
Convenors
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In recent years, contributions by, among others, Clegg (2006) and Spicer et al. (2009) have sparked a debate on the practical relevance and (critical) ‘performativity’ of CMS. Spicer et al. (2009) see authors arguing ‘against management’ (Parker 2002) and stressing the ‘non-performative intent’ (Fournier and Grey 2000) as promoting a (paternalistic) comfort zone and supporting a ‘cynicism which pervades CMS’. Following the discussion over the years, the convenors increasingly feel uncomfortable with this new avenue of thinking and the impact is has on the evolution of the CMS community. We believe that for many management scholars CMS is a more or less comfortable »haven« in which to share ideas and critically engage in the study “of, and sometimes against, management rather than [in] the development of techniques or legitimations for management” (Alvesson et al. 2009: 1, emphasis in original). In contrast, the new twist towards a ‘pragmatic’ and ‘constructive’ direction for CMS (as opposed to ‘negativism’ and ‘intellectualism’), actualize and support, as we see it, first, a widespread distrust of critical thinking (Adorno 1977). Second, in focusing on managerial and organizational practices it eclipses the interdependence of these practices with the societal, political or economic relations on a global scale. Having said that, we nevertheless share the critics’ dissatisfaction with the societal impact of CMS and want to explore avenues of critical, constructive engagement.

In the stream, we would welcome papers that re-initiate a debate which already has been conducted almost two decades ago and to transport it to contemporary structures, actors and discourses. In doing so, we neither want to evoke nostalgia about ‘the good old critical times’ nor do we want to limit the discussion to the new performativity in CMS. Rather, we would like to throw the first stone on ourselves as part of the CMS community to discuss the relationship between critique and constructive intervention as well as its consequences for our identities as critical researchers.

We invite contributions that deal with, but are not limited to, the following areas and questions:

- Reflections on the changes of what ‘Critical’ in CMS means and how it is constructed. We are both interested in a genealogy of critique as well as performativity in CMS. You may also want to think about the following questions:
  - From revolution to bureaucracy: Is managerial advice all that is left to us?
Where has the excitement gone: What happened to anti-Management, anti-Organization theory, de-differentiation, alternative economies and the rest?

Of legislators and interpreters: Is academia the wrong place for CMS?

Reflections on roots, buds, and neighbours:

- We’re not alone in this: The C’s in Critical Marketing, Critical Finance, Political Economy, Economic Sociology, Critical Discourse Analysis etc. What can we learn from these efforts and how can it inspire our own work?
- Any (real) news from theory? We are interested in contributions dealing with contemporary critical theorists (e.g. Boltanski, Honneth, Badiou, Agamben) and their suggestions regarding praxis.
- Opening the ‘message in a bottle’: What about Marx, Bakunin, Nietzsche, Gramsci, Adorno? We look forward to papers who challenge the status of the ‘classics’ as mere footnotes of CMS.
- Finally: Stop moaning! or How to be more than a caller in the desert: We are living in times of crisis, protest and societal changes which (at least) need attention and reflection. Therefore, we especially invite case studies or other empirical material on successful change, protests and disturbances.

References


