Enabling and Coercive Control: Coexistence in the Case of Banking

av

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Abstract


This thesis focuses on subjects of control and attitudinal outcomes of formalized control in organizations. Previous research have concluded contradicting results of whether formalized control is positive or negative for the employees and propose that not only degree of formalization, but also type of formalization, can explain attitudinal outcomes.

With the theoretical perspective of Adler and Borys’ concepts of enabling and coercive types of control, this thesis explore the concepts and practices of enabling and coercive control, and their relationships with attitudinal outcomes. This is done with a focus on the banking industry, which serve as a case of an extensively regulated context. An assumption put forth in this thesis is that the context in which individuals are part must be considered in the study of attitudinal outcomes of control.

The analysis show that both enabling and coercive control can be found in banking, for example in business plans and regulations. However, the picture emerging is more complex than enabling control leading to positive attitudes, and coercive control leading to negative attitudes. Also, coexistence of enabling and coercive control is responded to with decoupling and acquiescence, and by drawing on global transparency.

Based on these findings, together with theoretical elaborations, this thesis contribute to the literature of enabling and coercive control in a number of ways. First, it make explicit central concepts and relationships within the theory, such as design vs. perception, the role of zone of indifference as an outcome of control, and enabling and coercive control as dual roles or qualities of control. Moreover, this thesis suggests that multiple-level explanations to attitudinal outcomes of control, where contextual and institutional structures are considered, helps us understand attitudes to control in this context. Lastly, this thesis contribute to the notion of coexistence of enabling and coercive control by showing that coexistence can be simultaneous systems, and simultaneous cognitions, where a control can be perceived as both enabling and coercive at the same time.

Keywords: Enabling control, coercive control, coexistence of control, attitudinal outcomes of control, management control, regulation, banking.

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