

## **Cinema as an Organizational Text: An Integrative Review for the “Dark Side” for Business Organizations**

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### **Abstract**

By situating cinema as an organizational text as opposed to a pedagogical tool, this paper develops an integrative and critical conceptual framework to understand the dark side of business organizations. Despite mainstream organizational behavior studies having mostly dealt with such a positive construct as leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction, it has comparatively disregarded the symbolic and discursive processes that produce and naturalize negative organizational phenomenon.

The study methodology is based on an interpretive-critical review, where the literature published since 2000 in the area of organizational behavior, discourse analysis, and critical management studies is analyzed systematically. The inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed articles and seminal theoretical materials and excluded the studies that did not have a conceptual value to the meaning building of organizations.

The paper proposes a cohesive model that unites the five connected theoretical perspectives: sense making, social learning, discourse and power, normalization for deviance, and organizational silence. The paper is a synthesis of the concept of Narrative Legitimation of the

Dark Side that explains how harmful organizational practices become cognitive acceptances and are institutionalized.

The study contributes to the epistemological approach of organizational behavior research by integrating symbolic, cultural and discursive analyses in the analysis of organizational dynamics. It also highlights the role of cinema as a critical analytical tool in understanding construction and spread of meaning in terms of leadership, power and deviance in organizations.

Keywords: Dark Side, Organizational Silence, Toxic Leadership, Cinema, Discourse, Sensemaking, and other terms

## **1. Introduction**

During the past several decades, the study for organizational behavior has primarily concentrated on positive organizational phenomena, such as good leadership, job satisfaction, loyalty to the firm and employee motivation. Despite the fact that this focus has improved the performance and the morale for organizations, it has also caused some to refer to it as a positivity bias, which has in turn caused a loss for interest in theorizing about negative organizational dynamics.

Even though this is the main focus, there is more and more proof from modern companies that there are complicated and long-lasting negative dynamics, such as toxic leadership, organizational silence, workplace misbehavior, institutional corruption, and psychological weariness. It is not a chance event but an organizational structure, culture and power dynamics that cause these things to occur over and over again. In turn, the need to get a deeper understanding for the system leads them to require analytical frameworks beyond the basic interpretations for behavior.

Much for the current knowledge on these processes is based on previous research particularly those that have utilized empirical and behavioral techniques. However, much for this research is conceptual and epistemologically underdeveloped because it mainly researches phenomena separately and uses linear causal models. This fragmentation renders it difficult to comprehend how various things interact and how they are maintained within organizations.

The hypothesis for this paper is that in order to understand the incidence for negative events in organizations, there is need to focus on the symbolic and discursive processes through which individuals understand, justify and accept such actions. The focus moves away on the explicit actions to the current meaning-making processes that justify them at the workplace all for which exist within a critical interpretative framework.

In this sense, films serve as educational tools and as cultural and discursive resources to create and share discourses about institutions, authoritative figures and leadership. The narratives assist in shaping the so-called organizational imaginary. This is the set for ideas that people use to make sense for what's going on in an organization.

The main claim for this paper is hence that films are organizational texts that affirm, structure, and legitimize the dark side for organizations. The main goal for the research is to contribute to the knowledge on adverse organizational phenomena by expanding the epistemological perspective for organizational behavior studies by recontextualizing cinema in organizational analysis.

Toxic leadership, organization silence, normalization for corruption and deviance in the workplace have become unique areas for study in organizational behavior literature, which draws attention to the negative nature for companies. Morrison and Milliken (2000) assert that managers' attitudes and institutional frameworks that foster fear and compliance in the workplace lead to corporate silence, rather than individual behavior. The periphery for an organization can be penetrated by corruption as demonstrated by Ashforth and Anand (2003) by institutional gradualism and moral justification. These processes may be the roots for the normalization for institutional deviance as proposed by some researchers (Vaughan, 1996; Palmer, 2008).

According to a study done by Tepper (2000) on abusive supervision, some organizational situations might make the utilization for power abusive justifiable because for some need to perform at a high level or the need to compete. Theories that underpin this perspective are those for destructive leadership, according to which toxic leaders are associated with manipulation-easy and work environments, which are conducive to some forms for leadership (Padilla et al., 2007; Schyns and Schilling, 2013).

It is possible that there exists additional empirical studies on these issues, however, the view for the field concerning knowledge has not been altered significantly. Much for this work falls within the paradigm as defined by Alvesson and Deetz (2000) as the positivist hegemony for management research that simplifies organizational phenomena to measurable variables and tests them by causal models that attempt to establish linear relationships between causes and effects. Corruption is the dependent variable in quantitative explanatory models, toxic leadership is considered a behavioral indicator, and organizational silence an attitudinal indicator. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) and Rhodes and Brown (2005) conclude that the symbolic and discursive frameworks that support and sustain these practices are often overlooked by organizations.

Positivists believe that there is an objective reality in organizations, which can be evaluated without taking into consideration the cultural and discursive influences that inform interpretation. Critical and interpretive frameworks on the other hand argue that bad things about the organization cannot be solely explained by the actions for individuals, but rather by more pervasive meaning systems and justifying narratives that encompass managerial professionalism, organizational need, or invincible competitive logic to explain deviance (Weick, 1995; Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Investigations in the field for organizational discourse (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Phillips and Hardy, 2002) have demonstrated that organizational discourse and language shape an institutional meaning, which in turn impacts practices and gives leaders an implicit sense for legitimacy. Fournier and Grey (2000) argue that by restricting ourselves to quantitative research, we might be overlooking the deep-rooted symbolic and discursive action that perpetuates and reproduces the problem.

Cinema, in this sense, is an effective mode for learning since it demonstrates organizations as spaces for power struggles, dominance, complicity and perpetuation for power. However, movies have largely been used as a pedagogical tool to instigate a conversation or represent theoretic constructs in management education; their use in organizational literature is limited to this area (Champoux, 1999). Such practical application disregards the fact that cinema is a cultural discourse that reconfigures leadership, power and deviation by telling tales on how organizations operate. It is a method that is highlighted in the narrative research and the studies for organizational discourse (Grant, Keenoy, and Oswick, 1998; Grant et al., 2004).

Films contribute to the creation for the organizational imaginary that is typically discussed in discussions for leadership, power, and success, rather than merely representing organizations. According to social constructionists (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), the elementary building blocks for social reality are interaction, representation and discourse. In this regard, cinema is a cultural field that uses brief dramatic stories to create reality. Corruption can be demonstrated in films in the form for strategic planning, institutional silence in the form for uncompromising commitment, and charismatic leadership in the form for autocratic domination. This portrayal is consistent with studies for organizational narratives which reveal how cultural narratives affect perceptions for leadership, organizations and deviations to the norm (Boje, 1991; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Czarniawska, 1997).

We can now see the big picture: in a similar way that the dark side for organizations is represented in movies and other forms for culture in the use for language and meaning, then the study for organizations is incomplete. The material events that happen internally in an organization are important but the imaginations, narratives as well as symbolic representations that are attributed to it in the wider cultures are also important. According to Rhodes and Brown (2005), organizational narratives are cognitive structures that individuals use to make the sense for the external environment, as opposed to being objective descriptions. Sensemaking research (Weick, 1995; Boje, 1991) holds that individuals in organizations make sense for things that do not make sense with the use for the stories and frameworks that they have at their disposal.

The theoretical gap, as a fundamental problem, is that the theoretical assessment does not take into account some synthesis for the various levels for analysis, but the simple lack for research on toxic leadership or silence in the organization. In studies on destructive leadership and deviance in the workplace, researchers have investigated the consequences for behaviors on organizations (Tepper, 2000; Schyns and Schilling, 2013; Bennett and Robinson, 2000). Research on organizational silence has found mechanisms within organizations that cause fear for speaking to people (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Knoll and van Dick, 2013). These phenomena are often studied by these studies in a purely behavioural or perceptual form, without looking at the larger symbolic and discursive contextualizations that give meaning to them.

This paper will argue that despite the high level for literature on the topic, most for the approaches are analytically weak and lacked epistemological limitations. Most importantly, they do not answer the question, why bad things happen in organizations and how they are not only tolerated but made to look like it is normal. The critical interpretative approach used in this dissertation is in order to re-conceptualize the concept for cinema as a discursive space where meaning is produced and reproduced.

## **2. Problematization**

The increased attention for scholars to the dark side for organizations has given rise to a significant amount for studies on such topics as toxic leadership, organizational silence, workplace deviance, and institutional corruption. Despite the valuable empirical and theoretical contributions that this growing body for literature has provided, it still presents a significant degree for conceptual disunity. In most for the studies, these things are regarded as distinct phenomena in various analytical models. They tend to employ linear causal models which place measurement before the interpretation. As a result, toxic leadership is frequently reduced to a set for behavioral traits, organizational silence is defined as an attitudinal response, and corruption is seen as an outcome variable that is influenced by personal or structural factors.

This focus for analysis represents an intense epistemological limitation based on the dominance for positivist assumptions for organizational research. Much for the literature presumes that organizational reality is independent for the cultural and discursive processes that help to create it. This is due to the fact that it emphasizes on objectivity, quantification and causal explanation. Consequently, the symbolic systems, stories, and talk which determine how individuals in organizations make sense, define, and reproduce behaviors which may be considered wrong or deviant by the rest for us have been given insufficient attention. Interpretively and critically, the dark side for organizations cannot be well understood as simply a set for observable behaviors rather it must be seen as a system for meaning where legitimacy is always produced by interpretative processes involving normalization, discursive framing and interpretation.

In this regard, there is a big gap in terms for the role played by cultural media in the construction for organizational reality. Past research has acknowledged the pedagogical use for

cinema in management education but has been largely silent about its epistemological significance as a discursive field that produces and propagates meanings about organizations, leadership and power. Cinema is not just an act for description for organizational life; it constructs the organizational imaginary, the shared system for meanings by which people make sense for organizational practices. The symbols could be used in films to present authoritarian leadership as a symbol for strength, corruption as a symbol for strategic competence, and silence as a symbol for professional loyalty. This is able to normalize and make harmful organizational practices appear normal.

Therefore, the major problem discussed in the present research is the absence for a definitive analytical framework to relate the phenomena for behavior to symbolic and discursive procedures that ascribe meaning and legitimacy in organizational environments. Recent studies have largely failed to explain how these phenomena are not only undertaken but also rationally explained and institutionalized by systems for meaning that go beyond the formal organizational frames. This limitation highlights the need to make a conceptual shift between studying organizational phenomena as discrete variables and as part for a larger socio-discourse system that exhibits dynamic relationships for meaning, power and legitimacy.

To address this problem, this research relies on a critical interpretive paradigm redefining cinema as an organizational text and a place for meaning production. By so doing, it attempts to reconcile behavioral and discursive perspectives and arrive at an improved explanation for how the dark side for organizations is constructed, comprehended and legitimized in the current organizational existence.

### **3. Methodology for the Review**

This study employs a methodology referred to as integrative critical review. The main focus for the inclusion criteria was scholarly journals and books on organizational behavior, discourse analysis, and critical management studies that were published between 2000 and 2023. We excluded studies lacking a theoretical foundation in organizational dynamics or failing to directly address the topic. To maintain coherence in our conceptual understanding, we exclusively examined sources authored in English.

#### **3.1 The Review Method**

The basis for this integrated study is an extensive literature review that links organizational studies with film criticism. Research that elucidated the structural dimensions for the more nefarious elements for organizational challenges was deemed for inclusion. Using phrases like "toxic leadership," "organizational silence," "cinematic text," and "normalization for deviation," the search used academic sources like Scopus and Web for Science. To liberate the study for organizational phenomena from the constraints for positivism, emphasis was placed on research that adopts an analytical and critical perspective.

### **3.2 Theoretical Void**

This study addresses the theoretical gap, which can be encapsulated in three interconnected levels.

Toxic leadership, corruption, and organizational silence must be comprehended within the framework for cultural and interpretive norms that redefine the boundaries for acceptable and deviant behavior in the workplace (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Second, movies are a form for cultural and narrative communication that helps shape how people think about leadership, authority, and success in the workplace. It is a place where these meanings are made (Grant et al., 2004; Czarniawska, 1997). Thirdly, a theoretical synthesis is necessary to elucidate the relationship between symbolic representation and organizational reality, integrating sensemaking, institutional discourse, and the institutionalization for deviation within organizational contexts (Foucault, 1977; Vaughan, 1996).

The current literature indicates a clear demarcation between two fields for study. On one hand, the majority for research concerning the shadow aspect for organizations has employed behavioral, psychological, or management frameworks to elucidate deviant behavior. On the other hand, a lot for research on movies and businesses has looked at how movies could be used in management schools as a way to teach or learn about culture (Champoux, 1999). Nonetheless, considerable uncharted territory remains regarding integrative projects that conceptualize film as an organizational text, one that aids in legitimizing or contesting the shadow aspects for organizations through its own process for meaning formation. Rhodes and Brown (2005) and Alvesson and Willmott (1992) contend that film functions as a narrative and discursive space that illustrates the legitimization and normalization for power and deviance

within organizational contexts.

To solve this problem, we need to change how we think about leadership and authority. Instead of concentrating on the superficial inquiry for "What is the impact for toxic leadership on performance?" we ought to examine how toxic behavior can be justified and tolerated. From its perspective, film has perceived as more than a mere example; it serves as an analytical platform that elucidates the mechanisms for legitimization, normalization, and discursive replication, facets often overlooked in traditional positivist analyses. Building on the acknowledged theoretical gap, the next section offers a unifying framework that synthesizes these diverse perspectives into a coherent explanatory model.

#### **4. Epistemological Shift: Cinema as an Organizational Text**

This paper starts with an epistemological critique for how literature about the dark side for organizations is made. The body of research on the topic of toxic leadership, organizational silence, corruption and workplace deviance is growing in volume but most of this literature studies these phenomena as quantifiable behavioral variables within a managerialist paradigm that involves linear causal explanations (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Fournier and Grey, 2000).

Toxic leadership is often analyzed within leadership behavior frameworks (Tepper, 2000; Padilla et al., 2007), whereas organizational silence is typically assessed through the perspectives for management climate or psychological safety (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Workplace deviance is often framed within the context for unproductive work behavior models (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Spector & Fox, 2005). The problem with this point of view isn't the measurement itself; it's how these events are thought about. Toxic leadership and organizational silence are not just individual acts, but they are the result of configurations of meaning, power and discourse that make certain practices credible, acceptable and even justifiable in organizational settings (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Foucault, 1977; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000).

In this regard, this work is conceptually significant as it redefines the concept of film as an organizational text instead of just an educational tool or illustrative example. In this perspective, film belongs to a significant epistemic economy that produces imagery to organizations, leaders and deviance. This thesis is consistent with the organizational narrative

research, which stresses the vital role of cultural narratives and discourses in developing the societal perceptions of organizations and establishing limits of authority and deviance within them (Boje, 1991; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Czarniawska, 1997).

This belief is based on one of the basic principles of social constructionism, that is social reality, including organizational reality, is not introduced to people as a raw material; it is created with the help of symbolic resources, language, narratives and cultural institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Films narrate about the manner in which organizations operate, leaders perform well, and why they are cruel, corrupt, or quiet. Thus, it does not exist apart of organizational life; it is, in fact, a part of how people imagine organizations, i.e., it constitutes an organizational imaginary. This view is similar to organizational discourse analysis, which assumes that the institutional meaning is derived in terms of stories and patterns of cultural practices that are spread throughout the society (Grant et al., 2004; Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

To enhance analytical rigor, this paper presents three epistemic modes to interpret cinema in organizational studies, which is mostly missing in the existing literature on the relation of popular culture and organizations.

The overall conceptual model of the negative aspects to organizations is depicted in figure 1. It is supposed to assist individuals in observing the way the various components of the proposed integrative framework can be integrated.

## Integrative Framework of the Dark Side of Organizations

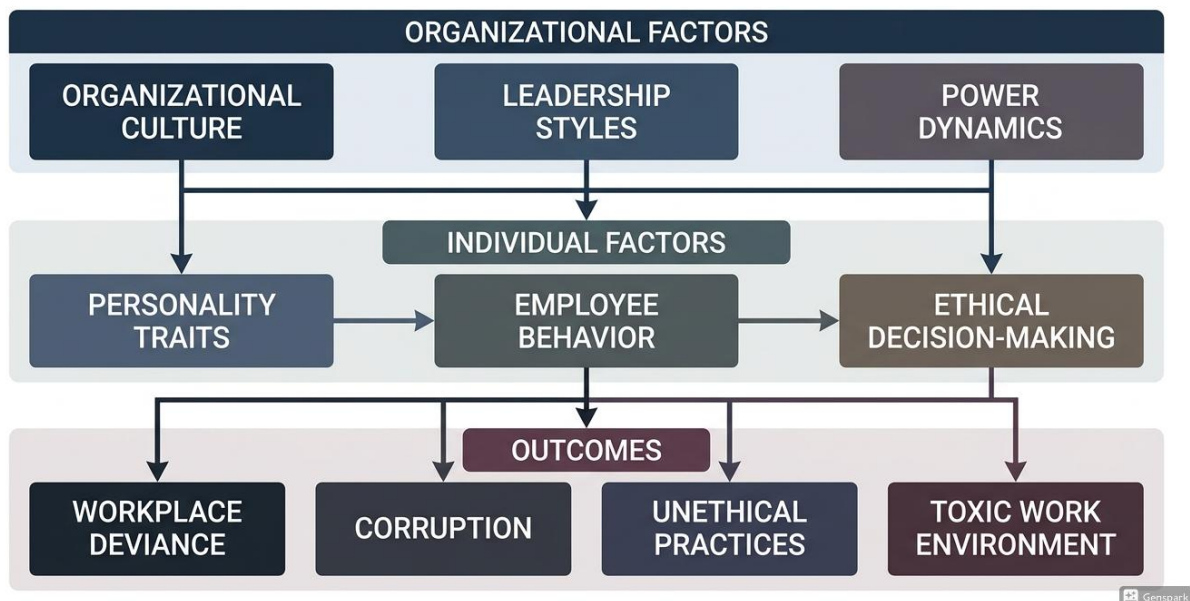


Figure 1: Integrative Framework for the Dark Side for Organizations

Figure 1 illustrates that the framework perceives the negative aspects for organizations as a dynamic interplay among sensemaking processes, social learning mechanisms, discursive legitimation, normalization for deviance, and organizational silence. Cinema acts as a mediating discursive layer.

### 4.1 Movies as a Form for Representation

In this genre, movies show and explain organizations, leadership, and power in the workplace in dramatic ways. Organizational narrative literature asserts that these representations not only reflect reality but also shape the frameworks for understanding it (Boje, 1991; Czarniawska, 1997).

### 4.2 Cinema as a Construction for Organizational Reality

In this context, cinema plays a role in determining what is deemed natural, rational, or legitimate within organizational life. Cultural representations influence perceptions for leadership, success, and deviance (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). From a sensemaking perspective, individuals employ these representations to interpret complex organizational phenomena and construct meaning within institutional contexts (Weick, 1995).

### 4.3 Film as Discourse

In this way, movies make or remake patterns for what is acceptable in the workplace. Language and narrative frameworks delineate acceptable discourse, enforce silence, and institute actions that receive symbolic reinforcement within organizations (Foucault, 1977; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). This perspective aligns with organizational discourse analysis, which asserts that cultural discourses profoundly impact the definition for acceptable and deviant behavior within organizations (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Movies don't just show us how things are; they also give researchers and professionals a "symbolic laboratory" where they can go beyond numbers and learn how to "rebrand" oppressive behaviors in fancy administrative language.

### **5. Extending the Conceptual Argument**

This, however, is not just about simply choosing a narrower word, but it also indicates the relationship between movies and the dark side of organizations in an analytic manner. You can think of film as a discourse type and watch how it silently helps to uphold dominance, how it transforms organizational silence into professional competence, and how it makes deviance look like a normal aspect to compete in the workplace. From this point of view, video goes from being a helpful tool in the classroom to an epistemic object in the field for organizational studies. The new idea presented in the paper is Narrative Legitimation of the Dark Side that it is possible to use as a basis of the research. This concept links two significant works. To begin with, organizational narrative studies have shown that stories not only clarify things, but also change perceptions of individuals to become normal and acceptable in the workplace (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Boje, 1991). But the studies on the processes of normalization of corruption and deviance reveal that unethical behavior are normalized over time through such mechanisms as gradual deviation, moral justification, and the spreading of responsibility in organizations (Ashforth and Anand, 2003; Vaughan, 1996; Palmer, 2008). According to this point of view, the stories and discussions that enable corrupt practices to be condoned in institutions are quite critical in comprehending their ill impacts.

According to the recent studies, it is time to move beyond individualism and begin examining the relationship between individual, organizational, and institutional forces to gain an insight into the mechanisms underlying complex organizational behavior. Studies in behavioral ethics (Treviño et al., 2006; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010) indicate that all these factors, including

institutional arrangements, professional cultures, and organizational pressures, combine to contribute to bad decision-making. Research findings on the violence in the workplace reveal that poor forms of aggression such as bullying and sexism tend to occur within a bigger paradigm where performance and competition are used to legitimize poor conduct (Hershcovis et al., 2007).

Recent studies about abusive supervision confirm the notion that bad leadership is not merely the consequence of some bad moments, but it is rather an institutionalized form of bad leadership, where bad leadership practices are perpetuated by institutionalized norms and daily interactions (Mackey et al., 2017; Fischer et al., 2021; Tepper et al., 2017). Researchers on employee voice (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Detert et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2015) show that the perceptions of employees on risk and legitimacy when protesting are constructed by the intricate power relations and expectations of roles.

According to the discourse analysis researchers, networks of texts and methods of communicating determine ideas of people about what should be an acceptable behavior in an organization (Grant, Keenoy, and Oswick, 1998; Phillips and Hardy, 2002; Hardy and Thomas, 2015). The scholars applying Foucauldian concepts (Burrell, 1988; Townley, 1993; Foucault, 1978) claim that discursive tools are employed by organizations to conceal ethical conflicts and alleviate the way administrative work is performed by employing a language that appears neutral.

Dehkharghani et al. (2023) argue that modern systematic research has established that organizational silence is a dynamic area of study which needs more developed theoretical models to explain its connection with the styles of leadership, organizational culture, and systems of governance. Also, studies conducted on institutional corruption indicate that psychological aspects, such as moral disengagement, are significant. These mechanisms help people to justify their use of immoral practices in the organizational context (Moore, 2008; Anand et al., 2004).

## **6. The Proposed Integrative Framework**

The main theoretical contribution to this paper does not concern the introduction of a new variable, but the formulation of a critical interpretive framework to explicate the pernicious

aspects of organizations as a system of meaning, power, and legitimation of an organization, not a collection of isolated phenomena. Mainstream literature generally discusses the following issues through different theoretical perspectives: toxic leadership, organizational silence, institutional corruption, and workplace deviance. Toxic leadership is discussed in the framework of leadership behavior models (Tepper, 2000; Padilla et al., 2007), organizational silence is analyzed in the framework of psychological climate or voice (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Detert and Edmondson, 2011), corruption is discussed within the framework of organizational ethics and normalization (Ashforth and Anand

These views give a significant understanding of the behavioral aspects of these events; yet, they tend to consider them as distinct constructs that can be measured in linear causal contexts. This type of analytical splitting up facilitates easier measurements of things in the real world but complicates how such processes interact in a business.

An example of toxic leadership is that it can make the workplace a fear-filled environment in which individuals do not feel secure; hence, they may be silent and do as they are instructed (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Tepper, 2000). By keeping quiet, chances of internal control are reduced, which encourages the spread of unethical or corrupt practices in the organization (Ashforth and Anand, 2003; Vaughan, 1996). These practices may over time be informal codes of conduct that the culture preserves on behalf of the organization, the power equilibrium, and the practices on behalf of the organization (Foucault, 1977; Palmer, 2008).

In this sense, the toxic leadership, organizational silence, and institutional corruption cannot be considered as single- event cases. Rather, they are to be understood as elements in a network of meaning, power and legitimacy where practices of behavior interrelate and interact with organizational discourses and institutional culture to generate what is often referred to as the dark side of organizational being (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Rhodes and Brown, 2005).

As a result, the study offers a comprehensive framework that combines five key theoretical viewpoints, conceived as interconnected "levels for explanation" for understanding the negative aspects for organizations.

### **6.1 Sensemaking: How Does Dark become the Rational?**

According to sensemaking theory, people do not perceive organizational reality as a compilation of objective facts, but they make sense of events based on socially and organizationally constructed contexts that give meaning to those events (Weick, 1995). In this sense, people require narrative coherence to help them make interpretations and rationalization of organizational events. So, when you put it in a way that makes sense, unethical or dictatorial behavior may make sense.

Just because toxic leadership or corruption in the workplace keeps happening doesn't mean that the people who work there don't have morals. They believe that these actions are required by the organization such as when they say stuff such as the market is mean or the end justifies the means. Organizational narrative literature holds that such interpretations usually lie within the narratives and discourses, which offer coherent accounts to explain organizational phenomena (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Boje, 1991).

And in this manner, movies are a very profound method to convey stories that provide actors with ready-made methods to comprehend such things as being tough as being strict in their management, lying as being clever in their strategy, being silent as being political savvy. Movies help to create what can be called the "rationalization for the dark" in the minds for people who work in organizations by showing things this way (Weick, 1995; Rhodes & Brown, 2005).

According to the proposed paradigm, the mediating discursive mechanism between cultural narratives and organizational action is cinema. Cinema offers interpretive frames through symbolic representation that shape the perceptions of people towards organizational realities hence enabling the normalization and legitimization of unethical practices.

## **6.2 Social Learning: What Makes the Dark a Pattern?**

The theory of social learning is the idea that people learn behavioral patterns by observing and imitating others and using symbols to reinforce behavior in social situations (Bandura, 1977). This view is best suited to explain the spread of behavioral patterns in organizations as people recognize the rewarded or punished activities by observing leaders and fellow workers.

Movies in this sense can be a symbolic space which promotes some forms of behaving. Movies may depict manipulative CEOs, those employees who prefer to capitalize on situations, or corporate cultures where workers are not free to voice their opinions against the company. These portrayals can be used to develop normative learning because people absorb unspoken beliefs on those behaviors that give rise to respect, legitimacy, and success in hypothetical organizational contexts.

The thesis put forward is not that humans just imitate cinematic behavior. The paper holds that the cinematic affects the symbolic motivation systems individuals use to determine legitimate or efficient behavior in the context of organizations (Bandura, 1977; Moore, 2008).

### **6.3 Discourse and Power: How Practices are Rationalized and Rebranded?**

In discursive sense, language goes beyond description of reality; it is a process of establishing and sharing legitimacy in social systems (Foucault, 1977). Discursive rebranding is frequently employed to legitimize coercive or authoritarian actions in a business context through placing them in a new context. In the case of forcing someone to do something, it might be referred to as positive pressure; exploiting time might be referred to as a culture of achievement; suppressing dissent might be referred to as professionalism or organizational discipline.

Such discursive changes are prerequisites to the continuity of the harmful aspects of organizations without outright opposition. Critical management studies have illustrated that managerial discourses play a crucial role in changing organizational practices and providing implicit legitimacy within an institutional structures (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000).

In this regard, the cinema can be considered as a discursive space that reproduces or questions such forms so as to rename them. Movies re-define the meanings of power and deviance through narrative and symbolic representation, and in the process influence the perception of viewers of leadership and the authority in organizations.

### **6.4 Making Deviance and Corruption Normal: What Makes the Deviant Normal?**

The studies of normalization of corruption and deviance indicate that deviant practices hardly occur abruptly in organizations. Rather, they are built up through justification processes, moral

incrementalism, and diffusion of responsibility among the members of organizations (Ashforth and Anand, 2003).

The normalization of deviance as a concept in the field of organizational sociology has been described to be the way minor violations of the laid down norms have been naturalized to become normal behavior in an organization (Vaughan, 1996). In this perspective, the current research paper proposes that cinema can be taken as symbolic laboratory whereby these processes are narratively depicted.

Most films demonstrate that deviance begins with simple, seemingly insignificant behaviors that later on develop into habits. Such practices end up being so institutionalized such that when individuals attempt to report such acts they are relegated or disciplined. Film in this case serves as an important analytic tool in interpreting organizational sociology of corruption and deviance in institutional set ups (Ashforth and Anand, 2003; Vaughan, 1996; Palmer, 2008).

### **6.5 Organizational Silence as a Systems Process of Maintaining the Dark Side.**

Morrison and Milliken (2000) affirm that corporate silence cannot be perceived as just a personal choice to not express ideas, but an outcome of organizations of power relations and managerial beliefs that render expression of concern too expensive and even risky. In the integrative paradigm presented in this paper, the organizational silence is not only a by-product of the negative attributes to organizations; it is one of the major working mechanisms.

Without silence, it would be more difficult to continue institutional corruption. Bad leaders would be forced to work even more to remain in power and bad behavior would be more easily discovered. The spiral theory of silence can also be used to help us to understand this. It states that people are not ready to express their dissent in society because of the fear of being isolated (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

This notion serves as an analytical metaphor to explain how silence in organizations emerges as a group phenomenon due to power relations, fear and social norms as opposed to an individual decision (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Detert and Edmondson, 2011).

## **7. Theoretical Logic for the Model and Its Components**

Over the past two decades, organizational behavior scholars have increasingly shown interest in what has at times been referred to as the dark side to organizations. This also encompasses poor leadership, bullying management, organizational silence, workplace deviance and institutional corruption. Increasing amounts of research is being done on these topics, although most of it has been constrained by the reality that ideas are not related and theories are not linked. Human beings have tended to present various approaches towards every problem and none has managed to come up with a way of explaining how they all relate within the workplace. According to scholars of critical management studies, such variable-based approach will tend to simplify phenomena in complex organizations into discrete measurable constructs and ignores the discursive and institutional contexts that constitute their production and reproduction (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Fournier and Grey, 2000).

Indicatively, studies of toxic leadership and abusive supervision have primarily examined the issues as things that leaders do that are damaging to their employees. In the early studies, the main emphasis was on the effects of abusive supervision on the mental and job performance of employees (Tepper, 2000). Subsequent research examined how bad leadership impacted organizations in greater detail (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). Padilla et al. (2007) also developed the Toxic Triangle model, which demonstrates the interaction of toxic leaders, easily controllable followers, as well as good organizations that support the work of destructive leadership. These models offer useful clues on the behavioral and contextual dynamics that are linked to toxic leadership but they are more centered on leadership traits and behaviors and fail to acknowledge the discursive and symbolic processes that make such leadership practices organizationally legitimate and sustainable in the long-term.

In a wider theoretical context, the organizational discourse literature holds that the emphasis behind some authoritarian practices in organizations cannot be entirely attributed to the personal actions of the leaders; rather, it is seriously interwoven with discursive systems that recontextualize these practices and give them implicit legitimacy in the frameworks of institutions (Foucault, 1977; Alvesson and Karrasman, 2000). Coercive or authoritarian tactics are commonly re-packaged as management assertiveness or high-performance culture that makes it easier to perpetuate in the culture of the organization.

In this perspective, toxic leadership should be considered as part of a broader system of organizational processes that involve the meaning generation, the power distribution and the cultural norm formulation in organizations. The observed phenomenon in this scenario aligns with the literature on organizational silence and institutional deviance, where the persistence of harmful practices being practiced in organizations is heavily informed by cultural and discursive systems that regulate what can and cannot be said in organizational settings (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Rhodes and Brown, 2005).

Morrison and Milliken (2000) proved that silence in organizations is not only a personal decision, but it also presents a cost to the management assumptions and power structures making speaking up to be very expensive. Subsequent studies contributed to this by discovering other forms of organizational silence, including defensive silence, acquiescent silence, and prosocial silence. These classifications mean that people would not wish to express themselves due to many reasons (Knoll and van Dick, 2013). Recent systematic reviews indicate that the ethical climate, psychological safety, and leadership style of organizations are closely connected to organizational silence (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, a large number of studies continue to employ a linear causal approach (leadership → silence → outcomes) without critically examining the symbolic and discursive contexts that reveal silence as a logical reaction on the part of the point of view by organizational actors (Alvesson and Kareman, 2000; Rhodes and Brown, 2005).

## **8. Deviance and Corruption in Organizational Contexts**

Ashforth and Anand (2003) conducted an innovative study that elucidated how corruption is normalized in organizations by three main processes; moral justification, incremental deviation and the establishment of social networks that sustain corruption. The same viewpoint was put forward by Palmer (2008) who claimed that institutional corruption does not develop out of cases of sudden ethical failure but out of slow organizational processes that alter the morality line of acceptable conduct within institutional contexts. Studies on counterproductive work behavior show that deviance in the workplace is significantly correlated with organizational pressures, perceived injustice and unethical leadership behaviors (Spector and Fox, 2005; Bennett and Robinson, 2000).

The bulk of the writing on this topic has considered it, however, primarily in terms of causal or institutional perspective, although these concepts are very profound. It has failed to integrate a cultural-discursive exposition that explains how deviant practices can be integrated to be socially accepted in the life of the organization (Foucault, 1977).

It is against this background that there exists an urgent need to have a holistic model that integrates the behavioral, symbolic, discursive and pedagogical levels of analysis so as to understand how the negative factors to organizations transform discrete individual acts into self-sustaining organizational system that is perpetuated by institutional culture and organizational discourse.

Part 1: Organizational expectations by using cinematic stories.

The literature on organizational story telling indicates that besides depicting what is real, stories also transform the ways people perceive social situations and establish ways of perception of how organizations operate that are consistent (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Boje, 1991). Stories about organizations are told by people and they always have success and failure and there is heroism and betrayal. Such forms of stories are prevalent both in the workplace and society in general.

In this view, cinema is an influential storytelling tool that provides normative images on leadership, moral limits, and rationalization of competitiveness on market terms. According to Sensemaking theory, individuals use cultural stories to make sense of ambiguous situations in the workplace and to attribute meaning to the events that take place in the workplace (Weick, 1995). then, when authoritarian leadership is referred to as managerial firmness in cultural conversations, or unethical success is referred to as strategic intelligence, then such sorts of tales can assist individuals in organizations to make sense of controversial practices.

Part 2: Reframing of Organizational Practices and Discursive Legitimation.

Language is not a detached means of explaining reality, based on a discourse viewpoint; it is a method of establishing legitimacy and distributing power in the social environment (Foucault, 1977). Procedures not popular in organizations are often changed by people trying to make them not sound as morally ambiguous. An example is that excessively high pressure might be

interpreted as a reward and being not part of the organization may be viewed as one way of controlling performance.

Ethical leadership studies indicate that the lack of explicit ethical guidelines in institutions helps in the re-framing of the vicious actions in the performance and succeeding context (Brown and Mitchell, 2010).

Cinema, in this analytical level, can be considered as a cultural discursive field that replicates or criticizes certain modalities of renaming. The movies may either demonstrate the wrong and badness of domination and unethical success, or they may make it normal. In both scenarios, movies alter the way individuals at large consider what is acceptable within an organization.

Part 3: Comprehending the way the brain arranges acceptance and brings sense to things.

According to Weick (1995), individuals make sense to events in manners that sustain a sense of rationality and consistency in their workplaces in order to maintain the cognitive coherence. When dark practices are repeatedly acted out within an environment in which they are culturally and discursively approved, they are more and more viewed through the prism of organizational necessity or managerial pragmatism.

Empirical studies on employee voice and silence show that anticipated consequences have significant influences on the decisions made by people on whether to air their views or not (Detert and Edmondson, 2011). When the organizational imaginary, which is constructed by prevailing cultural discourses, leads people to believe that dissent is either futile or detrimental to individuals, silence can be a logical reaction of the members of the organization, as opposed to being a mirror of fear.

Part 4: Organizational Silence as Reproduction Mechanism.

It has been consistently evident in the literature that silence in organizations leads to a setting whereby people become less accountable and bad leadership habits are perpetuated (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The studies reveal that toxic leadership has a more protective silence and less psychological safety among employees (Schyns and Schilling, 2013).

The suggested paradigm does not assume organizational silence as just an extension to the bad aspects of organizations. Rather, it is regarded as a means through which the organizational system can continue to operate and legitimize bad behavior. Silence reduces the likelihood of people questioning or objecting bad behavior since it constrains voice and halts dissent. This enables poor organizational dynamics to continue as time goes by.

#### Part 5: normalizing deviance, and recreating institutions.

Deviance normalization concept holds that deviant acts are slowly transformed into accepted norms in the form of an incremental deviation, and ongoing institutional ratification (Ashforth and Anand, 2003). In situations where members of an organization fail to speak up and such forms of methods are frequently employed, boundaries of ethics begin to be erased (Palmer, 2008).

At this point, a feedback loop that is effective within the system begins to develop. A deviant or an unacceptable behavior slowly shifts into forms of normative behavior which eventually becomes institutionalized and spread in the culture and organizational structure of the business.

The examples of the cinema used in this work are not additional examples to explain the preexisting organizational concepts, instead, they are regarded as analysis entry points that demonstrate how the organizations generate their dark meanings through narrative, symbolism and visual representation. In this respect, cinema is not just an expression of organizational reality, but it recreates it in a narrative structure that justifies some practices and recontextualizes others and hides ethical issues in the name of performance, excellence, and managerial realism.

The analytical significance of the chosen films is not merely in their potential to show how the unacceptable can be made acceptable, how the deviance can be made to seem successful, how submission can be repackaged as professionalism, silence as political maturity and obedience as an essential survival strategy in the work of organizations, but also in how they allow the viewer to see the unacceptable being made acceptable, how the deviance can be made to even

In this respect, the table below does not strive to find a direct and mechanical correlation between each film and a definite organizational structure. Rather, it provides a critical-

interpretive approach that demonstrates how cinema is a discursive medium that provides people who work in organizations with pre-existing means of understanding, explaining and normalizing behaviors within those organizations. People do not consider the movie as a mere reflection of what the event is, but rather, a site where symbols are constructed, which establish the imaginary of the organization that determines what leadership is, what types of forms corruption can be tolerated, and why silence is an institutional requirement.

Table 1. Discussion: Philosophical Reading of Selected Films as Organizational Texts.

(Developed by the Author)

Theoretical Concept	Film	Philosophical–Critical Reading	Organizational Meaning Produced	Central Analytical Question
Toxic Leadership	<i>The Devil Wears Prada</i>	The film does not portray authoritarian leadership merely as abusive behavior, but reconstructs it within a discourse for excellence, performance, and professional rigor. Domination, emotional pressure, and boundary violations are symbolically reframed as necessary conditions for success. Leadership thus appears not as ethical practice, but as a legitimized form for control embedded in	Reframing coercive leadership as “high standards” and redefining submission as a rational investment in career advancement.	How is organizational domination symbolically reconstructed to appear as a legitimate and even desirable form for leadership?

Theoretical Concept	Film	Philosophical–Critical Reading	Organizational Meaning Produced	Central Analytical Question
		narratives for achievement.		
Normalization for Corruption	<i>The Wolf for Wall Street</i>	The film illustrates how corruption emerges not as an exceptional deviation but as a gradual and collectively reinforced process. Through narrative glorification, deviant practices are reinterpreted as strategic intelligence and entrepreneurial brilliance. Corruption becomes embedded within networks for reward, imitation, and moral disengagement, transforming it into an organizational routine.	Transforming corruption from ethical deviation into normalized organizational practice, reinforced through collective success narratives.	How does deviance evolve, through narrative and collective reinforcement, into an accepted norm for organizational success?
Organizational Silence	<i>Margin Call</i>	The film presents silence not simply as a passive absence for voice, but as a rational and strategic response	Constructing silence as a rational survival strategy within environments	How does silence transform from an individual behavior into a systemic

Theoretical Concept	Film	Philosophical–Critical Reading	Organizational Meaning Produced	Central Analytical Question
		<p>within a high-risk environment. Individuals remain silent not because they lack awareness, but because speaking up is perceived as costly and ineffective. Silence thus becomes embedded within power relations and organizational expectations.</p>	<p>characterized by low psychological safety and high-power asymmetry.</p>	<p>organizational mechanism that sustains power without resistance?</p>

The table reveals that the films you have selected are not just mere illustrations to business ideas; they also reveal how business conquest can be carried out. Greatness creates a toxicity of leadership to appear acceptable, group reward systems make corruption appear normal, and fear-based reasoning silences people. Therefore, cinema can be helpful in analysis as it can indicate not only what organizations perform, but also how their members and viewers sense-making on their behalf.

## 9. Conclusion

This paper aims to address the dissection that modern literature is known to experience by reevaluating the understanding of the shadow side of organizations in a single philosophical perspective. The same socio-discursive system Weick (1995), Foucault (1977), and Ashforth and Anand (2003) speak of is maintained by sensemaking, discursive legitimation, and normalization in progressive steps. This paper holds that toxic leadership, organizational

silence, workplace deviance and institutional corruption are essential constituents to this system. This is where the proposed perspective fits in with critical management studies that concur with Alvesson and Deetz (2000) and Fournier and Grey (2000) that to comprehend organizational phenomena, we must look at discursive and institutional frameworks that make the same phenomena legitimate.

According to theoretical analyses, the attributes of leadership and poor institutional control are not the only factors that lead to persistence of opaque organizational practices. Rather it demands a closer examination of the social processes that establish acceptability and normalcy. The sensemaking processes provide individuals in organizations with explanations that make sense of silence or compliance as the appropriate thing to do at work (Weick, 1995). Discursive legitimation, on the other hand, puts controversial acts back into context in terms of performance and results (Foucault, 1977). These behaviors are supported by organizational silence which allows them to persist unchallenged (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Consequently, they become normal through institutional normalization processes that have been outlined in the literature on organizational corruption and deviance (Ashforth and Anand, 2003; Palmer, 2008).

The study contributes a considerable conceptual development to this framework by redefining film as an organizational text by forming the institutional perceptions of leadership, success and power. Consequently, film is perceived not merely as a means of learning; it is also a narrative-discursive place that enables individuals to construct interpretive systems that may conceal or expose the power relations and deviance that occur in the businesses. This perspective is consistent with organizational narrative studies (Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Boje, 1991) which interpret organizational activities based on the framework of narratives and cultural discourses as important interpretative tools. The paper constructs an explanatory model indicating how the shadow side is reproduced to organizations as a self-sustaining system at both the symbolic, behavioral, and institutional levels that integrate a sensemaking, social construction, discourse and power, social learning, and the normalization of deviance theories (Bandura, 1977; Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Vaughan, 1996).

Owing to this, this work substitutes a usual scholarly enquiry with:

How might bad leadership or silence in the workplace impact the amount of work done?

to a less technical and more comprehensive enquiry:

What are the factors of creation of organizational environments that facilitate, explain and sometimes justify such phenomena?

The integration of behavioral and institutional perspectives and discursive and symbolic analysis enhances the epistemology of organizational behavior research. This simplifies the comprehension of the relationship between various forms of organizational wrongdoing to one another (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Rhodes and Brown, 2005).

The proposed model reveals that bad things that occur in organizations cannot be rectified by the use of leadership training and rules alone. Instead, we need to look at the cultural and discursive structures that support such practices in organizations.

Finally, the work opens the door to further studies in other fields. They are to add such factors as organizational culture, professional identity, and institutional governance to the model, test the model in other cultural contexts, and demonstrate it using real-life data. The aim of this paper is not to make a final conclusion, but to initiate a broader theoretical discussion on the topic of power, importance, and deviation in contemporary corporate contexts.

This document has three additional sections:

1. It alters our thinking on movies as a means of achieving business objectives.
2. It brings various works of literature in a single structure to comprehend.

Third, the concept of Narrative Legitimation of the Dark Side is described.

We cannot merely have rules in the struggle against evil. We also must to deconstruct the cultural discourse such as Hollywood that informs us what it is to be strong and successful.

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