Extending Critical Performativity.

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Abstract

In this article we extend the debate about critical performativity. We begin by outlining the basic tenets of critical performativity and how this has been applied in the study of management and organisation. We then address recent critiques of critical performance. We note these arguments suffer from an undue focus on *intra-academic debates*; engage in *author-itarian theoretical policing*; feign relevance through *symbolic radicalism*; and *repackage common sense*. We take these critiques as an opportunity to offer an extended model of critical performativity involves focusing on issue of *public importance*; engaging with non-academic groups using *dialectical reasoning*; scaling up insights through *movement building*; and propagating *deliberation*.

Introduction

We may be witnessing the appearance of a third wave of CMS. The first wave was inspired by labour process theory, and focused on how control and discipline was established in the workplace. This was largely the creation of people trained in industrial sociology who had decamped to the then fledgling business schools in the UK (Parker, 2015). Their formula was to study an office or factory in order to broadly confirm Marxist views on the labour process. This created an impressive body of insights into workplace dynamics.

However, critics claimed it often missed issues which many thought were vital to 'new' kinds of workplaces, such as more subtle forms of power and domination (e.g. Clegg, 1989; Knights and Willmott, 1989). These shortcomings gave rise to a second of CMS largely inspired by Frankfurt School critical theory and, in particular, poststructuralist theory. The common formula for second wave critics was to import a French philosopher or other "exotic" thinker and then apply their ideas to a range of organizational issues. This formula provides some important insights into organisations and the workplace. But it has yielded ever-decreasing returns. This led theorists to look for every newer theorists, and novel contexts in which to apply their insights. Today, what was once a thriving area of scholarship has become increasingly moribund, offering increasingly little in way of claims which are academically rigorous, intellectually interesting and practically relevant.

Now a third wave of CMS is beginning to emerge. Rather than being driving by the application of ideas from fashionable thinkers, it starts from the point of addressing and critiquing organisational issues which are of greater public significance (Spicer, 2014). It is not completely clear how this third wave eventually is going to be labelled or understood. What is clear is that a lot of the debate around the third wave is captured by the concept of critical performativity (CP). In Spicer et al (2009) we define critical performativity as the 'active and subversive intervention into managerial discourses and practices'. We offer some key principles for CP: affirmation, ethics of care, pragmatism, focus on potentialities, and a normative stance. These were later consolidated into three overarching tactics: circumspect care, progressive pragmatism and present potentialities (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012a).

The idea of critical performativity has clearly touched a nerve among those working in the field of CMS. The ideas have been applied to a range of issues such as leadership (Craveni et al, 2010; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012a), human resource management (Janssens and Steyeart, 2009), marketing (Tadajewski, 2010), co-operatives (Leca et al, 2014; Paranaque and Willmott, 2014), academic conferences (Bell and King, 2010), and even online dating (Roscoe and Chillas, 2014). There have also been attempts to elaborate the idea such as Hartman's (2014) argument that subversive readings of mainstream theory can be made performative, and Wickert and Schaefer's (2015) paper which provides guidelines for the mobilization of managers and scholars to achieve meaningful change.

More recently, critiques of critical performativity have begun to emerge. These include Daniel King's reflections of his own difficulties of putting critical ideas into practice (King, 2015; King and Learmonth, 2015), Fleming and Banerjee's (2015) argument that critical performativity could end up generating a 'collaborationist' approach to researchers which both blunts critical sensibilities and is of little interest or use to practitioners, and Cabantous et al's (2015, also: Gond et al 2015) claim that critical performativity misrepresents key intellectual sources and does not take the power of objects seriously enough.

In this article, we would like to address some of these critiques. While we don't agree with everything they say, we acknowledge Fleming and Banerjee (2015) make some useful points that help to push forward the agenda of critical performativity. In particular their warnings about the

scope for failed performativities and their call for a public CMS deserve to be taken seriously. We wish we could be so complementary about Cabantous and her colleagues (2015; see also: Gond et al, 2015: 17-18). We were particularly troubled that they ignore our actual argument, and in its place set up a pale stand in. For them we show insufficient commitment to Austin, Butler and Lyotard, ignorance about Michel Callon, and insufficient interest in "materiality". Put bluntly, we have profound misgivings about such claims. They represent what we see as a regressive move within the field. Instead of building a novel way of doing critical work, they seem to want a return to the comfortable formula which produced so many second wave studies. But by doing so, they end up stuck in some of the familiar traps.

We think that CMS needs to take a different path from the one offered by Cabantous and colleagues. We argue that this can only happen if we put aside what has become an all too common recipe for doing critique: focusing on issues of *intra-academic debates*; engaging in *author-itarian theoretical policing*; trying to feign relevance through *symbolic radicalism*; and *repackaging common sense*. A new recipe is needed. This would involve focusing on issues of *public importance*; engaging with non-academic groups using *dialetical reasoning*; scaling up insights through *movement building*; and propagating *deliberation*. Developing this new recipe will probably require us to be braver about tackling issues that actually matter, more humble about the limited powers of critique, and more savvy about how to strategically make a difference.

We are by no means alone in making an urgent call for CMS to be more focused on issues of public concern (see also: Spicer, 2014; Delbridge, 2014; Fleming and Banerjee, 2015; Dallyn et al, 2015). At the heart of this work is the idea we should take inspiration from Michael Burawoy's (2005) concept of 'public sociology'. Doing this means paying attention to issues of public concern (rather than narrow disciplinary interest) and addressing these topics in a reflexive way which questions wide-spread presuppositions (rather than providing technocratic policy advice which largely bolsters them). What we do add, we think, is a more worked through account of how performative, publically focused critique might actually be done. Furthermore, we give some examples of work which has already been conducted in this direction, and highlight potential pitfalls and challenges.

To make this argument, we will proceed as follows: We begin with an overview of Cabantous and colleagues' criticism. We then identify what we see as five crucial shortcomings in their claims. Next, we identify an alternative to their approach which is based on a further elaboration of our ideas about critical performativity (CP). Finally, we conclude with some broader comments about how CP may present an exciting and important alternative to current thinking in the field.

The Failings of Critical Performativity?

Laure Cabantous and her colleagues are worried about the 'misunderstanding' of the concept of performativity. 'Our worry is that CPT provides a rather limited understanding of performativity in MOS, and so embeds a degree of misunderstanding that risks nullifying the political impact of the concept', they write. Their concerns about 'misunderstandings' are prompted by three papers published in *Human Relations* which have developed the concept of critical performativity (Spicer et al, 2009; Hartmann, 2013, Wickert and Schaefer, 2015). Our own 2009 paper is the primary target of their critique. In their own words, 'critical performativity theory is flawed as it misreads foundational performativity authors' (abstract). They aim to 'provide an alternate reading of performativity which better enables efforts to take on the issues that these earlier essays intended to address' (p.2). Their twenty or so pages of intellectual anxieties seem to boil down to three issues: misreading concepts of performativity, ignoring alternative conceptions of performativity, and ignoring materiality.

Cabantous et al's first concern is that we misread three core sources: Lyotard, Austin and Butler.

With regards to Lyotard (but also Fournier and Grey 2000), they point out that he originally conceived of 'anti-performativity' as 'opposition to forms of knowledge exclusively serving economic efficiency' (1979:5). With regard to Austin, they claim that according to his ideas of performativity, there are certain words that are performative or certain words that are not. This means you cannot be for or against certain categories of words (p. 6). When it comes to Butler, their argument rests on two points. The first is ontological: 'It is impossible to be more performative because without performativity there is no subject. Performativity cannot be exceeded' (p.8). Their second point is political: seeking to include managers in an account of performativity offers 'a very soft politics of benign managerialism rather than a politics of emancipation' (p. 9). The solution to all these ills? Greater fidelity to Judith Bulter's work, of course.

Their second worry is that we do not account for the role of 'materiality' in processes of performativity. 'Materiality is as important within performativity theory as discourse', they write (p. 10). It is hard to pin down exactly what they mean by materiality, as the concept is never clearly defined. Reference is made to a 'felicitous context' that makes a statement performative (p.10; see also: Fleming and Banerjee, 2015). They also point to 'the body's materiality' and claim 'language itself is material' (p. 10). This leads directly to their third trouble: we disregard alternative conceptions of performativity. They point out that 'Critical performativity theorists therefore need to look' at 'theorists who explore the imbrication of discourses and materiality' (p. 10). In particular, they suggest researchers should engage with the work of Michel Callon who offers 'a specific encompassing of materiality, notably when considering socio-technical arrangements and thus non-human (material) actants' (p. 12).

Overall, these shortcomings are seen as 'an academic failure' (p. 4) and blunting political effectiveness of critical performativity theory (CPT). They argue that when 'CPT neglects both performativity subjects' and 'overlooks the constitution of subjects through discourse, and performativity objects – it fails to recognize the materiality of discourse in performative processes. In doing so the current CPT approach damages the political and interpretive power of performativity.' (p 21).

Cabantous and colleagues' critique is curious, to say the least. Let's start by being polite: they do make a few points we agree with: It is important to acknowledge the continued relevance of anti-performativity in some situations (we make a similar point in Alvesson and Spicer. 2012: 385). It is also important to pay attention to the role of particular contexts which make some statements more performative than others (A similar point is made in Spicer et al, 2009 and again in Alvesson and Spicer, 2012a in discussion of pragmatism). There is a need to be 'engaging with staff, the professions, trade unions, the abjected, and so on' (A point which is we make in Alvesson and Spicer, 2012a: 336-337). Finally engaging with the 'politics of emancipation' is also clearly important (a point we make in Spicer et al, 2009: 533, as well as our other work eg. Alvesson and Willmott, 2012; Huault et al, 2014).

Having got the points of agreement out of the way, let us move on to what we see as the major shortcomings of Cabantous and colleagues' concerns. They make some claims we think are simply wrong. They claim that 'subjects do not 'make use of' words/discourses but are formed by and used within them' (p. 7); 'it is impossible to be 'more' performative because without performativity there is no subject: performativity cannot be exceeded' (p. 8); and 'it is through iterability that the appearance of something that appears to precede language is constituted'. These statements all seem to rest on the strong ontology assumption that language is performative of subjects (and perhaps objects). We think this is not always the case. It is best treated as an empirical question: when and how a statement is more or less performative? (for a parallel argument about discourse see: Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011, see also Spicer, 2013).

Cabantous and colleagues also think we need to pay attention to materiality. This seems like a

reasonable point, until you take a more careful look at what they mean by material. No clear definition is given. Instead, we find references made to 'felicitous contexts', 'bodies', 'language', and 'artefacts used in daily practice'. In other words, almost everything seems to fall under the category of materiality from the words used, the body of the person speaking, the artefacts they use and the context which they speak in. In other words: almost everything social scientists are interested in. Cabantous et al are not alone. Just like everything seemed to be discourse for a certain kind of Organization Theorist about decade or so ago, today nearly anything can be seen as 'materiality' (e.g. Carlilie et al, 2013). This makes it a concept which covers too much and reveals too little.

These untenable claims aside, there is another concern. In their critique of critical performativity there is little in the way of serious engagement with the key arguments about CP. We searched in vain for any engagement with the key principles in Cabantous et al's text, apart from a direct quote from Spicer et al (2009: 4).[1] The consolidated tactics from Alvesson & Spicer (2012a) get no mention at all. Similar points could be made about the other two targets of this text (Hartmann, 2014; Wickert and Schaefer, 2015). Instead, of a proper engagement with the concept of critical performativity, we get 37 references to Judith Butler. This deep fascination with Butler's work is perhaps not a problem as such. What is a problem is the apparent unwillingness to engage with the concept of critical performativity as an evolving debate. This seems to belie a strong preference for what, in another paper on the topic (Gond et al, 2105), they call theoretical borrowing rather than the kind of 'creative appropriation' we hoped to engage with.

When we developed the concept, we suggested 'a more fruitful way of conceiving of performativity draws on the work of J.L. Austin and Judith Butler. This leads us to look at performativity as the practical and sometimes parodic use of discourse.' (Spicer et al, 2009: 538). Only a page or so of our paper is devoted to Butler. In drawing on these ideas, we do so to indicate there are often ideas about performativity other than the one's handed down to us by Austin and Butler (Spicer et al, 2009: 543-544). The rest of the paper was an attempt to develop a novel idea. The key point of the Spicer et al paper was not to celebrate Austin or Butler and submit to their ideas. Instead, we hoped to engage in some 'creative appropriation' to develop a concept of critical performativity that stands on its own legs. We did this by not just drawing on Austin and Butler, but a wide range of theoretical sources as well as empirical projects we have been involved with, discussions we have had, and perhaps most important, some thinking through the subject matter ourselves. An adequate assessment should not be based on whether we are faithful borrowers who show a maximum degree of fidelity to a few of the texts we draw upon. Instead, we think our ideas are better assessed on the basis of whether the ideas which we develop seems to interesting, insightful and perhaps make some difference to the way people do critique - both in CMS and beyond.

The problem of author-itarianism in contemporary CMS

One of the reasons that reading Cabantous et al's response was such a depressing experience was that it reminds us of bigger problems that haunt Critical Management Studies, and Organisation Studies more generally. Their 'solution' seems to reproduce many of the ills in the field. This is because it is based on an intellectual recipe which has passed its use-by date. This recipe requires the user to select an esoteric issue which is of greater concern to small groups of scholars but rather limited relevance to the wider public. This issue is then mixed with a good dash of *author-itarianism* – a dogmatic faith to the ideas of a selected guru. Then some symbolic radicalism is added to give a sense that the concoction has some substance. Much of the time, this mixture ends up creating disappointing results which are little more than repackaged common sense. Let us look at each parts of this recipe in a little more.

Esoteric Issues Selection. The first thing which strikes us about Cabantous et al is their concern for a narrow intra-academic question: the correct interpretation of Judith Butler's ideas within a subfield

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1   To be fair, the tactics are reviewed in their wider review of performativity (Gond et al, 2015).

of Management Studies. If we were brutally honest there is only a small group of people in the world who are interested in such questions. There is a slightly larger group interested in how Callon's ideas might apply to Organisation Studies and what the question of Critical Performativity could mean. However, selecting such narrow issues only reinforces the navel-gazing which characterizes much contemporary Organization Studies, not least within CMS.

To be clear, such concerns about intra-subfield issues and internalized debates are worth attention. They can be beneficial. Such debates can help to increase rigor of an area of research as well as support idea generation and reflexivity. But they also can become a kind of comfortable trap where scholars are encouraged to feel good about themselves by talking with other converts. The very idea of critical performativity, at least as we formulated it, is primarily to focus on issues which matter to those beyond the narrow confines of our professional groups. It means selecting issues which are of some degree of public importance. Cabantous et al's entire paper seems to do the opposite. Their narrow, highly specialized target requires familiarity with and sympathy for a highly abstracted sets of ideas. It also necessitates a tolerance for what the authors themselves call 'jargon monoxide' (Gond et al, 2015: 15). Such hefty prerequisites hardly invite a broader group to the project of CP.

Author-itarian Reasoning. After selecting an issue of narrow professional concern, they go on to address the issue by demanding maximum fidelity to an iconic theorist. This amounts to a kind of theoretical dogmatism. As we have already argued, a good portion of their claims seem to boil down to the line: 'Butler did not say that'. We agree that good scholarship always requires careful reading and interpretation of source texts. Where we disagree is that scholarship should stop at a dogmatic insistence on what the source text 'really said'. The interpretation of scholarly texts usually evolves as people find different things in them and develop the ideas in different directions.

When this is not allowed to happen we get stuck in a kind author-itarianism. Here social scientists develop a quasi-religious faith in the letter of the texts of a thinker they have selected out as a secular prophet. Any deviation from what they take to be the true meaning of the prophet's text (Butler, Callon or whoever else) is seen as heresy.[2] What our critics call in another text 'creative re-appropriation' (Gond, 2015) is frowned upon here. Scholarship comes to be about theoretical policing: faulty interpretations are identified, punished and then corrected. We should be clear – this is not just the case for scholars like Cabantous and colleagues with a fondness for Butler or Callon. Similar accusations could be levelled against Organisation Theorists working with ideas from Foucault, Lacan, Luhmann, Latour and many others.

Symbolic Radicalism. By building a thought world around a small selection of theoretical texts, the would-be critic often generates a kind of symbolic radicalism. Use of supposedly subversive identity markers (such as heavy citation of avant garde theorists or well-known political movements) is confused with having wider engagement. When intellectualism rules, there is low tolerance for ambiguity and a high degree of political naivety. Changing subject positions, stories, social interpretations or material arrangements (whatever they might be) are considered to be powerful political mobilisation in and of themselves. Ideas are not seen as part of a broader struggle which is much more messy and uncertain. The assumption seems to be that you can truly change the world by reading Judith Butler (or whoever else) correctly. As Cabantous et al note 'there have been few attempts to translate this body of work into political action'. There may be reasons for this.[3]

When they do venture beyond their favoured theorists, the authors often reach for examples which

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2   It is interesting to note that in a companion piece Gond et al (2015: 15-17) do tolerate some creative misappropriation of the concept of perfromativity by the Montreal school of communications researchers and those studying performative routines

3   It is worth noting two major exceptions that we are aware of: the transgender movement and Sweden's Feminist Initiative Partly, both of which have taken particular inspiration from Butler's ideas about performativity. However, their degree of success does not come from reading Butler *only*.

are either very far away or highly symbolic in nature. In the case of Cabantous et al we get films. Such references give would-be critics the sense that they are engaging in something radical when they visit the local cinema to watch the latest Ken Loach film. Any interest in deeper empirical studies or engagement with practitioners within reach is overlooked. In this piece Cabantous and colleagues - four senior UK management academics – do not draw upon their own experiences, those of other CMS researchers' work or report any specific ideas for how CP can be exercised.[4] We are concerned that when researchers go looking for insight at a distance, they render many of the ideas from within our discipline almost useless. There is no acknowledgement of the difficult work of doing ambitious empirical research that leads researchers to have something important to say (beyond adding to the literature). Nor is there much thinking about building broader coalitions and linkages which help to make critical ideas relevant. Instead, using identity markers such as the citation of North American philosophers, French sociologists and English film-makers become a stand in for more thorough-going engagement.

Reconstituting Common Sense. The outcome of this approach is often to elevate common sense statements into the realm of cutting-edge theory. In Cabantous et al, many common sense states are presented as break-though insights which can only be afforded by their selected grand social theorist (e.g. that people are not unitary, that materiality matters etc). For instance, after a tour through Butler and Callon and the three documentaries, Cabantous et al eventually arrive at six questions: Two 'fundamental questions' are these: 'Who are you?' (Q1); and 'what are the conditions of the possibility of your becoming?'(Q2). (p 19)

These questions are broad, vague and have been addressed by CMS scholars many more times than we would like to think of. They may not always been answered in what our critics think is the 'right' way (ie. With profuse use of Butler or maybe Callon). But the questions are by no means unique or even that insightful. Indeed, they don't even require the heavy theoretical baggage which Cabantous and colleagues use to actually ask or answer. One of us has a three year old daughter who is already fairly proficient at asking one of their fundamental questions ('who are you'). And she has certainly been saved from Judith Butler's texts as bedtime reading (so far at least).

For us, Cabantous and colleagues' response is troubling because it draws on a theoretical recipe which is common in many second wave CMS texts: Issues of interest to only a small group of professional academics are selected for analysis; They are dealt with through author-itarian demands for maximum faithfulness to a selected thinker; Broader relevance is indicated through using symbolic indications of radicalism which often generate a kind of political naivety; The end result is that complex issues often become common-sense claims which are thinly disguised in (pseudo) high-brow jargon.[5]

Making Critical Performativity more Performative.

In the previous section, we tried to dig out what we see as an intellectual recipe which is at work not just in Cabantous and colleagues' response, but in many works in CMS and Organization Studies

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4   We do acknowledge they deal with some of these concerns in other papers. For instance, a paper by one of the authors deals with the struggles which employees in the NHS have when they are forced to engage with ideas of leadership (Learmonth et al, 2008).

5   There are of course fascinating questions of intellectual history about how this situation came about. Some have already explained the rise of the first wave of CMS research by referring to the Thatcherite restructuring of the universities in the UK during the early 1980s (Fournier and Grey, 1999). A history remains to be written about the rise and expansion of second wave CMS during the 1990s and 2000s. This strange situation may be the result of a similar processes to the ones which François Cusset (2008) describes in his analysis of the creation of 'French Theory' by North American Humanities scholars during the 1970s and 1980s. This entailed the appropriation and packaging together of thinkers who were relatively marginal in France happened on U.S. university campuses. At the time, these campuses were 'worlds apart from the universe of public discourse . . . permanently colored by the theme of adolescent rebellion' and marked by 'increasingly coordinated demands of women, people of color, and lesbians and gays who sought recognition for their identities in the academic sphere' (Frickle and Gross, 2005: 223).

more generally. We think this kind of intellectual recipe has become a hindrance. While it is good at sharpening up debates among small communities of researchers, it is much less useful for engaging with pressing public issues in a creative and insightful way. This means new intellectual recipes for CMS are needed. We think that developing ideas about critical performativity can help to provide this.

Building on our existing work, as well as some recent developments in the area, we will argue that a more critically performative approach for doing CMS has four components. The first is really about selecting the issue that you want to speak about. We think issues of broader public concern that can be investigated reflexively should be the focus. Doing this requires the critic to go beyond narrow intra-field disciplinary debates and show a willingness to question broader social assumptions. The second aspect is a decision about how you want to speak about the issue. We think dialectical reasoning is useful here. This entails tactics such as circumspect care, progressive pragmatism and paying attention to present potentialities. To do this requires giving up on the kind of author-itarian reasoning which we have noted seems to characterise much work in the area. The third aspect is the context from which you seek to speak. To give critical ideas some wider purchase, critics often need to engage in some kind of movement building. Doing this involves going beyond symbolic radicalism and performing the often tough and compromising work of engaging with a wider public. The final aspect is the question of what effects a critic might hope to achieve. We think that it is reasonable to aim for the elimination of bad ideas from broader debates, the introduction of progressive alternatives to these debates and creation of forums or processes of deliberation around these issues. Doing this requires scholars to move beyond simply restating common sense.

We have not picked these four aspects out at random. Underlying them is a kind of performative logic. We think that if you look at the now extensive debates about performativity, there are constant concerns around these: The language which a speaker reiterates within their speech act, the style or way the speech act itself is done, the context in which the speech act takes place, and the potential effects of the speech act. We think these aspects roughly correspond to the four questions which we ask. The focus on public issues in a reflexive way is about the language that one chooses to recite. Engaging in a dialectical way involves the style or process of speech act a critic undertakes. The issue of movement building is about selecting (or perhaps building) a felicitous context for critical speech acts. Finally the focus on particular effects is really a question of what the reasonable outcomes of a performative process might be. In what follows, we will consider each of these components in some more depth.

Issue Selection

The first major choice that any critical research faces is which issues or topics they will choose to devote their attention and efforts to. As we have already argued, the knee-jerk way of deciding on this is to look at what other people working in CMS are doing. Behind this, there is a kind of anxiety reduction: if my peers are thinking about and focusing on these issues, then they must be worthy of study. While a little novelty is required to mark out a novel contribution, too much is usually punished (Alvesson & Sandberg 2014). The result is often intensive and ongoing debate among professional critics about issues which are largely of interest to them only.

When this kind of work is done well, it involves reflexively questioning assumptions which are deeply rooted within a particular academic field. When they are not done well, they tend to largely focus on bolstering and policing already established assumptions in an area. As we have hopefully already made clear, such an approach has its uses, but it is unlikely to engage with issues that matter to a wider public. Even within apparently critically oriented scholarly journals, there is a dearth of articles address important public issues of the day (Dunne et al, 2008).

We think that critics should use a different set of criteria when selecting issue to address. Following

recent work on public sociology (Burawoy, 2005), and what some are starting to call public organisation theory (Spicer, 2014; Delbridge, 2014; Fleming and Banerjee, 2015), we think that would-be critics should (at least in some cases) seek to address audiences who are not just other academics working within their field, and they should do this a way which is reflexive (i.e. questioning deeply held beliefs or assumptions). We think this points to two very useful questions that would-be critical performativists might ask: Am I addressing an issue of wider public importance? Is there scope for reflexively questioning deeply held beliefs about this issue?

Extent of Public Interest. Researchers need to consider whether the issues that they might select are considered to be important or pressing for constituents which are beyond their own narrow disciplinary debates. This wider importance is often indicated by unresolved issues, challenges, contentions or concerns that exist but are not clearly articulated. Sometimes these may be relevant to be a fairly narrow public – such as a locality, a particular occupational field, an industry, a union or a particular organisation.

For instance, recent work by one of the authors focused on challenges that came about in the British retail banking sector following a series of scandals around mis-selling of financial products (Spicer et al, 2015).[6] This report addresses an area which was already recognised by those in the field as contentious, but it did so in a more extensive and probing way. While many of the issues addressed in this report were of relatively low interest to those engaged in professional debates within CMS, they were particularly interesting for many executives, policy makers, regulators and others working in the sector. In other cases, the issues which are selected for investigation may have broader importance to a wider set of constituencies which cut across fields, localities and occupations.

Another example is the publication by one of us of an opinion piece in one of the major national newspapers in Sweden about anxiety driven organisations (Alvesson, 2015). This article (and subsequent talks) gave voice to a concern that people working in a range of settings had noticed, but had not been able to clearly frame or articulate. By taking on an all purpose issue which affects a wide range of people, this appealed to a large group of people working in a range of sectors such as education, health and local government.

A third example is a paper about ethics in media organizations written by two of us (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2010) which was picked up by a journalist, who used it to examine his own professional practices. This lead to a series of articles about media ethics in one of the major national papers in Sweden. These articles focused on the commodification of people's fortunes and misfortunes, the double dehumanization of victims and reporters, and the short-circuiting of ethical reflection inherent in contemporary reporting and editorial practices. This helped to move the debate away from the rather tired tropes of libel and editorial integrity. In all these cases, issues were selected for investigation primarily because of wider public concern or importance. The potential for interest of other academics was not necessarily of primary importance. It is perhaps telling that none of this work were published in leading journals.

Reflexive Framing. The second question which those interested in critical performativity need to ask is whether there is scope to pose the question in a way that challenges underlying assumptions in a meaningful way. Many questions, which are of public importance, are framed in largely instrumental ways. The question– as they are presented to scholars at least – is often how something

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6   For reasons of transparency, it is worth noting that while Spicer was the lead author of this report, two of our critics (Gond and Fleming) were also co-authors of the report. We all work together at Cass Business School. We have had no specific or formal debates about Critical Performativity at Cass to date. We have shared our various texts. The shared interest in the topic perhaps reminds us of the role which what some scholars call 'small worlds' can have on intellectual development and debates.

might be done better or more efficiently given the existing evidence base. These kinds of 'evidence based management' type questions are important. After all, much in the way of harmful managerial practice is based on weak or shaky evidence (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006).

However, there are certainly limitations to this approach (e.g. Learmonth, 2006; cf. Rousseau, 2006). We think that critics are sometimes best placed to take on public issues not through building and checking the evidence base, but through questioning underlying assumptions around a particular practice. To do this, issues that are selected as a target for critique need to offer at least some space for reflexive questioning. This means asking more fundamental questions about the assumptions and initial framing of public debates. The ideal situation is when there are some fairly strong shared public assumptions around an idea. Such assumptions often prove to be an ideal target for questioning.

An example of this is Roland Paulsen's (2014) work on empty labour. Perhaps one of the reasons his book which was initially published as an expensive university press hardback based on a doctoral dissertation appealed to such a wide audience (it was the subject of an important column in *The Economist,* for instance) was that it called into question a widely shared assumption that people have too much work to do. Instead of accepting this idea, Paulsen flipped this assumption by looking at an important but often overlooked group of people who do not have enough work to do during their working hours. This led him to point to a curse of contemporary work we often don't think about: the need to waste time during what are often empty days.

In sum, engaging in critical performativity requires us to ask the right kind of questions. To do this researchers need to avoid the temptation to ask about issues of narrow disciplinary concern and instead ask issues which have some degree of public importance. They also need to avoid the temptations and pressures to focus on instrumental questions and instead seek to ask reflexive questions. By doing this, we hope that critical researchers will at least start out on the right path.

Forms of reasoning.

Having selected potentially fertile questions, the next challenge that the critical research is faced with is how they might go about engaging with these questions. We think that the key tactics outlined in Spicer et al (2009) covers this dimension fairly well. But, we also think that they are articulated more succinctly in Alvesson & Spicer (2012a). We think critical research should involve a process of dialectical reasoning, whereby tensions between two opposite concepts are explored – but not necessarily resolved. There are likely to be many dialectical tensions which critical researchers come across and explore in their work. These are often likely to be specific to the research site in which a scholar is working. However, in earlier work we have identified three more general dialectical tensions which those interested in critical performativity will probably need to work with.

Care and Circumspection. Taking the views of those you engage with seriously does not mean that you should uncritically embrace them. You take someone seriously not through credulous acceptance but through critical dialogue. We think this will help to temper the potential for hijacking and co-optation by elites and vested interests. But, we also need to remember that critics must take care to represent the views of actors who are marginalised in mainstream discussions. An example of this is the emerging research which draws attention to the combined views of managers and subordinates on leadership and followership. By paying attention to and caring about the perspectives and views of followers, it is possible to suggest important insights to managers about leadership concerns. This does not mean uncritically embracing the views of followers. They still need to be counter-balanced, contrasted and checked in relationship to the experiences and perspectives of others (including leaders). Critical insights demystifying notions of leadership may

be seen as problematic for managers. But loosening heroic and idealistic notions of leadership may be help leaders to think more reflexively their own activities and assumptions (Alvesson et al 2016).

Pragmatism and Progressivism. This dialectic is about addressing issues where there is some scope for change. But that change is not just about serving elite interests. It is progressive insofar as it helps to reduce harmful ideas, create less harmful alternatives and build spaces for deliberation (we discuss each of these points in more depth later). Progressive pragmatism involves picking up seeds for alternatives in existing discourses and seeking to nurture and develop them. We think this is what we have tried to do in some of our own work on leadership (e.g. Alvesson & Spicer, 2011, Alvesson & Kärreman 2015). Instead of focusing on established discourses (such as heroic or post-heroic leadership), we have tried to detect *counter-concepts* which are already floating around or at work in organisations, but are often overlooked by most mainstream research that is un-necessarily fixated on existing ideas, and apply *counter-measures* to dominant ideologies and ways of thinking. This helped to yield a new vocabulary that might be used to talk about and understand the work of 'leadership' such as influencing efforts or organizing work. We think this vocabulary can serve as a step towards getting rid of some of the more harmful myths around leadership, introducing alternatives and creating a broader deliberation around the kind of leadership which we might want.

Potentials and the Present. Exploring this dialectic means looking for radical alternatives which to some extent already exist in practice. Locating these present potentialities does not mean faddishly replicate reforms carried out elsewhere. Instead it means paying attention to alternatives which are embedded in the situation at hand. It may also draw on re-imaginings of inspirational acts and events elsewhere. We have also tried to do this in our work on leadership by looking at settings where leadership discourses were not overly dominating. By considering these settings more carefully, one of us has co-developed the concept of 'leadership on demand' – whereby a follower asks for or accepts leadership rather than having it foisted upon them (Blom and Alvesson, 2014; see also: Fryer, 2012). We think this gives an alternative potential for thinking about how leadership might be done.

We think that critical performativity offers a distinctive set of tactics for doing critique. For us the core of this is moving away from a one dimensional or oppositional critique towards a more dialectical approach. Part of this means being alive to the tensions which are specific to one's own research field. But there is a more general skill of being able to deal with more general tensions which arise in many critical engagement: circumspection *and* care; pragmatism *and* progressivism; the present *and* potentialities. The point is not trying to resolve such tensions, but to use them as a spring-board for novel ideas.

Forms of engagement.

Having developed a novel and reflexive idea about issues of broader public importance, researchers are faced with the challenge of how they can engage others beyond their immediate research context in order to scale up their ideas. To address this question, it is necessary to counteract the temptation of intellectualism: that ideas implement themselves because they are rational and superior. We may wish the world to work as if intellectualism ruled. Which academic wouldn't? However, in most cases empirical realities do not support intellectualism. Good ideas often don't get implemented. And when implemented, they certainly didn't get implemented by themselves. Rather, they require a felicitous context in which they might shift from just being general speech acts to potentially performative ones (Fleming and Banerjee, 2015). To put this more simply, they need to address a broader network of people and attract resources if they are going to have any influence beyond the critics own narrow world. The question, of course, is how this might be done.

One way to start thinking about how critical performativity might be scaled up is to turn to ideas from social movement theory. Hugh Willmott (2013) has already suggested that it may be useful to think about CMS as a kind of social movement. We partially agree. CMS has some social movement like qualities, but it is first and foremost an intellectual movement (Frickel and Gross, 2005). It is largely focused on knowledge production, rather than issues which other social movements might be focused on (such as changing policies).

Furthermore, CMS is a very particular kind of intellectual movement. Within the broad field of organisation and management studies, most intellectual movements mainly seek admittance to the 'mainstream' of knowledge production (Hambrick and Chen, 2008). Their core aim is being seen as legitimate. An example of such a movement is strategic management, which shifted from being a small and fairly marginal field during the 1970s to being a fully legitimate part of mainstream knowledge production in business schools by the 1990s.

In contrast, CMS might be seen as a *confrontational* or *contentious* intellectual movement which seeks to routinely challenge the existing social and intellectual order rather than join it (Hambrick and Chen, 2008: 33). Drawing on studies of intellectual movement, we will now look at four ways that contentions movements achieve some collective bite: when they engage disgruntled elites; when they mobilize resources available to support these ideas; when there are micro-mobilization structures in place; and when ideas resonate with broader audiences (Frickel and Gross, 2005).

Engaging Disgruntled Elites. When ideas are taken up by relatively high status actors, then they are much more difficult to ignore. These actors are able to lend an aura of importance to the ideas. They also provide valuable opportunities for accessing resources. However, it is unlikely that most high status actors will buy into these ideas – mainly because they benefit from established ideas. But this is not always the case. There are often a limited number of members of the elite who are disgruntled with the current situation. It may be due to personal circumstances. But it may be also due to wider crises that make it clear to at least some members of the elite that current ideas are not viable.

Following major disasters such as accidents, failures or systemic crises there is likely to be a greater supply of members of the elite who have lost faith in existing ideas and are open to consider alternatives. This is what happened following the 2008 financial crisis when policy makers around the world became much more open to alternatives to the highly liberal regulation of financial markets which had been the case up until that point. Disgruntled elites may be found both within the academic field (Willmott, 2013), in other academics fields but also – and crucially – outside of academia.

This is not to say CMS should only target high status actors. A wider range of stakeholders – in particular marginalised groups – should undoubtedly be an importance focus for CMS. However, if the field hopes to achieve some degree of impact or influence, the disgruntled elite are also likely to be an important part of the potential audience (see also Hartmann, 2013). This might sound difficult, but there are instances when it does occur. Consider the current backlash against ideas of shareholder primacy which has spread among a small but growing group of disgruntled senior executives, policy makers, elite commentators and even investors.

Mobilizing Resources. Getting critique to scale up requires slack resources. These come in the form of the usual resources which intellectual movements rely on such as publication opportunities, employment, grants and so on (Frickle and Gross, 2005). Arguably such resources have already played an important role in the growth of CMS (Willmott, 2013). For instance, the rapid expansion of students studying in business schools coupled with increasing pressure from certification agencies for faculty to publish in scholarly journals created expanded employment opportunities – which were sometimes filled by CMS scholars.

However, engagement with wider audiences requires other kinds of slack resources: opportunities to access policy and strategy making processes; access to the media; monetary resources to support projects which are not entirely focused on producing articles in highly ranked academic journals; skills required to reach out to broader audiences such as political nous. There are moments when these extra-academic resources might be become more available. For instance, Harney (2002) describes how the unexpected victory of a leftist political party in the Ontario legislature created opportunities to access policy making for a number of radical intellectuals – including himself. However, much of the time it requires a process of cobbling together a range of resources that are scattered throughout the broader social landscape. This can take time, be risky for intellectual reputations and not often be rewarded by traditional academic structures (Knights and Scarborough, 2010). A major problem is that most CMS people seem much more interested in instrumental rewards than doing something societally meaningful and relevance.

Mirco-mobilization. As well as bringing together resources, creating forums and structures to help develop ideas is vital. Of particular importance for intellectual movements are structures of 'micro-mobilization'. These come in the form of routine interactions which can help to build ferment and support fledgling members of the movement. An intellectual movement like CMS already has a range of well established forums such as conferences, workshops, doctoral training courses, research groups and even departments which supporting interaction of academics within the field (Willmott, 2013). While such forums provide an important social infrastructure, they can inadvertently encourage an inward looking and even cultish attachment to particular ideas (some of which we described above).

What is lacking, we think, are forums which encourage interactions which go beyond card carrying CMS members. This might be arenas which reach out to engage with other disciplinary fields both within the business school and beyond. But it is perhaps more crucially extra-academic audiences such as activists, policy makers, unions, professional groups and yes – even managers. These forums can help to create a space where people debate and refine ideas – not just communicate research findings. An example of this type of forum is the 'critical corporation project' which through over a dozen events brought together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to debate and discuss critical theories of the corporation – drawn from different disciplinary backgrounds (for summary see Baars and Spicer, forthcoming). This ongoing interaction subsequently sparked a number of spin-offs including a book targeted mainly at policy makers (Corporate Reform Collective, 2014), and a further series of workshops which has involved debates among a wider range of stakeholders including investors, regulators, activists and well as academics (Modern Corporation Project).

Resonant Framing. Finally, intellectual movements are unlikely to have much wider influence if their claims do not have resonance with the concerns of the wider public. Much has already been said about how claims might be framed in a way which engages a wider intellectual audience (eg. see: Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011). But resonating with a wider public is a slightly different matter. A crucial part of doing this means trying to frame claims which appeal to deeply held beliefs, connect with people's daily experiences and draw on wider cultural narratives and myths (Snow and Benford, 2000: 621-622). If we think about many ideas generated by CMS they often are couched in highly abstract terms which means they have little explicit connection to deeply held beliefs in society such as 'fairness', 'democracy' and similar items of secular faith. The preference for the exotic over the prosaic means there is almost no connection with people's immediate experiences of being managed, and indeed managing.

Put bluntly, the arguments produced by CMS are based on stories or myths that appear to be utterly alien to most potential allies. Creating some degree of resonance with each of these aspects is vital. But too much resonance is likely to make claims seem obvious, and uninteresting to the broader public. Thus, making appealing claims involves finding some balance between resonance and

dissonance with the wider public's accepted beliefs, experiences and familiar narratives. We think that our work on stupidity in organisations found a wider public for some of these reasons (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012a). It appealed to wide-spread basic beliefs (about the value of intelligence), spoke to familiar experiences (witnessing stupid things being done, often by apparently intelligent people), and fitted in with basic narratives which are familiar to most people (the trope of the 'professional idiot' which is found in many stories). There are clearly risks which come with trying to find a wider resonance. Perhaps one of greatest dangers is that your ideas will be misinterpreted or misunderstood. But this is a risk which comes with any kind of public communication. The only antidote is not say anything or have very few readers.

In sum, critical ideas don't become performative on their own. They require a felicitous context. Often this needs to be constructed through a significant amount of mobilization work. This involves engaging disgruntled elites, bringing together slack resources, creating forums for micro-mobilization and framing ideas in a way which resonate with a broader public. What is important to note is that much of this work takes critics outside of their established skill sets and experiences. Doing this kind of work is likely to require a mixture of reskilling as well as building coalitions with those who already have these skills and abilities. This is likely to be difficult, and in many cases not pay off. But what is for sure, the kind of theoretical navel-gazing which some strains of CMS encourage is likely to ensure that none of these things happen.

Desired outcomes.

After scaling up their ideas by connecting them with broader movements, the final question which critical research is faced with is what effects or outcomes might they realistically expect. The CMS project has long been driven by a set of abstract ends or outcomes such as emancipation, autonomy, equality and justice (e.g. Alvesson & Willmott 2012). There are some interesting tensions between the different facets of the CMS project, depending on your prioritised abstract ends. Regardless, these outcomes are rarely debated, and if they are, the question is how these goals can be made relevant to critique in the face of current socio-economic conditions. We subscribe to the ideals mentioned above, and think that deliberation about such normative ends is important. However, a central part of the idea of critical performativity is to focus on more immediately specific and identifiable effects. We think there are three kinds of outcomes which we might look for: a negative outcome which involves the *removal* of harmful aspects (what we call 'bullshit reduction'); a positive outcome which involves the articulation *of alternative* interests; and a dialogical outcome which involves *deliberation* about existing aspects and potential future aspects. Let's briefly look at each of these in a little more depth.

Bullshit Reduction. One of the prime roles of the critic will always remain waste-disposal. Getting rid of ideas which are harmful or have passed their best before date is essential. Sometimes careful deconstructive work is needed. In other instances, more brutal destruction is called for. Business schools are veritable junkyards filled with the ideological wreckage of long discredited ideas. Usually, companies are even worse. Decluttering organisations (and more broadly business schools) of questionable ideas can help to make people's lives easier. There are many kinds of waste-disposal which critics might engage in. They might spot unrealistic leadership ideas, vision and value talk, HRM systems and other forms of management mumbo jumbo. Sadly, second wave CMS encouraged much theoretical waste disposal work. The more important work of getting rid of harmful identities, taking out rotting ideologies, dumping out of date interests and dismantling crumbling institutions remained undone.

You don't need much exposure to modern work places to realize that they are replete with confusing and contradictory crap. A large part of this is driven by faddish management initiatives which are not necessarily put in play because of nefarious intent. Rather they are the creation of anxiety-laden activities of insecure managers. Because of structural, financial and ideological factors, managers

are constantly tempted to respond to issues with pointless and irrelevant initiatives that obfuscate, confuse and blur the issues. This is why structural discrimination is dealt with by courses where employees supposedly learn how to be polite to each other; structural labour shortages are dealt with by pointless re-organizations, and where declining performance is often dealt with by bringing in the consultants (which can often make matters worse). In short, managers seem rather susceptible to bullshit (Alvesson 2013; Jackall 1988).

Following Harry Frankfurt's (2006) work on the topic, we understand bullshit as being talk and text which has scant regard for truth and is often used to wilfully mislead people (see also: Alvesson 2013; Spicer, 2013). Often bullshit in organisation is fuelled by a lack of mechanisms for testing out management ideas. Rather, bullshit can prove rather helpful to managers – at least in the short-term – as it serves as it helps to build confidence in their ideas. However, it can also be very harmful – creating a great deal of tedious bullshit work (Graeber, 2014) - which many people in organisations are needlessly occupied with. An example of this is some of the work which has gone into repudiating bad ideas about charismatic or transformational leadership in organisation (eg. Tourish, 2013). Arguably such critiques have been a part of undermining the legitimacy of ideas about charismatic leadership. We think that bullshit reduction represents a relatively easy outcome for CMS researchers. At the minimum, just highlighting the stupidity invested in these practices might make it possible for employees and managers to protect themselves from the worst excesses. It could help to clear out some of the pointless bullshit work which people in organisations find so painful. By doing so, it is likely that critique will do many people a favour.

Articulating Alternatives. Of course, critics need also to aim towards positive or constructive outcomes as well, including proposing alternatives (Spicer et al, 2009). Rather than drawing on utopian thought (as Fleming and Banerjee suggest), we put forward Foucault's idea of heterotopia, or 'other places'. The idea is to compare and contrast progressive practices from other empirical realities and in that way re-imagine future social arrangements.

Such practices can be found in surprising places. For example, some professional service firms, while quite often associated with odious practices, can sometimes be run internally according to surprisingly progressive principles. Profits are widely shared over the work force, and meritocracy seems to be a key principle for promotion. Professional values and the voice of the work force matter in decision-making. Our point is not that professional service firms are always examples of socially valuable organizations – that is an open question, to put it mildly. Our point is that there are contexts that approximate progressive ideals that we can learn from, and presumably transfer to less enlightened contexts. Another example of how alternatives can be identified and transferred by critics is the project by researchers at the University of Leicester who documented a range of alternative organisational forms (Parker et al, 2014). By looking at many organisational settings, they were able to point at viable and operable alternatives to current corporate and managerial organisations.

Deliberation Creation. Critics can realistically expect to play a role in the disposal of bad ideas as well as the articulation of creative alternatives. A final role which we think that critics can play is the creation of spaces in which the relative merits (or otherwise) of propositions might be tested and debated. This involves the creation of spaces of deliberation, including forums that enable people with differing positions, ideas and evaluations to come together. Critics can help to create such forums. They might be developed within organisations – providing organisational members with the suspension of many of the questionable taboos which stop them for speaking out about issues which trouble them. But in many cases, critics are well placed to build these spaces between organisations to bring together actors who otherwise would not speak. After actually creating such forums, an important role for the critic can become ensuring they are not simply polite talking shops for 'stakeholder consultation'. Rather, they need to encourage active and critical use of reasoning on the

part of participants.

There have been some partial experiments with creating forums for deliberation by CMS academics. Often these have taken the form of academic-industry networks. One example is Financial Institutions Forum for Research and Management (Knights and Scarborough, 2010). This is an academic industry network which was established by well-known critical management studies academics.[7] What is perhaps most interesting for our purposes is that the Forum established a place to address issues which were marginalised within financial sector organisations: such as masculine biases in the design of financial products, the lack of financial literacy among customers and financial institutions role in the creation of the economic crisis in 2008. This clearly created some tensions – such as between the instrumental needs of industry members and academics desire to generate publishable research.

The Financial Institutions Forum was a partial experiment in deliberation: while it created (limited) discussion around marginalised issues, the membership remained rather exclusive membership. There has been some enthusiasm about the potential of deliberative forums from some working (broadly) with CMS (e.g. Scherer and Palazzo, 2007). Academics working in other fields have experimented with more developed deliberative forums involving a far wider range of actors – not just businesses. Often these have been focused on issues which would be fairly familiar to many working in business schools such as the allocation of budgets (Gaunaza and Francés, 2012). Perhaps some inspiration may be taken from this work to expand the scope of CMS. But when doing so, it is also important to be cognisant of the potential shortcomings and traps involve with such exercises (see: Moog et al, 2014).

In sum, we are not as optimistic as some of our critics who seem to think that discourses are immediately material. For us, the development of critical discourses can be made performative, but their consequences are far from certain. We think there are realistic opportunities to make a difference through bullshit reduction, articulation of potentially less harmful alternatives, and the creation of spaces for deliberation these. Achieving these outcomes is far from a sure thing. But we think they are worthwhile aims.

Conclusion

Lest we forget, critical management studies is in crisis, less so in terms of employment and careers for its proponents than in terms of moral and social relevance. While the global economy crumbled, CMS fiddled with footnotes. Any sense of bad conscience was salved with a pseudo radical demeanour. As a whole, the field offers little compared to books like Klein (1999). Religiously reading a few theorists, talking about 'neo-liberal capitalism' at any opportunity possible, and participating in the office recycling scheme has substituted for radical action and thinking. The result is a field which has done little more than create a space for people working in business schools to indulge in fantasies about themselves as subversive intellectuals while much evidence around them suggests otherwise. What was once a vibrant environment of intellectual innovation has become a stagnant pond of pseudo-radical cliches.

The field had once sought to reveal the dark matter of management so often ignored by managerialist accounts. Now, the old dark matter which many researchers go looking for is the inside of a cinema where they 'research management' by viewing a film with some mildly radical pretentions. Older members of the movement have found safety in chewing over old ideas. If we are

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7Over its lifespan, the Financial Institutions Forum involved a large number of scholars working in CMS. Research generated by this work also served as the empirical basis for a good deal of work by the 'Manchester School' of critical Foucauldian organisational researchers – much of which created the basis of what we called 'second wave CMS' in the UK.

honest, there are many people within the field who can't help themselves compulsively writing the same paper again and again. The field's middle managers have retreated into playing the metrics game (and undoubtedly soon, the impact game). They scan the horizons for the next publication opportunity with the desperation of a salesperson who has not met their targets. And newcomers spend their days trying to 'crack the code' of the 'publication game' in the fading hope of landing a decent job and then quick promotion. An abundance of similar-looking papers continues to appear, adding very little and seldom being relevant to any person outside the smallest intellectual circles. Even within these small worlds, people don't care that much about each other's ideas any more. They only read them when they need to produce the next journal article.

In this paper, we have tried to address some of these problems by pointing to what we see as an emerging third wave of critical management studies. We have argued that second wave CMS has come to rely on an increasingly tired intellectual recipe: focusing on issues which are largely of interest to other scholars, strictly policing the interpretation of these issues through a kind of author-itarianism, relying on symbolic radicalism to try to indicate the broader relevance of one's work, and producing disappointing outcomes such as the repackaging of common sense. We have argued that this recipe needs to be replaced. We think the idea of critical performativity provides one way of doing this.

For us an extended conception of CP would offer an alternative recipe for doing critical work. This would call for researchers to select issues on the basis of public importance and potential for reflexive questioning. These issues would be questioned through a process of dialectical reasoning. This might entail tensions between circumspection and care, progressivism and pragmatism as well as a focus on the present as well as potentialities. The results of such dialectical thinking can be scaled up to have wider intellectual influence through movement building. This requires engaging disgruntled elites, mobilising resources, creating settings for micro-mobilisation and ensuring issues are framed in a way which resonates with the broader public. If this process is successful, we think that critics might hope for outcomes such as bullshit reduction, articulation of alternatives and creation of spaces for the deliberative.

We hope that the extended version of CP which we offer in this paper is one which not only skirts around the problems suggested by our critics (Cabantous et al, 2015; Fleming and Banerjee, 2015), but offers an alternative way of doing CMS which does not fall into the traps which so much work in the area wallows in today. The recipe which we provide should be treated as only a starting point. It can help to identify useful things which might be done, or where there are potential gaps in a research process. But just like any receipe, we see it more like a set of guidelines which can be improvised around – depending on the ingredients which you have on hand. There are certain core ingredients – selecting issues of public importance, dialectical reasoning, movement building, accessible and effective communication and interest in outcomes.

As with any recipe there is clearly room for significant variation. Researchers may be allergic to certain ingredients we have suggested. For instance, many CMS researchers may find engaging with disgruntled elites does not go down well. In that case, go ahead and leave them out. Researchers are also likely to add their own ingredients depending on taste. For instance, when Judith Butler's (2015) new book on the performative nature of public assemblies appears later this year, we could imagine Cabantous and colleagues insisting on the need to look at physical performances of precarity through gathering together as an important outcome. Again – that is fine with us.

Having said that, if CMS is to develop other ways of doing critique, we need to also recognise where new sets of skills may be needed. For the previous two decades, CMS researchers have developed a skill base around the careful critical analysis of theoretical texts, the conducting of

(often modestly ambitious) qualitative field work (typically used to illustrate the preferred theory), the organisation of various intra-field activities (such as conferences, workshops, special issues) and perhaps most importantly the production of high ranked journal articles. These skills are clearly still important. However we think developing a more publicly engaged CMS requires other skills – which to some extent are lacking. These might include an awareness of wider public controversies, an ability to think dialectically, the skills and networks to reach out to and engage a wider group of constituencies, and the ability to monitor outcomes which we might deem valuable.

To some extent, these skills do already exist within the CMS community. But they also probably need to be further developed. In some cases, this means building them through not just doctoral but all forms of education. After all, our most important public is often our own students (Contu, 2009; Delbridge, 2014; Dallyn et al, 2015). This probably requires different modes of education than the ones which are common now in the class rooms of critics. There are also likely to be cases where skills need to be bought in from beyond the critical or academic community.

Let us end on a personal note. Each of us has become increasingly disheartened with the CMS movement in recent years. Despite working within the area for decades, we found the ideas and insights to be increasingly thin and pointless. This motivated us to write our initial piece on critical performativity. Following the publication of the article, we were surprised to find our misgivings were widely shared. These have lead us – and indeed many others we work with - to start to experiment with our own ways of doing critique beyond the narrow confines of CMS (see e.g. Alvesson 2013, 2015; Cederström & Spicer 2015). We have found this to be both an enlivening but also a challenging process. We have learnt a lot. In particular, we have found that bringing professional critique into dialogue with more public facing critique can help to give some of the vibrancy back to a stagnant pond. We wish to share this experience with the broader CMS community.

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