Den avvikande anställda
En studie av den disciplinära processens misslyckande

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Abstract


This thesis is devoted to the darker side of organizational control. How individuals, viewed by their superiors as dysfunctional or deviant, are dealt with once the everyday disciplinary standard operating procedures and social mechanisms are consider to fall short. My two research questions, how the deviant employee is constructed by management and how management handle the deviant employee, are closely related to how the threshold of deviance is defined, explicitly or implicitly, in formal organizations.

Central in my work is the concept of ostracism, a process where an individual is both physically removed/banished, made redundant, isolated or relocated and socially defined as deviant, said to be disloyal, uncooperative or lazy. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault I conceptualize this as the last step in the organizations disciplinary process, a point where the aim of normalization is replaced by a process of exclusion, to safeguard the organization.

In the analysis I identify different types of deviations and how managers construct deviance in relation to different logics. The individual can be regarded as a misfit in relation to a rational economic, a bureaucratic, a collegial social and finally a socio-cultural logic of action. The individual is classified as deviant in relation to one of these frames and the manager’s attempts to normalize the individual accordingly, something that also determine if and how the individual is excluded from the organization.

The wider implications of the study is that in order to understand disciplinary regimes in working life, the processes of labelling deviance and managing exclusion must be understood.

Keywords: deviance, employment, labor contract, wage labor, discipline, normalization, ostracism, Foucault

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