

"Possibilities for Changing Capitalism from Within: Perspectives on Critical Management Studies"¹

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Abstract: Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have given considerable attention to the deleterious effects of neoliberal, capitalist systems; however, the critique of capitalism does not emanate singularly from these academic areas. There is also an active and growing critique of capitalist systems from within the field of business by critical management studies theorists. This essay introduces the contemporary perspectives of Critical Management Studies (CMS) to an interdisciplinary audience for its potential to bridge some perceived ideological gaps between those disciplines that likewise offer critique of the systems of power that perpetuate the neoliberal state. I argue that CMS has a potentially important political voice to offer because of its inherently critical consideration of the normalized assumptions of organizations that reflect the aims of economic capitalism. Additionally as a political resource, CMS offers additional possibilities to de-center neoliberal discourse because of its academic location within the discipline of business. I suggest that CMS could be a vehicle for providing analytical focus on, and an accessible public voice to, those power structures of domination that populate the capitalist market system. This essay also provides a brief demonstration of the potential intersection of interdisciplinary and CMS scholarship through Clegg's circuits of power model.

Keywords: critical management studies, power, poststructuralism, interdisciplinary, capitalism, organizations, circuits of power

1. Introduction

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have given considerable attention to the deleterious effects of neoliberal, capitalist systems; however, the critique of capitalism does not emanate singularly from these academic areas. There is also an active and growing critique of capitalist systems from within the field of business by critical management studies theorists. This essay provides an overview of the contemporary perspectives of Critical Management Studies (CMS) and, specifically, its attention to power in organizations.

The CMS body of scholarship is varied, rapidly growing, and unified in its commitment to understanding systems of domination perpetuated within and across organizations; its calls for heightened reflexivity in scholarship, and its examination of how operations of power can create oppressive systems. The reason to introduce CMS to an interdisciplinary audience is for its potential to bridge some perceived ideological gaps between those disciplines that likewise offer critique of the systems of power that perpetuate the neoliberal state. One of the stated objectives of the CMS division of the Academy of Management is “to build bridges to progressive social movements to contribute to positive change for social and environmental welfare.”ⁱⁱ By introducing CMS to a broader interdisciplinary audience, this essay contributes to the bridge-building and offers an example of how redeploying one view of power within a CMS framework may help yield transformative social change.

A key reason for interdisciplinary scholarship to consider CMS resources is that CMS scholars offer additional political resources for change by virtue of their academic location from within the field of business. Given this location, critique of

capitalism may reach those scholars and practitioners enabling and reinforcing oppressive systems of management more directly. Though CMS' institutionalization within business schools has been critiqued as diluting its radical, liberatory potential,ⁱⁱⁱ I suggest that the existence of this location creates a recognized space for critique from *within* the business disciplines that would be otherwise inaccessible for scholars from any discipline. In fact, the Critical Management Studies division of the Academy of Management is explicit in its desire to serve as a space for "expression of views critical of established management practices and the established social order."^{iv} As an example of their efforts to reinforce and expand this space, the 2013 Academy of Management (AoM) Annual Meeting, which is generally recognized as one of the premier academic conferences within the discipline of management, was entitled "Capitalism in Question?" and was organized by the CMS division.

CMS, as with other critical disciplinary studies, identifies theoretical roots from Critical Theory and scholars of the Frankfurt School.^v However, CMS intentionally expanded its theoretical commitments such that the CMS Workshop^{vi} organizers originally self-described its approach as a "big tent,"^{vii} and it takes seriously its commitment to different epistemologies that challenge the positivist assumptions of "objectivity" and managerial thinking.^{viii} CMS counts among its critical theoretical resources the redeployment of mainstream scholarship such as classical sociology, contingency and resource dependency theories, and Marxism, as well as embracing more contemporary approaches found in postmodernism, pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, feminism, and environmentalism.^{ix} This interdisciplinary base provides multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary scholarship.

CMS is also explicit about its political commitments, which align well with interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with emancipatory politics. CMS can trace its origins out of the Labour Process Theory (LPT) scholars with its distinct, leftist political tradition. This leftist political commitment remains visibly evident as a tenet of CMS as reflected in their current goal statement:

We observe that management of the modern firm (and often of other types of organizations) is guided primarily by the interests of shareholders and other elites. We are critical of the notion that the pursuit of profitability will automatically satisfy society's broader interests. Such a system extracts unacceptably high social and environmental costs for whatever progress it offers. We believe that other priorities, such as justice, community, human development, and ecological balance, should be brought to bear on the governance of economic and other human activity. The overall goal of our research, teaching, and extra-curricula activities is to contribute to the creation of better organizations, more humane societies, and a viable world system.^x

However, CMS is a highly contested arena for scholars and practitioners, particularly with regard to the current state of its political efficacy in creating actual social change. Simply put, critics question the applicability of CMS solutions to real, contemporary issues. Other, related critiques of CMS frequently comment on the inaccessibility of the language by scholars, a lack of self-reflexivity of CMS by CMS, the institutionalization and power relations of CMS, the lack of politically actionable outcomes, and lost relevancy to lived experiences.^{xi}

Generally, CMS subdivides its broad field according to the epistemological premises of the scholarship (i.e., standpoint epistemology, poststructuralism, or critical realism), and then further by its radical or reformist aims.^{xii} However, CMS appears to have reached broad agreement on at least one thing: the theoretical intent of CMS is to create a transformative impact on current management practices both in the field and emanating from the academy. After this general

consensus, agreement becomes partial at best. CMS is broadly varied and tends to be embroiled in levels of contestation as to what CMS *is* and what it should *be/become*, not to mention concerns over its overall effectiveness in making an impact. Despite (and more likely because of) the variations within CMS, it has emerged as a recognized “field” in the academic spaces of management, organizational theory, and other related social science interests in a relatively short span of time. The critical voice CMS offers in the academic arena has resonated with a growing body of interdisciplinary scholars in its direct critique of the majority of recent organizational literature that uncritically succumbs to “managerialism” and largely fails to respond to the broad demands and human concerns created by the framework of global capitalism/neoliberalism.^{xiii} As a result of these and other issues, CMS is an on-going and growing area of inquiry for scholars working in organizational and managerial fields.^{xiv} With this backdrop in mind, this essay’s purpose is twofold. First, I aim to provide a general introduction of CMS to an interdisciplinary audience that is well equipped to engage in and further the discussions of power and domination central to CMS, particularly as connected to the impact of global capitalist systems. Second, I briefly present one possible intervention to address the critique of CMS, namely its lack of applicability.

One particular criticism of CMS has been its inaccessibility and its inability to create actionable, practical workplace impact, due in part to the esoteric language and theory deployed by post-structural scholars, but also from the privileging of an academic “publish or perish” mentality over transference of CMS through public practice.^{xv} This “lack of applicability” is the criticism that this paper will specifically address through the consideration of organizational power analysis. The next

section provides an overview of the history of CMS and the academic streams that have emerged in the CMS scholarship. This is followed by a brief discussion of the fundamental epistemic differences of CMS from mainstream organizational theory work and an explicit positioning of my paper's epistemic positionality for this analysis. Finally, I argue that the incorporation of Clegg's model of circuits of power into the CMS framework enables a CMS scholar to potentially meet two goals. It first provides an approach to conducting an analysis of organizational and institutional power structures that could be publicly accessible and actionable, while also meeting the larger CMS goal of creating an opportunity for transformative, radical critique that, if acted upon, could improve the work lives of targeted segments within organizational power networks.^{xvi}

2. The Historical Overview and CMS Streams

A common attribution for the "moment" around which CMS seemed to have coalesced, at least as a branding acronym or acknowledged label, is the 1992 release of the Alvesson and Willmott edited book, *Critical Management Studies*.^{xvii} Although earlier strands of humanist-type critique of capitalism and bureaucracy are evident as theoretical predecessors in the literature of multiple disciplines, this book provided a critique of management as not simply a technical function, but by utilizing critical theory, repositioned management as a complex social function. This marked a key moment in the continuum of problematizing CMS thought.^{xviii} This book entered as a counter to the instrumentalist approach of managing people singularly to achieve ever more efficient, productive outcomes, which had become the pervasive unquestioned paradigm in both theory and practice as reflected in the

late 1980s adoption of the term “human resources” in the field and emergence of “managerialism” in the academy. To this end, scholars from around the world, though particularly concentrated in the United Kingdom, resonated with the call for a radical critique of the discipline of management under the label CMS put forward by Alvesson and Willmott, and gained cross-disciplinary steam throughout the 1990s, becoming an established presence in the United States by the late 1990s.

The CMS presence continues to be stronger in the U.K., though it has established a solid, if more tenuous, presence in the U.S. today.^{xxix} In its evolution, CMS took another critical turn, and further distancing itself from LPT, in 2000 when Fournier and Grey identified three core elements specific to CMS as “de-naturalization,” “non-performativity,” and “reflexivity.”^{xxx} This scholarship was another important moment in CMS for the on-going problematizing of management scholarship that it represented, and opened the floor to the contestations within the field about the defining characteristics of CMS.^{xxxi} However, Fournier and Grey’s work remains critical in the CMS body of literature in establishing a framework within and against which the field has responded, and in so doing, further institutionalizing CMS as a legitimate field of inquiry.

Establishing the aims of CMS is also a challenge because of the breadth of the scope under its “big tent,” although multiple authors have explicitly addressed this project.^{xxii} Very generally, the concerns of CMS are the broad economic and social system that reproduces social injustice in the workplace, and based on the evidence from this lens, CMS advocates for radical critique of these systemic processes that moves organizations toward emancipatory goals.^{xxiii} For most CMS participants, the source of this inequity is directly attributable to the centering of the capitalist

market system and the well-established systems of domination that are connected to this economic model and that reproduce these systems of domination. “CMS proponents argue that so long as the market is the dominant mechanism for allocating resources in our societies, community and government influences are forced into a subordinate role.”^{xxiv} This is problematic because capitalistic market forces have no mechanism to incorporate the outcomes of counter values (e.g., justice, community) that reflect the needs of the social systems within which an organization operates.^{xxv} This imbalance results in systemic social injustice. CMS scholars further assert that these systems of domination are enacted through the role of management; not individuals in management, but through systems of “business and management that reproduce this one-sidedness.” To this end, Adler et al. describe the motivation of CMS proponents as stemming from a “concern with the role of management in the perpetuation and legitimation of unnecessary suffering and destruction, especially in the spheres of work and consumption,” and a belief that this suffering is “remediable.”^{xxvi}

Although this section presents a somewhat cohesive goal for CMS proponents, it is by no means a cohesive, uncontested field. As a basic tenet, CMS encourages a breadth and diversity of interpretations for pursuing these lofty ambitions that, at its extreme end, intend nothing less than the dismantling of “business” as an academic discipline and the deconstruction of the current capitalist economy. At the other extreme, the CMS strategy is dedicated to change through a reformist critique that challenges existing capitalist structures from within the same systems of domination.^{xxvii}

Though still a relatively small area within the broader field of management, the

speed with which CMS appears to have made inroads into the global academic organizational and business communities is remarkable. Although the United Kingdom is generally recognized as the hub of CMS scholarship, there has been significant growth around the world, even in the United States where the commitment to the assumptions of the capitalist economy remains strongest. For example, the CMS interest group in the Academy of Management (AOM) is the fastest growing.^{xxviii} This suggests that CMS, as a relative newcomer to the business stage, is gaining “traction” within the Academy. This is also evidenced by its growing and institutionalized presence in the world’s business schools. This kind of “domestication” or “taming”^{xxix} is an important point of concern for many CMS authors interested in the future of CMS, and much attention has been given to this positionality and the opportunities, politics, and challenges to scholarship and education processes that result from it.^{xxx}

Independent of, yet related to, this concern about CMS’s institutionalized situatedness, the key authors in CMS are reluctant to define CMS as a “field,” as this process in itself is antithetical to the radical critique intended to broaden and transform the academic disciplines engaging in organizational and managerial theory and practice. Nevertheless, recent attempts have been made to synthesize the greater body of CMS works. This synthesis reveals a field that is multidisciplinary and pluralistic and encompasses a broad range of perspectives. Nevertheless, these perspectives tend to reflect distinct, identifiable streams within the CMS literature.^{xxxi}

The influence of Fournier and Grey can still be seen in the common CMS streams, though they have broadened to reflect the expanding scope of the field.

According to the overview of critical management studies in *The Academy of Management Annals* (2007), these common themes include: “Challenging Structures of Domination” (e.g., feminist scholars, critics of bureaucracy and market structures, critical realists), “Questioning the Taken for Granted” (e.g., neoinstitutional theory, de-naturalization, critical theory), “Beyond Instrumentalism” (e.g., non-performativity), “Reflexivity and Meaning” (e.g., critical epistemology), and “Power and Knowledge” (e.g., critical scholarship, critiques of managerialism).^{xxxii} The examples provided here for each theme provide only a small fraction of the kinds of work being done within each theme. CMS scholars have drawn on many theoretical traditions to build the field. Some are represented above, but also include regulation-oriented/structural theories, classical sociology, Marxism (particularly in its descendants of Labor Process Theory and the Frankfurt School for critical theory), Pragmatism, Postmodernism, Feminism, and Environmentalism.^{xxxiii}

It is worth noting that, arguably, the most significant, recent, theoretical cleavage within CMS is between those scholars aligned with poststructuralist versus Marxist theoretical and political traditions. Furthermore, many of the divisions within CMS mirror the same debates and divisions of the same theoretic camps within the social sciences.^{xxxiv} As critical as these theoretical themes are to understanding CMS, it is perhaps more important to emphasize CMS scholars’ commitment to a different epistemological grounding than that of the predominant, noncritical, management scholarship because it is upon this different epistemic foundation that CMS deploys its theoretical approach.

3. Epistemological Considerations for CMS

A primary consideration for CMS proponents is the epistemic assumptions upon which authors premise their transformational critiques. The notion of radical critique within CMS is itself a contested notion, and this is reflected in the epistemic positions evident in the resulting scholarship. Despite differing epistemic positions, all of the primary epistemological approaches of CMS in some way seek to interrogate and complicate the notion of unquestioned “neutral” knowledge that emerged from the positivist and liberal tradition of scientific knowledge and that the management scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s embraced.^{xxxv} This most certainly can be identified in the predominant discursive streams in the business literature. In their overview of the CMS literature and trends, Adler, Forbes, and Willmott assert that there are primarily three epistemological approaches for CMS work: standpoint, poststructural, and critical realism (2007). Although fundamentally different approaches, each calls into question notions of scientific objectivity that ultimately reveals “Truth” through a scientific approach based in “facts.” Nevertheless, each epistemic position enables fundamentally different critique and can lead to outcomes that vary from radical to merely reformist in the pursuit of undermining systems of domination.

Put differently, each set of epistemic assumptions provides both strength and weakness to CMS’ ability to serve as a resource for the transformative actions that undermine systems of domination, such as neoliberal forms of capitalism. To that end, the power analysis in the final section of this paper is situated in a poststructural epistemological approach to CMS through the work of Stewart Clegg’s Circuits of Power model; however, it is moderated by a nod toward a critical

realist epistemology, which will be addressed later.

Poststructural epistemology primarily engages notions of language and its role in power constructions; the shift in understanding of the subject/object of knowledge as well as the contextual positioning of the “knower,” and a position of anti-essentialism characterized by “modesty of truth claims and reflexivity about the position of the observer world.”^{xxxvi} Although this too is contested, this was the basic framework that was intended to enable CMS to access new views into organizational and managerial theories and provoke opportunities for “radical critique” that would break the bounds of traditional epistemic conditions.

This epistemic position is appropriate for a consideration of CMS and power analysis for several reasons. First, poststructuralist epistemology decenters the knowledge production process to enable a better understanding of the whole by actively engaging the view from the margins. The margins are those moments that become available through the deployment of *proximal* rather than *distal* thinking in methods. Essentially, proximal thinking undoes the assumptions of a structured, “fixed” organization and mobilizes the notion of an organization as existing in a state of *becoming* [from Cooper (1986) as described in Adler et al, 2007]. This shift enables a richly contextual, temporal and contingent understanding of power in its particular circumstance. Second, the use of discourse analysis is critical to understanding not only episodes of power (to be discussed in the circuits of power) but also how the use of discourse continually constructs the broader network by which any power episode is governed and interpreted. Finally, poststructuralism pays explicit attention to the infusion of power throughout a knowledge system. It epistemically “centers” power, not other organizational signifiers that represent the

status quo.^{xxxvii}

For all its benefit, much scholarship based in poststructural epistemological approaches has been roundly criticized for the inaccessibility of the language as well as relativistic and highly theoretic findings that do not produce actionable outcomes applicable to lived work experiences.^{xxxviii} To address these criticisms in this project, the poststructural epistemic position is moderated by an epistemic facet characteristic of critical realism (within CMS) – ironically, one that poststructuralists specifically criticize. Critical realists contribute the epistemic conception that though there are empirical observations of objects made by science, these objects in fact have a “real existence” independent of this observation (and the observers), and critical realists seek to understand the structures that interconnect these “real objects.” Critical realists contend that ontologically there is an actual “layered reality” existing beneath the empirical layer: it presupposes causal powers motivating all observations.^{xxxix} Although the poststructural objection to this is the implied concession of a discoverable objective “fact,” the critical realist suggests that this is actually an opportunity to open the discourse in and among the scientific community about contesting “fact” and in this way, open the knowledge process to movement towards “more true” knowledge.^{xl} To this end, I see a bridging of poststructural and critical realist epistemic positions as important complements in addressing the criticism that CMS scholarship generates theory with little, to no import for real, transformative change.

Based on this epistemological frame, I suggest that by deploying the Circuits of Power Model, as introduced by Clegg, within this epistemic frame, CMS can address the criticism of public applicability and accessibility.

4. Circuits of Power

As stated earlier, CMS is characterized by the breadth of ideas it attempts to address within the landscape of critical thought. Therefore, individual scholars have attempted to enhance the utility of CMS by finding additional theoretical and methodological approaches that, when combined with CMS, provide a new lens of analysis otherwise inaccessible through current CMS scholarship. Analysis of networks of power through a CMS lens could be enhanced through the application of Clegg's Circuit of Power model. Stewart Clegg presented the full conceptualization of his Circuits of Power model in 1989 in his book *Frameworks of Power*.^{xli} In fact, the circuits of power model could be considered an unusual CMS vehicle, if for no other reason than its *practical* value as an analytic tool of power for post-structural theory. Furthermore, Clegg may actually contest being categorized as a CMS scholar given the current state of the field.^{xlii} However, I argue that the intention and design of this model is an exemplar of what CMS might represent in considering organizational power relations.

By adopting the epistemic positioning of both poststructuralism and critical realism, Clegg's Circuits of Power becomes a lens through which CMS goals might be achieved. This model interrogates the systems of power by beginning with recognition that the fundamental unit of analysis, an episode of power, is part of "complex and evolving" systems that are richly contextual. Therefore, the question becomes "whether episodic outcomes tend rather more to reproduce or to *transform* [my emphasis] the existing architectonics – the architecture, geometry and design – of power relations."^{xliii} This explicit interest in the transformation of existing power relations places this approach within the broad interests of CMS and

potentially aligns with the transformational goals suggested by CMS within a poststructural epistemology.

The circuits of power model, which is designed to consider power at a specific “focus” and a particular “level of circuit,” specifically engages situational and contextual elements required to integrate individual agency as well as capture the broader power implications at social network levels. Clegg’s interpretation of power is both a critique of the prevailing organizational theory scholarship of the time (in the late twentieth century), and a critical response to the development of power concepts more broadly. Clegg conceived of power as the variable outcome of the organization of social relations. It therefore only exists within “a relational field of force.” In other words, agents can only “‘possess’ power in so far as they are relationally constituted as doing so.”^{xliv} Generally, his overview of power is that it is non-causal (rather than a causal force occurring only in specific power episodes); it can be a positive, productive force (rather than a coercive force as a feature of illegitimate or informal organization), and the conditions of power are not *a priori* as they are conditioned on existing social relations. This last feature was a departure from the dominant view from the contingency perspective (as it was connected to resource dependencies) in organizational theory.^{xlv} Furthermore, Clegg’s conception of power is not of singular, post-structural theorizing. For example, he is aligned with the views of Braverman (labor process theory) in linking power to the division of labor, though he believes Braverman under theorizes the roles of resistance.^{xlvi} Clegg also aligns with Marxian theory with its analytic emphasis on economic domination and the relations of production.^{xlvii} In Clegg’s conception of power, relations of meaning, in addition to relations of production, are also of central

concern.

However, Clegg parts company from neo-Marxian approaches that assert that the division of labor is an outcome of historical power processes and serves as a causal mechanism, that is typically ahistorical. Instead, Clegg states “almost any phenomenon can be a resource [for power] in the appropriate context.”

Furthermore, Clegg does argue for an embodiment of power relations through the translation of the Marxist ‘species-being’^{xlviii} as one “who constitutes, and is constituted by, a moral universe of meaning.”^{xlix} Through this embodiment, Marx’s ‘species-being’ becomes a person who then, in the analytics of power, is gendered, ethnicized, nationalized, etc. This conception of power allows for broader possibilities of agentic capacity of the person entering into circuits of power. Clegg’s ‘person,’ when entering into organizational relations of power, “is irremediably social” as an individual and as part of a collective organizational unit.ⁱ

It is important at this point to avoid overstating a theoretically “ecumenical” approach here. Though Clegg sees potential connections in a variety of theoretic traditions, Clegg’s understanding of power is fundamentally Foucauldian, and this is infused in the Circuits of Power model. In particular, Clegg’s notion of power is deeply affected by Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault argues that the power of “the gaze” creates embodied knowledge that then disciplines the actors of the society without physical intervention from the institution/state.ⁱⁱ It is this kind of structural power, the disciplining of the body of the citizenry --a biopower that exists in all organizations, that is representative of the field of power envisioned in the operations of the circuits of power. However, while Foucault tends to neglect the subject in the systems of power, Clegg keeps an analytic focus on the individual

agent within his model through his theorization of episodic power and resistance.^{lii}

Deployment of Clegg's approach could achieve the goals of CMS by questioning the accepted role of power relationships within existing structures that constitutes the epistemic foundation of much organizational scholarship, while also addressing some of the existing critique. One of the criticisms of CMS has been its "esoteric post-structuralism" that serves only to cloud organizational issues in incomprehensible, and circuitous theories that lead away from productive discussion of workplace power struggles. This theoretic obfuscation creates barriers to a leftist politic. A group of scholars associated with post-Braverman Labour Process Theory (LPT) has been vocal in their view that CMS, particularly in the streams that emerged in connection with Michel Foucault, is guilty of "fetishization of managerial dominance at the cost of meaningful study of employee agency."^{liii} The circuits of power model directly engage this criticism with explicit consideration of individual agency and organizational dominance within a contextualized frame of power. Through this model, the systems of power that frame individual political structures can be represented in individual episodes of power, while recognizing that it is the series and culmination of episodes themselves that create the governing power framework. This approach utilizes a Foucauldian post-structural episteme by recognizing the creation of power-knowledge through the discursive events and resulting structures. However, recognition of the episodic nature of power displaces the ubiquity of power that Foucault advocated and places the individual as *a priori*, embodied social "facts" within a circuit of power.^{liv}

By displacing this notion of perpetual power construction, another criticism of CMS is addressed – its applicability. CMS is tenuous as a field in part because of its

current failure to move out of business schools and into public discourse.^{iv} This challenge has emerged from the inability to translate post-structural rhetoric into both methods and language that can make sense to the public about publicly observable phenomena (e.g., the global financial meltdown or corporate environmental damage). The circuits of power model creates frameworks for analysis that a skilled practitioner or a serious student of business can actually work with in order to assess the power structures that limit or enable the actions of an agentic actor, organization, or network of organizations.

Since its introduction in 1989, scholars from a variety of fields have redeployed the circuits of power model to analyze and explain organizational power issues at multiple scales. Hutchinson et al. used the circuits of power model to explain how episodes of power within a particular workplace of nurses created and perpetuated systemic workplace bullying.^{lvi} Clegg et al. deployed the model to explain how the Nazi party was able to develop and perpetuate a system that created the Holocaust.^{lvii} To demonstrate its potential utility to CMS, I briefly consider a planning study originally conducted by Bent Flyvbjerg in Aalborg, Denmark, which was reanalyzed by Clegg et al. through the circuits of power model.

The original study analyzed the 1977 Aalborg Project, which was a plan by Aalborg officials to limit car use. This Project ultimately generated significant conflict among multiple stakeholders with the ultimate result leading to wholly negative outcomes such as increased car traffic, disconnected bicycle paths, and increased fatalities in car accidents. Flyvbjerg concluded that the greater the power of a stakeholder, the lesser the need for rationality in decision making. Clegg et al. further analyzed the same case through the circuits of power model to determine

how the outcomes identified by high-level Aalborg officials were changed through the process. In so doing, Clegg et al. reveals how within individual episodes of power, the habitus of agents (i.e. city officials and other stakeholders) leads to reproduction of power systems, rather than enabling attention to transformative possibilities (i.e., stated goal of reduced car use).^{lviii}

The outcomes of this analysis have potential connection to the emancipatory aims sought by CMS scholarship. For example, one of Flyjberg's key findings was that there are ramifications for agencies when power and knowledge are intertwined. Specifically, the "means justified the ends" and power holders had less responsibility for rational grounding for their actions.^{lix} CMS scholars could use the findings about power revealed in this case to consider impacts on civic policy and discourse, and to develop theoretical as well as pragmatic methods for identifying and disrupting hegemonic discourse as manifest in episodes of power. This could lead to political and social activism by CMS scholars in ways that directly address criticism of the field.

Another project based on these data could be research about the creation of new forms of engagement that enter into a circuitry of power with emancipatory intention. This could have immediate relevance, for example, in the mobilization of community voices in "Public Meetings" that are used to collect opinions of coming public projects, by centering the voice of the community, rather than centering the position and response of the government, developer, or other powerful interest group. These suggestions would build on the understanding of power as being layered, richly contextual, and dependent upon the discursive constructions built by a community.

Another opportunity for CMS is the expansion of its consideration to move beyond management of a single organization and into the realm of the management of resources, networks, and institutional systems.^{lx} To this end, CMS must also have an analytic tool capable of scaling up its analyses to address the domination within and between networks of power. Deployment of the circuits of power model within the framework of CMS emancipatory aims enables this kind of view in that an actor in the circuit of power model is not limited to the individual, but also can exist as an organization. Further, an individual or organization can be connected to multiple circuits through the juncture of “obligatory passage points” through which power must pass in the circuits of power model. Alvesson et al. (2009) suggests the utility of CMS in the Global Justice movement, for example, as scholars have already identified the privileging of property rights over human rights in some global institutions through the use of corporate lobbying. In other words, reanalyzing power in a global justice framework, through the circuits of power model, would reveal the actors present and absent in the obligatory passage points of power (e.g., corporate lobbyists instead of human rights organizations).^{lxi} The identification of the actors influencing power outcomes affords the possibility of new strategies to affect better outcomes for justice.

5. Summary

CMS has a potentially important voice to offer in management studies because of its inherently critical consideration of normalized assumptions of organizations that reflect the aims of economic capitalism. However, unless these theoretical critiques can migrate into publicly accessible impacts, the future of CMS is

vulnerable to marginalization through the same processes that have enabled its rapid emergence on the organizational scene. Further, the critical moment for CMS to make this move may be now, in the face of evidence of global capitalist meltdown that gripped the U.S. and many Western-European countries. There is potentially a distinctive receptivity to this critique in the academic community at this moment. CMS could be a vehicle, from within the business disciplines, for providing analytical focus on and accessible public voice to the implicated nature of power structures of domination that populate the capitalist market system.

ⁱ This essay benefited significantly from the insightful comments provided by the peer review of this article and for which I am very appreciative.

ⁱⁱ CMS Division, 2014, CMS at the Academy of Management: Domain Statement, In, ed. Academy of Management, Critical Management Studies (CMS) Division, http://group.aomonline.org/cms/about_us/Domain.html (accessed January 16, 2014, 2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ M. Rowlinson, and J. Hassard, "How Come the Critters Came to be Teaching in Business Schools? Contradictions in the Institutionalization of Critical Management Studies," *Organization* 18 (2011), 673-689; Mayer N. Zald, "Spinning disciplines: Critical Management Studies in the Context of the Transformation of Management Education," *Organization* 9 (2002), 365-385.

^{iv} See Note 1 above.

^v A. Scherer, "Critical Theory and Its Contribution to Critical Management Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 29-51.

^{vi} The CMS Workshop was first organized in 1998 as a pre-conference forum to discuss critically oriented research interests. It continues to meet at the Academy of Management Annual meeting and is in 2007 became an official special interest group of the Academy of Management.

^{vii} Paul Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," *Organization* 9 (2002), 387-395.

^{viii} A. Scherer, "Critical Theory and Its Contribution," 29-51; M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman, and H. Willmott, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Paul S. Adler, Linda C. Forbes, and Hugh Willmott, "3. Critical Management Studies," *Academy of Management Annals* 1 (2007), 119-179; C. Grey and H. Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2005).

^{ix} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395.

^x See Note 1 above.

^{xi} Brewis, and Wray-Bliss, "Re-searching Ethics," 1521-1540; S.R Clegg, D. Courpasson, and N. Phillips, *Power and Organizations*: (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006); Fournier and Grey, "At the Critical Moment," 7-32; Hancock, "Critical Management Studies: An Introduction," *Critical Sociology* 34 (2008), 9-14; Heiskala, Risto, "Theorizing power: Weber, Parsons, Foucault and Neostructuralism." *Social Science Information* 2, no. 40 (2001):241-264; A. Tatli, "On the Power and Poverty of Critical (Self) Reflection in Critical Management Studies: a Comment on Ford, Harding and Learmonth," *British Journal of Management* 23 (2012), 22-30; P. Thompson, "Brands, Boundaries and Bandwagons: A Critical Reflection on Critical Management Studies," in *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*, eds. C. Grey and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 364; M. Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," *Organization* 15 (2008), 939-945; David Grant, Rick Iedema, and Cliff Oswick, "Discourse and Critical Management Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689; Zald, "Spinning disciplines" 365-385.

^{xii} Grey and Willmott, *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*

^{xiii} Ibid.; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395

^{xiv} Grey and Willmott, *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*; Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook*;" Adler et al, "3. Critical Management Studies," 119-179.

^{xv} Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945. Hancock, "Critical Management Studies: An Introduction," 9-14; Phillips, "The Adolescence of Critical Management Studies?," *Management Learning* 37 (2006), 29-31; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689.

^{xvi} Voronov, "Toward Engaged Critical Management Studies," 939-945.

^{xvii} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; 119-179; Alvesson, Bridgman, and Willmott, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; M. Alvesson, and H. Willmott, eds., *Critical management studies* (London: Sage, 1992).

^{xviii} Adler et al, "Critical Management Studies," 119-179; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*

^{xix} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*, 119-179; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689.

^{xx} V. Fournier, and C. Grey, "At the Critical Moment: Sonditions and Prospects for Critical Management Studies," *Human Relations* 53 (2000), 7-32; Rowlinson and Hassard, "How Come the Critters," 673-689; Zald, "Spinning disciplines" 365-385.

^{xxi} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*, 119-179; Grey and Willmott, eds., *Critical management studies: A Reader*; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; Thompson, "Brands, Boundaries and Bandwagons," 364; A. Spicer, M. Alvesson, and D. Kärreman, "Critical performativity: The Unfinished Business of Critical Management Studies," *Human Relations* 62 (2009), 537-560.

^{xxii} For examples, see Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*, 119-179; Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*; Alvesson and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*; Fournier and Grey, "At the Critical Moment," 7-32; Hancock, "Critical Management Studies," 9-14; Grey and Willmott, *Critical Management Studies: A Reader*; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395.

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^{xxv} Alvesson et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*.

^{xxvi} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*, 125

^{xxvii} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*; Adler, "Critical in the Name of Whom and What," 387-395; Martin Parker, *Against management: Organization in the age of managerialism*: Polity Press, 2002); Zald, "Spinning disciplines" 365-385.

^{xxviii} Adler, Forbes, and Willmott, eds., *Critical Management Studies*.

^{xxix} Thank you to Dr. Karen Hult for the suggested language here.

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^{xxxii} Adler et al, 3. *Critical Management Studies*. 125-129; M. Reed, "Critical realism in critical management studies," in *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Scherer, "Critical theory and Its Contribution," 29-51.

^{xxxiii} Adler et al, *Critical Management Studies*, 119-179.

^{xxxiv} Fournier and Grey, "At the Critical Moment," 7-32; Hancock, "Critical Management Studies,"

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^{xxxvi} C. Jones, "4: Poststructuralism in Critical Management Studies," in *The Oxford handbook of critical management studies*, eds. M. Alvesson, T. Bridgman and H. Willmott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009): 81.

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^{xlix} Clegg, "Radical Revisions," 98.

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