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1
3 CHANGING INSTITUTIONS:
5 CRITICAL MANAGEMENT
7 STUDIES AS A SOCIAL
9 MOVEMENT ☆
11

13 Hugh Willmott
15

17 ABSTRACT

19 Purpose – *To consider Critical Management Studies as a social movement.*

21 Design/methodology/approach – *The purpose is fulfilled by reflecting
23 upon the history of Critical Management Studies by reference to social
25 movement theory, institutional theory and the social theory of hegemony.*

27 Findings – *Critical Management Studies is plausibly understood as a
social movement.*

29 ☆ Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the Academy of Management Annual
31 Conference, Hawaii, 2005 and at the European Group for Organization Studies Annual
33 Conference, Bergen, 2006 and seminars at Imperial College London and the University of
Warwick during 2007. The work involved as a panel member in the 2008 Research Assessment
Exercise resulted in the draft being set aside. The invitation to contribute to this volume
prompted me to return to it and update it. I would like to thank everyone who has participated
in discussing, and providing comments on, the paper and to the editors of this collection for
inviting me to contribute to it.

35

Getting Things Done

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1 Originality/value – *The chapter offers a fresh perspective on Critical*
 3 *Management Studies by representing it as a movement rather than as a*
specialist field of knowledge. AU :2

5 **Keywords:** Critical Management Studies; ~~management knowledge~~;
 7 management education; institutional change; social movement theory;
 9 institutional theory; social theory of hegemony

11 INTRODUCTION

13 A resurgence of interest in the relevance of social movement theory for
 15 the study of organizations (Davis & Thompson, 1994; Davis, McAdam,
 17 Scott, & Zald, 2005; Hambrick & Chen, 2008) has contributed to a wider AU :3
 process of flux and contestation in institutional theory (e.g. Lawrence &
 19 Suddaby, 2006; Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004, Suddaby & Greenwood,
 2005; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012). Proponents of institutional
 theory are wrestling to retain the core idea that organizational behaviour is
 enacted in and through ‘highly elaborated institutional environments’
 21 (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 53) while endeavouring to account adequately
 for innovation and change (e.g. Fligstein & McCadam, 2012; Hirsch &
 23 Lounsbury, 1997; Lounsbury, Ventresca, & Hirsch, 2003). To address
 questions of innovation and change, a number of scholars (e.g. Amenta &
 25 Zylan, 1991; Davis, Morrill, Rao, & Soule, 2008; Rao, Monin, & Durand,
 2003) have been drawn to social movement theory, not least as it is attentive
 27 to ‘how political struggles shape cultural meaning systems and important
 socio-economic processes’ (Lounsbury et al., 2003, p. 72).

29 This chapter focuses on the field of business knowledge and education;
 and, more specifically, the de/legitimation of knowledge produced and
 31 disseminated in and through business schools. It reflects on how, during the
 past couple of decades or so, the scope and content of this knowledge has
 33 been placed in question by the emergence and insurgence of critical studies
 of management. Known increasingly by its three letter acronym – CMS –
 35 critical management studies (CMS¹) examined here as an example of what
 Hensmans (2003) terms a ‘challenger Social Movement Organization’. The
 37 chapter builds upon Hensmans’ (2003) engagement of Laclau’s social theory
 of hegemony (STH) (Laclau, 1990; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) to develop
 39 an appreciation of the role of CMS, as a social movement, in processes of
 de/institutionalization in the field of business knowledge and education.²

1 Of course, there have always been critics of management knowledge within
2 business schools and more widely (see Grey, 1996). What were previously
3 sporadic criticisms are now articulated in and through a social movement
4 whose core membership is based in business schools but whose concerns
5 resonate with, and can reach out to, activists, policy-makers, politicians,
6 journalists and others ~~who share their concerns~~ (Jones, 2005; see also Reedy,
7 2008 for a critique). What they share, arguably, is a critical view that ‘features
8 of contemporary society, such as the profit imperative, patriarchy, racial
9 inequality, and ecological irresponsibility, often turn organizations into
10 instruments of domination and exploitation’ (‘Domain Statement’ for the
11 Critical Management Studies Interest Group on the Academy of Manage-
12 ment website: <http://aom.pace.edu/cms/About/Domain.htm>).

13 Applying STH, it is acknowledged how the identification of, on the one
14 hand, ‘the mainstream’ (hereafter ‘Mainstream’) and, on the other, ‘CMS’
15 results from privileging a logic of equivalence so that diversity within each
16 category is unified and polarized.³ ‘Mainstream’ and ‘CMS’ are each ‘empty
17 signifiers’ (Laclau, 2006) in the sense that they are sufficiently capacious to
18 accommodate a wider range of meanings ~~that are taken to equivalents.~~⁴
19 From an STH perspective, CMS is seen to challenge the objectivity and
20 necessity of the incumbent ‘Mainstream’ form of business knowledge and
21 education. A distinctive characteristic of STH is its conceptualization of
22 *all* identities – the Mainstream as well as CMS, for example – as *political*.
23 They are ‘political’ not just, or even principally, in the sense that identities
24 are social constructions rather than natural givens (Berger & Luckmann,
25 1967), or because they are considered to lean towards the Left or the Right.
26 Rather, they are political in that identifications are understood to be
27 accomplished and precariously stabilized through hegemonic processes. In
28 this way, the political is placed at the very centre of the social (Laclau, 1990,
29 p. 33). For example, by disclosing the contingency of the Mainstream, CMS
30 associates management with a conception of ‘critical’ that transgresses
31 the limits of a narrow sense of ‘criticality’ that is preoccupied with refining
32 and justifying the agenda of the Mainstream, as reflected in the dismissal
33 of CMS by the declaration that ‘all good scholarship is critical’. ~~On the~~
34 ~~one hand, it~~ would be absurd to claim that CMS has a monopoly of
35 criticism within the field of business knowledge and education (see <http://maxspeak.org/mt/archives/000818.html#more>). See, for example, the open
36 letter to George Bush sent by numerous business school professors in
37 October 2004 that highlights the budget deficit, identifies a ‘fiscal crisis’ and
38 criticizes the divisiveness of the administration’s tax policies. What counts as
39 ‘critical’/critique is unsettled since it is itself the target of critique. However,

1 within the Mainstream, criticism tends to be confined to filling in gaps and
 2 refining ~~in~~ a comparatively established and ‘normalized’ body of knowledge.
 3 In CMS, in contrast, there is greater emphasis upon problematizing
 4 assumptions and boundaries (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010). From a CMS
 5 perspective, the sense of ‘critical’ invoked within the Mainstream is framed
 6 within a managerialist–scientific–technocratic template of ideas, beliefs
 7 and values.

8 ~~A~~ As critical students of management challenge the objectivity of the
 9 Mainstream, they/we are seen to struggle within an ‘open polity’ (Zald,
 10 Morrill, & Rao, 2005) that is nonetheless hegemonically sutured (Laclau &
 11 Mouffe, 1985) by a dominant, orthodox conception of what is legitimately
 12 counted as business knowledge and education – where ‘business’ is
 13 increasingly used as a shorthand to encompass management and extends
 14 to the public and not-for-profit sectors. In questioning and challenging the
 15 Mainstream, CMS presents a kind of insurgency which aspires ‘to implement
 16 goals, programs, or policy choices which have been explicitly denied by
 17 the legitimate authority of the focal organization’ (Rao, Morrill, & Zald,
 18 2000; Tarrow, 2011; Zald & Berger, 1978, p. 838). As a social movement
 19 organization, CMS aims to change the field of business, particularly with
 20 regard to the reformation of management knowledge and its influence upon
 21 practice (see Eden, 2003; Grey, 2004, 2005; Spicer, Alvesson, & Karreman,
 22 2009). In the language of neo-institutionalist analysis, CMS ‘presents an
 23 alternative, and poses a challenge, to the established archetypal template’⁵
 24 (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993, 1996) of business knowledge and education.
 25 CMS feeds off, and contributes to, a process of ‘normative fragmentation’
 26 (Oliver, 1991) as it makes more evident and amplifies the existence of
 27 divergent value orientations (e.g. with regard to ‘profit’, ‘markets’, ‘gender’,
 28 ‘sustainability’, etc.). CMS commends an alternative ‘template’ in a field
 29 where, in Greenwood and Hinings’ words, ‘some groups support the template-
 30 in-use, whereas others prefer an articulated alternative’ (Greenwood &
 31 Hinings, 1996, p. 1035; see also Davis & Thompson, 1994). CMS is, in this
 32 sense, symptomatic and productive of the field’s putative destabilization
 33 and prospective radical transformation.

34 The chapter is organized as follows. It begins by outlining the relation-
 35 ship between social movement theory and institutional theory. Next, the
 36 emergence of CMS in the field of business is considered, and its repre-
 37 sentation as a social movement rather than, say, a distinctive domain of
 38 knowledge or a group of specialists, is commended. Some limits of neo-
 39 institutionalism’s capacity to analyse change are then identified before
 showing how STH offers an illuminating approach for studying the role of

1 social movements, such as CMS, in processes of (de)institutionalization.
2 In its empirical focus and theoretical framing, the chapter is responsive to
3 the assessment that there is a ‘paucity of studies of activism in organizations
4 [which] is surprising’ (Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003, p. 473); and supportive
5 of the contention that ‘useful insights may be gained by connecting localized
6 investigations of intraorganizational activism to an analysis of broader
7 social dynamics that shape the possibilities for voice and emancipation in
8 particular settings’ (*ibid.*).
9

11 **CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES IN CONTEXT: 12 **INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND NORMATIVE 13 **FRAGMENTATION IN SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS******

15 Neo-institutionalist analysis (e.g. Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) has been
16 developed to counteract an objectionable tendency in new institutionalism
17 (e.g. Meyer & Rowan, 1977) to limit the role of actors (e.g. entrepreneurs) to
18 their success or failure in following scripts prescribed by well established
19 ‘myths’ and ‘ceremonies’. Neo-institutionalism commends a shift from
20 examining the institutional embeddedness of organizing practices to
21 studying the transformative role of actors in processes of institutionalization
22 and de-institutionalization. In this context, social movement theory is seen
23 to be relevant for showing how actors, as movement members, ‘alter’ as well
24 as become ‘altered by’ existing policies and institutions (Lounsbury et al.,
25 2003, p. 74; see also Fligstein & McCadam, 2012; McAdam, McCarthy, &
26 Zald, 1996; Tarrow, 2011) as they actively mobilize resources (Zald &
27 McCarthy, 1980) and/or seize upon opportunities (Tilly, 1978) to organize
28 their interests and advance their agendas.
29

31 *Organization and Fragmentation in Business Education*

33 Business schools, and indirectly the emergence of CMS within them, have
34 developed to service a demand for graduates with pliable ideological
35 leanings and some basic familiarity with managerialist knowledge. The
36 equivalent of corporate ‘finishing schools’,⁶ schools of business have been
37 established by wealthy benefactors as well as by national and increasingly
38 international corporations, agencies and governments. Given this pedigree,
39 it is unsurprising that business knowledge and education have been shaped

1 by a Mainstream ‘framing process’ (Khurana, 2007; McAdam & Scott,
 2005, pp. 15–16). Within this Mainstream framing, it is taken for granted
 3 that business education should be *for* business or at least be uncritical or
 4 minimally critical of its values and inattentive to its destructive social and
 5 ecological consequences. In the Mainstream, debate is confined to the
 6 question of what kind of knowledge and education (e.g. highly specialist or
 7 more general) serves business ‘best’. Yet, when based in Universities, and
 8 when they are not merely milked ‘cash cows’ to cross-subsidize activities
 9 undertaken in other departments, business schools are subjected to
 10 established academic norms of scholarship and research. Where they are
 11 retained, ~~these norms~~ support an alternative framing that legitimizes critical
 12 forms of inquiry in which debate circles around questions of what the
 13 advancement of knowledge means, and/or how it best serves ‘the public
 14 good’ – ~~that is,~~ a good which is not self-evidently equated with what
 15 corporate executives or their shareholders regard as ‘good’.

16 These co-constitutive or ‘schizophrenic’ (Zell, 2005, p. 274) framings⁷ –
 17 which are characterized here, respectively, as ‘commercial/training’ and
 18 ‘scholarly/education’ – exist in an uneasy alliance where totalization of
 19 either framing is frustrated by their mutual dependence. Privileging the
 20 scholarly/education frame renders business schools vulnerable to the
 21 complaints that they are insufficiently relevant to business practice and/or
 22 inadequately preparing their recruits for industry (Daniel, 1998). Con-
 23 versely, unrestrained pursuit of a training/commercial framing invites
 24 accusations of being so market, or ratings, driven as to displace educational
 25 goals (Porter, Rehder, & Muller, 1997), including the development of moral
 26 sensibility and awareness of business ethics (Ghoshal, 2005); and/or a failure
 27 to connect research activity to a bigger picture (Clegg, 2002; Hinings &
 28 Greenwood, 2002; Walsh, Weber, & Margolis, 2003). Such tensions, which
 29 are played out as struggles within business schools, present an opportunity
 30 for a less conservative and more progressive agenda to emerge, such as that
 31 articulated in CMS where questions about corporations, democracy and the
 32 public good are incorporated (Barley, 2007; Stern & Barley, 1996).

33 Tensions between commercial and educational frames are perhaps most
 34 sharply illustrated in the design and delivery of the Masters of Business
 35 Administration (MBA). Its contents and delivery tends to be organized to
 36 secure a good return – principally reputational but also pecuniary – for the
 37 business school as well as for corporations, sponsors and especially the
 38 recruits who make a financial investment in the production and acquisition
 39 of this highly commodified product. Questions about the research-base of
 what ‘MBAs’ are taught, the legitimacy of business as a practice and/or the

1 accountability of management to constituencies extending beyond senior
2 managers or shareholders are rarely asked or they are marginalized (e.g. by
3 ensuring that they receive some coverage in some part of the teaching
4 programme, such as in an elective on ethics or corporate social responsi-
5 bility). MBA purchasers and providers are complicit in a mutually assured
6 delusion⁸ to the extent that they believe any significant or sustained
7 attention is given to such questions, let alone that they form part of the
8 core (e.g. finance and marketing) of MBA programmes. As Pfeffer (2005,
9 p. 1093) has observed, ‘let’s not kid ourselves – what the students are mostly
10 buying *is not an education*, defined by what they learn and the skills they
11 develop, but rather a credential that will enhance their career prospects and
12 salaries’ (emphasis added).⁹ And yet, as business schools are located in
13 Universities and award degrees, there remains some pressure – at least for
14 the moment and even if it is diminishing in deference to commercial
15 considerations – to maintain at least a veneer of academic content and
16 rigour. But this is usually restricted to research activities, and is evacuated
17 from mainstream textbooks and case studies where critical frameworks and
18 analyses are a rarity.

19 Significant issues – for example, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism
20 in relation to post-1989 globalization, de-regulation culminating in the
21 meltdown of financial markets in 2008 (Willmott, 2011) and the role of
22 business in climate change ~~been~~ marginalized ~~from~~ core business school
23 education and research (Dehler, 2009; Zald, 2002). Core research agendas,
24 analytical frameworks and doctoral training do not equip business school
25 faculty and students to examine these issues, despite mounting popular
26 concern about the consequences of global capitalism. In the popular media,
27 businesses, especially multinationals, are increasingly identified as conduits
28 of anti-social, reactionary forces that mobilize their resources to lobby for,
29 and advance, systems of ‘free trade’ in which they exploit all available
30 planetary resources, including cheap labour, in a relentless pursuit of growth
31 and profitability (Bello, Bullard, & Malhotra, 2000; Korten, 1995). As if
32 operating in a parallel universe, and dominated by a commercial/training
33 frame, most business school faculty exhibit an arrogant, or bewildered,
34 ostrich-like, disinclination to address what Greenwood and Hinings (1996,
35 p. 1028) characterize as ‘the degree of instability in the face of external
36 shocks’ (e.g. corporate scandals – Enron, WorldCom; see Adler, 2002) or the
37 global financial crisis (Willmott, 2011). The world has moved on but, from
38 the perspective of CMS, much business education scores high on platitudes,
39 self-justification and image management (Gioia & Corley, 2003), and low on
critical scrutiny and wider relevance (see Willmott, 2012; Zell, 2001, 2005).

1 *The Challenge of CMS*

3 Proponents of CMS can be heard to give voice to what Hensmans (2003,
 5 p. 359) calls a ‘marginal ideology in a field by positioning themselves
 7 as liberating emancipators’. So, for example, advocates of CMS question
 9 the value of programmes which amplify or endorse students’ belief in
 11 shareholder value as any residual allegiance to broader, social values is cast
 13 aside (Aspen Institute, 2003; Khuruna, 2007). CMS ‘theorization’ (Rao et al.,
 15 2003; Strang & Meyer, 1993) of business education (see Perriton & Reynolds,
 17 2004) has drawn support from other commentators – such as Pfeffer and
 19 Fong (2002, 2003) and Trank and Rynes (2003) – who share elements of its
 21 critique. Pfeffer and Fong (2003), for example, call for a reorientation of
 23 business schools as they commend a move away from the competitive
 25 ratings game, where the business press decides the ranking criteria, and
 27 advocate the embrace of ‘some core purpose more consistent with a
 29 professional ethos’ (*ibid.*, p. 1517; see also Trank & Rynes, 2003, p. 202).

31 A limitation of Pfeffer and Fong’s prescription, which distances it from a
 33 CMS standpoint, is its casting of a nostalgic eye back to a past that most
 35 likely never existed, and its lack of concern to address the challenges of the
 37 present and the future.¹⁰ A comparatively narrow conception of the purpose
 and accountability of business schools is advocated – that is, ‘to the
 management profession that they ostensibly serve’ (*ibid.*, p. 1515; see also
 Khuruna, 2007). There is no call for business academics to become engaged
 with critical thinking on fundamental issues – such as those of global
 poverty, ecological imbalance and neo-imperialism (Willmott, 2012). CMS,
 in contrast, identifies business as a key participant in the generation of these
 problems – for example, through a relentless pursuit of (rapacious and
 unbalanced) growth and by lobbying governments to accommodate the
 demands of business, or face the consequences (e.g. the relocation of
 business to a more benign or lower cost environment). Business has played
 a central role in funding administrations. Notably, major parties have come to
 depend on corporate sponsorship in return for which they provide business
 with huge subsidies and pursue policies that benefit their funders. For
 example, the occupation of Iraq and the subsequent process of ‘reform’
 provided unprecedented opportunities for business expansion by private
 military firms¹¹ (Barley, 2006) as well as securing control over the oil
 reserves (see <http://www.warprofiteers.com>; see also Klein, 2004).

39 A core assumption of CMS, as a ‘challenger social movement’, is that
 knowledge of business and business education is too important to be
 dominated by a commercial frame in which so many human issues of critical

1 importance (e.g. women's rights, poverty, global warming, international
2 security, etc.) – are unaddressed or considered only insofar as a business case
3 can be made for their (selective) inclusion, or when public pressures become
4 too intense to be ignored. What, then, of repeated expressions of concern for
5 business schools to 'regain relevance'? The demand for greater relevance
6 articulates the tension between commercial and educational framings of
7 their purpose, a tension that has been expressed by faculty and pundits since
8 the first schools were established in Universities (Daniel, 1998).¹² In the
9 Mainstream, the disconnection from broader social and political issues is
10 noted in Zald's (2002) commentary on the credentials of business school
11 faculty:

13 Where are the political sociologists and political economists on the faculties of schools of
14 management? ... capitalism has to be seen in its full global and civilizational context. In
15 the rush to neo-liberalism and globalization we have ignored the dark side of
16 globalization, the massive poverty, the cultural and personal costs of displacement,
17 the conflicts and reactions to the spread of global capitalism. (*ibid.*, p. 203)

18 Political challenges, in which CMS participates, include a shift in the
19 orientation of research and teaching away from a conservative, corporate
20 conception of relevance (Willmott, 2012). The shift requires a deepening and
21 extension of critical inputs into teaching and research agendas as a basis for
22 reaching out beyond fellow researchers and teachers. It necessitates
23 engagement 'in serious dialogue with managerial audiences' (Walsh &
24 Weber, 2002) about issues that are silenced or trivialized in Mainstream
25 business knowledge and education. Beyond academia, there is the challenge
26 of connecting with producers and consumers around the world whose lives
27 are directly or indirectly affected and avoidably blighted by the 'ideas,
28 beliefs and values' (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1026) – a 'template'
29 which defines and legitimizes a narrow conception of business and what is
30 properly researched and taught in business schools (see Grey & Willmott,
31 2002; Willmott, 2008).

33

35 **CMS: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TEMPLATE-IN-USE**

37 The contribution and limits of neo-institutionalist analysis for under-
38 standing CMS as a social movement organization will now be considered.
39 To this end, the heavily referenced¹³ work of Greenwood and Hinings
(1996) is taken to be exemplary of an emergent concern to incorporate

1 considerations of agency and power into the examination of processes of
 institutionalization and de-institutionalization.

3

5 *Contours of Neo-Institutionalist Analysis*

7 *Neo*-institutionalists build upon, yet also depart from, a premise common to
 both ‘old’ and ‘new’ institutional theory: namely, that ‘institutionalized
 9 organizational behaviours’ are ‘stable, repetitive and enduring activities ... “
 infuse[d] with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand”’
 11 (Oliver, 1991, p. 563, citing Selznick, 1957, p. 17). Neo-institutionalism is
 animated by the assessment that ‘one of the core premises of institutional
 13 organization theory is to look at institutions as taken-for-granted scripts
 which *define* the constitutive expectations of actors’ (Beckart, 1999, p. 781).
 15 Reacting against the structure-driven account of institutionalism developed
 by new institutionalists, neo-institutionalists pose the following kinds of
 17 question: ‘How is it possible that actors can take a calculating position with
 regard to taken-for-granted rules?’ (*ibid.*). In the field of business, a parallel
 19 question is: how is it possible to take a critical position in relation to the
 established Mainstream template?

21 Such questions highlight how, for neo-institutionalists, new institutional
 theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) places excessive weight upon the imperative
 23 to comply with established routines, scripts and schema, and so encounters
 difficulties in accounting for mould-breaking innovation and change.
 25 Beckart (1999) identifies two broad, neo-institutionalist approaches for
 addressing this deficit. The first problematizes the homogeneity attributed
 27 by new institutionalists to ‘structure’. Questioning the representation of
 structure(s) as coherent and totalizing, this approach commends an
 29 attentiveness to possible tensions and internal inconsistencies that may
 prompt and inspire agents to develop innovative responses. The second
 31 approach focuses upon ‘agency’ – in the form of institutional ‘entrepreneurs’
 who, individually or collectively, ~~to~~-exploit ‘strategic opportunities’ by
 33 mobilizing resources within their environment. Instead of accounting for
 change by reference to structural fault-lines, the focus is upon the capacity
 35 of agents who ‘take a reflexive position towards taken-for-granted rules’
 (Beckart, 1999, p. 790). Questioning the necessity and legitimacy of
 37 established rules and norms, space is opened up for alternative institutions
 fashioned by creative ‘institutional entrepreneurs’. Such innovative action is
 39 understood to arise independently of the (consistency or otherwise of)
 established structures to whose reproduction it poses a threat.

1 *Neo-Institutionalist Analysis of Change*

3 According to Beckart (1999), Greenwood and Hinings' (1996) neo-
5 institutionalist framework for analysing organizational change leans in the
7 direction of the first, structure-driven approach. This assessment is, however,
9 difficult to reconcile with Greenwood and Hinings' emphasis upon what
11 they characterize as 'four aspects of an organization's internal dynamics –
13 interests, values, power¹⁴ dependencies, and capacity for action' (*ibid.*,
15 p. 1032) – all of which connect to an agency-driven understanding of change
17 and also resonate directly with insights developed in social movement
19 theory (McAdam & Scott, 2005). That said, for Greenwood and Hinings,
21 the formation of distinctive *interests* and *values* is associated with the
23 differentiation of groups within organizations, such as the differentiation of
25 CMS academics from Mainstream academics. In this respect, interests
27 and processes of value formation are understood to be embedded within,
29 and contingent upon, heterogeneity within the structural composition of
31 organizations (e.g. business schools). It is this structural differentiation that
is conceived to nurture '*the seeds of alternative ways of viewing the purposes of
that organization*' (*ibid.*, p. 1033, emphasis added). Within organizations,
groups are seen by Greenwood and Hinings to form coalitions that vie for
dominance as they endeavour to translate their interests into favourable
allocations of scarce and valued resources. In the field of business, CMS has
emerged by forming and organizing informal groups, and by recruiting
research students and early career lecturers. Within or across business
schools and the wider Academy, critically minded scholars have engaged in
co-authorship, run specialist seminar series, workshops and conferences and
established an Interest Group within the Academy of Management which
has become a sizable Division. In such ways, CMS members have forged an
identity, and have gained access to symbolic as well as material resources – in
the guise of prestigious appointments, research grants, teaching awards,
doctoral students, etc.

Anticipating Beckart's (1999, p. 790) point about taking a reflexive
33 position towards taken-for-granted rules, Greenwood and Hinings (1996)
35 contend that a condition of the creation of an 'alternative template' (e.g.
37 CMS) is making a (reflexive) connection between 'the prevailing template'
and 'the distribution of privilege and disadvantage' (Greenwood & Hinings,
39 1996, p. 1035) so as to show that the template can be changed *only* by
replacing the template, not by refining it. When commenting upon the
political struggle involved in questioning and replacing the dominant
template, they outline four possibilities that, arguably, are also pertinent for

1 analysing CMS as an intraorganizational and interorganizational social
 3 movement. In the first of these possibilities, virtually all groups remain
 5 committed to the prevailing (e.g. Mainstream) template-in-use; in the
 7 second, groups are indifferent to, but generally comply or acquiesce with,
 9 the established template; in the third, some groups support the template but
 11 others tend to favour ‘an articulated alternative’; finally, in the fourth
 13 possibility, most groups prefer a single articulated alternative to the
 15 established template.

9 It is not wholly fanciful to imagine a scenario in business schools where,
 11 initially, most faculty are committed to the template (Position 1) or at least
 13 acquiescent (Position 2). These positions do not exclude the possibility of
 15 taking a reflexive position towards the taken-for-granted rules; but the
 17 dominance of the template-in-use operates to affirm the necessity of the
 19 Mainstream as a matter of conviction or at least resignation. Over time, some
 21 of those aligned with Positions 1 and 2 may reflect on their positioning,
 perhaps stimulated by exogenous developments – such as a continuing
 financial crisis or impending ecological crisis. Allegiances then gravitate to
 Positions 3 and 4. Greenwood and Hinings’ neo-institutionalist point is that
 such shifts or movements are not unconnected to changing structural
 conditions but they also involve some degree of agential participation.

23 *The Template-in-Use: A Complex of Managerialism,*
 25 *Scientism and Technocracy*

27 If, following Greenwood and Hinings (1996), change occurs as a template-
 29 in-use is problematized and weakened, how might the established business
 31 template be characterized? As alluded to earlier, there probably ~~has never~~
 33 been a unified and universal template or a uniform set of ‘ideas, beliefs and
 35 values’ (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1026) for business. In the context of
 37 business schools, factions within as well as tensions between commercial/
 39 training and scholarly/education framings contribute to diversity both
 within and between schools. Nonetheless, the longest established and/or
 most widely acclaimed business schools, as rated by the business press (e.g.
Financial Times, *Business Week*), have tended to harbour and promote a
 distinctive (‘Mainstream’) *complex of ideas and values*. At the risk of
 disregarding diversity, a convenient shorthand for this complex is ‘manage-
 rialist’, ‘scientific’ and ‘technocratic’; and its hallmark is the placing of the
 scholarly/education frame in the service of the commercial/training frame,
 with the former providing a measure of legitimacy for the latter.

1 The activities undertaken within business schools are *managerialist* insofar
3 as the knowledge conveyed to students affirms the sovereign role and
5 elevated status widely attributed to executives; or, at least, it presents an
7 unthreatening portrayal of them and the corporations which they lead.
9 Knowledge in business schools is *scientistic* when it uncritically mimics the
11 trappings of science, in the form of elaborate methodological posturing,
13 measurement and testing.¹⁵ And business school knowledge and education
15 are *technocratic* insofar they are valued primarily as a means of securing
17 ends whose legitimacy escapes critical scrutiny.¹⁶ This complex of manage-
19 rialism, scientism and technocracy comprises the template for generating
21 most, but not all, scholarly contributions in journals, textbooks, lectures and
23 case studies. It is to the potency of such a complex that Hensmans (2003)
25 refers when relating political conflicts to ‘...[the] organization of *systemic*
27 *power relations* that almost invisibly pre-structures participants’ sense-
making possibilities’ (*ibid.*, p. 375, emphasis added). Just what is ‘at stake’
becomes more clearly apparent when an alternative value commitment
emerges and gains sufficient credibility to challenge established business
knowledge and educational provision. By advancing different and more
challenging research and by developing teaching topics and approaches
that are responsive to ‘multiple pressures providing inconsistent cues and
signals’ (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1029), the challenger may, at the
very least, ‘open the possibility for ... either deliberate or unwitting variation
in practices’ (*ibid.*). When what was previously experienced as self-evidently
authoritative becomes increasingly viewed as partial or contingent. Ideas
that challenge the established framing of business knowledge and education,
if they gain sufficient traction and support, then discredit and progressively
displace the established template.

AU :4

CMS as an Alternative Template

31 The emergence of CMS announces what Oliver (1991, p. 565) calls an
33 innovative, ‘competitive value commitment’ that names and amplifies a
35 degree of ‘*normative fragmentation*’ (emphasis added) in (some of) the
37 institutionalized practices of business schools. The identification and
39 institutionalization of CMS – as a specialism, as a genre, but especially as
a movement – makes such fragmentation more explicit; with the prospect
that ‘the legitimacy of an established institutionalized organizational
practice erodes’ (Oliver, 1991, p. 564) – at least to the extent that some
business school faculty are emboldened to identify more closely and openly

1 with ‘ideas, beliefs and values’ that deviate from the dominant template-
in-use.

3 CMS resonates with, and draws inspiration from a number of intellectual
and social movements – Marxism, feminism, environmentalism, anti-
5 globalization, etc. Scholarly and rigorous as they frequently are, these ideas
are also chastening for, if not challenging to, the corporate-friendly,
7 commercially relevant, image projected by schools.¹⁷ The formation and
growth of CMS as an Interest Group, and then a Division, within the
9 Academy of Management is indicative of its insurgency. Another indicator is
the openness of CMS to re-imagining the notion of engagement in ways that
11 are not limited to a dialogue with current or prospective managers but extend
to an appreciation of the wider significance and influence of ‘management’ in
13 processes of local and global social reproduction (see Murphy, 2006;
Thompson, 2001), and so potentially reach ‘a broader organizational
15 constituency’ (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 27; Grey & Willmott, 2002;
Perriton, 2000). As Zald et al. (2005, p. 270) note, with regard to social
17 movements like CMS, ‘most [organizational] members have salient identities
in and with other social groups, categories and statuses’ – such as feminism,
19 environmentalism, etc. As a manifestation of ‘normative fragmentation’
in business schools, CMS is propelled by wider campaigns and move-
21 ments that dislocate hegemonic modes of (corporate) knowledge manage-
ment (see, e.g. <http://visar.csustan.edu/aaba/aaba.htm>; <http://www.criticalmanagement.org>). It is therefore implausible to conceive of CMS – whether
23 as a discipline, genre or movement – existing independently of a wider milieu
25 in which received wisdoms shibboleths of capitalist modernity are subjected
increasingly to radical doubt.

27

29

CMS AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT?

31

CMS members challenge a dominant template or framing of knowledge and
33 education in which it is assumed that business schools are places of research
and teaching *for* management and managers. CMS, in contrast, conceives of
35 business schools as places for the *critical* study and education *of* manage-
ment and managers in which the meaning and scope of management is not
37 only extended but reframed.¹⁸ In response to this challenge, guardians of the
dominant template have sought ~~either~~ to exclude CMS – for example, by
39 demonizing it as ‘anti-management’ or by identifying (and ghettoizing) it as
a specialism, rather than as a movement, within the field of business research

1 and education. It is then either suppressed or it becomes segregated and
 3 domesticated within a (professionalized) spectrum of specializations. In this
 5 regard, some developments – such as the establishment of a CMS Division
 7 within the Academy of Management or the (mis)equation of CMS with
 9 variants of ‘organization studies’ may reinforce its externally ascribed
 11 identity as a specialism whereas, arguably, CMS is more adequately
 13 understood as a broad social movement which aspires to influence and
 15 transform the entire field of business knowledge and education – from
 17 marketing to operational research, and from international business to
 19 human resource management. (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009;
 21 Alvesson & Willmott, 1992, 2012). This wider aspiration or mission is
 23 consistent with the understanding of social movements as:

... collective enterprises seeking to establish *a new order of life*. They have their inception
 in a *condition of unrest*, and derive their motive power on one hand from *dissatisfaction*
 with the *current form of life*, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new
 system of living. The career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order
 of life. (Blumer, 1969, p. 99, cited in Crossley, 2002, p. 3, emphases added)

19 Something of the ‘condition of unrest’ and the ‘new order of life’ (Blumer,
 21 1969, p. 99) to which CMS aspires is articulated in the ‘Domain Statement’
 23 for Critical Management Studies Interest Group in the Academy of
 25 Management:

~~Our premise is that structural features of contemporary society, such as the profit
 imperative, patriarchy, racial inequality, and ecological irresponsibility often turn
 organizations into instruments of domination and exploitation.~~ Driven by a shared
 desire to change ~~this situation~~, we aim in our research, teaching, and practice to develop
 critical interpretations of management and society and to generate radical alternatives.
 Our critique seeks to connect the practical shortcomings in management and individual
 managers to the demands of a socially divisive and ecologically destructive system within
 which managers work. (<http://aom.pace.edu/cms/About/Domain.htm>)

31 Many, though by no means all, CMS activists and sympathizers would
 33 broadly endorse this statement of collective purpose and identity (~~‘Our
 35 premise ...’~~) while others would likely dissent from specific parts of this
 37 formulation. In this respect, CMS is typical of social movements
 39 ‘characterised by a low degree of institutionalization, high heterogeneity,
 a lack of clearly defined boundaries and decision-making structures ...’
 (Koopmans, 1993, p. 637, cited in Crossley, 2002, p. 7). Divisions and critics
 within CMS are a potential source of vitality and renewal but may also be a
 liability when, for example, they provoke or encourage a paralysis of
 endless, self-referential debate over what is ‘really’ CMS.¹⁹ For reasons

1 sketched above, it is implausible to ascribe a unified set of ‘interests’ or
 3 a single set of power dependencies; or, finally, to ascribe to them a shared
 capacity for action (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996).

5 The most palpable sign of CMS organization and activity has been its
 meetings. The first explicitly Critical Management Studies event, comprising
 7 about 25 invited participants from Europe and North America, took place
 in the United Kingdom in 1989.²⁰ The first open gathering around the CMS
 9 banner was organized in the United Kingdom in 1999 when 350 delegates
 from 19 countries attended the Critical Management Studies Conference,
 11 contributing 201 papers to 21 different streams. The UK’s Economic and
 Social Research Council has funded a number of critical management
 13 projects and seminars across the field of business and management, from
 operational research to marketing, and from accounting to organization
 15 studies.

In the United States, Divisional status in the Academy has bestowed a
 17 degree of legitimacy upon Critical Management. This is of considerable
 importance in a context where there are fewer CMS academics and
 19 supporters in senior positions, especially with regard to placement or tenure
 decisions (see Scully, 2002). In the United Kingdom, in contrast, ~~most~~
 21 the elite tier of business schools (e.g. Warwick, Lancaster, Manchester, Bath,
 Cardiff, Cambridge) has appointed or promoted CMS academics to
 23 professorships – with obvious implications for future appointments and the
 direction of teaching and research.²¹ These developments were necessarily
 25 supported, or at least accommodated, by professors already in post (see
 Eden, 2003). In McCarthy and Zald’s (1977) terminology, these figures are
 27 ‘conscience constituents’ of CMS whose symbolic resources, in the form of
 endorsement, have raised the profile of CMS and/or at least inhibited its
 29 demonization. Whereas the approach to organizing CMS in the United
 Kingdom has been to operate largely independently of the Establishment
 31 (e.g. the British Academy of Management²²), the US approach has been
 to piggy-back on the Academy of Management meetings prior to becoming
 33 an integral part of the Academy²³ and to organize ‘stand-alone’ conferences
 immediately before its ~~annual~~ meetings. Beyond the United States and
 35 United Kingdom, CMS is emergent in Latin America (Mandiola, 2010)
 and other developing countries (e.g. Alakavuklar & Parker, 2011; Ozcan,
 37 2012), with an increasing number of meetings, workshops and conferences
 being held under the CMS banner around the world, and the appearance
 39 or translation of critical management texts in French, Spanish, Japanese
 and Chinese.

1 The sprawling as well as open, ill-defined nature of the CMS constituency
3 makes participation and association comparatively easy, with low barriers
5 to entry (but also exit). Nonetheless, it is often presumed by outsiders that
7 CMS is a doctrinaire, sect-like movement where only converts or supplicants
9 are welcome or feel comfortable. And there is ~~indeed~~ evidence to suggest
11 that CMS activities carry a legacy of the Mainstream insofar as its practices
13 are cliquy, male dominated and unaware or uncritical of, or even
15 indifferent to its own forms of domination and exploitation (Butler &
17 Spolstra, 2012; see also footnote 2). On the other hand, a self-defined
Mainstreamer ventured into a CMS meeting reports that:

11 ... realizing what kind of group I had strayed into, I thought, 'Here I am, Mr
13 Mainstream, associate editor of Academy of Management Journal, in a hotbed of
15 dissent, sedition, and insurrection. What am I doing here? But my second thought was
17 that what I was hearing was interesting, if not fascinating, that it made a lot of sense, and
that these are Academy members with a minority viewpoint that ought to be heard'.
(Eden, 2003, p. 390)

19 In this assessment, CMS articulates a 'minority viewpoint' that is not
(simply) negative but has something relevant to offer despite deviating
21 significantly from the Mainstream: it 'made a lot of sense' and 'ought to be
23 heard' (*ibid.*). Against this positive, if somewhat patronizing, evaluation of
25 the 'sense' of CMS, a preparedness to adopt the decision-making structures
27 of the Academy of Management could be interpreted as suggestive of a
29 predisposition towards cooptation and incorporation by the Establishment,
31 or at least a desire to have one's cake and eat it. Becoming an Academy of
33 Management Division has implications, negative as well as positive, for the
35 organization of CMS as it results in some energies being consumed in the
37 politics of the Academy (cf. Selznick, 1949). It also risks CMS becoming
39 equated with the mission and activities of the Division whereas a majority of
CMS participants, even those who attend the biannual CMS conferences
held in the United Kingdom since 1999, are not members of the Academy
of Management. That said, it is also relevant to appreciate how the
opportunity presented by involvement in the Academy to influence its
direction, and mobilize its resources, has been leveraged. Notably, Paul
Adler, who played the leading role in establishing the CMS Interest Group
and in steering its successful application for Divisional status, was the
Program Chair for the 2013 meeting of the Academy of Management. Its
theme was 'Capitalism in Question'.²⁴ It should therefore not be assumed
that the visibility and legitimacy derived from endorsement by the Academy
is ~~wholly~~ a negative development for the growth and influence of CMS.

1 Eden (2003), for one, makes the assessment that ‘there can be little doubt
 3 that the critters will have significant impact on Mainstream Academy
 5 values, thinking and action’ (*ibid.*, p. 390). The chance to enter and shape
 7 the Academy of Management provides a means of raising the profile of
 9 CMS and gaining some (ambivalent) legitimacy as well as mobilizing
 11 resources and organizing interests.

13 **INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND CHANGE:** 15 **THE LIMITS OF NEO-INSTITUTIONALISM**

13 The preceding account of CMS as a challenging social movement within the
 15 field of business points to a number of limitations of neo-institutional theory.
 17 The shortcomings include the playing down of the contested formation and
 19 reproduction of expectations; the conception of ‘interests’ as given and self-
 21 evident rather than socially organized and attributed; and reliance upon a
 23 view of power as a possession of individuals and groups that is exercised
 25 independently rather than organized systemically. These limitations serve to
 27 indicate why paying closer attention to the insights of other approaches,
 29 including social movement theory and STH, can be instructive when
 31 examining processes of de/institutionalization.

23 Greenwood and Hinings (1996, p. 1025) conceive of the realm of ideas,
 25 beliefs and values as productive of behaviour and locate it in an
 27 ‘institutional context’. In this formulation, there is little sense of the
 29 constituent elements of this realm being established and politically contested
 31 through processes of struggle. In the case of CMS, struggles recur in relation
 33 to the established template and within the disparate membership of CMS. In
 35 Greenwood and Hinings’ framework, however, little attention is given to
 37 how ideas, values and beliefs are reproduced, as well as transformed,
 39 through uncertain processes of social interaction. It is as if a unified and self-
 evident ‘institutional context’ exists ‘out there’ from which ‘pressures’
 emanate, and to which behaviour, as a product of ideas, etc. must adapt,
 thereby promoting forms of ‘entrepreneurship’, if it is to survive and
 develop. Stability is not conceived as a consequence of hegemonic practices
 that may have a precarious legitimacy on account of their exclusion of
 elements that refuse, or escape, incorporation. Instead, in Greenwood and
 Hinings’ thinking, interactions are comparatively stable because, it is
 conjectured, the ‘pattern of an organization’s structures and systems is
 provided by underpinning ideas and values’ (*ibid.*, p. 1025).

1 Consider Greenwood and Hinings' understanding of change in relation to
 3 the preceding account of CMS within the Academy. The position of CMS
 5 has precarious legitimacy amongst some (but by no means all) Academy
 7 members, but also amongst some of its membership who, for example,
 9 characterize CMS *primarily* as a brand (Thompson, 2005). By associating
 or indeed equating CMS with the cynical pursuit of career, any commitment
 to radical change is cynically dismissed, and support is thereby lent to
 conservative forces as any aspiration to transform the field of business is
 lampooned.

11 The struggle to establish CMS is illustrated by the process of negotiating
 entry to the Academy of Management, gaining legitimacy and sustaining
 membership. ~~For example, as~~ an Interest Group, CMS was required to
 13 submit a three-year review report to the Academy. Its domain statement (see
 earlier) attracted some unfavourable feedback couched in terms of the
 15 compatibility of the CMS Interest Group with the orientations of other
 Divisions of the Academy:

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17

19 As one reviewer commented, "The domain statement comes across as rather negative
 and somewhat close-minded given that it sets forth a strong premise; and also that it
 seems to suggest an emphasis on activism over scholarship ... Other concerns were
 21 noted by a second reviewer: "As a number of members have indicated, a danger for CMS
 is that other Divisions consider the IG as irrelevant or too iconoclastic ... A reviewer
 23 presents this challenge to CMS to genuinely ponder: 'The CMS has a highly motivating,
 strong values orientation but can alienate others who do not hold these values. *Is*
CMS prepared to keep its relationships with other Divisions open and mutual?' ([http://
 25 group.aomonline.org/cms/Announcements/2005%20review%20doc/CMS%20Review%
 20FINAL%204-20.doc](http://group.aomonline.org/cms/Announcements/2005%20review%20doc/CMS%20Review%20FINAL%204-20.doc))

27 Embedded in such feedback are taken-for-granted notions of what counts
 as 'scholarship' and 'ir/relevance', with the barely concealed threat to
 29 impede the development of CMS from an Interest Group to a Division if it
 places in question activities pursued by other Divisions. A limitation of
 31 Greenwood and Hinings' (1996) discussion of interests, power and agency is
 that it does not explore how individuals and groups are constituted by
 33 identifications with diverse and inconsistent practices. Instead, it is assumed
 that groups self-evidently or objectively have 'interests' that they endeavour,
 35 through the exercise of their power, 'to translate into favourable allocations
 of scarce and valued organizational resources' (*ibid.*, p. 1033). Actors', or
 37 groups', interests are assumed to be known to them, or at least to be readily
 identifiable by a social scientific observer; and it is to the fulfilment of
 39 these interests that behaviour is understood to be purposefully directed as
 actors strive to transform or defend established structures. Change is

1 accounted for by the role of actors (individuals or groups) who ‘gain power’,
 2 or receive, power because it is ‘in the interest of those in power to alter the
 3 organization’s goals’ (*ibid.*, p. 1038, citing Fligstein, 1991, p. 313). It is
 4 assumed that radical change is a likely outcome only when it is favoured by
 5 ‘those in a position of privilege and power’ (*ibid.*, p. 1038) – an assessment
 6 that is largely blind to *their dependences* on ‘subordinates’ whose allegiances
 7 may shift from the status quo to an alternative ‘value commitment’. In this
 8 version of neo-institutionalism, analysis of the ‘political’, and the ‘dynamics’
 9 of organizing, tends to drift back in the direction of rational choice theory in
 10 which the formation of agency and pursuit of interests becomes
 11 disconnected from their institutional constitution. Interests are invoked as
 12 if they exist or develop externally to the structural pressures of institutions
 13 within which interests are continuously organized; and agency is defined in
 14 terms of its capacity to resist or subvert such pressures (see also DiMaggio,
 15 1988, p. 14; Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004, p. 675). For example,
 16 processes of acquiring resources, including ‘social skills’ which are regarded
 17 as productive of change, are ascribed by Greenwood and Hinings to the
 18 actions of seemingly sovereign, ‘entrepreneurial’ agents.

19 In relation to the development of CMS, the neo-institutionalist approach
 20 would most likely attribute change to the role of certain ‘entrepreneurial’
 21 actors – such as members of the Executive Committee of the CMS Division
 22 at the Academy of Management; the organizers of the biannual CMS
 23 Conferences; the authors of key CMS texts, etc. – whose interests are
 24 conceived to compel them to challenge established structures or at least
 25 expand its membership of CMS. Neo-institutionalist analysis attributes to
 26 actors a sovereignty based upon a *possessive* concept of power: ‘organiza-
 27 tionally defined groups vary in their ability to influence organizational
 28 change because they have differential power’ (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996,
 29 p. 1038). The notion of ‘power dependencies’ is potentially fruitful inasmuch
 30 that it conceives of power as relational. However, an appreciation of the
 31 relational nature of power is limited to understanding how the power to
 32 influence organizational change is unevenly distributed: power is something
 33 that groups possess in greater or smaller measure. Aside from a reference to
 34 ‘normative scheme(s)’ (*ibid.*, p. 1038) which are conceived to underpin
 35 differential control over decision-making processes, a separation is assumed
 36 between, on the one side, the power attributed to sovereign actors and, on
 37 the other side, the institutional structures that they endeavour to change or
 38 preserve. ‘Relations of power and domination’ (*ibid.*) are conceptualized in
 39 terms of the unequal power of particular groups and individuals. Absent is a
 recognition of how the power attributed to these groups is systemically

1 invested, or institutionalized, in the institutional practices that place them
2 in a position (of ‘power’) *and* which enable an ostensibly powerful position
3 to be represented as a possession of actors. An alternative understanding, to
4 be elaborated below, conceives of such practices as an articulation of the
5 institutional ‘myth’ of sovereignty that is maintained to the extent that
6 subjects are prevailed upon, more or less coercively, to identify themselves
7 with, and invest in, its reproduction.

9

A Dialectical Alternative?

11

12 Does this imply that neo-institutional theory is fundamentally flawed? The
13 answer could be ‘yes’ only if one assumes that ‘power’, ‘interests’ or ‘agency’
14 have an essence which is imperfectly grasped by, or reflected in, neo-
15 institutional analysis. What can be said, instead, is that institutional theory
16 is partial and limited – for example, in its conception of agency and power
17 and in their application to the analysis of change; and that its formulation
18 and application of these concepts tend to have performative effects which
19 are, arguably, conservative. Other conceptualizations are possible that offer
20 a different, less conservative way of representing processes of institutiona-
21 lization. Before moving beyond the comparatively familiar theoretical
22 terrain of neo-institutionalist analysis, it is relevant to consider briefly an
23 innovative and theoretically sophisticated proposal for remedying its
24 limitations.

25 Seo and Creed (2002) recommend the adoption by institutional theorists
26 of a dialectical mode of analysis where institutional structures are conceived
27 as heterogeneous and de-centred – in the sense of being composites of
28 loosely coupled and more-and-less contradictory ‘elements, practices and
29 procedures’ held together ‘in the search for legitimacy and stability’ (Seo &
30 Creed, 2002, p. 228). This understanding resonates with insights developed
31 in social movement theory and also with the earlier characterization of the
32 institution of business education as comprising intertwined and conflicting,
33 yet mutually dependent, framings. In the application of their framework,
34 however, Seo and Creed switch to an agency-driven analysis in which
35 change is attributed to ‘the partially autonomous social actor’ who is ‘the
36 active exploiter of social contradictions’ (*ibid.*, p. 230). The explanation of
37 change in organizations is located in the agency of the ‘artful’ (*ibid.*, p. 237)
38 individuals and groups who are conceived to possess, or to have gained
39 access to, the resources and capabilities necessary for pursuing their
40 interests. There is a passing acknowledgement that ‘frames themselves are

1 also the historical products of interinstitutional contradictions' (*ibid.*, p. 237) but this is subsequently suspended in the discussion of 'praxis' which Seo and Creed (*ibid.*, pp. 229–230) identify as 'perhaps the most important piece of the puzzle in understanding institutional change processes'.

5 Echoing analyses developed by proponents of institutional entrepreneurship, Seo and Creed's 'dialectical approach' emphasizes agents' 'ability to artfully mobilize different institutional logics and resources' (*ibid.*, p. 240) that serve to 'legitimize and support their change efforts' (*ibid.*, p. 242). Agents' exercise of power in developing or changing institutions is not connected to the 'logics and resources' that, arguably, make possible what Seo and Creed describe as agents. Power is attributed to abilities or skills as *possessions of actors* – a view that is common to analysis in which the transformation of fields is ascribed to the co-evolution of strategies deployed by incumbents of, and challengers to, dominant, taken-for-granted archetypes of organizing (e.g. Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Hensmans, 2003). There is little sense of the institutionalized operation of power as invested, for example, in discursive practices²⁵ that are constitutive of the representation of agency as sovereign ('partially autonomous') or in the formation of the capacities for action ascribed to agency (Willmott, 2011a).

21

23 SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY, THE SOCIAL 25 THEORY OF HEGEMONY AND CMS: REFLECTIONS ON CHANGE

27 It has been noted how neo-institutional theorists examine change and stability in terms of how 'group members react' by virtue of their 'commitments and interests' and their 'ability to implement or enforce them by way of their existing power and capability' (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1048).²⁶ It has been suggested that in order to appreciate how power is articulated in and through practices, including the discursive practices that impute to human beings a sense of sovereign agency, it is necessary to move away from a conceptualization of power and capability as the possession of sovereign agents exercised episodically to realize their interests. Whenever advocates of institutional theory or their critics argue along the lines that 'agents work to affect processes of institutionalization in ways that fit with their interests' (Phillips, 2003, p. 221), it is relevant to reflect upon how what is designated as the work of 'agency' or 'agents' interests' is institutionally constructed and signified. Such reflection is absent

1 from Hinings and Greenwood's framework, from Seo and Creed's (2002)
2 application of dialectical analysis and from studies which focus more
3 directly upon 'institutional entrepreneurship'. Change is ascribed to actors'
4 skills and strategies (see also DiMaggio, 1988, p. 14 cited in Maguire et al.,
5 2004, p. 658) without reflection upon how this proposition trades upon and
6 reproduces a *particular* mode of analysis in which the sovereignty of agency
7 is taken-for-granted as a *universal*. Its 'Other' – in the guise of 'structure' – is
8 then invoked to justify agency by demonstrating how its sovereign will is
9 enabled – for example, by 'contradictions' that the agent 'exploits' (Seo &
10 Creed, 2002, p. 230). It is a mode of analysis that has become hegemonic as
11 its necessity – the dualism/duality/dialectic of agency and structure – is
12 placed beyond question. This is not to suggest that such analysis is wrong or
13 incapable of producing valued knowledge. Rather, it is to invite greater
14 openness to, and critical reflection upon, the basis and (performative) effects
15 of the institutionalization of its truth.

17

Beyond the Agency-Structure Formula: The Social Theory of Hegemony

19

20 We have seen how, neo-institutionalists attribute change either to the
21 creativity of agents, characterized as 'institutional entrepreneurs', who
22 mobilize resources to challenge established practices; and/or to inconsis-
23 tencies or contradictions in structures that stimulate and promote innova-
24 tive forms of action; or, finally, to their dialectical interplay. Institutional
25 analysts attracted to social movement theory have sought to advance
26 the study of change by attending to the role of contested mobilization
27 processes. As Schneiberg and Lounsbury (2008, p. 651) summarize this
28 project:

29

30 Regarding actors, it counter-poses challengers and champions of alternatives to standard
31 accounts of states, professional associations and other incumbents as key players in
32 fields. Regarding structure, it moves away from images of an isomorphic institutional
33 world of diffusion, path dependence and conformity toward conceptions of fields as
34 fluid and pluralistic sites of contestation, organized around multiple and competing
35 logics and forms.

35

36 The linking of institutionalism to social movement theory valuably
37 encourages a greater appreciation of 'politics and collective mobilization as
38 motors of change' (*ibid.*, p. 3). However, the proposed framework for
39 analysing institutional formation and change continues to rest upon, and be
40 restricted by, the established and naturalized agency-structure formula, or,
41 to invoke Greenwood and Hinings' (1996) term, a 'template'. Incorporating

1 the insights of social movement theory improves the prospect of ‘the
 2 relations between activity, collective or existing social contexts’ ~~being~~ ‘more
 3 systematically addressed’ (*ibid.*; see, e.g. Osterman, 2006). But the
 4 established conceptualization of the categories of ‘activity’, ‘collective
 5 organization’ and ‘social contexts’ is preserved. In the absence of reflection
 6 upon the power-invested constitution of these categories, the idea of the
 7 sovereign agent is effectively transposed from the individual to the
 8 collective.

9 Drawing upon social movement theory, McAdam and Scott (2005) ~~also~~
 10 elaborate and reinforce the agency-structure formula for understanding
 11 change as they give additional weight to ‘governance structures’ and the
 12 ‘structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the [social]
 13 movement’ (*ibid.*, pp. 15, 16 citing McAdam et al., 1996, p. 2). Members of a
 14 social movement, such as CMS, are understood to contest established
 15 arrangements as they develop new visions, operate outside of established
 16 channels and/or exploit multiple logics or frames ~~to~~ mobilize support and
 17 bring about change whilst also registering how ‘movements and change are
 18 endogenously shaped by institutions’ (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008, p.
 19 652). McAdam and Scott’s framework takes for granted a conceptualization
 20 of structure and agency where classes of actors (dominants, challengers and
 21 governance units) confront a wider social environment (comprising external
 22 actors and external governance units) that may be found to be more or less
 23 benign or hostile for the realization of interests ascribed to such actors. At
 24 the same time, there are some equivocalities that place in question the
 25 coherence and exhaustiveness of this approach. Consider, for example,
 26 McAdam and Scott’s (2005) acknowledgement of how it is not the events or
 27 processes per se that destabilize the established structure of political
 28 opportunity but, rather, a process of ‘reactive mobilization’ (*ibid.*, p. 18). As
 29 they put it,

31 ... it is generally not the destabilizing events/processes themselves that set periods of field
 32 contention and change in motion. Rather, it is a process of *reactive mobilization* defined
 33 by [a] set of highly contingent mobilizing mechanisms that mediate between change
 pressures and a significant episode of field contention ... (*ibid.*)

35 This formulation is illuminating inasmuch as it attributes change to
 36 *processes* of ‘reactive mobilization’ rather than, say, to institutional
 37 entrepreneurs; and it also emphasizes the *contingent* operation of ‘mobilizing
 38 mechanisms’ (*ibid.*). This is important because, in the language of STH, the
 39 key ‘mediating mechanism’ – or, better, articulation of change – is *discursive
 practice*.¹ McAdam and Scott’s promising analytical move is ~~then~~ set back by

1 an untheorized appeal to actors' interests as the first of the mechanisms
 3 ('attribution of threat or opportunity') – is conceptualized in terms of how
 5 actors 'interpret events as representing new threats or opportunities to or for
 7 the realization of their interests' (*ibid.*, p. 19).

7 *The Social Theory of Hegemony*

9 Offering an alternative to established conceptual frameworks for analysing
 11 stability and change, STH is guided by an understanding that *lack* – and
 13 hence suffering and struggle – is an ontologically key feature of subjects and
 15 their/our worlds. 'Lack' is a manifestation of the world-openness of human
 17 incarnation²⁷ that makes possible the emergence of 'culture', or 'second
 19 nature' – what Lacan terms the Symbolic – through which the identity and
 21 significance of objects, including the identities ascribed to subjects, is
 23 constituted. Subjects are not, however, reducible to, or completely stabilized
 25 by, the social construction of identities. STH 'problematizes essentialist
 27 conceptions that privilege the determining role of either structure or
 29 agency ... [and] ... contests dualistic conceptions which are predicated on an
 31 external relationship between structures and agents' (Glynos & Howarth,
 33 2007, p. 129). Instead of conceiving of the subject as a unified seat of
 35 consciousness that is occupied, as it were, by one or more identities, STH
 37 assumes (1) a 'thrown' subject for whom identification(s) are inescapable yet
 cannot provide a desired sense of fullness and (2) a distinctive conception of
 structure as an articulation of a struggle to engage with this 'throwness' by
 providing sutures whose inherent precariousness makes possible, and indeed
 demands, involvement by subjects in processes of identification, including
 what has become termed as—'institutional work'.²⁸ The moment of
 identification is 'the moment of the radical subject, which discloses the
 subject as an agent in its world' (*ibid.*).²⁸ Lack is constitutive both of the
 (precarious) structure and of the thrown subject. In sum, 'far from being a
 moment of the structure, the subject is the result of the impossibility of
 constituting the structure as such' (*ibid.*, citing Laclau, 1990, p. 41).²⁹
 Accordingly, acts that (re)produce institutions are not theorized as the
 voluntary choices of sovereign agents but, rather, as articulating a lack in
 the structure that prompts and sustains processes of identification. As
 Laclau (1996, p. 92) puts it,

39 If I need to identify with something it is because I do not have a full identity in the first
 place. These acts of identification are thinkable only as a result of the lack of the
 structure.

1 The ontology of STH understands conflicts and tensions as endemic to
the establishment of identity/difference and also as productive of new
3 objects – such as CMS or indeed STH – that become possible targets of
identification. There are tensions between, on the one side, multiple forms of
5 identity and associated processes of identification; and, on the other, what
unavoidably lies beyond the reach of identifications – an Otherness that
7 threatens to *dislocate* and undermine the necessarily limited claims (and
control) of specific identifications.

9 The term ‘dislocation’ characterizes moments when the lack becomes
evident prior to efforts to restore a sense of fullness through new forms of
11 identification. Dislocations – whether trivial (e.g. being lost for a word) or
extraordinary and cataclysmic (e.g. losing all sense of relevance of control)
13 demonstrate the contingency of discursive structures (see Howarth &
Stavrakakis, 2000). To take a case offered by McAdam and Scott (2005) ~~to~~
15 ~~illustrate~~ ‘reactive mobilization’: it may be suggested that, in the field of
health care, a ‘structure’ once dominated by an occupational association
17 became dislocated and was transformed by an engagement of discursive
practices present within other associations, public organizations, corporate
19 organizations and market processes. The mission of CMS is to contribute to
the bringing about of a similar dislocation and transformation in the field of
21 business.

To expand briefly upon key insights of STH, change is understood to be
23 precipitated by dislocations in which the contingency of institutionalized
discursive practices becomes apparent. The emergence and spread of CMS,
25 for example, serves to articulate and expand a dislocation in the field of
business research and education as it reactivates the contingency, and so
27 unsettles the authority, of practices comprising the Mainstream. From the
perspective of STH, CMS challenges the values and priorities of the
29 Mainstream, including the treatment of employees as commodities (‘human
resources’), the institutionalization of patriarchy and neo-imperialism in
31 business practice and its destructive ecological impacts, etc. Such concerns
have direct affinities with other ‘social movements’ (see Spicer & Böhm,
33 2007), such as the Global Justice Movement³⁰ (GJM) and Occupy – a
connection that is made in the following extract from a statement which
35 highlights the centrality of democracy in the GJM:

37 Democracy means that people have a voice in the decisions that affect them, including
economic decisions. Democracy requires time and public space and quality education
and freedom of information. And democracy means that no group can be excluded
39 from power because of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, or any
other ‘ism’.

1 We stand for the right of communities to control their own destinies and resources,
2 whether that is indigenous community preserving its land and culture or a neighborhood
3 deciding to keep its local hospital open. Enterprises and businesses must be rooted in
4 communities and accountable to them.

5 ... We also say that democracy, community, and true abundance are the real antidote to
6 the despair that breeds terrorism, and the best means of assuring our global security.
7 (Starhawk, 2000, n.d.; see also Cavanagh & Anderson, 2002)

8 Like other social movements, CMS comprises a wide diversity of
9 elements. GJM has been aptly described as consisting of ‘a rag tag army
10 whose leading detachments include communists, anarchists, socialists,
11 feminists, trade unionists, environmentalists, anti-racists, neo-hippies and
12 alternate lifestylers, or numerous collections of the above’ (Peart, n.d.).
13 Whilst currently drawn primarily from an academic constituency, CMS
14 contains, like the Mainstream, a range of ‘detachments’. Specifically, it
15 includes participants with a wide span of ‘critical’ intellectual orientations
16 that range from hard core Marxism to varieties of post-modernism. It is
17 ‘fractured by multiple lines of division’ that themselves do not ‘demarcate
18 clear “camps” or fixed positions within CMS, but rather [are] lines of
19 movement, arguments and shifting alliances’ (Fournier & Grey, 2000, p. 25).
20 CMS and GJM exemplify movements constructed by a logic of equivalence
21 which enables them to be much more than the sum of their parts.³¹ The
22 heterogeneity of CMS (and GJM) of course also renders them vulnerable to
23 factionalism and disintegration but, more positively, it enables a flexibility,
24 dynamism and process of self-renewal – at least so long as contingency is
25 acknowledged and celebrated, thereby avoiding the totalizing fantasy that
26 an identification with the particular discourse of a specific faction can
27 somehow escape the radical contingency of social relations.

DISCUSSION

28
29
30
31 Social movement theory complements and extends institutional theory by
32 appreciating de/institutionalization as an on-going, contested process of
33 mobilization in which social movements pose ‘collective challenges to
34 authority in political and cultural domains’ (Rao et al., 2003, p. 796). They
35 share a rejection of versions of rational choice theory where actors are
36 abstracted from the institutional contexts of their actions. However, when
37 appealing to the power of actorhood as a catalyst of change, neo-
38 institutionalists and social movement theorists come up against the paradox
39 of embedded agency (Seo & Creed, 2002). Consistent application of the

1 constructionist credo articulated by Berger and Luckmann (1966) requires
 2 the development of a form of analysis that, in honouring the basic premise
 3 of institutional theory, also transgresses its confines. ‘Agents’ with ‘interests’
 4 cannot be regarded as self-evident ‘objectivities’ (in Berger and Luckmann’s
 5 terms) but, rather, must be understood as articulations of particular
 6 discursive practices of institutionalization (see Willmott, 2011a).

7 From an STH perspective, the agency-driven conceptualization of power
 8 and interests in neo-institutional analysis is extended and insufficiently
 9 challenged through an engagement of social movement theory (see
 10 McAdam & Scott, 2005). STH advances a radical version of construction-
 11 ism that avoids idealism by insisting upon an ontological difference between
 12 the ‘isness’ of the world and its representation through discourse where
 13 dislocation is the guarantor of this difference. STH conceives of ‘agency’
 14 and ‘structure’ as constructs that have no essential meaning or referents that
 15 can be known except through processes of constituting social objects within
 16 particular hegemonic discourses. Structure is no longer conceptualized in
 17 opposition to agency that it constrains (and/or enables). Rather, it signifies
 18 how social realities are institutionalized in particular ways through
 19 articulatory practices. So, for example, the ‘isness’ of management, whose
 20 representation is necessary yet ultimately impossible, is understood to be
 21 structured through particular discourses (or, better, discursive practices).
 22 ‘Structure’ is thereby (re)defined post-structurally, and not anti-structurally,
 23 in a way that appreciates how every such ‘structure’ is inherently ‘dislocated’
 24 (Laclau, 1990) as its presence is understood to depend on the exclusion, or at
 25 least marginalization, of other possible ‘objectivities’ against which it is
 26 defined, and with which those identified with a particular objectivity must
 27 struggle, even when the objectivity is comparatively stable, naturalized or
 28 habitualized – that is, institutionalized.

29 This approach at once builds upon and departs from Hensmans’ (2003)
 30 application of Laclau’s thinking to study social movement organization in
 31 which a strong residue of rational choice theory is retained. In STH, the
 32 ‘ideological actor’ (*ibid.*, 2003, p. 359) is not the one who strives to establish
 33 possibilities for identification – or, as Hensmans puts it, in his agency-driven
 34 formulation, ‘possibilities of strategic agency’. Rather, in STH, the
 35 ‘ideological actor’ is the one who fails to appreciate the contingency of
 36 any objectivity, including CMS, as s/he (mis)identifies (with) a particular
 37 discourse as a universalizing, totalizing one (see Laclau, 1990, p. 92). In
 38 STH, the creation of a boundary that defines an objectivity is largely an
 39 unintended consequence of the operation of a logic of equivalence that
 40 translates a disparate set of activities into something that holds them

1 together. Similarly, as noted earlier, an established core of the field of
2 business and management is identified by CMS as ‘Mainstream’. Elements
3 that previously were known as distinctive, differentiated contributions to
4 business practice and theory become homogenized by downplaying or
5 disregarding differences; and, of course, as has already been noted, the
6 ‘objectivity’ of CMS is itself inherently vulnerable to subversion by the logic
7 of difference that, by highlighting divisions within CMS, threatens to break
8 it up into a series of disparate sub-specialisms and factions.

9 From the perspective of STH, ‘agency’ is (a) power enacted through the
10 mundane labour of managing and juggling diverse identifications. It is
11 exemplified in competing identifications within and between CMS and
12 Mainstream conceptions of business education, and their related notions
13 about worthwhile or credible research. Subjects, Laclau writes, ‘are
14 condemned to be subjects by the very fact of dislocation. In this sense,
15 however, efforts to rearticulate and reconstruct the structure also entail the
16 constitution of the agents’ identity and subjectivity’ (Laclau, 1990, p. 50). In
17 this light, participants in CMS are seen to engage in rearticulating and
18 reconstructing business and management in the face of potential or actual
19 dislocation(s). They/we are involved in reactivating what has become
20 sedimented as we/they problematize the hegemony of the Mainstream by
21 recalling and investing in what has been excluded, marginalized and
22 devalued. It follows that any ambition to replace the Mainstream with CMS
23 is a fantasy since all attempts to encompass the world of management are,
24 from an STH perspective, inescapably partial and inherently contestable. It
25 may be the ambition of advocates of a particular discursive practice, such as
26 CMS, to dominate the wider field of discursivity but this is an impossibility
27 since, paradoxically, it depends on difference (e.g. the Mainstream) to define
28 and maintain its identity.

29 As the CMS domain statement makes clear (see earlier), it is not
30 management as a universal that is challenged by CMS (CMS is not anti-
31 management) but, rather, how it is implicated in the (re)production of
32 specific features of contemporary society. What is deemed problematical
33 about the Mainstream is not its advocacy of business schools or its education
34 of managers per se but, rather, its content and form. With regard to content,
35 the focus is upon diverse forms of domination, exploitation and subjugation
36 in which business and management is implicated, and to which Mainstream
37 thinking contributes by ignoring or normalizing them. With regard to form,
38 CMS commends a democratic concept of knowledge production and
39 dissemination in Universities, and of business schools within them, where
40 the ideal of developing and sharing of knowledge as a public good is

1 prioritized – a ‘public good’ in the sense of knowledge that has pu benefits
 3 as well as a go which there is comparatively unimpeded access.

5 CONCLUSION

7 CMS has been here conceived and examined as a social movement, rather
 9 than a specialism or genre of management. Taking CMS as its focus, the
 11 chapter has focused upon the relevance and contribution of social
 13 movement theory for advancing analysis of change in institutions. Key to
 15 social movement theory is its engagement with political theory and its
 17 appreciation of the importance of processes of mobilization in engendering
 change. Through a critique of neo-institutionalist analysis of change, and a
 close consideration of the paradox of embedded agency, STH has been
 explored as a possible way of making politics central to institutional analysis
 while overcoming some limitations of neo-institutionalism and social
 movement theory.

19 The chapter has reflected upon the emergence and de-institutionalizing
 21 effects of CMS as a challenger social movement that operates intraorga-
 23 nizationally and interorganizationally across the field of business knowledge
 25 and education. Consistent with recent calls to incorporate the insights of
 27 social movement theory into institutional theory, a critical conception of
 29 power and agency has been applied that places the study of institutional
 change and innovation squarely in the terrain of political theory. Taking a
 lead from Hensmans’ (2003) application of Laclau’s thinking, the process of
 de/institutionalization has been conceived as one of contestation through
 which social relations are organized by discursive practices that either
 dominate or challenge particular fields of discursivity, such as that of
 business and management.

31 In departing from the theoretical moorings of much institutional theory
 33 and social movement analysis, Laclau’s STH offers an alternative approach
 35 to studying organizations and organizing as processes of contestation and
 37 diffusion (see Cederstrom & Spicer, 2013). Conceiving of social movements
 as engines of institutional innovation, the skills and commitments associated
 with ‘agency’ are not held to exist in opposition to structures or
 ‘institutionalized contexts’. Rather, incumbents as well as challengers –
 that is, members of the Mainstream as well as CMS – are conceived as
 articulating competing, composite discursive practices that become hege-
 39 monized to different degrees. It is the appeal of, and identification with,
 discursive practices that is responsive to a lack, and not the demand of

1 structures or the entrepreneurial agency attributed to individuals and/or
3 change which avoids becoming enmeshed in the paradox of embedded
5 agency. Limitations of neo-institutional theory, including its incorporation
7 of social movement theory, are seen to stem from a reluctance to recognize
9 that the agency-structure formula is not a necessity, nor a given of
11 institutional analysis, but, rather, a hegemonic construction in which a
13 positivity, or objectivity, is (mis)attributed to ‘agency’ and ‘structure’.

15 In conclusion, it can be asked whether STH aspires to replace more
17 established forms of theory (e.g. institutional theory, social movement
19 theory). The response is that retention of the agency-structure template
21 favoured with neo-institutional analysis and social movement theory is
23 unobjectionable so long as its limitations are fully and openly registered. In
25 this regard, STH is of value in stimulating reflection upon the assumptions
27 of the agency-structure template as it offers an alternative framework in
29 which sedimented conceptions of agency, interests and power, as well as
31 processes of change, are placed in question. Notably, in STH, attention is
33 drawn to the role played by empty signifiers, such as Mainstream and CMS,
in the political process of mobilization through which subjectivities invest in,
and become identified with, particular projects of institutionalization and
de-institutionalization. It also highlights how ‘lack’ and ‘dislocation’ are
critical for appreciating the possibility and dynamics of change. STH
provides a distinctive and promising approach to studying de/institutiona-
lization in which, critically, the political assumes a position of analytical
centrality and where social movements are identified as motors of radical
change (see especially Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 159 et seq). A challenge for
this approach is to explore further how concepts that are key to STH, such
as ‘discursive practice’ and ‘identification’ as well as ‘dislocation’ and ‘lack’,
can inform detailed empirical analysis of processes of innovation and
change (see Lok & Willmott, 2013) This challenge includes the further
illumination of, and insights into, the struggles of CMS activists and
supporters in de-institutionalizing and (re)forming the established template
of business knowledge and education.

35

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Fligstein (2001); Levy and Egan (2003); Lounsbury (2003); Norval (2000);
Prasad (2003); Rowlinson and Hassard (2011); Scott (1995); Zizek (1992).

NOTES

1. The emergence of the term ‘CMS’ tends to be associated with an edited collection of papers published in 1992 (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992). However, a critical tradition in business and management scholarship can be traced back at least as far as Baritz’s (1960) *The Servants of Power* (see also Brief, 2000). Contributors to the Alvesson and Willmott collection formed a small (and comparatively well-established and elite) part of a much larger and less visible group of (mainly) business school academics who, for some time, had distanced themselves intellectually from the mainstream. This, it should be emphasized, was not an organized or unified group of academics but, rather, one that collectively shared a position of difference and subordination in relation to dominant management knowledge personified in the Academy of Management. The Critical Management Studies Workshop established in the late 1990s subsequently metamorphosed into an Interest Group, and then a Division, of the Academy of Management. In the United Kingdom and Europe, there has been a series of biannual conferences, beginning in 1999, ~~that on each occasion have attracted around 400 participants from over 25 countries.~~

2. It adds to a growing number of analyses and commentaries on the development and significance of CMS. Amongst these are Fournier and Grey (2000), Grey (2007), Thompson (2005), Adler, Forbes, and Willmott (2007) and Rowlinson and Hassard (2011).

3. Conversely, this front is undermined by the operation of a logic of difference that disputes the drawing of any sharp distinction between CMS and Mainstream, and thereby problematizes their respective identities and associated agential identifications. A number of contributions draw attention to important and uncomfortable continuities in the everyday practices of CMS and Mainstream academics (see, e.g. Bell & King, 2010; Wray-Bliss, 2003, 2004).

4. A ‘logic of equivalence’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) operates to de-focalize differences within each identity in a way that is productive of a seemingly dichotomous, clear-cut political frontier (e.g. Mainstream vs. non-Mainstream or CMS). Of course, the operation of this logic is itself problematical as there is always a prospect of a return of the repressed – that is, of a refocusing upon differences within the mainstream and/or CMS that threaten the sense unity and coherence ascribed to these identities by the logic of equivalence.

5. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) invoke the term ‘template’ and ‘template-in-use’ in a number of ways. Sometimes (*ibid.*, p. 1028) they use it as equivalent to a design archetype (see Greenwood & Hinings, 1993) but elsewhere they conceive of a template more broadly to include content (e.g. purpose and philosophy) so that, for example, ‘norms’ are attributed to templates (*ibid.*, p. 1038). It is the second meaning of template that is favoured here, and it is more consistent with Greenwood and Hinings’ emphasis upon the importance of value commitments in understanding radical change. The origin of the use of the term is attributed to DiMaggio and Powell (1991, p. 27).

6. These schools were established to teach young women social skills and cultural norms which would enable them to fit into and succeed in male-dominated societies by, for example, acquiring the correct etiquette and attracting a suitable husband.

1 7. It is enshrined in the Joseph Wharton's donation that established a business
school dedicated to promoting the study of entrepreneurship and business ethics
(Srinivasan, Kemelgor, & Johnson, 2000).

3 8. Such fantasies are difficult to renounce, even when they are cynically
acknowledged as such, as affirm an established and respected sense of identity
(Zizek, 1992).

5 9. This uncomfortable assessment is perhaps most evidently applicable to MBAs
7 but it is also increasingly applicable to a growing number of undergraduates who are
attracted to studying business rather than, or as a part of, more established academic
subjects in the sciences or humanities.

9 10. Pfeffer and Fong (2003, p. 1516) commend the-breaking free from constraints
that impede the 'ability to provide critical, analytical thought and analysis on the role
11 of corporation and the place of business and other organizations and society' but
there is no indication that this would penetrate beyond established notions of
13 corporate social responsibility.

15 11. Between May 2003 and June 2004, the Head of the Coalition Provisional
Authority dismissed 500,000 state workers, including soldiers; opened Iraq to
unrestricted imports; began to privatize state enterprises; lowered Iraq's corporation
17 tax from 40% to 15% to entice multinationals into the country; and allowed full
repatriation of all profits by foreign investors, etc. (see Guttal, 2005).

19 12. So, relevance is perhaps more credibly characterized as something that is yet
to be accomplished rather than something to be 'regained'.

13 It is amongst the most heavily cited work in neo-institutionalist analysis.

14. Power is the third 'aspect' of Greenwood and Hinings' (1996) model of internal
21 dynamics is conceived in terms of the differential ability of groups to realize their
interests and values in the production of an alternative template. Power is possessed
23 by groups, but it is the template that "gives" power to some groups and not to
others' by virtue, for example, of the template's normative scheme that 'implies
25 differential access to and control over key decision processes' (*ibid.*, p. 1038). And
'capacity for action' refers to the skills and competencies to secure and maintain the
27 change – skills and competencies that are understood to be promoted by the
institutional context.

15. The emphasis here is upon packaging studies in 'the trappings of science'.
Rarely are business students encouraged to understand how research-based
29 knowledge is constructed and institutionalized.

16. The research base of course content is largely unexplored (how many MBA
31 students are required to read, let alone, interrogate, the journal articles and books
that are the primary sources of the received wisdoms?) and to the extent that course
33 material is based upon research, the focus is upon a superficial digest of its content
presented in the obligatory bullet points.

17. Many CMS members are supporters of, or activists within, movements that
35 critique business and management by highlighting its shortcomings (e.g. <http://www.corpwatch.org>; <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk>).

18. Members of CMS disagree, and continue to disagree, sometimes vehemently,
37 about precisely *what* theories and practices should replace those of the Mainstream.
To date, there seems to be some (largely tacit) agreement that splits and factionalism
39 is likely to be counterproductive, with the result that an ill-defined pluralism or 'big

1 tent' conception of CMS has predominated. CMS has not (yet?) been significantly
 2 disrupted or distracted by internal divisions (over strategy, normative commitment,
 3 intellectual orientation etc.) and so, for the time being, is open to accommodating a
 wide range of voices (see Adler et al., 2007).

4 19. As Grey (2005, pp. 24–25) has observed, participants in CMS may 'develop a
 5 common front against managerialism and all the assumptions to which it is related –
 6 hierarchy, globalization, masculinism, the primacy of markets, anti-unionism and so
 7 on – or engage in an endless debate about how this confrontation [between rival
 8 claimants upon CMS] is to be effected and what are the right theoretical
 9 resources ...'. They may, in other words, become mired in agonizing and soul
 10 searching about whether motivations for participating in CMS are sufficiently pure
 11 or relations with sections of the audience (e.g. managers) are consistently open and
 empathetic (see Elliott & Reynolds, 2002; Reedy, 2008). ~~See also footnote 19.~~

12 20. It was from this event that many of the contributions to Alvesson and
 Willmott's (1992) *Critical Management Studies* were drawn.

13 21. In the United Kingdom, an unintended consequence of stringent research
 14 performance measurement of Universities, in the form of ~~the Research Assessment~~
 15 ~~Exercise~~, has been the pressure to promote people with strong publication records
 16 irrespective of their orientation. This development has been significantly facilitated
 17 by editors of some key, UK-based journals who have actively solicited and supported
 critical work.

18 22. BAM ~~has~~ itself formed a (somewhat dormant) CMS Special Interest Group.
 19 This was primarily a top-down response to the visibility and popularity of this
 distinctive 'field' that has struggled to find committed champions.

20 23. This is not the place to reflect at any length upon the pros and cons of these
 21 approaches. It is worth noting, however, that in the United Kingdom, there is more
 22 of a history of stand-alone, self-funding conferences. The Labour Process
 23 Conferences, now in ~~their~~ 25th year (<http://www.hrm.strath.ac.uk/ILPC/>), is an
 24 example. University accommodation can be used that is comparatively cheap and
 25 flexible. Experience gained in organizing these conferences was crucial for the design
 26 and delivery of the Critical Management Studies Conferences. Also, outside the
 27 United States, there is perhaps less difficulty in openly applying for funding to attend
 a 'critical' conference whereas, in the United States, running the Workshop in the
 28 pre-conference period enabled it initially to be bundled with attendance at ~~(the~~
 29 ~~legitimacy activities of)~~ the Academy.

30 24. The theme is presented as follows: 'The Academy of Management's vision
 31 statement says that we aim "to inspire and enable a better world through our
 32 scholarship and teaching about management and organizations." The recent
 33 economic and financial crises, austerity, and unemployment, and the emergence of
 many economic, social, and environmental protest movements around the world
 34 have put back on the agenda some big questions about this vision: What kind of
 35 economic system would this better world be built on? Would it be a capitalist one?
 If so, what kind of capitalism? If not, what are the alternatives? Although most of
 36 our work does not usually ask such "big" questions, the assumptions we make about
 37 the corresponding answers deeply influence our research, teaching, and service'
 38 (<http://aom.org/Events/2013-Annual-Meeting-of-the-Academy-of-Management.aspx>,
 39 accessed 5 March 2013).

1 25. As discourse is a term used to convey diverse meanings, it is relevant to
note that, in the social theory of hegemony, it refers to 'systems of meaningful
3 practices that form the identities of subjects and objects' (Howarth & Stavarakakis,
2000, pp. 3–4).

5 26. It is as a consequence of this imputation that human beings find themselves
constructed as sovereign agents who repeatedly endeavour to realize, or confirm, this
7 sense of sovereignty. They/we are compelled to advance and defend this self-
understanding, and thereby produce institutions, including forms of academic
analysis, that reflect and reinforce a sense of (individual or group) agency as
sovereign, and power as its possession.

9 27. This position is consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) *Social
Construction of Reality* which is a seminal text for institutional theory. As they put
11 it, 'man's relationship to his environment is characterized by world-openness ... the
ways of becoming and being human are as numerous as man's cultures ... the
13 specific shape of into which [man's] humanness is molded is determined by those
socio-cultural formations and is relative to their numerous variations. While it is
possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man
15 constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself' (*ibid.*,
pp. 65–67).

17 28. Because the common-sense conception of agency is so taken-for-granted, any
challenge to its sovereignty tends to be interpreted as a nullification. For example,
when reflecting upon the 'ontological scepticism' that they accredit to new
19 institutional theory, Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997, p. 412) argue that 'neo-
institutionalists ... should concentrate on how actors construct themselves by
21 drawing on available cultural models' in a way that should 'not, however, require
the dissolution of actors as in a Foucauldian approach'. There are two difficulties
23 with this argument. Firstly, post-structuralism, as articulated in such a Foucauldian
approach, and also in Laclau's social theory of hegemony, does not dissolve actors
but, rather, deconstructs their constitution and identification; and, secondly, the
25 assertion that 'actors construct themselves ...' adopts the commonsense conception
of actors as sovereign entities, and thereby reproduces the limitations of analysis
27 based upon the agency-structure formula.

29 29. 'Lack ... is the primary ontological level of the constitution of the social. To
understand social reality, then, is not to understand what society [or 'CMS'] is, but
what prevents it from being' (Laclau, 1990, p. 44).

31 30. The media's preferred description for this movement is 'anti-globalization'.
This is a particular interpretation which privileges the negative and excludes any
mention of justice and overlooks the strong, positive advocacy of the global justice
33 movement of 'a borderless world in which people can move freely; that is simply
what "globalization from below" means, the mirror opposite of the capitalists'
"globalization from above" (Peart, n.d.).

35 31. The development of such movements, Laclau and Mouffe argue, is
symptomatic of a realization that modernity, and within it capitalism, is productive
37 of a 'proliferation of antagonisms' (*ibid.*, p. 163) that are not reducible to 'class' or
any other social identity (*ibid.*, pp. 159, 167–168). Associated with this understanding
is 'a renunciation of the subject as a unitary, transparent and sutured entity' as it is
39 acknowledged how the identifications of subjects are overdetermined by multiple

1 relations of subordination; and also a ‘polysemia’ of ways in which particular
 2 antagonisms (around gender, ecology, development) are discursively constituted
 3 (*ibid.*, p. 168).

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