

Organizing Creativity and Creative Organizing

at a high-tech company

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Akademisk Avhandling

för avläggande av ekonomie doktorsexamen i företagsekonomi
som med tillstånd av Handelshögskolans fakultetsstyrelse vid
Göteborgs universitet framlägges för offentlig granskning
fredagen den 4 oktober 2019, klockan 13.15 i CG-salen,
Handelshögskolan, Vasagatan 1, Göteborg



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Language: English
203 pages
ISBN: 978-91-88623-15-7
Doctoral thesis 2019

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In today's society, creativity, in close collaboration with innovation, is considered key to the success of many businesses. On the one hand, organizations need to organize people's efforts and to control the outcomes of work, while on the other, creativity and innovation require the space for play and freedom. It is this contradiction, between the need to organize employees efficiently and the need to be creative, that forms the starting point for this study. Much previous research has focused on various ways to solve or manage this tension. This study takes a different approach, viewing creativity as something that people construct through their actions. The aim here is to understand how efforts to organize creativity unfold in practice.

The study is based on fieldwork conducted at an international high-tech company in Sweden. How people within that company try to organize and perform (i.e. achieve, manage or control) creativity has been followed by means of observations and interviews conducted between 2014 and 2016. Two different frameworks, Orders of Worth and Boundary Work, have been used for the analysis. The framework of Orders of Worth helps us to understand how different competing, or conflicting, rationalities are managed in practice in an organization, while Boundary Work provides a dynamic way to understand what is going on in an organization. The analysis describes how the relationships between organizing and creative work are worked out in different ways: i.e. through the creation of spaces, change initiatives, structures, and activities.

The findings show how the inspirational order is instrumentalised in the service of the market order of worth, and how the industrial and fame orders play a part in this process as well. Further, it is also shown how inspirationally and industrially worthy boundary drawing and crossing takes place during efforts to organize creativity in the company. Creativity unfolds in practice through two interconnected processes: *organizing creativity* and *creative organizing*. Organizing creativity entails organizing spaces for creativity but also harnessing it so that it fits with current organizational goals and strategies. This is what management does. The second process, creative organizing, was the employees' reaction to this way of organizing creativity. By means of a resistance movement, they introduced a series of dirty objects and unconventional work practices into the organization, in order to stir up and arouse creativity. They worked in the opposite direction to management and tried to integrate creative work into regular work. In conclusion, the initial tension between organizing work and being creative is reformulated.

Keywords: organizational creativity, orders of worth, French pragmatic sociology, boundary work, engineering