

“invariant causes,” I think we can do more than identify common mechanisms. Ideally, a theory should use the identification of causal mechanisms to explain how and why certain correlated factors lead to the observed outcome. That is, identifying mechanisms should not be an *alternative* to looking for common causal factors; it should be a step in that process. Della Porta’s detailed and sweeping historical analysis gives us a rich understanding of the common processes these movements move through, but it might also reveal common factors that trigger (cause) each of these processes, if we were to look for them. For example, her analysis seems to suggest that police violence triggered radicalization in all four cases. I can’t help but wonder if taking that next step to identify the causal factors that are implied by her analysis could have yielded a mid-level theory that could be tested in other cases, without denying that the mechanisms will play out differently in each setting and without going so far as to posit a “general law” with “invariant causes.” As it is, della Porta has brought us most of the way there, and certainly miles closer than we were before.

References

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Deviant and Criminal Behavior in the Workplace, edited by **Steven M. Elias**. New York: New York University Press, 2013. 288 pp. \$30.00 paper, ISBN: 9780814722619.

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Deviant and Criminal Behavior in the Workplace, edited by Steven M. Elias, presents the current state of knowledge about workplace deviance, mainly defined as behavior that intentionally harms the organization or

the people within the organization. Most of the twenty-two contributors of the ten chapters are from the fields of organizational psychology and management, and the chapters reflect these disciplinary orientations. Seven of the chapters focus on the undesired behaviors of individuals, often linked with organizational characteristics that might encourage or discourage these behaviors. Of most interest to sociologists are the other three chapters—Chapter One (authored by Randy Hodson and Gary E. Jensen), Chapter Four (Sharon L. Grant), and Chapter Five (William L. Smith, Brandon Hill Haines, and Cindy L. Seipel)—which include analyses of patterns of behavior by organizations that have disruptive consequences for communities and societies.

The first chapter, written by sociologists, presents an analysis of major institutional failures and calls for an expansion of the topics normally covered in the study of deviance and criminality. Criminal behavior, in this chapter, is defined as harm to others, whether or not it is legal. The underlying defining characteristics are injustice and abuse of power. The chapter goes on to discuss criminality that has become widespread practice in the corporate world, with egregious examples from Enron, WorldCom, British Petroleum, the banking industry, and real estate. Important themes in this chapter are the importance of understanding white collar and corporate crime at three levels—the macro level, the meso level, and the micro level; the role of collusion between governments and corporations in harming populations; the central role of “repeated systematic actions that have acquired the status of ‘normal operating procedures’” (p. 8); and the power of strain theory in explaining the growth of white collar crime.

The authors call for a comparative study of the devastating impact of widespread, legal corruption on economic development, applying to the United States the lessons learned in less-industrialized nations that do not confront corporate criminality. Observers of corporate criminality can also gain insights from studies of street crime. Although the harm caused by corporate crime is much greater, one solution—empowering the stakeholders—is similar. This call for new directions in the study of

white-collar crime and deviance is groundbreaking and should trigger the creation of a new and vital area of study for scholars of criminality and deviance.

Chapter One sets up an expectation that its multi-level theoretical context will be shared by the more practice-oriented chapters which follow. In most cases, this expectation is not fulfilled. Subsequent chapters, while valuable, have a much narrower focus, treating deviance as individual behaviors that violate the norms of an organization. They provide an administrative guide to the understanding, prevention, and treatment of workplace deviance, as traditionally defined. Each chapter begins with an extensive review of the literature and then provides case studies exemplifying the points emphasized in the literature review. Most chapters go on to suggest strategies for preventing and responding to undesired and illegal behavior in the workplace.

The set of readings brings together issues that are rarely addressed together, including embezzlement and other employee theft (Chapter 5), fraud on behalf of an organization (Chapters 1 and 5), employee conflict (Chapter 6 by Philip G. Benson, Glennis M. Hanley, and Wesley A. Scroggins), abuse of power (Chapter 8 by Steven M. Elias, Lindsey A. Gibson, and Chet E. Barney), and workplace violence (Chapter 9 by Ricky W. Griffin and Yvette P. Lopez and Chapter 10 by Allen K. Hess and Clara E. Hess). The inclusion of diverse topics allows for discussion of the interactions among them. Many chapters address the importance of monitoring and addressing problems in the social climate of the workplace. A stressful climate can be an unanticipated consequence of management practices. For example, while cameras in work areas can reduce employee theft, they can also result in decreased trust and low morale. Abuse of power can also damage the social climate of the workplace and lead to a lack of trust. Organization-level patterns of inequality, inflexibility, and extreme competitiveness can unintentionally promote destructive behavior within an organization. Both injustice and perceived injustice can promote a lack of trust within the organization. The absence of trust can lead to undesired behavior as retribution.

Deviance is sometimes dealt with on the individual, personal level—looking at personality characteristics that make someone prone to political deviance or interpersonal aggression (Chapter 2 by Rebecca Michalak and Neal M. Ashkanasy and Chapter 3 by Christine A. Henle and Michael A. Gross) or characteristics that might lead someone to be a provocative victim (Chapters 2 and 3). Certain personality traits are viewed as desirable in maintaining a low level of deviance—emotional stability and conscientiousness (Chapter 4)—while people low in those traits are undesirable employees. Screening job candidates through personality tests is suggested as a preventive measure. The possible unintended consequences of recruiting a homogeneous, compliant workforce are not addressed.

Despite the wide range of topics covered in this collection, there are gaps. Positive deviance in the workplace is largely ignored. Whistle blowers are mentioned but not discussed. The chapters do not address immigration status issues, union busting, violation of minimum wage standards, or environmental abuse. A bias towards the perspective of the employer is often evident. For example, the cost of abuse of power, focusing on sexual harassment and discrimination, is described in terms of dollars paid out to employees who sued but not as the pain inflicted on victims of sexual harassment and discrimination, most of whom do not sue; the cost to the morale and climate of the workplace; or the cost to communities and families burdened by high rates of victimization. Outside Chapter One, the term “deviant behavior” is used without problematizing how it is defined.

The authors are from the United States and Australia, and the case studies and legal issues, while largely focused on the United States, also include some references to Australian and European patterns and policies. The context of most chapters is decidedly the United States. This collection provides a guide for administrators, grounded in the literature, to the promotion of normative behavior within organizations and a call to scholars for the expansion of the areas normally included in research on deviant and criminal behavior in the workplace.