Taylor & Bain 1999.
[99] Kinnie et al. 2000.
[100] Wrede 2018.

3 Theoretical concepts

In this chapter I introduce the key theoretical concepts that have informed the research articles included in the thesis and, to a significant extent, structure their findings. These concepts include the Fordist and post-Fordist work regimes, the ideal worker and the myth. The first of these concepts is important in defining the historical context and the research period of the thesis. The second is utilized in the analysis of the managerial representations of working life. The third concept is used for critically analyzing the dichotomy between the old and the new ideal worker.

3.1 Fordism and post-Fordism

As noted above, the rise of the emotionally involved ideal worker has often been associated with a transition from Fordism to post-Fordism or flexible capitalism. These are very broad categories which inevitably include unwarranted generalizations and are difficult to date precisely. However, because of their established usage in the discussions on the new demands of working life, they are necessary concepts for the contextualization of this study.

The narrow definition of Fordism would include the technological, organizational and social reforms that took place in Henry Ford's automobile factories in the early 20th century. These included the assembly line, the standardization of products, the increasingly detailed division of labor, the re-composition of tasks, the reduction of worker autonomy, the use of a large pool of unskilled laborers, the use of higher wages as a means of motivating workers and a synthesis between mass production and mass consumption. However, while the exact system developed by Ford never proved to be particularly successful or widespread, in the period after World War II, the concept of Fordism became loosely associated with a wider societal system including labor market corporatism, increasing wage levels, public welfare policies and Keynesian economic policies. This marriage between Fordism, corporatism, welfare programs and Keynesianism proved to be a highly successful combination in the post-war years, and this period has often been simply called the Fordist period.[101]

Internationally, the Fordist period came to an end around the 1970s. With economic growth stagnating, profits falling and inflation soaring, both governments and

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[101] Clarke 1992.

corporations came to view the Fordist arrangements as problematic.[102] According to critical views, the post-Fordist solution to these problems, influenced by the rising ideology of neoliberalism, was to cut back the support for corporatism, governmental regulations and welfare programs.[103] Markets were opened for free competition and the power of shareholders over economic activities increased at the expense of governments and labor organizations.[104] Individual corporations started to chase profits through leaner organizations, more flexible models of production and more intense demands on their workers.[105] Francis Green argues that the post-Fordist period has indeed been characterized by an intensification of work.[106]

An important characteristic of post-Fordism in work organizations is the way in which employers have come to demand enhanced performance and flexibility from their employees while simultaneously attempting to secure their motivation and commitment.[107] Much of the rhetoric around the post-Fordist ideal worker revolves around the concept of empowerment, which promises workers greater autonomy and happier lives in exchange for their dedication and heightened individual efforts. In discussions regarding the effects of post-Fordism on workers, the conflicts between the rhetoric of empowerment and the intensification of work environment are a constant source of friction.[108]

As Raija Julkunen argues, it is not clear whether the concept of Fordism sits comfortably in the Finnish context since, for example, the Fordist factory system never fully reached the Finnish industrial sector, and the local system could be better described as paternalism spiced up by the ideas of rationalization.[109] However, it seems reasonable to argue that many of the characteristics of the post-World War II style of Fordism were also adopted in Finland. According to Karl-Erik Michelsen, the end of World War II can be roughly seen as the beginning of the Fordist period in Finland in terms of the application of rationalized production models.[110] In wider societal terms, the growth of the industrial sector and the development of mass consumption during the post-war period were accompanied by increasing governmental spending on social welfare and the rise of tripartite labor market negotiations,

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[102] Patomäki 2007, 50–51.
[103] Harvey 2005, 2–3; Navarro 2007.
[104] Lazonick and O'Sullivan 2000.
[105] Harvey 1989, 147–150; Uusi-Rauva 2006.
[106] Green 2004.
[107] Thompson 2003.
[108] Webb 2004.
[109] Julkunen 2008, 35.
[110] Michelsen 2001, 203; see also Kettunen 1997, 27–29.

resulting in a regulated economic environment that emphasized growth, stability, full employment and political consensus.[111]

Unlike in many other Western countries, the growth of the Finnish welfare state continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The economic recession of the early 1990s has been seen as the defining point in the transition towards the post-Fordist models emphasizing flexibility, economic de-regulation, market-orientation and governmental austerity policies.[112] According to Risto Heiskala and Eeva Luhtakallio, a major social and ideological transformation towards a "competitiveness state" may indeed have secured a certain amount of economic growth, but at a considerable social cost.[113] However, many work organizations already experienced shifts towards a new kind of market orientation and more flexible organizational models in the 1970s.[114] Thus in some terms, the transition towards "flexible capitalism" began in Finland at the same time as it did in other Western countries.

3.2 The ideal worker

A key theoretical tool in this thesis is the concept of the ideal worker. This concept refers to the worker qualities preferred by employers in the given social context. These qualities do not only refer to being qualified in terms of educational credentials, skills and work experience, but also to being motivated and oriented towards one's work in terms of values and personal characteristics.[115] While it is possible to analyze the specific traits of the ideal worker in individual organizations or fields of industry, the ideal worker is also a cultural character whose image is widely shared throughout society during a given time period.[116]

The image of the ideal worker is likely to change in tandem with the development of society and working life. As argued by Patricia McLaren and Albert Mills, the ideal worker is a historically formed social construct rather than an "ideal for all contexts"[117]. For example, the ideal worker of the Fordist period has been described as a task-oriented, authoritarian and rule-abiding character who is able to ignore personal and emotional considerations that may interfere with daily routines. In contrast, the ideal worker of the post-Fordist period has been

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[111] Alasuutari 1996, 75–79; Kalela 2005a; Kallioinen et al. 2010.
[112] Heiskala & Kantola 2010; Julkunen 2008, 13–14; Lilja & Tainio 2006; Siltala 2004, 112.
[113] Heiskala & Luhtakallio 2006.
[114] Kettunen 2002.
[115] Tienari et al. 2002.
[116] Väänänen & Turtiainen 2014b.
[117] McLaren & Mills 2008, 386.

described as an emotionally intelligent, egalitarian and cooperative character who is able to exploit their unique individuality in order to succeed.[118] However, some aspects of the ideal worker may remain remarkably stable over time, as argued by those who claim that the ideal worker of the industrial society has predominantly been a white heterosexual male.[119]

One way in which to look at the changing qualities of the ideal worker is to consider them as an expression of occupational needs. For example, many studies analyzing the employer characterizations of the ideal worker, using either questionnaires or job advertisements as source material, have equated their findings rather straightforwardly with the skills and qualities that workers need in their work tasks.[120] From this perspective, it appears that the changes in the characterizations of the ideal worker are reflections of the changes in the labor process.

On the other hand, several other contributions have stressed that the qualities that define the ideal worker are far from neutral in terms of social power. Feminist scholars such as Joan Acker have pointed out how labor market structures, workplace relations and labor processes are affected symbols of gender and processes of gender inequality.[121] For example, the ideal worker of the Fordist period has been criticized for being an expression of masculine hegemony that favors men over women, whereas the ideal worker of the flexible organization has been seen to include more feminine, "softer" qualities that, at least theoretically, enable more equal gender relations in work organizations.[122] On the other hand, the criticism of the ideal worker of the flexible organization has emphasized its role as an expression of neoliberal values that favor individualism, competition and uncritical acceptance of employer politics as opposed to collectivism, altruism and labor unionism.[123] The neoliberal ideal worker has also been accused of exploiting employees' desire to achieve the ideal, and for using guilt as an internal control mechanism.[124]

Another way in which to interpret the changing image of the ideal worker is provided by class theory. According to Valerie Walkerdine, the "new labour market demands can be understood as aiming to produce a subject in the image of the middle class".[125] She argues that the neoliberal ideology of the contemporary period has embraced the middle-class

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[118] Fondas 1997; Hughes 2005; O'Sullivan & Sheridan 2005.
[119] Britton & Logan 2008.
[120] e.g. Bennett 2002; Jackson 2007; Kureková et al. 2016; Lynch & Smith 2001.
[121] Acker 1990.
[122] Peterson 2007.
[123] McDonald & O'Callaghan 2008.
[124] Hoggett 2017.
[125] Walkerdine 2003, 238.

ideal of value-achieving personality and turned it into a general ideal that defines a person's worth in society, thus re-conceptualizing class inequalities as uneven psychological capabilities.[126] Beverley Skeggs has put forward similar arguments. Building on the views of Pierre Bourdieu, who claims that individual capabilities and personal characteristics cannot be separated from class struggles and the inherited cultural capital,[127] Skeggs argues that in contemporary labor markets "the person has become a fetish in which the labour and resources required for its development is hidden and psychologized"[128].

Interpreted from this perspective, the ideal worker of the flexible organization seems to aim toward undermining traditional working-class values. The contemporary ideal of an individualistic, collaborative, friendly and enterprising labor market subject does not easily fit in with a working-class culture that has historically been characterized by collective resistance against employer demands, antagonistic relations with the management and a strong emphasis on autonomy and self-sustainment.[129] According to some arguments, an understanding of such class-based cultural distinctions is crucial for analyzing the worker behavior and social divisions in working life.[130]

Furthermore, it seems that to accept a single image that represents the ideal worker for a given historical period risks hiding important social divisions. For example, the image of the ideal worker during the Fordist period is typically derived from the world of industrial work, leaving aside the world of non-manual work, and its "marketing orientation" and "personality markets" which, according to Erich Fromm and C. Wright Mills, put great stress on the personal traits of the workers already in the 1940s and 1950s.[131] In contemporary labor markets, the rise of the demands for new skill has been associated with a polarization of labor markets. Whereas personality and soft skills can be important in both high- and low-level occupations, Irena Grugulis and Steven Vincent argue that in low-level occupations, the demand for soft skills is more likely to disadvantage workers and decrease their bargaining power and personal autonomy. Because of the generic nature of soft skills, workers in low-level occupations can be easily defined as cheap labor to whom the ideal of an autonomous, innovative modern employee does not apply.[132]

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[126] Walkerdine 2006.
[127] Bourdieu 1984, 281.
[128] Skeggs 2011, 508.
[129] Teräs 2001, 44–81; Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012; Willis 1977, 52–56.
[130] Wolkowitz 2006, 68–69.
[131] Fromm 1947, 69–70; Mills 1951, 182.
[132] Grugulis & Vincent 2009.

3.3 Myths and the uses of history

While the term "myth" may have several different meanings, its concept here derives from Roland Barthes, who defined myths as "forms of authoritative histories, which through their de-contextualization, conceal their ideological roots and instrumental conditions of creation"[133]. A myth, as Barthes argued, removes histories and replaces them with other, ideologically laden histories.[134] The purpose of these ideologically laden histories is to transform people's worldviews and legitimize social power.[135]

Management knowledge, as argued by Matthew Stewart, is hardly free from mythical elements. He maintains that throughout its history, management thinking has attempted to legitimize itself by claiming a scientific status while much of the "science" behind it has been based on superstitions, pseudoscientific methods, loose anecdotes and fabricated stories. One important myth that continues to sustain the scientific legitimacy of management knowledge concerns the ability that Frederick Winslow Taylor had to improve organizational efficiency and generate cost savings by applying scientific methods to the reorganization of work. Stewart uses the famous pig iron tale as an example: instead of applying real scientific methods, Taylor mostly offered calculations based on random extrapolations, and the cost savings enabled by his methods were too small to even cover the fees of his team. Similarly, the famous Hawthorne tests conducted by Elton Mayo and his colleagues have been used to advocate the economic importance of the "human factor" for decades, but according to Stewart, the actual improvements achieved by the tests were largely accidental and statistically insignificant.[136]

Another kind of myth that characterizes management knowledge involves the idea of management as an evolving science. Roy Jacques argues that the core ideas of modern management thinking were fully formulated around 1920, and later contributions have been viewed as new discoveries only by ignoring earlier contributions.[137] Similarly, Pauli Kettunen claims that the importance of the individual – the human character at the center of work organizations – is an idea that management thinking rediscovered over and over again during the 20th century. Kettunen stresses the ideological nature of this repeated argument. First,

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[133] Durepos et al. 2008, 117.
[134] Barthes 1994, 183.
[135] Leak 1994, 27–32.
[136] Stewart 2009, 22, 48–50, 118.
[137] Jacques 1996, 155–158.

ignoring the fact that the same idea has been expressed many times before conceals historical continuity and overemphasizes the novelty of the present situation. Secondly, the argument can be used to disguise adverse working conditions, increasing demands and harmful reorganizations in the name of progress. Despite the egalitarian rhetoric of the argument, it still represents a managerially controlled "top down view" of the workplace, which treats workers as exploitable resources.[138]

Myths are important not only for management thinking, but also for individual organizations. Because collective history is a resource for organizations in terms of implying values, responsibilities and the direction of change, managers find it relevant to control the interpretations of the past and to "recast the organizational members as participants in an ongoing drama"[139]. This control becomes particularly acute in times of organizational change. The problematization of the past is a key element in the implementation of new strategies, and potential conflicts over the direction of change are also transformed into struggles over the organizational past.[140] Managers attempting to legitimize their views on the new strategies are likely to construct stories of discontinuity between the past and the new models while offering "postalgic" views on the golden future of the organization.[141] In such struggles, the past of the organization becomes a target of ideological reinterpretations.[142]

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[138] Kettunen 1997, 187–188; see also Mannevuo 2018.
[139] Maclean et al. 2014, 543.
[140] Vaara et al. 2004; Ybema 2014.
[141] Ybema 2004.
[142] Booth et al. 2007; Durepos et al. 2008.

4 Research questions, materials and methods

In this chapter I introduce the five research articles included in the thesis and discuss their aims and methods. In terms of their general approach, the articles can be classified into two categories. The first three focus on the changing qualities of the ideal worker in public representations. The last two articles shift the attention to worker experiences that may contradict the images offered by public representations. Overall, the articles reveal the tension between the changing character of the ideal worker and the worker experience.

4.1 Aims and research questions

As noted above, the usual way to trace the historical changes in the qualities of the ideal worker is to analyze the prescriptive management literature. A far less common approach includes the analysis of texts produced by management practitioners, or at least, such analyses usually rely on a relatively short time span. Previous knowledge on how the qualities of the ideal workers as defined by management practitioners have changed over the decades is scarce.

The first two articles included in the thesis examine the shifts towards the increasingly emotional and psychological definitions of the ideal worker in work organizations, using job advertisements from the 1940s to the 2000s as their source material. Since previous literature has argued that changes in management ethos are primarily implemented in organizations by altering the image of ideal management,[143] the research articles focus on managerial job advertisements. In both articles the questions are: 1) Which characteristics used to define the ideal manager in the past? 2) Which characteristics have come to define the contemporary ideal manager? 3) When did the qualities of the ideal manager change?

Article I builds on the concepts of "personalization" and "subjectivization". Personalization, as defined by Raija Julkunen, refers to the fusion of work and the worker. Personalized work is not only repetitive performance predefined by the management; it requires the employment of more dimensions of the self in work performance, while the work process itself gains characteristics from the worker.[144] Subjectivization, for its part, refers to the fusion between the labor process and the personal experience and worldview of the worker. According to Nikolas Rose, subjectivization transforms personal fulfilment and emotional

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[143] George 2000; MacLaren & Mills 2008.
[144] Julkunen 2008, 122.

satisfaction into the main gratifications of hard work instead of material benefits such as money.[145] The article uses the title of "psychological management" to capture the way in which the focus on psychological qualities seems to penetrate the definition of the ideal manager and result in the anthropocentric management of personalities, human interaction and inner motivation. The aim of Article I is to analyze the increasing focus on personal characteristics and non-material rewards in managerial job advertisements during the study period 1949–2009.

Article II shifts the focus to emotions and social skills. It is built on the notion of emotional intelligence, which is defined as a competence that allows the identification, expression and understanding of emotions and improves productivity, teamwork abilities and dedication to the organization.[146] The article also employs the notion of feminization, which is defined as an increasing emphasis on qualities traditionally considered feminine, such as empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and a preference for open, egalitarian and co-operative relationships as opposed to masculine qualities such as determination and aggression.[147] These characterizations are not considered de facto qualities of men and women, but culturally conditioned stereotypical images. The aim of the article is to trace the spread of ideals related to emotional intelligence and gendered qualities in the definitions of the ideal manager in the period between 1949 and 2009.

Article III also examines the changing image of the ideal worker, but from a different perspective. It draws on the parallels between the increasing focus on emotions, human interaction and workplace cultures in management literature[148] and the emerging emphasis on the psychosocial determinants of occupational health in stress and exhaustion studies since the late 1970s.[149] According to previous literature, discussions on health and psychological wellbeing are far from value free and may be analyzed from the perspective of social power and the production of new subjectivities.[150] The focus of Article III is on the ways in which public discussions related to psychosocial health risks in work organizations have come to promote a new kind of understanding of social relations within workplaces and a new kind of relation between the worker and the workplace. This changing ethos is approached by comparing how the representations of workplaces in the research material fit working-class notions of a hierarchical and naturally conflictual organization, and middle-class notions of a

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[145] Rose 1999, 248.
[146] Baumeler 2010.
[147] Benschop & Doorewaard 1998; Fondas 1997.
[148] Bolton 2005, 34.
[149] Väänänen et al. 2014.
[150] Armstrong 1995; McDonald & O'Callaghan 2008.

smoothly functioning, harmonious organization offering personal gratification. The aim of the article is to analyze the changing image of the ideal worker in health-related public discussions in the context of an emerging neoliberal ideology.

Article IV shifts the focus from the public representations of the ideal worker to worker experiences. Its subject is industrial work in Finland during the Fordist period, from the 1940s to the 1970s, as experienced by the workers themselves. Building on the tradition of "history from below", which seeks to criticize elitist and universalizing interpretations,[151] the article analyzes the labor processes in industrial organizations and questions the stereotypical images of the Fordist organizations. The question is whether the industrial workplaces of the period indeed conformed to the rational definitions or whether they exhibited traits of a flexible organization, such as autonomy, worker responsibility, teamwork, and the strive for quality and customer satisfaction. As in the ethnographic approach adopted by Michel Burawoy in his analysis of machinists in a Fordist industrial setting in the 1970s,[152] the study focuses on the informal aspects of the labor process as organized on the shop floor.

Article V offers a case study of a managerially driven organizational reform towards more flexible models of organization. The subject organization of the case study is the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland, the management of which adopted the model of "management by results" around the turn of the 1970s and 1980s.[153] The article explores the different meanings of the narrative on the transition from a rational, bureaucratic organization to a flexible, emotional organization for management and workers. Building on the theory of organizational myths, it reveals the contradictions between the managerial representations of the organizational past and present, and worker experiences from the same period. Overall, the article aims to critically analyze the historically changing role of emotions in the world of service work.

4.2 Research materials

The research material in Articles I and II consisted of supervisor- and managerial-level job advertisements collected from *Helsingin Sanomat*. Job advertisements are an important arena for public expressions of job qualifications, and have been argued to represent the ideals of

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[151] Fingerroos and Peltonen 2006; Peltonen 1999, 16–17.
[152] Burawoy 1979, 2.
[153] Soukola 2008, 13–31.

company managers far better than managerial textbooks.[154] *Helsingin Sanomat* was selected as the source due to it remaining the largest newspaper in Finland throughout the research period and because it places a strong emphasis on announcements, especially job advertisements.[155] The job advertisements were collected from spring and autumn Sunday issues at five-year intervals (1949, 1954, 1959, and so forth) between 1949 and 2009; this ensured at least 60 supervisor or managerial level job advertisements from each year. Unlike in Article I, the advertisements in Article II were further classified into top-level positions (CEOs, directors, board members), mid-level positions (heads of departments) and supervisor-level positions (supervisors, foremen). In total, the research material for both articles included 68 issues and 1 305 job advertisements.

The source material for Article III was also drawn from *Helsingin Sanomat*, as well as form *Me Naiset*, the largest weekly published women's magazine. The publications were selected because, throughout the research period, they were among the most important, widespread public arenas for popular occupational health discussions. The data were collected at four-year intervals, each collection period covering two consecutive years (1962, 1963, 1967, 1968, 1972, 1973 and so forth). Three additional years (1961, 1985 and 1989) were selected to compensate for the low number of occupational health-related articles at certain data collection points. The collection from *Me Naiset* covered all the issues of the selected year, and the collection from *Helsingin Sanomat* covered all the September and October issues. The collections included articles with topics related to occupational health or environmental risks at the workplace. The data consisted of 93 articles from *Helsingin Sanomat* and 32 articles from *Me Naiset*, making a total of 125 source articles.

The research material for Article IV consisted of worker biographies and other memoirs provided by the Labour Memory Data Commission of the Finnish Labour Archives. The data collection included all biographies in the archival material that represented industrial work in Finland during the period from the 1940s to the 1970s. This data proved to be highly heterogeneous, as they had been produced by the Labour Memory Data Commission through several different writing collections on various topics between the 1980s and 2010s. However, the strength of the data was that they offered a versatile, intimate source of information about life on the shop floor, and they covered several industrial branches and a large number of different-sized employers. In total, the data included 64 worker biographies, of which 53 were

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[154] Bennett 2002.
[155] Tommila & Salokangas 1998, 210–216.

written by men and 11 by women, and 46 by manual workers and 18 by supervisors, managers or other non-manual workers.

As the study design in Article V includes a comparative analysis of two different narratives on the history of the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland, the empirical source material of the article was also divided into two distinct groups. The managerial narrative on the bank's history and managerial reform was derived from published materials such as annual reports and the personnel magazine Omapankki, as well as from archival material related to the bank's training and development programs. The employees' views were analyzed using 19 employee memoirs, acquired from the memory data collections of the Labour Memory Data Commission of the Finnish Labour Archives. This data included 14 autobiographies; interviews and one diary of female workers, mostly representing bank tellers; and five biographies and interviews of male workers, mostly representing supervisor positions.

4.3 Methods

The research methods in Articles I and II combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. In both articles, the theoretical concepts were operationalized by classifying the skill demands and other qualities defining the ideal worker found in the job advertisements into relevant categories and then counting the occurrence of these skills and qualities in relation to the overall number of the job advertisements collected from a certain period. This allowed the construction of figures to represent the changing qualities of the ideal manager. These figures were accompanied by job advertisements that offered representative examples of the changing nature of skill demands and worker characterizations.

In Article I, all the skill demands mentioned in the job advertisements were counted and then categorized into either technical skills or qualifications linked to personality. The latter were further classified into characteristics describing the dimensions of "psychological presence"[156] as defined by William Kahn, namely emotional and social skills, job integration and concentration. Other classifications separated different leadership styles from each other, marking the shifts between paternalistic leadership, consultative leadership and entrepreneurial leadership.[157] Furthermore, Article I included an analysis of the benefits offered to the manager candidates in the job advertisements. These benefits were classified into

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[156] Kahn 1992.
[157] see e.g. Day and Zaccaro 2007

material rewards, including salary, company housing and so forth; and immaterial rewards, including workplace relationships, psychological quality of work and the opportunity for self-development. Similarly, Article II required a reconstruction of emotional skills and gender roles. Emotional skills were recognized using the breakdown of skills related to emotional intelligence, as provided by Andrew Langley.[158] The gender roles that defined the changing ideal manager were recognized using the traditional cultural classification of feminine and masculine traits described in gender studies.[159]

In Article III the analysis of the newspaper and magazine articles was based on qualitative content analysis, which, according to Klaus Krippendorff, refers to the re-articulation of given texts into new theoretically and culturally conditioned narratives.[160] The analysis began by identifying all articles related to the psychosocial risk factors of occupational health. To analyze the different kinds of approaches to occupational health, the articles were categorized according to what kind of normative descriptions of social behavior at the workplace they included. After the classification, the analysis began from the most fruitful articles, which were closely read to expose their "assumptions, categories, logics, claims and modes of articulation"[161]. The hypotheses formed in this way were tested on the rest of the material and the arguments were amended according to the emerging findings.[162]

Article IV's approach of using autobiographies and memoirs is drawn from the social history of everyday life, focusing on the immediate locale that contextualizes the narrators' experiences.[163] The point is not to merely recount events, but to include the feelings, sensations and social experiences of the workers that arise from the biographies.[164] The analysis concerned the labor processes, social networks, power structures and management models of the corporations described by the informants. The data were categorized on the basis of whether they supported the stereotypical images of the Fordist organization or whether they exhibited traits of the flexible organization, including worker autonomy, teamwork, learning opportunities and high commitment. Due to the partial, inconsistent nature of the analyzed texts, the biographies were not analyzed as complete narratives but as narrative fragments and "proto-stories"[165] that offered insights into the industrial workplaces of the period.

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[158] Langley 2000.
[159] e.g. Fondas 1997; Rafaeli & Worline 2001.
[160] Krippendorff 2004, 17.
[161] Miller 1997, 32.
[162] See Alasuutari 1995, 162–174.
[163] Lüdtke 1995, 20.
[164] Hytönen & Koskinen-Koivisto 2009.
[165] Gabriel 2004, 70.

Article V offers a case study that is built on a marriage between business history and organizational studies, a marriage that has become an emerging trend in organizational theory in recent years.[166] The article combines approaches from business history and narrative analysis to examine a research problem mainly developed in social and management theory. It compares two different stories about the changing role of emotions in the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland, one offered by the management and the other offered by the company's employees. The former is expressed in texts produced by the management, whereas the latter is expressed through employee biographies and interviews. The methods used to analyze the texts are very similar to those in Article IV, building on fragments and isolated stories that offer insights into the managerial change and emotional experiences in the bank.

According to Michael Rowlinson et al., historians have long regarded contemporary documents as the best sources of past events, expressing doubt about the reliability of memory data.[167] Indeed, most methodological discussions on the use of memory data in historical research have stressed the need to recognize its subjective and partial nature, particularly the characteristic of remembering.[168] However, Article V analyzes the documents themselves as ideological products of the management. In contrast, the memory data are used to reveal a hidden world of emotions that the managerially produced documents do not express.

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[166] Godfrey et al. 2016; Hansen 2012.
[167] See Rowlinson et al. 2014; see also Yates 2014.
[168] e.g. Kalela 2006; Portelli 1998.

5 Summary of results

In this chapter I summarize the findings of the five research articles included in the thesis. The chapter is split into two subchapters. The first discusses the findings related to the changing characteristics of the ideal worker in Articles I, II and III. Article I shows how personality and non-technical skills slowly became the most important characteristics of the ideal manager in the period 1949–2009. It also shows the increasing meaning of intrinsic, non-material rewards in defining the work orientation of the ideal manager. Article II reveals similar trends in job qualifications related to emotional and social skills. The article also discusses the qualities of the ideal manager from the perspective of gender stereotypes. Article III, for its part, notes the increasing emphasis on the normative descriptions of worker behavior in occupational health-related newspaper and magazine articles between the 1960s and the 2000s. The findings suggest that the rise of public discussions on occupational mental health and psychosocial risk factors has been associated with a redefinition of the ideal worker as a cooperative and proactive team-player who follows middle-class behavioral codes.

The second subchapter focuses on the findings related to worker experiences and organizational myths in Articles IV and V. Article IV questions the stereotypical images of the industrial workplace during the Fordist period and shows how worker autonomy, initiative, social networks and high commitment played a significant role in the labor process in Finnish industrial organizations from the 1940s to the 1970s. Article V shifts the focus to the world of service work. The findings show an immense gap between the managerial interpretations and employee experiences of the changing role of emotions in the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland from the 1950s to the 1990s.

5.1 The ideal worker in transition

Article I. Personality and intrinsic work motivation in the representations of the ideal manager

Article I studied the changing images of the ideal manager in job advertisements. The examined job advertisements included 1 305 managerial and supervisory position advertisements published in *Helsingin Sanomat* between 1949 and 2009. Overall, the results reveal an increasing emphasis on personality traits and non-technical skills. As shown in Figure 1, job

advertisements became increasingly detailed in their descriptions of the required skills and qualities over the decades, and the number of individual skills and traits found in each job advertisement grew. For most of the study period, the average number of both technical skills and personal qualities per job advertisement kept increasing, but in the 1990s, the focus clearly gravitated towards personality traits, which have dominated job advertisements from the late 1990s onwards.

A further breakdown of the personality traits that have appeared in the job advertisements reveals a changing approach towards leadership styles and the qualities of the ideal manager. Between 1949 and 1964 most job requirements related to personality traits and non-technical skills involved qualities associated with a paternalistic leadership style, such as natural leadership talent, controlled behavior and honesty. However, from the latter half of the 1960s onwards, the focus shifted, first towards a more social, collaborative and flexible leadership style, and then from the late 1970s towards a stronger emphasis on an entrepreneurial leadership style emphasizing results and development orientation. It seems that job advertisements reflect a transition towards less hierarchical forms of management with an increasing emphasis on individual responsibility for job performance.
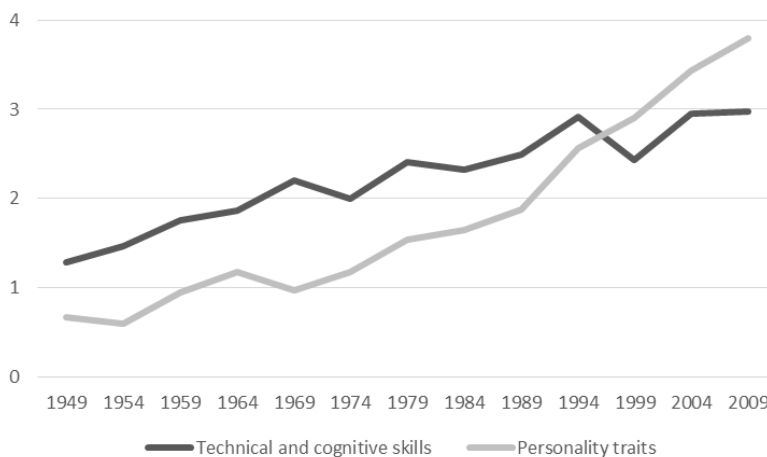
**Figure 1**. *Average number of personal traits and average number of technical and cognitive skills required per manager position job advertisement.*

The article also reveals an increasing emphasis on intrinsic work motivation in the definitions of the ideal manager. As shown in Figure 2, the job advertisements of the late 1940s and early 1950s relied almost exclusively on extrinsic job benefits (wage, company housing, etc.) when

promoting the workplace to potential candidates. However, the non-material rewards of employment quickly gained similar attention from the late 1950s onwards. The emphasis was particularly on the atmosphere and the work community that the workplace offered, but the quality of work and the opportunities for self-development also received attention, especially from the 1970s onwards. In the 1980s, the role of material benefits in defining a desirable workplace began to decrease, and the focus fully shifted towards non-material benefits. It seems that job advertisements followed the wider cultural change towards post-material values, as recognized by Ronald Inglehart.[169]
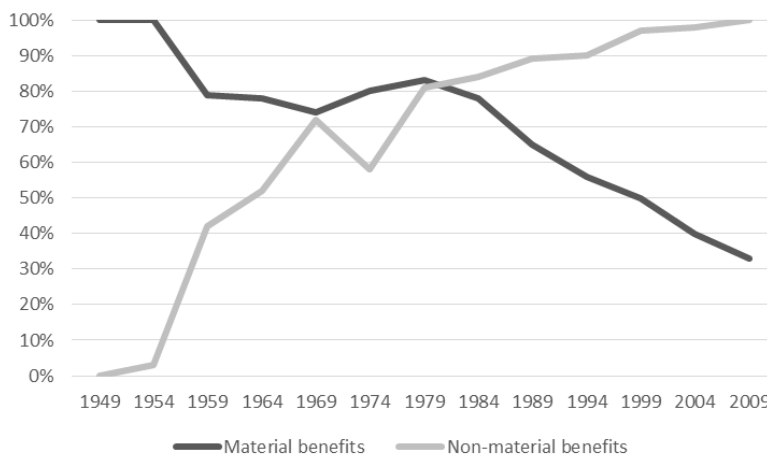
Figure 2. *Proportion of job advertisements referring to material job benefits and non-material job benefits. Only job advertisements referring to job benefits were included.*

Qualitative analysis of the job advertisements in Article I showed that the image of the ideal manager has shifted from a fully learned skilled worker towards a professional manager with multiple skills and a constant drive to learn more and strive for excellence. The emerging ideal manager had to be cooperative, flexible, innovative, outgoing, teamwork oriented, emotionally sensitive, determined and results-oriented. The new ideal manager was not only motivated by the wage purse but also by the opportunity to stay at the top of the business, achieve new things and generate profits. In general, the emerging ideal manager possessed the right kind of personality and worked using their personality as an instrument. Interestingly, Kuokkanen et

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[169] Inglehart 1997, 35–43.

al. showed highly similar developments in the characteristics of the non-managerial ideal worker during the same period.[170]

Article II. Social sensitivity and competitiveness in the representations of the ideal manager

Article II deepens the image of the emerging ideal manager in relation to emotional and social characteristics and gender stereotypes. The article shows that skills related to emotion management and social relations are among the most important characteristics of the new ideal manager. Still in the 1940s, job advertisements made no references to such skills. References to social skills such as cooperativeness, openness, friendliness and supportiveness emerged around the 1950s and 1960s, and since the 1970s they have been among the most common skill demands in manager position job advertisements. The new ideal manager is also supposed to have a positive attitude, welcome organizational changes with enthusiasm and inspire others towards the same goals.

The shifts in the definition of the ideal manager were accompanied by changes in the way in which the workplaces were represented in the job advertisements. Instead of describing only a specific area of expertise such as sawmilling, more references were made to sales work, customer contacts and product innovation. The skills needed for a job appeared to be increasingly mobile and transitory. The workplace also appeared more democratic. References to teamwork and social networks increased. Accordingly, managers were supposed to be more democratic, supportive and sensitive, and at the same time to stimulate their subordinates rather than give them commands.

The increasingly emotional and democratic picture of the ideal manager suggests a transition towards softer "emotional styles of power"[171] with a more "feminine" outlook. This new style replaced the representations of a more authoritative paternalistic leadership style which, according to Hannele Seeck, still characterized Finnish work organizations in the 1940s.[172] However, as Figure 3 shows, this did not provide the whole picture of the new ideal manager. From the late 1970s onwards, a new emphasis emerged on hard, "masculine" qualities such as assertiveness, competitiveness, result-orientation and tough-mindedness. It seems that the shifts towards more democratic and competitive definitions of the ideal manager

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[170] Kuokkanen et al. 2013.
[171] Kantola 2014a.
[172] Seeck 2008, 93.

were almost simultaneous, with the former only dominating the job advertisements around the late 1960s and early 1970s.
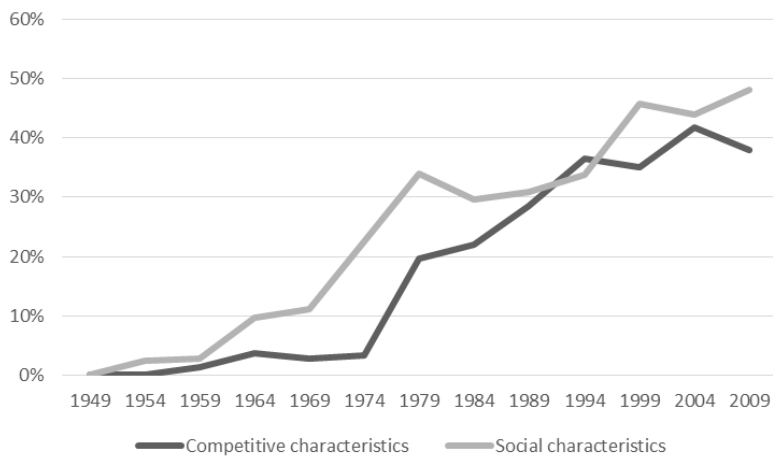

Figure 3. *Proportion of job advertisements containing at least one requirement related to social characteristics and emotional sensitivity, and proportion of advertisements containing at least one requirement related to aggressive and competitive behavior.*

Article III. The ideal worker in public occupational health discussions

In Article III attention shifted from job advertisements to public discussions on occupational health and psychosocial risk factors. The results show that, just like job advertisements, the public discussions on occupational health reflect important aspects of the changing image of the ideal worker. According to our results, still in the 1960s and 1970s, the occupational health discussions in the popular media primarily included topics related to physical illnesses and injuries. In the 1980s, however, topics related to mental health and psychosocial risk factors quickly supplanted these, and the new hot topics included issues such as stress and burnout. In the 1990s, concern was great that a stress and exhaustion epidemic would affect a large part of the workforce and endanger the future of Finnish working life, but in the 2000s such discussions tailed off and the focus shifted to the individual worker and personal resilience.

The emerging focus on issues related to mental health and psychosocial risk factors were accompanied by a new kind of problematization of the workplace. The few discussions on these issues that had appeared in the 1960s and 1970s represented a different approach towards the social order in the workplace to that in later discussions. They presented

a hierarchical image of the workplace in which workers were required to adapt themselves to the command structures and pecking orders of the work organization. Workers were seen as subordinates who had little control over the labor process and the social organization of work.

However, the new focus on mental health problems in the 1980s was accompanied by a different approach to the psychosocial work environment and the social behavior of an individual. The references to hierarchical order and subordination disappeared. The articles became dominated by middle-class expectations of harmony and equality. Contrary to traditional working class values, workers were discouraged from retaining emotional distance from managerial goals and participating in collective resistance. Workplaces were presented as flat organizations with shared responsibilities. The new ideal was a conflict-free, co-operating and forward-driving organization in which everyone emotionally supported each other and voluntarily strived towards common goals. Co-operation would improve both organizational efficiency and individual wellbeing, creating a win-win situation that would benefit both employees and employers.

The results of the article show how the discussions on psychosocial health risks have fostered the image of an emotionally involved ideal worker who strives at the workplace by using her intrinsic motivation and complex psychosocial skills. Instead of bureaucratic structures and Fordist production models, the occupational health discussions fully embraced the image of a flexible organization with its emphasis on flat, informal social relations, teamwork and a shared enthusiasm for organizational success.[173] This could partially be interpreted as an expression of the increasing role of middle-class workplaces and their occupational demands in the Finnish labor market. However, unlike in job advertisements, the new ideal emerged in the occupational health discussion relatively suddenly, around the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. The individualized approach to stress and the psychosocial health risks of the workplace in the 2000s suggests that neoliberal values influenced the definition of an ideal worker's behavior.[174] The emergence of flexible capitalism and the political hegemony of neoliberalism may have been among the reasons why stress and burnout became serious problems from the 1980s onwards,[175] but at the same time it appears that they have shaped the way that these problems have been represented in public discussions.

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[173] Kantola 2014b, 120–136.
[174] McDonald & O'Callaghan 2008.
[175] Schrecker & Bambra 2015, 43.

5.2 Worker experience and the labor process

Article IV. Worker experience and the labor process in Finnish industrial work during the post-World War II period

Article IV analyzes how workers experienced the labor process in Finnish industrial work organizations during the Fordist period from the 1940s to the 1970s. The worker experiences were analyzed using worker biographies and memoirs from industrial branches such as metal work, wood processing and textile industries. The aim of the study was to examine whether the workers' representations of their past workplaces fit the stereotypical images of the Fordist industrial organization, namely an organization with strict hierarchical command structures, low worker autonomy, routinized physical work performances and little room for personal contribution in the labor process.

In part, the depictions offered by the workers did indeed fit the stereotypical images of the Fordist industrial organization. The biographies included examples of workplaces in which the supervisors exercised rigorous (or arbitrary) control over the workers and the job mainly consisted of routine physical tasks. A few workplaces were explicitly associated with the Tayloristic organization of work, and in such cases the workers complained about the minimal amount of autonomy the labor process left them.

However, such experiences were not the norm in the 64 analyzed worker biographies. One of the most striking features of the descriptions was the significant amount of autonomy the workers seemed to enjoy. In some cases, mainly the skilled workers were left with little supervision, but auxiliary workers did not enjoy similar autonomy. Skilled workers could hold on to a personal "territory"[176] that the employer did not fully control, while other workers were subjected to stricter hierarchical control and routinization.

On the other hand, the great amount of autonomy among the workers and the lack of close supervision seemed to be a larger structural issue in Finnish industrial workplaces. Many workplaces had a relatively flat organizational structure and a low number of supervisors. Sometimes the only close supervisor was more of a "front man" than a representative of management, hardly distinguishable from the other workers. Sometimes supervisors formally enjoyed strong power over their subordinates but left the workers with little supervision due to lack of time or lack of interest. In the terminology of Richard Edwards,

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[176] Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012.

the Finnish industrial organizations of the period had not developed advanced bureaucratic control structures, and relied on simple control systems.[177]

In contrast to the stereotypical image of the Fordist industrial organization, the research material showed only a few examples of workplaces in which the rationalization of production resulted in a deskilling of the workforce. Instead, it seems that most employers placed great value on workmanship. Skilled workers were regarded highly by their superiors and ambitious beginners were given opportunities to develop their skills and sometimes even receive formal training. Some of the supervisors were happy to teach new skills to motivated subordinates. Furthermore, in many workplaces the workers were allowed to make changes to the organization of work themselves, sometimes even without consulting the management first.

Teamwork or work conducted with a partner was a common practice in Finnish industrial workplaces during this period. Furthermore, because of the high level of autonomy and lack of close supervision, most workers had to learn their skills from older workers. In such cases, work required constant social interaction and reliance on other peoples' performance, thus increasing the role of social skills, even in highly physical work tasks.

The sources of work motivation among the industrial workers during the study period can hardly be reduced to the material rewards of the employment relation. For example, the work community played an enormous role in the working lives of the industrial workers and many of them judged their workplaces according to the atmosphere and communal spirit they had enjoyed there. The work tasks and the skills needed for performing them were themselves a source of joy for many workers, and they strived for higher quality because of the great social value placed on workmanship.

Lastly, the material included examples of workers who strongly identified with their employers. In general, a certain amount of hostility between "upstairs" and "downstairs" was the norm, and the biographies were filled with stories about class antagonism and social conflicts on the shop floor. Some of the autonomy and initiative enjoyed by the workers was not freely granted to them by their employers; they were sometimes the result of bitter struggles over the unregulated spaces between the official organization of the employer and the unofficial organization of the workers.[178]

However, the mutual respect for quality and workmanship put the workers and the employers on the same side in many issues. When workers showed enough hard work and

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[177] Edwards 1979, 18–21.
[178] see Kettunen 1999.

deference, and the employers supported them without excessively controlling their activities, the workers were sometimes extremely proud of their employers and showed a great deal of loyalty, which otherwise seemed to a rare phenomenon in the worker biographies. The psychological contract of the Fordist society, namely the rewarding of hard work and loyalty with confidence and security,[179] thus allowed a great deal of flexible arrangements in several industrial organizations.

Article V. Managerial reforms in the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland

The main aim of Article V was to build a case study of an organization in which the old "rational" and "bureaucratic" style of organization had been superseded by a managerially imposed "flexible" model, and in which the official targets of the managerial reform included an increased emphasis on worker autonomy, motivation, social and emotional interaction in the workplace and customer service. The National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland offered the opportunity for such an analysis, as its management launched a significant organization reform program around the turn of the 1970s and 1980s.

Although it remained a relatively small bank throughout its history, the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland was one of the most successful and fastest growing banks in Finland during the economically favorable phase in the 1950s and 1960s.[180] However, the economic downturn of the 1970s reduced its profitability, and the management launched new programs to improve performance.[181] When Ulf Sundqvist entered the bank's management in 1982, he imposed a new managerial model of "management by results", which included enhanced autonomy and responsibility among workers, decentralization of power from head office to the branch offices, increased worker training in customer service and crash courses on emotionally sensitive leadership styles.

According to the management, the new measures were required because the authoritative leadership style, rigorous organizational structures and passivity in customer service inherited from the past impaired the bank's competitive edge. The management promised that the new management style would improve worker initiative, motivation, organizational culture, the bank's internal atmosphere and the quality of customer service. It would foster both the success of the bank and the happiness of its employees.

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[179] Alasoini 2018.
[180] Lyytinen 1983, 401–414.
[181] Soukola 2008, 13–31.

However, it seems that the managerial narrative of the bank's bureaucratic past and flexible future differed significantly from the workers' experiences. According to the employees, the golden period of the bank had been in the 1950s, 1960s and the 1970s. In their memories, the bank had then been a place in which hierarchies were low and the relationships between the employees and their supervisors had been extremely close. The bank had enjoyed a good, family-like atmosphere, which enhanced the work motivation of its employees. The bank tellers had had warm relations with their customers and were proud of the high quality and personalized customer service they could offer.

The transformations in the bank that followed the managerial reform in the 1980s were mostly experienced in negative terms. Time pressure and demands grew, and the employees complained about higher levels of stress. The old family-like feeling in the bank deteriorated, and interpersonal conflicts increased. The bank tellers had less time for customer contact, and felt that the overall level of customer service fell. Their relationships with customers became more "instrumental"[182], with an emphasis on commercially motivated sales work rather than individualized social interaction.

This contrast between the managerial narrative and worker experiences reveals how the role of emotions in bank work was open to different interpretations. From the workers' viewpoint, their work had always been characterized by a significant emphasis on emotions, customer orientation and personal interaction, but this received no official recognition from the management at the time of the organizational reform. This could be interpreted as a disagreement regarding what high-quality customer service meant and what role the bank played in society. However, it also shows the mythical elements in the managerial narrative about the changing role of emotions in the bank. The myth that the management imposed was that an emotionally-sensitive, customer-oriented and communicative workplace was only possible through managerial intervention.

While trying to improve the profitability of the bank and respond to the increased competition and financial deregulation facing the Finnish banks of the period,[183] the management attempted to emphasize the commercial role of the workers at the expense of their other roles. The myth about the bureaucratic past and flexible future worked to legitimize these changes. The myth also emphasized the role of the management as a dynamic source of positive

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[182] Korczynski et al. 2000; see also Bolton & Boyd 2003.
[183] Kuisma and Keskisarja 2012: 189–192, 227–229; Soukola 2008, 29.

change during the transition into a competitive commercial bank and a player in the so-called casino economy.

6 Discussion: the rise of the emotionally involved ideal worker

In this chapter I draw together the findings presented in the previous chapter and offer my interpretations of them. The chapter also includes a discussion on the implications of the results for the ideal worker of the future, as well as on the consequences of the research findings for working life studies outside the discipline of history.

6.1 The ideal worker in transition

The results of the first two research articles show a significant change in the image of the ideal worker since the 1940s. Instead of a few characterizations that define a fully learned skilled worker, definitions of the ideal worker have come to express a great number of skills and traits related to emotional and social behavior, work motivation and personal qualities. Within a period of 60 years, the image of the ideal worker has become unprecedentedly personalized and emotionalized.

The reasons for this development are most likely multiple. As Raija Julkunen has argued, many traditional, physical and routinized work tasks in Finnish working life have become gradually automatized since the 1950s.[184] Consequently, the remaining jobs have more often involved the processing of abstract information and contacts with customers and other social actors,[185] and a general shift has occurred in labor markets toward the service sector and office work.[186] Therefore it is plausible to assume that in many occupations, the amount of social interaction and mental work tasks has increased.

Another historical process that the results of the first two articles may reflect is greater equality in social relations. Traditional industrial discipline and strict command structures fit poorly together with the emerging culture which, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, began to question traditional authorities and demanded more democratic practices at workplaces.[187] Control through direct commands became a less acceptable form of leadership, and managers had to employ complex psycho-emotional skills in order to persuade rather than force their subordinates to work.[188] Accompanying these cultural changes were organizational

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[184] Julkunen 1987, 48, 285–286.
[185] Autor et al. 2003.
[186] Fellmann 2008.
[187] Julkunen 2008, 102.
[188] Wouters 2007, 184–191.

reforms that increased the amount of teamwork, flattened organizational structures and shifted the responsibility for certain work tasks from supervisors to subordinates.[189]

However, the results of the last two articles offer reasons to doubt the simple juxtaposition between the characteristics of the ideal worker and the requirements of work tasks. Both articles criticize the overtly "rational" or "bureaucratic" depictions of work during the Fordist period; one article as regards to industrial work and the other as regards to service work. Rather than inflexible bureaucratic structures, the two articles present a world of paternalistically managed workplaces in which the organization, partially unregulated by the management, incorporates many elements of the "flexible" models, including flat hierarchies, worker autonomy, high-quality customer service and intrinsic sources of work motivation. In this sense, the results of this study challenge overtly categorical claims about the qualitative differences between "Fordist" and "post-Fordist" work regimes in Finnish working life.

The same conclusion can be drawn about the work motivation of the workers themselves. The claims concerning the shift from material to post-material values[190] or the substitution of material sources of work motivation by the intrinsic joys of work and the work community[191] received no support from Articles IV and V. Both the industrial workers and the bank employees of the post-war period seemed to strongly build their identity on questions of workmanship, work community and social acceptance among peers. According to Titta Tuohinen, these sources of work motivation represent the evolutionary qualities of human psychology rather than merely the cultural characteristics of the most recent decades.[192]

On the other hand, the period around the turn of the 1970s and 1980s did seem to signify important changes in the definitions of the ideal worker. The results of Article II show an increase in hard, competitive values in the definitions of the ideal manager in the 1970s. The results of Article III show that the early 1980s was the period when public discussions on occupational health began to promote the ideal of a cooperative, goal-oriented and emotionally involved worker. The occupational health discussions adopted a flexible view of the workplace, which was accompanied in the 2000s by a neoliberal ideal of an uncritical, individualized worker. It seems that the economic and political upheavals of the period, with the stagnation of the 1970s leading to a deregulation of financial markets and increased economic competition

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[189] Boltanski & Chiapello 2007, 97–98.
[190] Inglehart 1997, 35–43.
[191] Rose 1999, 248.
[192] Tuohinen 2000.

in the 1980s and a political attack on collective labor,[193] left their mark on the public representations of the ideal worker.

It is interesting to compare this shift to neoliberal ideology with the results of Article V. In the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland, the introduction of emotionally focused management models and the increased emphasis on individual responsibility over company profitability followed the economic downturn of the 1970s and the adoption of neoliberal market ideology. The managerial changes undertaken in the bank did not, however, lead to a fusion between profitability and happiness. Rather, the bank employees had to face relentless competition, tightening resources and the consequences of financial "turbo-capitalism"[194], which eventually led to the bank's demise. Consequently, it seems that in terms of the labor process and the role of worker emotions and personality, the break between Fordist and post-Fordist work regimes may have affected the representations of working life more than the work itself.

If we draw these arguments together, we see that the new emphasis on emotions and personal qualities in the public representations of the ideal worker does not unequivocally signify their increasing role in work and workplaces. First, it appears that the increasingly detailed descriptions of work communities, social interaction, personal characteristics and personal sources of work motivation found in the job advertisements, especially those from the 1960s onwards, signify a process that made visible the social and emotional elements already found in the organizations. If the paternalistic organizations of the 1940s and 1950s largely ignored the "unofficial" forms of worker organization on the shop floor,[195] or silently included the social and personal qualities of the workers within their definition of workmanship, these were increasingly brought under managerial control from the 1960s onwards. The spread of human resource departments and new methods to fully employ "the human resource" in Finnish working life since the 1970s[196] shows this formalization of the unofficial organization in action. Instead of associating these developments with the notion of de-bureaucratization, it seems plausible to follow Richard Edwards' argument and claim that the increasing regulation of emotions and worker behavior during the past decades represents progressive bureaucratic control over the unofficial organization.[197]

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[193] Harvey 2005, 24–26; Patomäki 2007, 55–63.
[194] Luttwak 1998.
[195] Harisalo 2008, 116–117; Kettunen 1999.
[196] Kettunen 2002, 347.
[197] Edwards 1979, 147–148.

Second, while neoliberal ideology has been quick to embrace the rhetoric of the emotionally involved ideal worker, this rhetoric has been used as much to hide the effects of flexible capitalism on work organizations as to expose the new needs of flexible organizations. As Juha Siltala has argued, the transition to flexible capitalism has been associated with problems such as more intense and stressful work environments, increased social conflicts and reduced workers' abilities to regulate the conditions of their employment.[198] Article II shows how the emerging softer, more feminine style of management has come to be accompanied by an emphasis on aggressive competitiveness and top-level performances since the late 1970s, and Article V shows how the new rhetoric of high-level customer service and worker empowerment in the National Workers' Savings Bank of Finland was accompanied by mostly opposite results. In some ways it seems that the transition to flexible capitalism may even have decreased the role of psycho-emotional skills in Finnish working life.

However, the myth about the bureaucratic Fordist organization and the de-bureaucratized flexible organization is a powerful image that dominates much of academic literature and, as shown in Article V, the self-understanding of many management practitioners. It is a myth that underscores the novelty of the new management ideology, legitimizes managerial interventions and emphasizes the role of management as a dynamic source of change. It hides important historical continuities in the active role of workers in defining the labor process, as well as certain discontinuities such as the transition towards increasingly instrumental customer relations. The history of the "human resource" in Finnish work organizations is far more complicated than the mythical images would suggest.

6.2 The ideal worker of the future

As shown in the introduction, academic literature contains a strong sense that the role of worker personality has increased in the labor process during recent decades and that emotions matter more in organizations than they did before. Particularly in analyses that we could call the "third type of sociological theory", which seek answers to existential questions such as "who are we?" and "what is the nature of our epoch?",[199] the distinction between the past bureaucratic models and the new flexible models is seen as a total categorical break.[200] These analyses present the contemporary worker as an emotion worker or (more commonly) a knowledge worker for

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[198] Siltala 2004.
[199] Noro 2000.
[200] e.g. Holvas & Vähämäki 2005; Järvensivu 2010.

whom immaterial work processes, human interaction and a lack of routines form the defining characteristics of their work.

Yet it seems that the emphasis on emotions and worker personality is expected to grow even more in future. According to the most recent Government Report on the Future, profound shifts are likely in many aspects of work and labor markets in the next two decades. Globalization and technological change will continue to push workers into the service sector and towards occupations that require higher educational credentials and skills in knowledge work. Workers of the future will also have to adapt to new kinds of jobs and workplaces that are less stable and well defined than before. Project work and simultaneous assignments for different employers will increase. Work will be performed in networks that are less dependent on time and place, blurring the distinction between home and workplace or working hours and leisure. More people will need to be self-employed and the difference between wage labor and entrepreneurship will diminish.[201]

Because of these structural changes, it is expected that the demand for skills and qualities such as adaptation, communication and social skills will increase at the expense of more technical skills. Digitalization will eliminate many physical and routine tasks, and the remaining human work will require capabilities in fields such as creative action, intuition, invention, interaction and motivation. Work conducted in networks and increasingly multicultural work environments will require workers to expand their language skills and cultural capital. The lack of permanent attachment to a single organization or even to a single field of industry will put new pressures on self-management and the meta-skills related to constant learning. Workers will find themselves increasingly "on their own" in labor markets, actively looking for opportunities to improve their employability.[202]

While these forecasts in themselves are plausible, it would be wise to approach them critically. First, it seems their projection of the ideal worker of the future largely duplicates what is considered to be the ideal worker of today. As the results of this study shows, the ideal of an adaptable, communicative, social, innovative and self-managing worker has been emerging for the last 70 years. The discussions on the ideal worker of the future serve to repeat an argument that has been expressed many times before. Hiding behind them is a significant degree of continuity with the past.

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[201] Oksanen 2017; see also Ahokas 2011; Donkin 2010; Väänänen et al. 2016.
[202] Oksanen 2017; see also Alasoini et al. 2012; Freudenschuss 2010; Pajarinen & Rouvinen 2018.

Second, we need to promote a more complex image of the emerging ideal worker. This study suggests that the public representations of the ideal worker may hide skill requirements that already characterize many occupations, as in the case of industrial workers who require significant relational skills and self-management ability despite little official recognition of such requirements. Public representations of the ideal worker may also overemphasize the novelty of the new skill requirements and hide work reforms which, in the eyes of the workers themselves, reduce workers' abilities to use these skills. What we need to recognize is that labor markets are subject to simultaneous de- and re-skilling processes and that new ideals may have different consequences for different occupational groups.[203]

Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee argue that digitalization will create unemployment in the future by eliminating routinized information work tasks. Consequently, the competition over occupations that depend on complex social and personal skills will increase.[204] As in the analysis by Phillip Brown and Anthony Hesketh, although the tight competition over high-end jobs in the future may further increase the demand for these soft skills at the point of entry, this demand reflects more the oversupply of applicants than the needs of the labor process.[205] What increased demand for soft skills may achieve is further pressure on the "achieving self"; having to ensure one's employability in scarce labor markets.

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[203] Grugulis & Vincent 2009.
[204] Brynjolfsson & McAfee 2009.
[205] see Brown & Hesketh 2004, 215–218.

7 Conclusion

In his thought-provoking book *Manufacturing the Employee*, Roy Jacques argues that the development of management thinking in America started with the closing of the frontier and the demise of the Federalist society in the late 19th century. Early management thinking retained some of the ideology and terminology of the previous social order, but as a form of knowledge it was a direct reflection of the emerging industrial order. This management knowledge offered an aura of objectivity to industrial relations, preventing the employee from revolting against the new order. Jacques argues that this same principle still binds management thinking, because it is the hierarchical order of the industrial workplace that made management a legitimate field of research in the first place. He sees management thinking as knowledge "*to* managers *about* employees"[206], and claims that any true form of self-management among employees would invalidate the whole field of management thinking.

Jacques' proposed framework offers tools for understanding some of the paradoxes that are associated with the emergence of the emotionally involved employee. According to Anu Kantola, the rhetoric of modern managerialism that circles personality and empowerment has not prevented managers from pulling back from democratic tendencies and relying on bureaucratic control mechanisms.[207] Similarly, Harri Melin argues that despite all the discussions on the new flexibility of organizations, empirically it seems that most Finnish workplaces are still characterized by hierarchical and bureaucratic structures. The amount of team work may have increased, but this has not necessarily meant any kind of redistribution of power.[208] In the field of management thinking, Mona Mannevuo claims that the ideal subject created by post-Fordism may possess a new "emotional" outlook, but that the new subject is the outcome of rationalization ideology, to the same extent as Taylorism was.[209]

This study supports these earlier arguments and supplements them with a discussion on how the notions of the "bureaucratic" past and the present "flexibility" can be powerful tools in hiding power relations in workplaces. These notions of past and present do not adequately describe the skills and qualities needed of Finnish workers during the "Fordist" period, nor do they adequately reveal the tensions related to the role of worker emotions and personality in contemporary workplaces. Yet they can be used to legitimatize managerial power

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[206] Jacques 1996, 166.
[207] Kantola 2002, 295–297.
[208] Melin 2018.
[209] Mannevuo 2015, 207.

in the organizations of today and to justify managerial reforms that lead to further bureaucratization of the labor process.

The point of these discussions is not to pit the experiences and viewpoints of managers and workers against each other. As shown by the job advertisements analyzed in this thesis, supervisors, middle managers and even senior managers are subject to the same demands as those of non-managerial workers. Managers also need to operate within a new framework that emphasizes the role of ownership and competition in a changed cultural and technological environment. This critique of this thesis is therefore aimed at the managerial knowledge regarding organizations, and not at the managers themselves.

To conclude, further discussion is needed on what the increased demand for psycho-emotional skills mean for workers and organizations. Roy Jacques argues that industrial organizations have always relied on the relational and managerial skills of their common workers, but such skills were mostly learned at home and received little official recognition. Yet employers benefited from these skills without needing to invest in them.[210] This argument is supported by the experiences of the industrial and bank workers from the post-war period as presented in this study. The question is, does this mean that most workers in the labor markets possess the adequate psychosocial skills anyway? Does the contemporary recognition of the great value of psychosocial skills refer to something else, like compliance with managerial values, perhaps?

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[210] Jacques 1996, 176–180.

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