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**The Copenhagen Stress Model
The "Six Golden Nuggets"**

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Outline:

- 1. A critical look at the two prevailing models: The Job Strain and the Effort Reward Imbalance model.**
- 2. What should be done?**
- 3. The Copenhagen Stress Model.**

The strengths of the two models

- 1. They focus on important dimensions of modern societies: Democracy and influence (JS)
Justice and fairness (ERI)**
- 2. They are both models of balance:
Demands – Control
Effort – Reward**
- 3. They are both simple, easy to grasp, and easy to understand.**
- 4. Tools for measurements are available.**

Some weaknesses of the two models

- 1. Theoretical ambiguity: To what extent are they models about individual perception and appraisal of working conditions? To what extent are they models about working conditions?**
- 2. The models are too abstract and general to be used in practice.**
- 3. The questionnaires are questionable.**
- 4. The models are used in an academic and futile competition: Who gets the highest RR^{'S} or OR^{'S}?**

The two complementary competing models

- 1. Many studies have now been “testing” both models and compared the results. Hence, the models are in reality treated as competing models.**
- 2. In order to behave politically correct everyone use the phrase “complementary”. Very few – if anyone – have really looked at ways in which the models might complement each other.**

Why do we do research in psychosocial factors at work

Most articles on JS or ERI use the data to test the models. The workplaces have now become suppliers of data used for a futile academic competition.

Most discussions are about synergy, reliability coefficients, cutpoints, confounding, and measures of association.

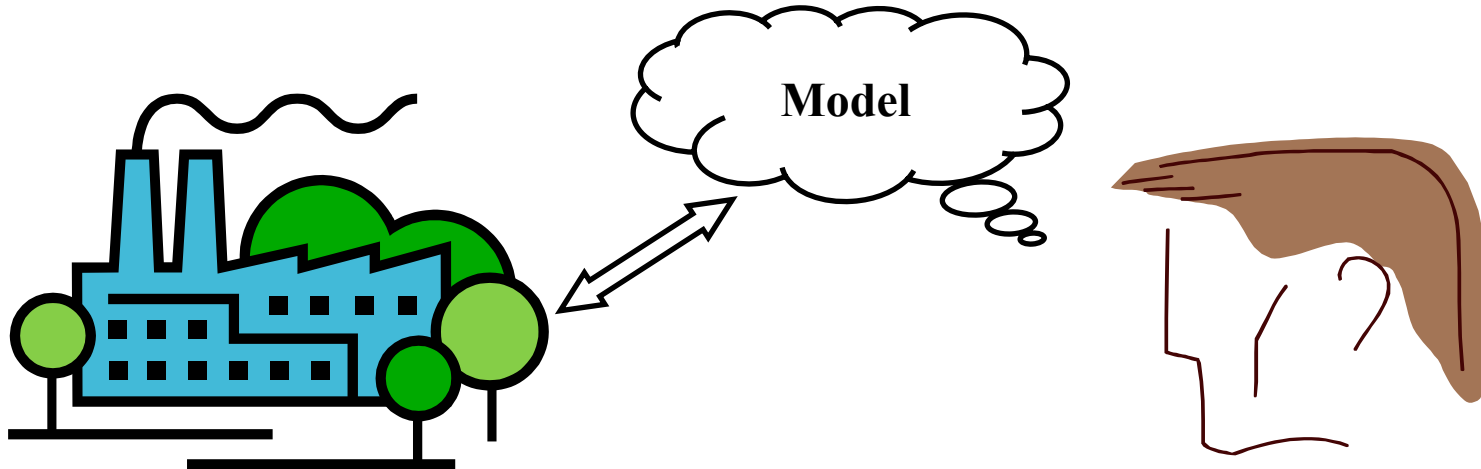
Very few researchers discuss how to use the results for improving the working conditions. In fact the workplaces are disappearing in occupational health psychology.

This is what C. Wright Mills called “Abstracted empiricism”. (The Sociological Imagination).

The problem

We should use our theories and models in order to understand and change the workplaces.

Instead we are using the workplaces as suppliers of data for testing academic theories and models.



What should we do?

1. Psychosocial models are not models of physical science. We should not expect these models to be confirmed everywhere, in all industries, and at all times.
2. We should specify when and where we expect a model to be useful, and why we do so.

Not: I used this model because everyone else does.

But: I used this model because it fits well to this particular context.

Or: To this particular outcome.

The Copenhagen Stress Model

“The Six Golden Nuggets

1. **Influence** ↑
2. **Social support** ↑
3. **Predictability** ↑
4. **Meaning** ↑
5. **Rewards** ↑
6. **Demands** ↻

The six basic dimensions of stressors

The use of the Copenhagen Stress Model

- ✚ We do not expect “the full model” to be “confirmed” in all studies.
- ✚ Some dimensions are fruitful in repetitive work, others in human service work, and others again in modern “work without limits”.
- ✚ There are many ways to improve working conditions. Good models provide several options.
- ✚ This “model” does not exclude the JS or ERI models.

**This presentation (and many others)
may be found at**

