ACTION RESEARCH
PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT
Dr. Edward Wong Sek Khin
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people who have made numerous helpful suggestions and have taken the trouble to review portions of the completed work, especially Dr. Mark C. Williams and Dr. Edmond La Vertu. To Dr. Mark C. Williams, my principal supervisor, who practices what he advocate about reflexive professional practice and reform, for his scholarly contributions to my work, and for providing a reliable and constant source of inspiration. I am grateful for his advice, support, and companionship and for his encouragement through many difficult times.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Jack Whiteheads (University of Bath, U.K) and Professor Roy Allen (Dean, School of Economic and Business Administration, Saint Mary’s College of California, USA).

I would like to apologise for any errors or omissions in the book and would be grateful to be notified of any additions or corrections that should be incorporated in any future editions.

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January 2018
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Chapter 1

The Importance of Epistemology in Management Research

Edward Wong Sek Khin

Abstract

The book, “Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology” was written by authors Johnson and Duderley, with the aim of persuading management and organisation researchers to harness their ability on reflection. The manner in which research questions are raised, the selection and assessment of the multitude of research methodologies and the analysis and evaluation of the research results are all varied based on the individual researcher’s epistemological commitments – whether the researcher is aware or unaware of his or her stance.

The book then, offers a prelude to the epistemological principles in social sciences and assists the readers in appreciating the variations involved and their implications within the context of management and organisations. This is deemed necessary due to the increased expectations for researchers to exhibit reflexive understandings of their own epistemological stances within their research writings. The book also focuses on how managers who conduct research can be reflexive towards their epistemological position in understanding that every management strategy, policy and intervention, implicitly or explicitly, is impacted by their philosophical stance. Managers must reflect critically upon the modes of engagement they use in making sense of their experience. Thus, epistemology will expose them to this critical interrogation.
The book aims to provide some basic knowledge on how the understanding of epistemology could help a researcher appreciate the notion that behind every action of a researcher lays certain epistemological commitments, which the researcher him/herself may, or may not realize. These commitments, in turn, would directly or indirectly shape research behavior and the direction of management studies research.

The study of epistemology is of prime importance as it helps us to understand ourselves better and leads to more focused research. By consciously knowing our own epistemological commitments, we will be able to better ensure that our research directions and methodology adopted are within our epistemological framework. More critically, our theoretical framework for our research should only be formed after we are familiar with our epistemological theory. Part of the outcome of reading the book is to assist a researcher to rightfully identify his/her own epistemological commitments and consciously act according to that commitment throughout his/her research work. Researchers are expected to self-criticize their own epistemological commitments and see whether there are any other possible epistemological assumptions that would suit better.

The book is written based on the fundamental assumption that whatever actions we take in our life are primarily driven by our worldview. This has made every person in the world an epistemologist. Our worldview may consciously shape our behavior, or it may not. In most cases, people do not actually realize their own worldview as they are so used to doing things their way, that it does not really matter to them what their worldview is. In some cases, once we get to notice this worldview of ours, our actions that were once natural may later becoming less natural and more awkward.

The book’s discourse relates to how questions are raised together with the evaluation of the relevance and value of varying research methodologies. Therefore, researchers can examine the questions and assess the findings; where each is communicated differently in accordance with the underlying epistemological
commitments. These epistemological commitments are an important trait of pre-understanding that will affect such intelligibility although they are frequently unidentified by the person.

In the opening part of the book, Johnson and Duberley highlight their critical thinking on the importance of epistemological commitments as a starting point for researchers and scholars to influence their point of interest. Thus, with the never-ending discussion of epistemological views amongst scientists individually, this book tries to offer a different but comprehensive overview of the epistemological debates in social science and how these lead to different ways of conceiving and undertaking particular research within management and organizational areas. In other words, the author’s main aim of the book is to provoke debate and reflection upon the different ways in which we engage with management and organizations when conducting relevant research.

Introduction

The Importance of Epistemology in Management Research

Epistemology is the study that involves challenging and reflecting on presupposed conventions and deeply rooted beliefs for the greater purpose of seeking true knowledge. The word epistemology is derived from two Greek words – ‘episteme’ and ‘logos’. The two words put together mean ‘knowledge about knowledge’. This chapter further discusses epistemology commitments, circularity of epistemology and the scepticism of epistemology.

People perceive things differently. Human beings themselves determine what is right or wrong, true or false, and real or unreal. Hence, it is obvious to have different viewpoints. Thus, there are no absolute conceptions. This is also common in social research and sometimes more serious than natural sciences because the constructs or concepts we use in social research are
quite intangible (Satisfaction, Loyalty, Performance, etc) and different interpretations are possible. Most probably, the researcher’s school of thoughts lead to his/her perception and cognition.

In the past few (nearly three) decades, social research has been subjected to much criticisms regarding non-scientific research design. This has caused to change management research into a new paradigm, which is more scientific. This change is reflected by the terminologies and methodologies used in social research. Sometimes the language seems more abstract and advanced and hence has limited intellectual and philosophical discussion. In a broader perspective, research is conducted for the wellbeing of humans and the development of the world. Therefore, research should be carried out in a scientific and systematic way to get accurate results, which should be interpreted in an understandable manner.

Epistemology provides a solid, scientific and theoretical approach to perform research in a more systematic way. Researchers are the main contributor for the body of knowledge, which ought to have a high level of pre-understanding of epistemology. As Utilitarianism explains ‘good is whatever brings the greatest happiness to the majority’ and actions (behavior) determined by the outcomes. Relativism states that mainly culture and historical experiences shape human behavior and understanding. However, behavior is an outcome of thoughts and it is internally motivated and justified. Thus, ontological assumptions or pre-understanding about the context is essential to develop and conceptualize what is knowledge.

Basically, epistemology determines knowledge is in a scientific way and it carries much broader meaning. Simply, it allows us to know what cause and what does not cause for a specific outcome. Theoretical and methodological foundations for establishing scientific knowledge normally begin with normative standards, which differentiate what is right and wrong. Thus, epistemology itself has different viewpoints. Richard Rorty viewed epistemology as a discipline, which helps to perceive, evaluate and make comments on other disciplines. Therefore,
other disciplines (both Sciences and Non Science) are based on epistemology and it provides guidelines, framework and structure to figure out what will be the knowledge (theory) that can be tested. Habermas is a new branch of epistemology introduced by a German philosopher to resolve some problems encountered in epistemology. Habermas ‘Theory of truth and knowledge’ describes a ‘pragmatic epistemological realism’ and it proposes to combine empirical arguments with practical actions to get more realistic interpretations.

Since epistemology encountered many issues, Johnson and Duberley (2000) suggested using self-comprehension; where criticisms on own understanding and impact assessment with social and natural context is more realistic. Furthermore, they proposed to challenge presupposed knowledge to explore alternative possibilities that will broaden thinking. Everyone has their own moral obligations and judgments to differentiate what is right and wrong and such arguments help to assess social and natural contexts. Based on this, epistemology permits to establish presupposes with direct observation (though interpretation of observation is also shaped by individual perception over context). However, epistemology helps to clarify the origin, nature, limitations and gaps in existing knowledge while identifying what is scientific practice and how we use this to solve fundamental gaps that exist. However, sometimes after in-depth analysis and effort, it may result in very small contribution to the body of knowledge.

As mistakes are unavoidable, the acceptance of theory of knowledge is based on ‘peer review’. Epistemological relativism explains that the truth is always relative to some form of reference. Hence, mistakes such as misunderstanding the significance of data and methodological issues are common in social research. Those can be corrected through improvements in training, recruitment and appropriate selection of scientists.

The epistemological debates among scientists and philosophers’ date back to the Plato and Aristotle time which makes the ‘epistemology’ term more mysterious than it reveals. In addition,
it is somehow the foundation for scientific knowledge, which provides a standard methodological and theoretical framework to evaluate knowledge by specifying what is acceptable. Richard Rorty, suggests that epistemology is the discipline that enables the judgment of all other disciplines and that it is the foundation to all other theories and studies. This creates the key question of “how can we develop an epistemological theory – a science of science?”

Quine provides this answer by advocating that epistemology, as a science of science, should be a branch within experimental psychology as it enables understanding the laws of cognition in explaining why and how theories are articulated. However, this point of view did not materialise as this may result in confining epistemology itself within the context of psychology rather than within the philosophical phenomenon.

Otto Neurath explains this problem as the problem of circularity. Circularity occurs because of the absence of an incontestable foundation from which other theories can emerge, resulting in various competing philosophical assumptions about knowledge when dealing with management and organisations. Hence, the best manner to proceed with research from an epistemological stance is to be reflective by observing and contesting own presupposed conventions while exploring alternative epistemological commitments. In summary, every person has something in mind that helps him/her decide which knowledge is warranted and reliable. This forms the foundation to making scientific claims.

Another shortcoming for this approach is that our perceptions are subjective and they cannot form an exact science. This circularity prevents epistemology in providing a reliable and secure foundation for scientific knowledge. However, knowledge is based on the ways we view phenomena’s around our-self and it cannot be differentiated from a human’s belief. So, while we are faced with this circularity, we cannot evaluate science by using science. Refer to Figure 1.1 for a more visual explanation.
Otto Neurath further explained the circularity problem in terms of a nautical metaphor:

“We are like sailors who on the open sea must reconstruct their ship but are never able to start afresh from the bottom . . . They make use of some drifting timber of the old structure, to modify the skeleton and the hull of their vessel. But they cannot put into dock in order to start from scratch. During their work they stay on the old structure and deal with heavy gales and thundering waves. (1944: 47)”

The distinguisher between reliable and unreliable knowledge is related to the set of epistemological commitments. In other words any evidence that is offered in support of this knowledge needs to be epistemologically evaluated. Hence, there are
different philosophical approaches to knowledge which epistemological commitments afford tacit answers to the following questions:

1. What are the origins, nature and limits of scientific knowledge?
2. What constitutes scientific practice?
3. What are the processes through which scientific knowledge advances or is such progress a forlorn hope?

Assessing the impact upon how we engage with the social and natural world, it needs us to notice and then criticize our own pre-understandings in a more systematic fashion. Culture differentiation derived different ways of knowing the world which vary in their substance to the extent that they have been accorded social legitimating. Through criticizing any theory, we have been imposing our own cultural belief on the other world, which is dependent on our understanding of epistemology. This shows that further understanding of epistemology will open doors to new research possibilities.

Epistemological stances provide answers to questions regarding origins of scientific knowledge, the elements of scientific practice and the processes for the advancements of scientific knowledge. When analysing England in the seventeenth-century, Robert K. Merton indicates that the rise of modern science in England was contributed significantly by the Puritans whose values are based on successfully performing worldly commitments as a service to God. Merton also elaborated that apart from religious commitments and modern scientific methodology, epistemology was also based on socio-cultural commitments comprising of the following four sets of institutional imperatives – universalism, communism, organised scepticism and disinterestedness.

Merton viewed the theory of knowledge as a historical evolution of particular religious values reformed and transformed as a new science. This idea aligns with postmodernism. On the contrary, Weber (1949) argued that science should be based on either
rational or facts. Weber states that science is a mode of inquiry that goes beyond social influences, hence it can avoid ideological contagion, which agrees with his demand for a value-free social science. Weber made a clear-cut distinction between empirical facts and value dispositions: the former draw from a cognitively accessible reality, whereas the latter derive from cultural temperaments. Since Weber’s science dealt with facts, it does not resolve matters of value – a commitment that is abide by a number of modern scholars of management and organization. As a result, it shows scientific activities as sociologically trouble-free and functional to the development of warranted knowledge.

Indeed, criticizing the demonstration of Merton’s and Weber’s views in management and organizations being an establishment legend is an increasingly trendy pastime, notwithstanding at present and more commonly associated with the political Left rather than the Right.

Bloor (1976) and Mulkey on the other hand, had different perspectives, which were more behavioural. Bloor suggested that there are no objective ways to differentiate warranted from unwarranted and that it all depends on values, norms and culture while, Mulkey claims that vocabulary differences are the reasons for different levels of understanding and interpretation. Mulkey proposed to use symbolic negotiations especially when new domains arise. However, establishing and defining symbols may be more complex.

Summarizing above arguments, it is clear that knowledge is based on ‘what we experienced’ and ‘what we mean’ by true or false. Science is not merely an outcome of intuition but rather rational and hence no such value-free knowledge is possible. Furthermore, epistemology seems to tally with ancient religious philosophies such as Buddhism. Buddhism mainly explains the ‘cause and effect’ relationship, which can’t be escaped. Epistemology on the other hand, approaches a more scientific and systematic way to justify aforementioned relationship.
Mintzberg (1973) and schon (1983) emphasized how managers utilized epistemology to evaluate their day-to-day activities and decisions. Therefore, understanding epistemology is essential in management research. Careful understanding and refinement of knowledge will lead to appropriate methodology, which will acquire much better results and facilitates to broader and realistic interpretations for management research.

**Conventionalist Epistemology**

Conventionalism left a good fingerprint on management disciplines as it argued that what scientists observe is not independent of the process of observing but is an outcome of the scientist methodological interaction with their objects of knowledge and that there is no neutral objective observation. Conventionalism is represented by many philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Tomas Kuhn who formed a "paradigm thesis" in addition to Burrell and Morgan whom put four metatheoretical assumptions about nature, social science and paradigms.

**What is conventionalism?**

Conventionalism is a philosophical attitude that fundamental principles of a certain kind are grounded on (explicit or implicit) agreements in society rather than the external reality. Conventionalism undermines positivism theories although it doesn't look at the knowledge as warranted facts or accumulated science. Instead, it looks at knowledge as subjective, not neutral, relativistic and incommensurability. Conventionalism affects social science, management and organizations by forming some assumptions and paradigms, which facilitate the management theory.

It looks at how:

- Scientists are active agents in the process of perception
- We are not passive receivers of an external data as empiricist assumes
- We participate in creating what we experience
• It is impossible to study something without influencing what is seen.
• What scientists observe is not independent of the process of observing but it is an outcome of the scientist’s methodological interaction with their objects of knowledge.
• Every scientific fact is a social fact and it is collective thinking of a community united by a thought style.

Conventionalism based into three elements according to Keat and Urry:

First, scientific statements are not considered to be true or false because of external reality, but because of the creation of scientists, which are taken to be true.

Second, the scientific statement is not accepted due to the set of objective standards of evaluation but because they are interpreted by conventionalists and determined to be products of scientist’s subjective understanding of reality which is approved by social conventions, controlling the scientific communities.

Third, the observation can't provide objective control over scientific statements because the theory-neutral observation is not available.

The conventionalist Immanuel Kant undermined the empiricism and distanced himself from empiricist epistemology by arguing that:

• Our minds are not passive receivers of sense data.
• Our knowledge contains components deriving from us, prior to any experience.
• There is no separation between the knower (Subject) and the known (object) so he opposed Cartesian Dualism.
• We can't have direct knowledge of reality: things-in-themselves, which he called "nomena" as they are unperceived and unknowable.
• Our experience is shaped by our mental structures (space, time, causal) and we can only know the external world through that cognitive structure.
• Any observer implicitly or explicitly influences what is observed.
The role of the observer's subjective interpretation of experience becomes a central epistemological concern to conventionalists.

**Kuhn's thesis**
The Paradigm thesis which means (pattern, Model or plan) refers to a set of believes, values, assumptions and techniques entered around successive exemplars of successful practical applications. Kuhn identifies three types of problems, which were investigated during the mopping-up operations of normal science. First, there is the determination of significant facts. Second, there is the matching of said facts with theory. Thirdly, there is the articulation of theory. Kuhn followed Popper in many points. However, he looked at the science as a circle not as a revolution as Popper saw it. In his incommensurability thesis, which means that scientists can't have a rational dialogue across the boundaries between two or more paradigms, he adopted the subjectivist ontology. Although he adopted relativistic - no absolutes exist, making what counts as warranted knowledge, truth and reason always relative to historical time, place, culture and paradigm.

According to Kuhn, the paradigm is socially constructed and explained through the distinctive knowledge. But he sees that in a normal science, there will be only a single paradigm applied based on the convention of community practitioners. Therefore the correspondence theory of truth should be denied. According to Kuhn, science will develop into sequential stages starting from the pre science to the revolution of science:
In the early stage, Kuhn’s sees no universal theory while in the normal science, there will be a single dominant school of thought characterized by:
1) A basic paradigm expressed in the book
2) Set standards for scientific work which supplies a conceptual framework to developed science
3) Setting the criteria to choose problem.

During the mopping up stage, there will be:
1) Determination of significant facts
2) Matching the fact with theory
3) Articulation of theory.

Finally, in the third stage, the crisis will break up as the phenomenon which can’t be expressed by the rules of the game exist. The break up at the end may lead to the revolution of a paradigm.
Chapter Two

Epistemology Orientation in Social Science

This chapter will discuss epistemology and its importance in the social sciences, in particular, management research. This chapter discusses the various epistemological scholarly debates, the origins of epistemology, the aims of epistemology as well as the circular reasoning of epistemology, and as well, discussions pertaining to the nature, sources and validity of knowledge.

Epistemology as defined by Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary is the part of knowledge that deals with knowledge. Even though research in management as soft science is debated in terms of its instruments and measurements, such epistemological commitments are a key feature of our pre-understandings that influence how researchers make their management research findings and then create valuable knowledge. It is criticized for being uncritical and misleading and that creates difficulties for new comers to make academic comparisons of the range of the available and different research studies.

Epistemology establishes criteria for judging knowledge from other than knowledge, and assumes vantage points that are one step removed from the actual practices of science and to create a normative standard for knowledge evaluation. This chapter further discusses the commitments of epistemology, the circularity of epistemological logic and the scepticisms of epistemology.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge a branch of philosophy that studies the origin, nature, methods, validity and limits of knowledge. Its major point stresses on the basis of how do we acquire certain knowledge and how can we be certain of that knowledge. Epistemology is the fundamental nature of the
concepts and root assumptions that we construct as knowledge. It also determines what constitutes warranted knowledge that enables us to distinguish between reliable and unreliable knowledge. The acceptance of knowledge and the choice of the methods employed require a defence of justification. To understand epistemology, one must also understand the surrounding knowledge that supports apparent new knowledge. Examining the knowledge about knowledge enables us to be more certain that the new apparent knowledge is actually new knowledge.

Various researchers have conducted studies concerning epistemology. Each study put forward various justifications and arguments of a suitable model (refer Table 1). The issue of whether a particular model is right or wrong does not arise; it is to clarify the conditions and limits of justified knowledge. For instance, Richard’s argument raises a question concerning whether epistemology theory concerns a science of science. On the other hand, the circularity of epistemology argument prevents any grounding of epistemology into what claims to be scientific knowledge. Each researcher has stated well-judged justification of their proposals dealing with epistemology and the subsequent acceptance or rejection of another researcher’s findings. Both Merton and Weber have contradicting thoughts on a ‘value’ factor in the advancement of science. In this case, Weber has justified his stand with the value-free social science concept.

**Table 1:** Researcher’s concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Richard Rorty (1979)</td>
<td>Epistemology is pivotal to science since proper scientific theorizing can only occur after the development of epistemology theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Quine (1969)</td>
<td>Epistemology should abandon any philosophical questions and become a branch of experimental psychology that analyses human cognitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
processes through empirical research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Ottoh Neurath</td>
<td>Described problems of circularity in terms of a nautical metaphor, as one cannot detach oneself from epistemological commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1944)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Merton</td>
<td>Scientific ethos is composed of universalism, communism, scepticism and disinterestedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1938)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber (1949)</td>
<td>Science dealing with empirical facts is not value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Quoted from Johnson and Duberley (2000)

One conclusion reached is that one must be able to substantiate how concepts originate. Reasoning that has been put forward in justifying the relevance of using different research methodologies and the evaluation of the outputs varies according to one’s underlying epistemological commitments. In the next section, we discuss the following:

**Conventionalist Epistemology**

Conventionalism within the discipline of management studies, argues that observation relies upon the processes of observing but it is an outcome of the scientist’s methodological interactions with their objects of knowledge, and therefore there no neutrally objective observations are possible. Conventionalism as an epistemology finds support by many, and includes Immanuel Kant and Tomas Kuhn who formed the "paradigm thesis." As well, Burrell and Morgan put four meta-theoretical assumptions about nature and social science and paradigms as a basis of their work.

**What is conventionalism?**

Conventionalism is a philosophical attitude society determines the fundamental principles of a certain kind, and grounded upon
(explicit or implicit) agreements in society rather than the external reality experienced by the researcher. It determines the following:

- that scientists act as active agents in the process of perception
- we are not passive receivers of an external data as empiricists assume,
- we participate in creating what we experience as independent events away from and external to ourselves
- it is impossible to study something without influencing what is seen
- what a scientist observes is not independent of the process of observing but it is an outcome of the scientist’s methodological interaction with their objects of knowledge
- every scientific fact is also a social fact and it is a process of the collective thinking of a community united by a thought style and the granting of collective approvals.

Conventionalist Epistemology-The Sociology of Science

The alternatives to the positivist epistemology such as logical positivism, the use of Popper’s conclusions and an interpretive approach has been united by the assumption that scientists have an ability directly and objectively to access empirical data and by the belief that warranted knowledge is something which correspond to reality through biologically neutral and passive registrations of various sensory inputs.

The Positivist assumptions to a claim of knowledge is then criticized by the Conventionalist who believes that scientists are active social agents and they could be biased in assessing their claims of truth, and therefore, as with the conventionalist, is epistemologically subjective. The conventionalist perspective in management and organization research has groundings through the works of Immanuel Kant, Thomas Kuhn, and Burrell and Morgan.
Immanuel Kant

According to Immanuel Kant, the human being is not a passive perceiver of external reality. Kant rejects Cartesian dualism, as it is impossible for scientist to neutrally access external reality. Later, Kant introduced the concept of phenomenalism where phenomena exist independently from human understanding irrespective on how the human mind anticipates and organizes every sensory experience. Kant supports some rationalist epistemology concerning the actions of our perceived mental a priori structures and emphasized the importance of rational reflection to know how we organize our sensory input.

Although Kant supports the subjectivist epistemology, he sees reality as being independent of the researcher, as the interpretation of reality itself is dependent upon the researcher.

Kuhn’s thesis

The word paradigm as used by Kuhn, refers to the set of beliefs, values, assumptions and techniques. According to the Kuhn paradigm knowledge is socially constructed and explained through relevant distinctive knowledge. However, he perceives that in normal science there will be only a single paradigm allowed and applied based on the conventions of a community of practitioners, denying the correspondence theory of truth. According to Kuhn, science will develop into sequential cyclical stages beginning from current pre-revolutionary-science leading to a revolution of science, that scientific revolution becomes a new pre-revolutionary-science and where this pre-revolutionary-science is developing new science, leading to another scientific revolution, leading to a new pre-revolutionary-science, as this cycle repeats.

In the early stage, Kuhn saw no universal scientific theory stating that in normal science, there will be a single dominant school of thought or paradigm, characterized by 1) a basic paradigm expressed in current literature 2) this paradigm sets standards for current scientific work 3) it also supplies a conceptual framework to develop further science 4) and sets the criteria to
choose a research problem. During the conclusion reaching stage, there will be 1) a determination of significant facts 2) a matching of the facts with theory 3) leading to an articulation of theory. In the third stage, there is a crisis, where the described phenomena is composed of two sections, that which can be explained and those that cannot. If the unexplained is greater than the explained, a scientific revolution is expected. (Table2)

The Epistemological and Ontological Implication of Kuhn’s Thesis

Kuhn’s introduces the incommensurability thesis reflected through the subjectivist ontology. Kuhn sees the impossibility for the researcher to use the framework of a paradigm-independent epistemology to assess the competing paradigms. This paradigm known as relativism asserts:

1. The inexistence of the independent standard to measure the knowledge or truth claims
2. Truths are socially constructed
3. Any empirical observation is only intelligible in terms of the prevailing consensus
4. We create reality through sense-making processes.

In effect, Kuhn’s thesis supports the descriptive survey methodology as it has no neutral evaluative standpoint, as there is no bases for evaluation to a particular set of paradigms.

Conventionalism based into three elements according to Keat and Urry:

First, the scientific statements are not considered true or false because of external reality, but because of the creations of the scientist that are taken to be true.

Second, a scientific statement is not accepted because it has validity due to the set of objective standards of evaluation used, but because they are interpreted by conventionalists and determined to be a products of scientist's subjective
understanding of reality which is approved by social conventions that control the output of scientific communities.

**Third**, observation cannot provide objective control over scientific statements because theory-neutral observation is not available.

The conventionalist **Immanuel Kant** undermined empiricism and distanced himself from empiricist epistemology by arguing that:

- Our minds are not passive receivers of sense data.
- Our knowledge contains components originating from ourselves prior to any experience.
- There is no separation between the knower (Subject) and the known (object) so he opposed Cartesian Dualism.
- We cannot have direct knowledge of reality or things-in-themselves, which he called "Nomena" as they are unperceived and unknowable.
- Our experience is shaped by our mental structures (space, time, causal) we can only know the external world through that given cognitive structure.
- Any observer implicitly or explicitly influences what is observed.
- The role of the observer's subjective interpretation of experience becomes a central epistemological concern to conventionalists.

The Paradigm thesis developed by **Kuhn** and means pattern, Model or plan, refers to sets of beliefs, values, assumptions and techniques centered around an exemplar of successful practical application.

Kuhn identifies three types of problems which are investigated during the conclusion developing operations of normal science. First, there is the determination of the significant facts. Second, there is the matching of facts with theory. Thirdly, there is the articulation of the additions to theory.
Kuhn followed Popper on many points but he looked at science as a circle not as a revolution as Popper saw it. In his incommensurability thesis, that scientists cannot have a rational dialogue across the boundaries between two or more paradigms, he adopted the subjectivist ontology. Although he adopted the relativistic approach, where no absolutes exist, he holds that what counts as warranted knowledge, truth and reason are always relative to historical time, place, culture and paradigm.

**Assumptions about the Nature of Social Science**

The first set of assumptions are ontological. Is reality external from conscious or a product of individual consciousness? Is reality a given or a product of the mind?

The second set of assumptions is epistemological. What forms of knowledge can be obtained and how can we sort truth from falsehood. Can knowledge be acquired, or must it be experienced?

A third set are assumptions of human nature. Are humans determined by their environment, or do humans create their environment? This is the Determinism vs Voluntarism argument.

Each of the assumptions has important methodological implications. The two camps are objectivist and subjectivist. Objectivists examine relationships and regularities between the elements. They search for concepts and universal laws to explain reality. Subjectivists focus on how individuals create, modify, and interpret the world, and see things as relativistic.

There are four main socio-philosophical debates:

**Nominalism vs Realism: The Ontological Debate**

Nominalism assumes that social reality is relative, and the social world is mainly names, concepts, and labels that help
the individual structure reality. These labels are man-made creations.

Realism assumes that the real world has hard, intangible structures that exist irrespective of our labels. The social world exists separate from the individual’s perception of it, and the social world exists as strongly as does the physical world.

**Anti-Positivism - Positivism: The Epistemological Debate**

Positivists posit that one can seek to explain and predict what occurs in the social world by searching patterns and relationships between people. From this, they believe one can develop hypotheses and test them, and conclude that knowledge is a cumulative process.

Anti-positivists reject that observing behavior can help one understand a pattern of behavior, as they posit one must experience behavior directly, and they reject the proposition that social science is able to create truly objective knowledge of any kind.

**Voluntarism vs Determinism: The Human Nature Debate**

Determinism sees human behavior as determined by the situation and the responses to external stimuli.

Voluntarism posits that human action arise out of culturally derived meanings deployed during sense-making.

**Ideographic vs Nomothetic Theory: The Methodological Debate**

Ideographic inquiry focuses on "getting inside" a subject and exploring their detailed background and life history. They involve themselves with people's normal lives, and look at diaries, biographies, observation.
Nomothetic relies more on the scientific method, and hypothesis testing. They use quantitative tests like surveys, personality tests, and standardized research tools.

**Conventionalism and Social Science Research**

Various scholars in social science research have tried to develop the paradigm of paradigm theory through a meta-theory that resembles Kuhn’s view in one side and the Kantian view on the other, which at the end lead to reflexive analysis.

**Burrell and Morgan’s Paradigm**

Both Burrell and Morgan support Kuhn’s ideas on the impossibility of communication between paradigms. However they also consider that several paradigms may exist simultaneously. In understanding external reality, they proposed the notion of a metaphor, “after theory.” A metaphor specifies the appropriateness of a theory under certain condition. The central thesis of Burrell and Morgan’s paradigm can be understood through the matrix below. Table 3

Burrell and Morgan also describe the nature of society in which the external reality occurs. They split the social condition into two extremes: the sociology of regulation and the sociology of radical change.

**Organizational analysis and sociological Paradigm**

The model of organizational analysis developed by Burrell and Morgan classifies sociological theories along the two dimensions of regulation and radical change and subjectivity and objectivity. They applied Kuhn's notion of paradigm in a very broad sense to refer to mutually exclusive social constructions that generate distinctive analyses of social life. This divides sociology into four different paradigm groups. There is internal consistency under each paradigm, and there is internal consistency, in terms of assumptions about
individuals, groups, societies, goals of study and accepted forms of evidence. However, each cluster neglects, excludes, or opposes some of the insights generated under other paradigms.

**Radical Humanist - Radical Change-Subjectivism**

Radical Humanism posits that social opportunities and ideologies are restricted and controlled by the large institutes, leaving the rest of society voiceless and ignored and this leads to the breakdown of communities. The main aim is to raise the consciousness of the individuals and groups leading to social and economic change. For example, People entrapped in socially constructed realities have the aim of releasing society from these ideological constraints through the development of alternatives.

**Functionalist - Regulation-Objectivism**

Societies are the coming together of populations with shared civic values who establish social order which benefits everybody. However, some individuals and some identifiable groups may fall into misfortune or maladaptive patterns. The goal of intervention is to help these to adapt to the existing structures. For example, society and institutions have a concrete tangible existence which produces an ordered status quo in which is analyzable objectively through the rigor of the scientific method.

**Radical Structuralism - Radical Change-Objectivism**

Inconsistency of fundamental regularities makes our entire way of living unfair and untenable. Intervention must be integrated across political, regional, community and interpersonal levels in order to achieve a complete transformation of society. For example, society is dominating and exploitative. Hence, the requirement is to analyze these processes and as well their contradictions objectively to identify a possible set of change processes.

**Interpretive - Regulation-Subjective**
The meaning of social situations are largely a matter of interpretation. Anyone can feel trapped by their situation, but viewing things in a new light can open up new options and lead to an improved outlook. Intervention focuses on helping people reframe events and adjust the axioms they use to regulate their own behavior. For example, organizations are understood from the participant’s viewpoint. The objective is to understand how shared versions of reality emerged and maintain improved personal outlooks.

In addition, Morgan developed the concept of metaphor as meta-theoretical tool for analyzing organizations and management. However, he repositions metaphor as central to the way in which anyone understands and reasons about their experience. For Morgan, embedded metaphors are part of our cognitive structure and are the vehicles by which paradigms operate in our own minds so when a metaphor is used, it enables a person to understand and experience a phenomenon.

Morgan states that each metaphor derives from a particular paradigm, the machine metaphor from the functionalist, the culture metaphor from the interpretative, the psychic prison metaphor from the radical humanist, the domination metaphor from the radical structuralist.

According to Burrell and Morgan, each description of society employs a particular methodology. In a functionalist paradigm, the researcher employs the psychometric and quasi-experimental, while in the interpretative paradigm the researcher employs the ethnography methodology.

**Morgan’s Metaphors**

According to Morgan, the management and organizational researcher will solidify the image of social phenomenon based on their basic paradigmatic assumptions through the metaphor of an external reality. The main objective of Morgan is to reject the theory of a neutral observational language through the method of language. Unfortunately,
Philosophy in Management

the positivist view concludes that Morgan’s approach preserves the possibility of a theory neutral observational language. From this, the positivists expect the scientist to remove the use of metaphor in management science. However, Morgan defends the critique by saying that the metaphor is a primal generative process that allows the researcher to understand the external reality. He suggests the scientist be reflexive and skeptical in the use of those metaphors as the external reality will always be examined through the particular paradigm

Some Problems with Conventionalism

As many other alternatives to the positivist epistemology, the conventionalist also faces problems. The Burrell and Morgan’s view on the meta-theory model for example, which embraces the realist ontology, is on the subjectivist side. Their work also reflects the radical paradigm more than any other metaphor.

Conclusions:

There are many alternatives to positivism such as Logical positivism, Popperian, and Interpretativism, and all have been unified by the theory of neutral observational language. This theory is then rejected in the Conventionalist epistemology, as it views the scientist as an active actor in comprehending reality. This rejection has led to the relativist epistemology. However, the conventionalists have been split into those who support the combination between subjectivist epistemology with subjectivist ontology, that is, Thomas Kuhn’s direction or Immanuel Kant’s subjectivist epistemology with realist ontology. However, this epistemology is not flawless. There are many critiques of the Conventionalist epistemology sourced from experiences using Positivist alternatives. The lack of a universal standard, the important assumption of relativism, the impossibility of a reference to external reality within a closed reference system, due to the adoption of relativism, are examples of problems faced by conventionalists. In the end, the use of metaphor in
a conventionalist epistemology have shown us the proof that the critiques on positivist epistemology are basically derived from the positivist epistemology itself. Therefore, self-reflexivity remains necessary in understanding any epistemological stance.

Conventionalism undermines positivist theories as it does not consider knowledge as warranted facts or accumulated science, it considers knowledge as subjective, not neutral, relativistic and incommensurable. Conventionalism affects the social sciences and the study of management and organizations by forming some new assumptions and paradigms that facilitate developments in management theory.

Therefore, it is clear that epistemology contributes to knowledge by clarifying the conditions and limits of what is construed as justified knowledge. It allows the researchers and managers to have the ability to reflect critically in an effort to make sense of their experiences or study. Thus, the study of epistemology provides one with a range of different approaches to management and organizational research.

**Note: - Author Authentication Voices**

Here I would like to display an overview of the objective of and the different perspectives and implications of epistemology. The chapter is concerned on how we engage with management, organizations and humanity as a social phenomenon. From here, the debates mentioned in the chapter concedes that all our perceptions and our understandings about everything are related to the social science discipline, practice and research, which depend on our understanding epistemology.

So, it is important to understand epistemology, if we want to comprehend the debates and to enjoy the ability to reflect critically as we engage with management and organizations in undertaking research.
What is epistemology and what does it stand for?

The analysis of epistemology concerning certain knowledge or a scientific truth, all based on some ontological assumptions about the natural of the world, considers that everything around us are internally motivated by what we believe and is related to our common sense if we reflect upon them. Therefore, we are all knowers and we routinely take certain epistemological conventions without feeling the need for conscious reflection upon such actions.

I ask myself, why study epistemology if it is based on such assumptions?

I argue that even if an epistemological analysis is based on such assumptions, its debates about what is our pre-understanding which influences how we determine whether or not something is true or false. However, it doesn’t mean that this book will provide us with standard conduct to guide or improve our research but by studying epistemology we can became more consciously reflexive by noticing and then consciously criticizing our per-understanding in a more systematic fashion.

Epistemology is the study of the criteria from which we can know what does and does not constitute warranted or scientific knowledge.

I argue that this definition from first sight means that epistemology can provide us with both the methodological and theoretical approach as a normative standard that enables us to evaluate knowledge by specifying what is permissible, and so discriminate the warranted from the unwarranted, the rational from the irrational. This is from Richard Rorty and Quine (1969) when the former considers that epistemology as discipline enables us to judge all other disciplines, and the latter argues that epistemology should abandon any philosophical questions and became a branch of experimental psychology.
The question is as experimental psychology is based on a stream of philosophical assumptions, Quine’s notion is not identical to reality because of this circularity in reasoning. This means that the presupposition for any theory of knowledge is that we know the conditions where knowledge take place and those conditions prevent any grounding of epistemology as scientific knowledge, and cannot provide us with certain foundation for scientific knowledge.

For Otto Neurath, this circularity is the key problem of epistemology meaning that we cannot separation ourselves from our epistemological commitments, because we need to depend on them in order to assess them objectively. So there is no foundation that can guide us to how we can begin any consideration of our knowledge of knowledge, and he adds that all that is available is some philosophical assumptions about knowledge to help deal in a particular way with management and organization research.

Finally, the author also focuses on the followings:

**How we can make sure that this knowledge is warranted knowledge and how can we warrant this knowledge as being scientific?**

First: warranted knowledge is a set of epistemological commitments which provide us with criteria for discriminate between reliable and unreliable knowledge.

I argue that everyone possesses some theory (principle and standards) about what constitutes warranted knowledge, but if we do not have at least some knowledge about such theory, we will not be able to prove legitimate claims about

1. What we think we know?
2. What we think we have experienced?
3. Therefore, these commitments provide us with criteria to assess what is the appropriate explanation and description of our social and natural world.

Second: we can warrant having scientific knowledge-
If the errors and mistakes corrected through improvements in training, recruitment and selection of scientists. By supervision and examination of scientific findings by the wider community of scientists.

Hence, science will progress and its outputs be trusted because we obtain this new knowledge through objective observational processes encoded into its methodology and by self-regulation. Robert K. Merton (1938) express all the above about being scientific as both the “ethos of science” and epistemology, as these are historical evolutions of particular religious values, and he accords science a socio-culture status because those values enable science to develop to the level that transcends social influences. In (1949) Weber came to enhance Merton’s notion for value-free science.

But the authors explain the attack which exposed Weber and Merton`s notions, then they mentioned two of the most determined attackers, Bloor and Mulkay (1979). Bloor’s view of knowledge and science is that they are arbitrary outputs of social processes and there is no objective way to discriminate the warranted knowledge from unwarranted knowledge. So, Merton’s notion is to reject this view in favor of a view of science as related outcomes of:

1. Paradigm.
3. Discourse.
4. Social convention.

The authors limit their effort in portraying the epistemology picture within its epistemological commitments that influence the process through which they develop what they take to be warranted knowledge of the world. By using a Merton’s ethos, the authors present a perspective about how we come ‘to know’ influences what we experience as being true of false, what we mean by true of false, and indeed whether we think that true and false are viable constructs.

So in any discipline, profession, occupation or everyday activity where knowledge claims are routinely made, epistemology
contributes by clarifying the conditions and limits of what is construed as justified knowledge – whether or not people involved recognize this as so.

Finally, the author explained the extent to which this book can reach this objective, depends on the reader himself and his pre-understanding.

References:

Chapter Two

Chapter Three
Chapter Four

The Philosophy Perspectives of Post-Modernism around Themes of Slavery, Enslavement, Emancipation, Freedom, and Power

Introduction

This chapter exposes the foundations of the processes that we used to create this document as a research document and to use it as a record of events leading up to the completion of this work, that is the philosophy perspectives of post-modernism. The title of this chapter encompasses and alludes to all these major words without, in many situations actually stating them outright, and this applies to the final rich picture as well.

This work relies upon the words, slavery, enslavement, emancipation, freedom, and power within an impression of three philosophical streams, these are - structuralism, post-structuralism, and post-modernism.

The first two terms, slavery and enslavement are versions of each other, and the others follow when certain directed actions take place, leading to a form of personal and general power leading to forms of active responsibility. The model itself uses the literary and philosophical terms structuralism, post-structuralism, and post-modernism, and uses them within an apparent philosophically impossible relationship with existentialism, without defining these terms explicitly. A glossary of terms is preferred, that is, a localised description of the terms without an all-encompassing definition.

Because of the described influences of serendipity, whenever I have come to a research dead-end, or brick-wall, something arises from within and afar that has allowed me to proceed to more solid philosophical grounds. These events suddenly and quite unexpectedly supplied support from recognised sources that allowed the further investigations into
areas not bounded by the original proposed research. This broadening of the research also created problems of a possible meandering work that would yield nothing of importance.

**Narrative explanations – Edward Wong**

These sections contain commentaries concerning the preceding narrative. Presenting these commentaries may help a reader form a sense of the work as a whole before moving into a different section. In the narrative section, the author includes an account of the development of his writing style and his personal experience as an heuristically critical reflective practitioner learning to use what Jack Whitehead, the "authority of my lived experience" in a "living work paradigm".

However, this approach yields an introduction to the evolving and evolution of a final literary conclusion. This literary function of research tends to treated pejoratively, when indeed it is the heart of any written research. By using the Heideggerian ‘clearing’, that is to bracket all influences upon a topic, and then to unbracket these influences one at a time, this can show the influences of each upon the topics discussed.

This process allows one’s experiences and learning to complement the imagination of the self at a given time and place, to evaluate a given question, yielding, hopefully, new insights, and new warranted assertions.

All of this is to learn how to create a new and broader addition to one’s picture of life, in which I call a post-modernist theme of life.

**Beginnings**

From the outset, I felt that Philosophy was a self-aggrandising branch of Academe and that all universities that taught Philosophy were in a self-fulfilling research loop where philosophers taught students to become philosophers so that they could teach other students to become philosophers as well. This infinite loop meant to advance humanity to some unknown source of wisdom that would lift humanity to new and better
existences, everywhere. At that time, I could not see any tangible or intangible results of philosophical study, as I could not relate to the apparent uses of arcane philosophical and logical statements that determined whether truth existed in whatever statement, literary piece, or political decision, or whatever else a given scholar was apparently studying at a given time.

It is a sign of my advancement in studies that I now consider these ideas, were statements made in academic ignorance, and today I can yet make them in the knowledge that I am not particularly ignorant or alone in support of these negative statements. It is part of my role as a thinking human that I pass judgements upon what others have said or written, irrespective of the depth of my actual knowledge about the topic, as it is right and proper that others will and do the exact same thing to me about my work as well. Where these others and I probably differ, hopefully, is that I will at least try to assemble some form of fundamental knowledge about a topic before either seeking more information or passing judgement, or I will pass a revisable judgement as I attempt to learn more about the reasons for a given conclusion.

**Narrative explanations – Edward Wong:**

Here, the researcher acting as the author uses acceptable descriptive techniques and some of them are as follows. The use of a post-modernist approach to philosophy, that is, to advance humanity to some unknown source of wisdom that would lift humanity to new and better states of existence, is a pre-requisite in this type of research.

If we have a choice between apparently positivist and quantitative processes that are acceptable to those who examine these works, and those processes that use qualitative methods to describe the actual situation of all the people involved with the research problems and questions, it is possible to yield answers that are not available with the other, more conventional method. From this change in approach, it is possible that as these newer methods become more informative, this will tend to lead to newer methods yet again. This form of Darwinism is the
apparent heart of philosophical investigation and therefore cannot be denied at least a fair trial.

It is not a question of agreeing or disagreeing with the research results, but being aware that current methods, particularly quantitative methods, cannot supply the only sources of valid data, and from that, valid warranted conclusions. I always use the example of the word Love. Is Love a number such as 43.256, with various related calculated statistical relationships, or is something that numbers cannot define? Do not the research problems and research questions determine the methods used?

What is of fundamental importance here is that the foundations that previous acceptable works provide, not only in method, though that is important, but also in the examination of the holistic situation that includes not only that which is quantifiable, but that which cannot be so described. The influences of prejudice, custom, culture, and so on, cannot be ignored just because they cannot be described in a positivist manner.

This does not mean that all is new and cannot be sourced and supported by previous research. This bouncing process, that is, the testing of acceptable theory with the observed and reported practices. This provides important validity to the research. This does not mean that theory will mirror practice, but that a partial match is better than no matching at all, and that perhaps many theories may apply to just one set of practices. In my opinion, this is the central purpose of research: new insights using the foundations of the sciences and arts to develop new ways of seeing.

**Slavery**

**Introduction**

The words slave and slavery, as nouns are not used much today except to point out that it still exists in the predominately backward places in the world. Yet we see postcard humour on office walls such as “Slaves can’t be fired, they have to be sold!!”
and so on, some use these words as pejorative adjectives in describing what some describe as water-cooler humour. What such signage shows is a relative truth of modern office work, without the knowledge of what is the actual terminology that is to be descriptively used for their position within an organisation, and these words are not indicative actually of slaves, slavery, or the any use of those particular words.

In dealing with slavery, I will deal with reference philosophers John Locke, Baron de Montesquieu, Thomas Hill Green, Theodor Adorno, and the philosophical topics of Human Rights, legal obligation and Authority, Libertarianism, Exploitation, Game Theory and Ethics, Equality, Paternalism, and Positive and Negative Liberty. Any one of these is a thesis unto itself and I have used only secondary sources to present a series of discussion points on the topic of Slavery.

From the references below, I draw some warranted conclusions.

Firstly, slavery does not seem to draw, in a philosophical sense, an emotional hatred of the systemic buying and selling of human beings for the use of others, irrespective of the political age concerned. What I show is the ivory-tower approach to the issue of slavery. If we assume that collecting potential slaves from a despotic and savage tribe is to “save their souls” as was probably thought at the time of Locke, then slavery was a mission of religious based mercy at that time. Yet, from the same philosophers came forth the Social Contract and other social thinking meant to liberate the population from political, social, demographic, and economic impoverishment. However, the application of the Social Contract, it seems, was only for the European societies coming to grips with democracy, for other places, perhaps they were considered too backward for the Social Contract and would remain so for the foreseeable future.

The ease in which thinkers of yesterday and perhaps today, consider slavery, I posit, forms the basis of the lack of concern over the modern day anxiety of what others and I call enslavement, my next topic. The source of such levels of minor
concern for the topic of enslavement has, I warrant, a source in the attitude to the topic of slavery.

**Narrative explanations – Edward Wong:**

The author uses elements of constructivist and critical and interpretive, or phenomenological and feminist writing styles; he also incorporates some phraseology compatible with heuristic inquiry. The research writing style developed, as he became aware of what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) refer to as the self-reflexive and transformational processes of self-creation, which can emerge during research.

The author begins to focus on the literature dealing with slavery and then proceeds by working with secondary sources to analyze these topics. These secondary sources deal with the referenced philosophers John Locke, Baron de Montesquieu, Thomas Hill Green, Theodor Adorno, the philosophical topics of Human Rights, Legal Obligation and Authority, Libertarianism, Exploitation, Game Theory and Ethics, Equality, Paternalism, and Positive and Negative Liberty.

We feel that an understanding of the secondary research sources can help analyze a problem and these sources often have a persuasive influence on the research process by virtue of the sources themselves. This is from their apparent quality from their choice of authors, the quality of the scholarship of these chosen authors, or the reputation of the sponsoring organisation, or all of these. It is for the author to chose, then to bear the responsibility for the quality of the references they use, and the use of secondary references may be an acceptable short cut.

When the researcher is the presenter, it is the reader, as critic, who determines whether these sets of actions are acceptable as research. This forms the foundation of the acceptance of the presentation based upon the soundness of the interpretations of primary sources by quality readers and reviewers that form a secondary source. It is said ‘if you have no time to read the book, read the reviews.’
Locke

Slavery is the “state of being in the absolute or arbitrary power of another” (Uzgalis, 2001 P.20) is a quite interesting discussion point. John Locke (Ibid., p. 19) stated that “Man is God’s property” and as such by implication man is God’s slave, yet man, according to Locke, also has certain natural rights as well. Locke recognised two forms of slavery legitimate and illegitimate, the former the result of a defeated unjust aggressor in war, and the latter a “state in which someone possesses absolute or despotic power over someone without just cause” (Ibid., p. 20). Yet in Locke’s Second Treatise of Government we see the beginnings of the Social Contract, where the populace yields certain rights and powers to government in return for the powers of policing, justice, and defence, for example, that the individual cannot do alone (Ibid, p. 18). These actions are not those of powerless slaves.

Baron de Montesquieu

Baron de Montesquieu (Bok, 2003, P. 8) deals with slavery, and perhaps tries to justify it as not as bad as it seems when one considers a despotic situation where the non-slave has as many or as few rights as a slave in a more civilised environment. The main consideration in this article is that “when work can be done by freemen motivated by the hope of gain rather than by slaves motivated by fear, the former will always work better…” (Ibid., p. 8).

Thomas Hill Green

Thomas Hill Green (Tyler, 2003 P. 16) states that a “slave has a right to his freedom in that he is engaged in social relations founded on the movement to attain a common good.” Also, (Ibid., p. 17) “The slave-owner’s right to the free use of his possession - that is, the slave - is thus nullified as it rests on the non-recognition of the slave’s right to freedom.”

Theodor W. Adorno
Theodor W. Adorno (Zuidervaart, 2003 P. 3) describes giving “domination a triple sense: domination of nature by humans, domination of nature within humans, and the domination of humans by others. What motivates such triple domination is an irrational fear of the unknown.” I ask the question who or what creates this apparently irrational fear, more on this later.

**Human Rights**

Human Rights as the first philosophical topic, (Nickel, 2003) describes the various sources of human rights and among them is freedom from slavery, yet today in the 21st century it still exists, irrespective of treaties, international agreements, and representations from strong, but foreign, governments.

**Legal Obligation and Authority**

Legal Obligation and Authority (Green, 2003) describes civil responsibility and obligations by citizens of a community and has links with Jeremy Bentham’s Pan-Opticon prison design where prisoners are meant to control themselves for various in-house rewards. This was accompanied by “duty-imposing and duty-excepting laws,” to complete the circle of legal support for the actions of such a prison. Green also quotes Wolff “If the individual retains his autonomy by reserving to himself in each instance the final decision whether to co-operate, he thereby denies the authority of the state; if, on the other hand, he submits to the state and accepts it claim to authority then… he loses his autonomy.”

**Libertarianism**

“Libertarianism, as usually understood, is a theory about the permissible use of non-consensual force” (Vallentyne, 2002). Again, “Libertarianism in the strict sense is committed to full self-ownership, which is a maximally strong bundle of ownership rights... At the core of full self-ownership, then, is full control self-ownership, the full right to control the use of one’s person.” Yet with this ownership, can comes the right to
dispose of or transfer ownership in a form of self-enslavement (Ibid., p. 3).

**Exploitation**

Exploitation (Wertheimer, 2005) is nearer to the point of the presented model’s Anthill. Yet I am now beginning to think that exploitation in the Anthill’s case is a two way street, depending upon the time, place, and circumstances of the event. Wertheimer (Ibid., p.3) quotes Goodin

“There are four conditions, all of which must be present if dependencies are to be exploitable, First, the relationship must be asymmetrical... Second ... the subordinate party must need the resource that the superordinate supplies... Third... the subordinate party must depend upon some particular superordinate for the supply of the needed resources... Fourth, the superordinate... enjoys discretionary control over the resources that the subordinate needs from him…”

There is also a useful distinction between harmful exploitation and mutually advantageous exploitation (Ibid., p. 4). Wertheimer states (Ibid., p. 5):

“Let us say that A oppresses B when A deprives B of freedoms or opportunities to which B is entitled. If A gains from the oppressive relationship, as when A enslaves B, then A may both oppress and exploit B. But if A does not gain from the oppression, the oppression is wrong but not exploitive.”

However, voluntary transactions cannot be exploitive, (Ibid., p. 8).

**Game Theory and Ethics**

Game Theory and Ethics (Verbeek & Morris, 2004) uses game theory to determine ‘interdependent rational choice. There are three “kinds of inquires in the literature. First, functionalist... to describe problems in the absence of morality... Second, contractarianism... especially bargaining theory to formalize
social contract theory… and evolutionary game theory to recover many traditional moral norms or practices.” Later section of this work is entitled “Morals by Agreement” and discusses David Gauthier’s method of determining which course of action is rational even if it is not the best course of action (ibid., p. 7) …”where morality is used not to solve one problem but frequently recurring problems” (ibid., p. 8). Yet the question remains “Why be moral?”

**Equality**

Equality (Gosepath, 2001) “deals with social and political equality.” Gosepath (Ibid., p. 3) states, “The predicates ‘just’ or ‘unjust’ are only applicable when voluntary actions implying responsibility are in question.” In addition, “The principle of equal dignity and respect is now accepted as a minimum standard throughout mainstream Western culture” (Ibid., p. 5).

**Paternalism**

Paternalism (Dworkin, 2002) as described by Dworkin “is the interference of a state or an individual with another person, against their will, and justified by a claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm.” The pejorative statement “I’m from the government and I am here to help you” counters this. This statement is used to show that help from any government may not be true aid.

**Positive and Negative Liberty**

Positive and negative liberty, and Carter (Carter, 2003) sourced from Isaiah Berlin defines these terms as follows: “Negative liberty is the absence of obstacles, barriers, or constraints. Positive liberty is the possibility of acting or the fact of acting, in such a way as to take control of one’s life and realise one’s fundamental purposes.” On the topic- to be free, (Ibid., p. 3) – “To be free, you must be self-determined, which is to say that you must be able to control your own destiny in your own interests.” Carter (Ibid., p. 3) also describes a ‘higher-self” and a “lower-self.” The higher self “is the rational, reflecting self, the
self that is capable of moral action and of taking responsibility for what she does. The lower self, on the other hand is the self of passions, of unreflecting desires and irrational impulses.” Carter (Ibid., p. 6) also states using MacCallum as a reference, “Freedom is therefore a triadic relation – that is a relation between three things: an agent, certain preventing conditions and certain doings, or becoming of the agent.”

I raise a thought here, what if social pressures and management pressures within employment make the employee seek not to be free? Is this a form of voluntary or enforced enslavement?

**Narrative explanations: Edward Wong:**

In the above section, the author concerns about "What social, management, and organisational pressures within employment make the employee seek not to be free?"

When one is a member of an organisation, you become that organisation by virtue of becoming a brand, that is you are part of the image of the organisation, a simulacrum of the organisation. That is to say, as being part of a particular organisation, you are the human representation, a microcosm, of that organisation. For instance, to be a past member of a now disgraced organisation due to criminal activity taints your experience base, irrespective of your position within that firm. You are part of that problem or series of problems that led to the firm’s downfall. I would suggest that William H. Whyte’s *The Organisation Man* (Whyte, 1965), still has relevance today, several human generations after its initial release: things have become much worse. This cooperation with one’s new employer is a natural reaction of trying to fit into a new minor society. Your friends are now fellow workers, or as I found when I worked for IBM, one became internally branded as an IBMer. This allowed you to claim a vicarious membership of one of the largest and most successful organisations of its time. By becoming such a company person, whether it is IBM or any other medium or large organisation, you can take on the mannerisms of such a titled person, as well as the cynicism directed at local, country, and international
management. At that time when I was employed at IBM, few did not offer unsolicited advice as to better ways of performing their own tasks, the tasks of their fellow workers, the tasks of their immediate manager, all the way up to the very top of the organisation. Rather interestingly, this was encouraged by directives from the headquarters of IBM. This was meant to ensure that failings in corporate strategies or actions were quickly addressed and corrected. This led to IBM at one time to be considered the best-managed corporation in the world. Although, a few years from that time into its future, this organisation almost ceased to exist, as entrenched attitudes almost destroyed it, as such policies and actions became almost a case of inbreeding destroying the bloodline.

What was not considered were the pressures placed upon each employee to conform to the image of what an IBMer was meant to be, without it being actively defined and from that ideal to become an active supporter of a very successful corporation.

Please note that I use the example of my experiences at IBM to point out general trends, as my research has shown to me that a successful employer, carries with it the aura of being an employee member of a successful team, and the more successful the employer the more vicarious kudos one can proudly wear to external functions when one is asked “who do you work for?”

The actual cost to the employee for a promise of continuing success may be the sacrifice of personal activity time, this at a stage of a young employee’s life when they are serious in becoming a part of the society to which they belong, that is seeking a partner, marriage, home building, children and so on. It can be shown that by wanting to create a career with a successful organisation, the new employee decides to compete with fellow new hires and current employees, and that may mean forgetting one’s personal life for an imaginary and arguably short time, which may mean several years until they continually prove themselves worthy employees, firstly to themselves, then to their organisational competitors, and then to the management of the organisation. This process, I suggest, means that the personal freedoms normally exercised by most of the
population are put aside until the proving process is somehow completed. I have known highly intelligent men give up their personal lives for a promise of better things in the very near future. Better things came, but with the attachment of new sets of proving tests, that meant giving up more and more personal time to be known as an achiever.

This seems to be akin to military training, where indoctrination is a valid term in such training, and today as military terms are more and more being introduced into business, e.g. *we will endeavour to take the high ground, take no prisoners*, and so on, perhaps this is the reason for business to take on the indoctrination process rather than an induction process. In the military if you do not conform or follow orders, you are put into a military jail or possibly executed; in the business world, worse is expected as punishment- you can be fired and then lose all contact with your newly established social network.

It is the personal isolation that occurs when such events happen that leads to a form of self-destruction. The choice is either a form of enslavement or a new form of ostracism.

**Enslavement**

**Introduction**

One-step beyond being a good and chattel as a slave, is the reality of the 21st century of a person enslaved in some form or another. In areas of the world where an unemployment rate of 30% or more is considered an economic boom period, factories owned by foreign and the domestic partners of these firms are in fact enslaving their workforces with workplace conditions that would not be tolerated in their home countries. This is not, perhaps considered a pejorative action by either the local or overseas governments concerned, as the people concerned are at least employed or earning a living, a “trade not aid” proposition, however what price to the ethical foundations of Western society?
If we go one-step further, into what I have described as an Anthill, we find that the term is not *enslavement* but *corporate culture*. It is here that the humour of being a *wages-slave* ceases to be black-humour, and becomes, in my opinion, a real personal, social, and corporate problem.

The secondary sources I will be using again come from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, plus two articles that apparently describes the case of enslavement under two different guises: a specific case study and an examination concerning *Corporate Culture*. The authors are Wanda J. Orlikowski, then of the Sloan School of Management and Hugh Willmott, then of the Manchester School of Management.

There seems to be little consideration of enslavement in the secondary sources that I am using, but the ones that I consider relevant I use here. Max Stirner and William Godwin are the two philosophers and Libertarianism (seen on the topic of slavery).

**Max Stirner**

Max Stirner (Leopold, 2002) examined in Leopold’s work concerning Stirner’s assault upon the “expectations about how political and philosophical argument should be conducted, and seeks to shake confidence in the superiority of contemporary civilisation.” Further, “He provides a sweeping attack on the modern world as dominated by religious modes of thought and oppressive social institutions, together with a brief sketch of a radical ‘egoistic’ alternative in which individual autonomy might flourish.” Leopold (Ibid., p. 5) discusses part 2 of Stirner’s work *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* (1844) or *The Ego and Its Own*, where he discusses the avaricious individual who sacrifices everything in pursuit of individual riches. “[Stirner] suggests that the avaricious man has become enslaved to a single end, and such enslavement is incompatible with egoism properly understood” (Ibid., p.5). “Stirnerian egoism is perhaps best thought of, not in terms of the pursuit of self-interest, but rather as a variety of individual self-government or autonomy (ownness)” (Ibid., pp. 5-6).
Stirner (Ibid) also uses the description of the avaricious man to describe not an egoist, but something else, as he describes egoism as self-governance not self-interest. Yet, in the research carried out in this work, self-governance is possible only in the decision to leave the organisation or to improve one’s career outlook by education. The choice to join another organisation doing the same thing is not I posit, self-governance, it is merry-go-round decision making. That is, changing, yet repetitive scenery by staring fixedly into the moving view without proceeding anywhere. The option of self-governance seems to be a matter of private judgement.

William Godwin

William Godwin (Philp, 2003) “was the founder of philosophical anarchism.” “…the rigorous exercise of private judgment, and its candid expression in public discussion, plays a central role, motivating his rejection of a wide range of co-operative and rule-governed practices which he regards as tending to mental enslavement, such as law, private property, marriage, and concerts.”

Godwin, (Ibid.) allows private judgement to reject mental enslavement, yet as my research has shown, the use of this judgement is minimal, as the seductive and profitable skills of the information systems professional seem to cloud such judgement. The costs of using personal judgement to the advantage of the professional, that is the advantage of moving up and out as an emancipative and strategic career move, can be high, and the typical risk-averse organisation may not wish to incur its share of the cost of such moves by its information systems professionals.

Narrative explanations- Edward Wong:

Here, the author reflects presents the theorizing about the concepts of enslavement.

As a specific example, the adoption of the corporate culture or personal branding to the personal detriment of an employee in their life outside of their time at their workplace, I posit is a form
of enslavement. To indoctrinate a person to the point where the striving to become the perfect example of either as a technocrat, salesperson, manager, or manager of managers, or in a military sense – a soldier, is a form of enslavement, whether or not one truly believes the corporate culture is best for all concerned. It becomes the bedrock of discussion concerning almost every aspect of the organisation.

The point I make is this: one can espouse the corporate culture and believe it and one can espouse the corporate culture and not believe it, the final case of not believing or espousing the corporate culture, leads most probably to short term employment. The second will make a mistake one day, and be proved as a non-believer, likely at great career cost.

My real question here is why management and their subordinates tolerate such excesses concerning their almost God-given human rights to be diverse within the organisation’s culture? A corollary perhaps, is why do people in the military in combat roles who face daily harm, and do so perhaps with some reluctance, but still do their duty?

Is a job with a particular organisation so important as to give up one’s common rights to a life glittering in its dedication to liberties and freedoms, with a pursuit to a form of joy and happiness? Many believe their job is paramount; as it determines who and what they are, their place within their community and all of this is supported with the ideals of freedom, all of this is, it seems to me, is an unfortunate myth. Because as a free person in a free society, they willingly do what no slave can do, they enslave themselves in the inverse sense of a slave, free but in chains, as Marx espoused.

**Libertarianism**

The topic Libertarianism was discussed within the topic of Slavery, here I am dealing with the “objections of full self-ownership... as it permits voluntary enslavement” and within this work of Philps, is a reference to Steiner (1994) who defends
“the right to *exercise* one’s autonomy is more fundamental than the *protection or promotion* of one’s autonomy” (Ibid., p. 3).

**Orlikowski**

I will refer to the Orlikowski article firstly. This article presented during the course work of this degree states “…the framework and findings suggest that in order to account for the experiences and outcomes associated with CASE tools, researchers should consider the *social context* of systems development, the intentions and actions of key players, and the implementation process followed by the organisation” (Italics mine) (Orlikowski, 1993). This article set in train this entire work.

Orlikowski’s article (Orlikowski, 1993) draws a picture of an information systems professional’s workplace, firstly at SCC, at an extreme, but in some cases a similar level as compared with my experiences. Yet, the intensity of this workplace and its ability to instil a form of loyalty is typical of such situations. It is not because information systems professionals are involved in a typical employment; it is because it is atypical and ever-changing that seems to attract and for the most part keep, technical expertise. However, at SCC, “The firm has a particularly competitive culture, which is reinforced by the strict, single career path that every employee follows. “…as well as leveraging the existing technical and managerial skills in the firm.” I seriously question the managerial skill base here, as the manager may only have the skills of a trained supervisor or leading-hand. This skill level was described at my MBA course as follows: “Good morning, how’s the wife and kids, pick that up and move it over there.” The management skills at SCC I posit are in the same vein, not management but the giving of simple orders that are expected to be obeyed.

Because of the SCC standards of operations in the creation of products, any new procedures outside the norm, result in the attitude “…we are not changing the direction or discipline of our work.” In my model, Anthill dwellers, as those at SCC are rule followers, and will probably remain rule followers.
PCC, the other half of this paper, is an organisation that was to buy in CASE tools, took another tack, they trained their information systems professionals before installing these tools. They foresaw that “[These professionals] required new training courses with the information systems division... imparted skills of negotiation, relationship-building, and conflict resolution—competencies that as one information systems manager indicated, had never before been considered part of the narrow technical role played by information systems.” This meant, that information systems, in this instance were given the opportunity to be a different type of critical-thinker, critical-thinking other than expected from typical knowledge and information systems professionals. Here, importantly, it seems that their employer trusted their information systems professional’s ability to be other than what they were paid.

It must be noted here, that in this paper, SCC had a much higher turnover of information systems professionals than PCC who also had a lower than usual turnover of these professionals than the industry norm.

**Hugh Willmott**

The second article was a pure serendipity in its discovery. As I was seeking solid references for this work, I used an article search facility at the University’s library, and this gem appeared under the search word slavery, but it deals with enslavement more than the term slavery. It links the self-discipline of Bentham’s Pan-Opticon prison with the modern use of Corporate Culture with further links to Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four. This article strengthened my resolve to finish this work, as it offers sustained support for the model and my thinking about the information systems industry.

Willmott quotes liberally from the Peters and Waterman (1982) book *In Search of Excellence: Lesson from America’s Best-Run Companies* and the most telling conclusion is found in note 6 on page 543 of the source journal:
“...that over a five-year period, Peters and Waterman’s excellent companies performed no better in terms of stock market valuations than a random sample of Fortune 1000 companies (Hitt & Ireland, 1987).”

“...that organisations with strong cultures in core values become hardened into inflexible dogmas that impede responsive responsiveness to changing circumstances (Soeters, 1986).”

From the first quote above, as a general statement, that all of these installations of various corporate cultures, their expense and personal trauma, have not yielded anything more than a status quo in comparison with other considered slower-witted organisations. In addition, it means that the valuable assets put into these plans have not yielded anything for the shareholders or managers who supported such a move and these assets that could have been used elsewhere, perhaps more productively. In other words, the organisation’s mangers would have become corporate heroes if they stood up to the supporters of such a move. The conclusion here, as a suspect generalisation, is that such encapsulations of attitudes and career paths resolved nothing, did not recover costs, and did not deliver anything to the bottom line; the role of management was subordinated to a myth.

From the second quote, I can only use the model of International Business Machines (IBM) whose existence today was the result of a stroke of good luck rather than good planning. Its senior managers all had marketing backgrounds selling mainframe-based systems, and they considered the personal computer, a toy. I must admit, at the time, I did so as well. The IBM data-bus, which probably drives most of the personal computers today and as these machines were originally described in disparaging terms, this fundamental necessity for all personal computers, was given away as IBM’s gift to the world, which allowed more prosipient entrepreneurs to change the world of information systems. Now perhaps, 100 million units or more, later, it is too late for IBM to respond, as this ill-advised but simple act led to the demise of the mainframe, and almost IBM itself. The good luck for IBM was found in a person who
could see the technological changes to personal computers and their advantages, and while based in IBM’s headquarters in Armonk, New York, he could pursue his case at the highest levels. Whether this has changed IBM’s corporate culture is for others to investigate, but IBM at least survived this fundamental change in almost every area of their business.

If we can assume that what Willmott states on page 517 of his article, that corporate culture is incipiently totalitarianism and that such policies are in place solely to gain a competitive advantage within the ideology of progressive management, why has it not been seen in increased profitability or returns to shareholders? Is there a link to the famous statement “The benefits of information systems are seen everywhere but in the financial statements of business?” Is the information systems supplier that has adopted a corporate culture policy a benefactor or challenger to its customers who may or may not be using a corporate culture policy as well? These questions will be answered elsewhere, and perhaps as a question within what constitutes a systemic corporate morality.

However, in my experience, it is the individual who will make the decision to embrace the corporate culture of his employer or not, and whether or not their acceptance of the corporate culture is genuine. Also within this analysis is the fact that the employee who accepts these policies as a real benefit to their lives must also accept that they have yielded control of their lives to others who have different pressures placed upon them, at different times. This reduces to the fact that being employed, and working for a certain employer is voluntary for both sides, in spite of the corporate culture. Personal identity still exists beyond this strange idea of a corporate culture, as it can do for the slave, but as I posit that a slave cannot be enslaved as they have no power to reject personal control over their lives, as only a free person can give up their freedoms and become enslaved to an imaginary ideal or even idol created on the premise that the near transfer of ownership of the human soul is a condition of employment.
These two articles Orlikowski and Willmott at least and by themselves, point out the risks of “Flavour-of-the-month” management change and the echoing or indiscriminate acceptance, without argument, of risk-averse decisions from apparent thought-minimal corporate policies. I have found, even though these articles ought to have been obsolete by now, they are currently relevant as if they were published today.

We can see from the outlines given by the secondary sources that there is a common thread of enslavement and it is a personal choice, not one of no choice at all as in the actual case of the powerless slave. Yet as the slave is in a captive state, it is quite possible that the slave is not mentally enslaved as they are only physically held captive, and this forms the basis that I posit that only a non-slave may be enslaved, as enslavement is a mental condition not a physical one.

**Narrative explanations - Edward Wong:**

Here, the author believes that if a professional desires to achieve reform in their profession, by using systematic inquiry by collaborative, self-critical communities of practitioners they can legitimately employ an autobiographical approach integrating practice into theory.

As a specific example, the core of both articles above is the approaches to ownership of the self. If one owns oneself, then one can do what they want with that self, and voluntary enslavement is an option. This can be under the guise of a social context of employment, a closed-shop guild if you will, of similarly employed persons who think almost the same thoughts when confronted with a problem within the organisation. The internal competitiveness seems to yield a form of conformity that does not support a group of ‘yes-persons,’ but a group that uses conformity to support a discussed solution that uses incomplete information to form and support that conclusion.

In Orlikowski’s article, the difference between SCC and PCC is quite remarkable.
SCC uses extreme competitiveness to achieve a result for a given project, and ignores the qualities of questioning by potential managers to ensure a continuity of apparent productive and profitable policies and actions. On the other side of the coin, as a high-tech organisation technological change is so rapid that policies are also quickly obsolete as new methods replace those of perhaps a month or less ago.

What is missing is the treatment of the humans that make up the productive facility of SCC. They are learning SCC’s product lines, production methods, personnel policies, and then rejecting them by moving to a more normal workplace. SCC may enjoy high profits, but it also has high costs or training and retraining its people in its product lines and to accept enslavement and lack of corporate and managerial trust as normal.

PCC accepts the humanity and trust of its personnel and that information systems personnel, like all other personnel can be trusted to be professional in their jobs. For these policies, PCC has high employee retention rates and therefore lower hiring costs.

Hugh Willmott’s article shows that totalitarianism works, but freedom and liberty work best, as they tend not to accept management fads.

Why then, are they considered as an analogy of liberation? The term liberation is probably the most overused word that holds out hope but leads to an even worse case of near slavery. In the cases described above, liberation offers no such hopes of freedom, but the ability to exercise forms of power. This is not in a sense of ‘power to the workers,’ but as a case of mutual flexibility. In the case of SCC, there is no escape from the market as the market, organisation, job, and person are identical. In the case of PCC, the market is differentiated between the job and the person, giving each a relationship to the organisation. The problem discovered in this research is that there are many SCCs and few PCCs in the marketplace, yet PCC seems to be the preferred workplace.
How is such an ideology implemented into practice? The days when a project was a best guess completion date, cost and benefits to the organisation, are still with us, but the best guesses are getting much better. So, now the emphasis seems to be on the lowest cost option, one that meets the minimum specification of the product’s quality, as the product still may exist for only a short relative period before a newer improved fundamental or base product, the product from which other products are sourced is available. What is of importance in such a situation is the availability of suitable personnel at very short notice to keep the processes, in this case information systems, running at the required times, more and more it is all day every day.

On the other hand, the information systems professional wants to be considered expert in both the primary and secondary product, sufficiently expert enough to repair the systems, to implement new features, and to justify further training in the systems used. If management farms out the donkeywork, code cutting and so on, then perhaps the in-house professional will survive in their job, but they also realise that they are expensive to keep. Management must make the decision whether or not they are also a disposable luxury.

Emancipation

Introduction

Of the three major points to be raised from this point onwards; emancipation, freedom and power, emancipation seems to be the least resourced. On August 2, 2005, I used the Google search engine using the search term freedom and received 133 million ‘hits’, I then used the term emancipation and received a little over 2 million ‘hits’, and finally I used the term power and received 351 million ‘hits.’ I then used the Google Scholar engine (at that time it was in Beta testing format) and using the same terms in the same order I received 1.2 million, 35,300, and 6.7 million ‘hits’ respectively. In Google, for every emancipation ‘hit’ there were 60 ‘hits’ for freedom, and about 150 for power. In Google Scholar, the search engine for academic articles, for every
article on *emancipation* there were thirty-odd for *freedom* and for *power*, there were 190 ‘hits.’ The ratios are not important for this work, as I use them to show that power is predominate, freedom is a minor next, and emancipation hardly gets a mention. Yet emancipation, in my opinion, determines the other two terms, as you cannot be free unless you are emancipated, and you cannot have the ability to obtain power unless the sources of your power are free to lend or give some of their power to you. The most astute would recognise a potential problem here, as in the words of a song “... they only paid a nickel, but they want a dollar song!” In the world where gifts are suspect unless proved otherwise, the acceptance of responsibility and commensurate power over that responsibility is the only way to ensure that the power gift is a true gift of power, as the sources of the gift are not necessarily trustworthy in ensuring the receiver of this gift are still free to accept or abjure.

What I posit is we are in a situation where the fundamentals of a free people are not considered very seriously at all, that freedom is mouthed, yet that freedom is used to gain power over those who considered themselves to be a free but ‘everywhere in chains’ as Marx apparently stated. I also posit that the conclusion must be that the current western-based culture is consumed with freedom-based power, but is ignoring the foundations of the idealities and ideals of emancipation.

**Sources**

Again as a secondary source, I will use the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The Philosophers are Karl Marx, Jean Baudrillard and the topics are Critical Theory, and Social Epistemology.

**Karl Marx**

In the Jonathan Wolff entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, on the topic of Karl Marx (Wolff, 2003) emancipation is mentioned 13 times, firstly in the terms of religion preventing emancipation (Ibid., p. 2) sourced from Bruno Bauer, a ‘radical liberal member of the Young Hegelians,’
secondly in Marx’s response to Bauer and his differentiating political and human emancipation. Marx also uses political emancipation (‘essentially the grant of liberal rights and liberties’) as a barrier to human emancipation as well (Ibid., p. 3). However, “real freedom is to be found in our relations with other people …It is to be found in human community not in isolation.”

Interestingly enough, Marx does not elucidate what human emancipation happens to be, though Wolff states “…it is closely related to the idea of non-alienated labour.” Alienated labour is described as follows:

“Marx famously depicts the worker under capitalism as suffering from four types of alienated labour. First, from the product, which as soon as it is created is taken away from its producer. Second, in productive activity (work) which is experienced as a torment. Third, from species-being, for humans produce blindly and not in accordance with their truly human powers. Finally from other human beings, where the relation of exchange replaces mutual need” (Ibid., p. 4).

However, Marx is no utopian in his thinking, again from Wolff:

“Marx wanted to distance himself from this tradition of utopian thought, and the key point of distinction was to argue that the route to understanding the possibilities of human emancipation lay in the analysis of historical and social forces, not in morality. Hence, for Marx, any appeal to morality was theoretically a backward step (Ibid., p. 11).

From Karl Marx, we see that the first level of the presented model, the Anthill, is enforced isolation, so the members of the Anthill are unable to fulfil the freedom from the interference that Marx refers. By isolating the information systems professional, emancipation becomes difficult unless by specific actions of the person concerned, that is, Marx’s self-transforming actions (Ibid., p. 3).

I for one could not apply alienated labour proposal to the information systems professional as it does not describe at all
what these people do, and I support the ideas that neither do they apply to modern industry as well. Nor is alienation described as creating human playthings for the capitalist ‘factory’ owner; as the modern worker and professional has trade unions and professional associations who can speak for them as a group, and sometimes as an individual, but only I posit, as a member of the Anthill. Here lays the heart of the problem, what does it mean to liberate? In this case, using a trade union or professional association, can also limit the possible actions of the worker or professional. However, to shift away from the anthill, in any direction requires courage, foresightedness, and education, plus a determination insufficiently used and experienced within the structure of the anthill, which makes the difficulty of the proposed transition more difficult.

Jean Baudrillard

Jean Baudrillard as described by Kellner (Kellner, 2005) replaces Marx’s use-value and exchange-value with sign-value, an item’s expression of style, power, luxury and so on (Ibid., p.3). I propose that people also have a sign-value that reflects in their jobs, their businesses, and their social and political power sourced from the sum of their sign-value.

As part of the Structuralist and post-structuralist groupings in France, “where structuralists and post-structuralists argued that subjectivity was produced by language, social institutions, and cultural forms and was not independent of its construction in these institutions and practices,” (Ibid., p. 3) Baudrillard has connections with the Frankfort School through Marcuse, and the reification process where people are dominated by things and become thing-like themselves (Ibid., p. 4).

According to Kellner, (Ibid., p. 8) Baudrillard considered “...modern societies are organized around the production and consumption of commodities, while post-modern societies are organized around simulation and the play of images and signs, denoting a situation where codes, models, and signs are the organizing forms of a new social order where simulation rules” (Ibid., p 8).
Using Baudrillard’s sign-value idea, I posit that a person’s job, calling, or profession determines the sign-value of the particular person, not only to themselves, but to others as well. Let me give you an example. When I was purchasing for the family hardware business, I could not find a particular item, so I asked the man sweeping the floor if he knew where a particular item was located, his reply is still with me today, – “I’m sorry I can’t help you I am only the cleaner.” Whatever happened to that man to make him say that? His sign-value was in his eyes, almost non-existent, yet if he did not do his job properly, many seen and unseen dangers will arise and employees and customers will be injured. From this sign-value of a product or a person, in this case and in the case of an Anthill structuralist employee, it is possible that a personal sign-value can lead to a stagnant career and to a form of needless self-debasement of one’s inherent creative qualities, all to support a conformist view established by someone other than the person at the centre. Alienation of the self, I posit is self-inflicted, but supported by apparent determiners of available fact.

If Baudrillard’s reification, that is, the domination of things to create people who become thing-like, then do we not then have an anthill as I described previously and are information systems professionals living a simulacrum of being a computer themselves? Does their information systems jargon, that confusion of tongues that have a universal multi-language application, and used when normal language is insufficient, create the undesirable and unthinking human, but a desirable employee? Does this indicate they are not thinking in human terms, but only in terms necessary for interpreting the needs of a particular machine or group of machines and its probable need for derivative linguistic solutions to problems that have little or nothing to do with the problems that confront humanity or even themselves?

Consider Baudrillard’s simulation where codes, models, and signs are the organizing forms. I consider this situation as my Guru level of the model I have made central to this work, that is, the jump from post-structuralism to post-modernism as an
employment and personal metamorphosis with the collapse of
the distinctions, power of social and political boundaries, and the
possibility of extreme confusion to the person making this move.
This apparent danger means that the Guru level must still be
aware of the real world and its successes and failings, but they
are now able to see the real world as an artist-writer, not merely
as a station in a community.

Yet Baudrillard dismisses emancipation, as not possible
because it is we who overwhelmed by the post-modern, so much
so that we seem to be enslaved to its forms of destructive
simulations.

Yet I posit that a society may be a summation of
Baudrillard’s simulations, but such a society has a fundamental
weakness - if one person rationally chooses not to participate,
then as a critical-thinker the whole structure is at risk. This is
because if that person apparently profits greatly, either
intellectually or in monetary terms, from non-participation, then
others will try to replicate the actions of that apparently
successful person, as is natural in our society, and society will
change because of this vanguard’s actions. This is the strength
of a free person making decisions for their personal betterment, and
the strength of a society are the freedoms that allow such
motives, strategies, and actions.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory is described by Bohman (Bohman, 2005)
“...a ‘critical’ theory may be distinguished from a ‘traditional’
theory according to a specific practical purpose: a theory is
critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation, (he then
quotes Horkheimer, 1982) “to liberate human beings from the
circumstances that enslave them’” (Ibid., p.1). He again uses
Horkheimer to describe “that a critical theory is adequate only if
it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and
normative all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is
wrong with current reality, identify the actors to change it, and
provide both clear norms for criticisms, and achievable practical
goals for social transformation” (Ibid., pp. 1-2).
Bohman (Ibid., p. 7) makes an interesting statement concerning emancipation where there was a shift of emphasis begun by Habermas: “…shifts the goal of critical social enquiry from human emancipation as such, to the primary concern with the democratic institutions as the location for the realization of ideals of freedom and equality.” This apparently is a shift from ideology to a pragmatic solution to the problem of emancipation. Further on within this article is further explanation.

“As I have been arguing, the ideal in question for pragmatism and recent critical social theory inspired by pragmatism is a robust and deliberative form of self-rule—also a key aspect of Critical Theory’s wider historical ideal of human emancipation and freedom from domination” (Ibid., p. 22).

Critical Theory is concerned with emancipation; it is the first line of its reasons for being, however it faces the reality of the world as Habermas exclaimed. It must somehow provide a pathway to emancipation but it cannot do so, and Habermas has shifted the aims of Critical Theory to find the locations of the ideals of freedom and equality. Perhaps this is a mistake.

**Social Epistemology**

With the title of Social Epistemology, Goldman (Goldman, 2001) uses Geuss’ quote of “Critical theory aims at emancipation and enlightenment by making agents aware of hidden coercion in their environment, enabling them to determine where their true interests lie” (Geuss, 1981). This to reinforce the idea of the undercurrents that determine the application of one’s efforts in almost any endeavour, whether to one’s advantage or otherwise, this is a social epistemology, not an individual’s epistemology, and is accepted or rejected at the peril of the person concerned.

Social Epistemology allows the inclusion of social coercions to limit the ability of Critical Theory to seek emancipation, but I believe that a warranted insight is possible here for both Critical Theory and Social Epistemology.
Warranted Assertions

I warrant that from the above references and discussions that an implication is established that puts several points. Firstly, that there are forces, both individually and as a group that are anti-emancipation.

Secondly, in all that I have read, the authors have considered the human being or person as to be a set, constant, and unchanging being. The person or human being is to be fixed so that the presented model is allowed to be simple and to become simpler and easy to explain. When indeed the person is not fixed, is ever changing, and by whatever measure, is not a constant, these models become less relevant to the phenomenal world. The problem for emancipation is what is it that you are emancipating? Yet if we say it is the human being from demeaning and belittling work, what are the measures of this work for a given person. Is a Ph.D. driving a taxi demeaning and belittling?

The presented model allows for three philosophical types where each level requires the same physical person but different psychological person to do that particular job, yet no mention is made for the variability of humanity in the emancipating motives of Critical Theory, as it is meant only to emancipate human beings from their enslavement, voluntary or imposed, irrespective of their abilities or training.

Social Epistemology declares that there are forces within a society that work against the individual who fights against these encapsulating societal forces. ‘To reach beyond one’s station’ and ‘Who do you think you are?’ are perhaps the phrases to describe moves by an individual to challenge these unwritten and fraudulent forces to homogenize, standardize, and encapsulate and alienate the most vital forces that we are aware, those of the critical-thinking human being.

To emancipate means to set free, but freedom has a cost and the resulting situation may not be very free at all, again it is a
matter of personal choice, within the society where they wish to live.

Narrative explanations - Edward Wong:

Here, the author explores the power of emancipation disciplines. By definition, emancipation is to set free, whether or not the now free person wants this or not. It is a final step in the aspect of slavery, and I posit enslavement as well. However, enslavement can be quite comfortable, if the position that one holds promises power, wealth or both, in a proposed model that describes the near future and is mutually created by both the giver and receiver of these rewards.

There is, however a conundrum and that is - time. Marx is 19th century and Baudrillard and Critical theory is current thinking. Marx believed that emancipation only came about by political revolution, that is whenever the populace decided that emancipation was needed, then a political revolution brought down that which is enslaving, and the revolution established a newer and freer set of rules for the population, creating a new reality in the minds of the populace. Usually, however, the new reality created just as many points of enslavement as the previous model.

Baudrillard discussed a newer and more peaceful way: emancipation by sign-value. That is that people create power alternatives that are not under the control of those with actual power. For instance a person can purchase a powerful sports car to extend their power to the roadways, beyond the power of the powerful. Their social life is now under their control and not the control of others by the simple act of purchasing goods and services.

This does not only apply to goods and services, but to creative acts as well. By pushing the boundaries of art, eventually the new boundaries become commonplace and new boundaries appear radical to the previous radical boundary. This form of expansionism is also a form of emancipation, as the powerful
have the power of what determines art taken from them, and the new forms are acceptable or not to the emancipated and not to the enslaved art determining arbiters of art forms.

This however, runs the risk that emancipation may overstep, and create a counter wave to bring back a form of stability, not to the oldest form, but to reverse to points that are somewhat acceptable, but most importantly, to points that are still constructive and not destructive.

Critical Theory, of the Frankfurt School, also has for its aim emancipation. By using a logical stream of processes, it determines what is wrong; who has the power to change the situation; and then to provide the processes to achieve the goal of emancipation, all of this for the aim of a consensual form of social life.

There is a problem however, man is a tribal animal, and what is the ultimate emancipation for one person may not be the form for another and the group may not consider an individual’s version of emancipation as worthy of consideration. In a free society, the individual may consider moving to another tribe, isolate themselves from the tribe, or perhaps accept the ostracism of its present tribe as a price to pay for their personal evaluation of what emancipation means to them.

This series of options confronts us all, at one time or another. To be a member of a successful team, tribe or other community forms is a very comfortable position to find oneself, the downside is that once a member, dominate forces may act to attempt to codify the tacit into the explicit in order to control, or perhaps even enslave the other members of the group to a new form of enslavement. Some or even most may accept this as a natural order of events, but of the others, as in cases of history, can be expelled into a wilderness situation, and the group expects these now non-conformists, to die.

This expectation that all people can be controlled and made into conforming near automatons has constantly failed throughout
Freedom

Introduction

Freedom is the second most popular topic in Google and in Google Scholar. The term has various meanings that depend upon its use in language, language being the most limiting factor in describing almost anything.

Sources

The philosophers used here are Simone de Beauvoir, Thomas Hill Green, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, John Dewey, Jean-Paul Sartre, Baruch Spinoza, Herbert Spencer, and Paul Ricoeur. The topics used from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy are Positive and Negative Freedom (seen before within the topic of Slavery), Compatibilism (including a supplement), Free Will, existentialism, Liberalism, Personal Autonomy, and Critical Theory (seen before within the topic of emancipation). This list represents freedom as applicable to the models discussed here, and is by no means complete.

Simone de Beauvoir

In her contribution about Simone de Beauvoir, Bergoffen (Bergoffen, 2004 p. 2) has almost 80 references to the word freedom. My first impression is one of over-stating de Beauvoir’s work. However, on reading this article, my mind has changed. The idea of situated freedom, where the conditions of our situation determines the limits of our ability of agency and meaning, as described by Bergoffen, links quite well with the anthill part of my model, and as described in this article the link with Heidegger, the use of lived experience and its importance in its ability to determine meanings of the world, again interlocks with my thesis. Further on within this article, de Beauvoir “identifies the essence of freedom with the uncertainty and risk of our actions” (Ibid., p. 5).
As freedom requires at least two people to be established, it must mean that freedom can be evaded or misused, and de Beauvoir points out that it is necessary to recognize the experience of freedom and the meaning of freedom, and that is found only within the “critical-thinker” and the “artist-writer” descriptions of those who will recognize difference and protect difference, and this becomes the grounding of an ethical life (Ibid., p. 7).

If freedom is denied, and there is no way of gaining the ability to be free, then devious and violent methods may arise to ensure the freedom of a captured person, or they may resort to sabotage. In my model, that is the hacker described as an airplane dropping a bomb.

Freedom is a tangible thing for all of us, however if we have recently been emancipated, then freedom may be difficult to define and then use effectively. This seems to be the message from de Beauvoir, and if the freedom of one person denies freedom to another, then violence is acceptable as a solution. However, violence need not be direct as it may be indirect such as sabotage, go-slow, or other similar reactions to either real or imagined freedom loss. This type of situational freedom, in fact, may be the best resolution to the freedom question. If you are free to leave, you can do so, but at what risk do you attempt such a move? This quandary is almost a daily occurrence with information systems professionals so unless one becomes firstly a “critical thinker” or Condor in the model’s nomenclature, and then an “artist-writer” or Guru in the model, freedom remains evaded or misused.

Thomas Hill Green

Idealistically we have Thomas Hill Green when dealing with freedom. Tyler’s article with the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Tyler, 2003), for the first half deals with free will and its connection with freedom, but this is not what is needed here. If we deal with freedom as the antithesis of slavery then a similar line of support for this work arises. Freedom is based upon
rights and includes moral rights, which exist prior to the law (Ibid., p. 16). As with slavery, a slave has a right to his freedom as they contribute to the common good (Ibid., p. 16). Freedom is also allows the creation of wealth by allowing the freedom of the use of resources (Ibid., p. 20).

The bases of Green’s freedoms are the necessity of a free will, but more than that, the conclusion is that freedom allows the best use of available resources. If a systems professional is free to leave his employment and is able to better themselves in most measures of that term, then it is freedom that allows them to do so, not their responsibility to their community. On one hand, the community needs only to look after groups and not necessarily individuals, and on the other hand, by using Lewin, the individual may deem it necessary to consider the interdependencies of the group’s fate and task, the latter is the more important to an information systems group with its tasks at hand and in the near future. Still however, freedom allows an individual’s self-centred actions.

Fichte

(Breazeale, 2001) gives an encyclopaedic overview of Fichte’s concept of freedom. “The primary task of Fichte’s system of philosophy (the Wissenschaftslehre) is to reconcile freedom with necessity…” (Ibid., p. 5). “Freedom, according to Fichte’s argument, is possible and actual only within the context of limitation and necessity, and thus it is never ‘absolute’ but always limited and finite” (Ibid., p. 11).

Fichte attempts to secure a meaning of freedom through a process of what it is not. In common with writers about freedom, Fichte requires two or more participants in a determination of freedom. It is not, as a genie escaping from his bottle would say, “Free at last!” The question remains - free from what? The ultimate freedom the genie possesses is not freedom if his ‘freedom’ is oppressive. Perhaps, it is not freedom that I should be discussing, but oppression, the oppression that makes a person shriek from their soul “freedom!”
John Dewey

John Dewey’s Political Philosophy by (Festenstein, 2005) moves us to the 20th century concepts of freedom, at least in a somewhat remarkable American sense. “Freedom in a ‘positive’ sense consisted not merely in the absence of external constraints but the positive fact of participation in such an ethically desirable social order” (Ibid., p. 3).

In a section entitled Freedom, we see Dewey’s development of freedom. It seems the “What is valuable about freedom is not the negative absence of interference but the positive ‘power to be an individualized self’” (Ibid., p.5).

Dewey’s view of individuality is complex, but three elements seem most prominent: Individuality is reflective, it is social, and it must be exercised in order to be enjoyed. The first point is that freedom is held to consist in the capacity and willingness on the part of a person to reflect on her or his own goals, aims and projects, and to revise them because of this reflection (Ibid., p. 5).

Dewey seems to leave the utility of freedom, to the individual and not to society. The reflective individual has the inherent self-responsibility to use freedom to his or her own personal ends and not for the team as such. That responsibility for freedom lay with the individual seems counter to other authors mentioned here, where freedom is a social asset and not a personal one. It is here that the decision to leave the anthill and use the freedoms, and the risks involved attaining a greater life.

Jean-Paul Sartre

Flynn (Flynn, 2004, p 3) explains Jean-Paul Sartre’s ideals of freedom as Sartre says “We are condemned to be free.”

“The first part of his [Sartre’s] professional life focussed on the freedom of the existential individual (you can always make something out of …); the second concentrated on the socio-
economic and historical conditions which limited and modified that freedom (what you’ve been made into), once freedom ceased to be merely the definition of ‘man’ and included the possibility of genuine options in concrete situations” (Ibid., p. 6).

Sartre takes the idea of freedom as a non-blessing, but most importantly, in my opinion is the duality of what is the existential individual, (something to be made out of), and the social environment (which makes the individual into). Again, I venture to say that we are dealing with a seemingly constant form of humanity, something that does not exist. I posit that, and my model suggests that a person can be a structuralist, and then a post-structuralist, and then a post-modernist as a sequence of events, and in each event, the attitudes towards freedom is different, and that this is a natural course of events. Even if the social events are the same at each event, the individual is different in a major way.

**Baruch Spinoza**

Baruch Spinoza through (Nadler, 2005) describes freedom in religious tones, arguments of the 1600’s CE, where God, as then described, determined everything and freedom was determined by what God allows man to do, else a calamity may befall anyone who attempts or does that which God does not approve. “In the Mind there is no absolute, or free will, but the Mind is determined to will this or that by a cause that is also determined by another, and this again by another, and so to infinity” (Ibid., p. 9). Nadler also refers to Descartes [who] “believed that if the freedom of the human being is to be preserved, the soul must be exempt from the kind of deterministic laws that rule the material universe (Ibid., p.9).

In a discussing of Spinoza and freedom, I am including this type of discussion to emphasise the ‘God-given’ freedoms that developed over the last few centuries or so. The obligation of obedience, in a religious sense is probably the source of much of the freedom controlling propositions put into effect probably every moment of every day, everywhere. It makes for a placid population that willingly suffers because it is obliged to under
some unwritten rule or unwritten set of rules called the common good. This ‘common good’ argument and ‘faith’ as well are perhaps the greatest philosophical vices of all, as much evil in the name of both in order to justify the positions of those using these arguments. It is also difficult to imagine a state without the defined freedoms of a 21st century state, yet the history of freedom and liberty is perhaps the most interesting historical study of all, as it is my opinion, that where such arguments were not developed, you will find only primitive societies where freedom and liberty seems to have been selectively bred out of the population by killing those considered unhelpful with their questions and alternatives.

**Herbert Spencer**

Herbert Spencer as described by Weinstein, introduced *equal freedom* (Weinstein, 2002 p. 2),” …liberty of each, limited by the like liberty of all, is the rule in conformity with which society must be organized.” There is however from Spencer, a group of moral rights attached to the freedoms that a society offers. If both the freedoms and moral rights make a society moral then “Moral societies are happier societies and more vibrant and successful to boot” (Ibid., p. 3). Also

“…members of a society inherit moral institutions which become authoritative in succeeding generations, and this favours those cultures wherever moral common sense becomes more uncompromising all things being equal. Eventually, the members of favoured societies begin consciously recognizing, and further deliberately refining, the utility-generating potency of their inherited moral institutions. ‘Rational,’ scientific utilitarianism slowly replaces common sense, ‘empirical’ utilitarianism as we learn the incomparable value of equal freedom and its derivative moral rights as everyday utilitarian decision procedures” (Ibid., p. 6).

Spencer describes what is not usually found in modern organisations as enforceable policy - equal freedom. The Critic of such a statement would probably respond that even in society “some are more equal than others” to indicate and argue that
equal freedom is not possible or is not feasible in any organisation that needs human bosses. Does this mean that if we do not have human bosses, we are equally free, and would have both equal freedoms and equal moral rights? The answer to both questions, I posit, lay in the area of improvements to the humans within the organisation and the organisation’s ability to make a profit with a contented customer base and workforce. How this is done is the role of management, however, in today’s world of quarterly reporting or shorter time periods, it is the immediate result that makes the manager’s manager positively respond or not.

In passing, will the greater and greater use of computer based recording and decision making through the use of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) make the employee more free, by disposing of the middle management requirements of organisations?

The time factor expressed by Spencer, of generational evolution of better organisations and their communities is far too long for Spencer’s ideas to bear fruit in today’s world of quarterly or shorter reporting cycles. However, historically speaking, it is the generational change, evolution if you will, of political actions and responses, violent and peaceful that makes a free society increasingly free, beginning with a local social freedom and continuing through to central governments. However, freedom in a corporation, whose life cycle is probably less than 100 years, has not the chance to evolve freedom over time as it must define and refine freedom in the encapsulated worlds in which they operate. Freedom therefore is not a foundation of business; it is beyond the competence of a business to determine what freedom means, it can only operate within the rules determined by others. This is where society takes the role of controlling the short term for corporate actions, the time span that the corporations of today understand.

Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur is described by (Dauenhauer, 2002) as “...one of the most distinguished philosophers of our time.”
“Ricoeur argues that the voluntary and involuntary dimensions of human existence are complimentary… Each person has to struggle with the conflict between them. But this conflict is what ultimately makes my freedom genuinely mine, what gives me my distinctive identity” (Ibid., p. 2).

This does not mean that a human being must stand by and be a sitting target and victim; it means that each person has the option of doing something to change the world in which they exist. The initiating of an action is a desire to change -

“…Desire is not only a force that moves or impels a person. It is also a reason for the initiative in question. It is a reason that makes the initiative intelligible and meaningful. Thus desire shows that the self, as agent, belongs both to the order of nature, in which desire impels, and to the order of culture or meaning, in which the initiatives make sense both to the agent and to others as motions aimed at obtaining what it desires” (Ibid., p.6).

Ricoeur presents a form of reality that is applicable to the model I present in this work. The information systems professional must make an evaluation of their situation, and then make choices as to the moves they wish to undertake or even those allowed and allowable. They are not typically in a free society, they are only as necessary as are janitors, accountants, auditors, and other ‘hack’ occupations to keep the operation of the organisation legal, running smoothly, and honest in the eyes of others. There is little power at this level to change the operations of the organisation, but the individual can initiate meaningful changes within and without the encapsulated situation they find themselves. It is here that consideration of any jump in occupational situation must dominate, as the power to initiate such a move remains with the individual, but the corporate acceptance of such a move is determined by the power of others.

Narrative explanations - Edward Wong:
In the above section, the author explores the underlying theme of freedoms.

To be emancipated does not necessarily mean that you are free. Towards the end of the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln freed the American slaves with the Proclamation Emancipation, yet the result was not a group of freed ex-slaves, but something far worse: ex-slaves with no sense of their new and enforceable freedoms. For possibly generations these now ex-slaves had masters. They were told what to do, how to do it, when to do it, they were fed, housed, and in a sense maintained, as would any asset. With their newly found freedoms, they had to make decisions about things that were foreign to their slave culture within a larger culture and were at that time, feared as much as they were intimidated before. In a larger sense, they were emancipated, but not free.

Simone de Beauvoir paints a similar picture, as do the rest of the philosophers mentioned, about what freedom means. De Beauvoir classified western humanity into seven groups, but only two were considered free or at least on their way to freedom. She considered that freedom must be experienced and its meaning explained. The critical-thinker experienced freedom and the artist-writer sought to explain freedom; these two alone were worthy of freedom. She also stated that freedom denied leads to violence, yet these two classes of humanity are not known to be violent people, however, these two groups are exceptionally reactive and powerful when their ideas of freedom are trespassed by any group.

The purpose of freedom is, according to Green is basically economic, free will uses resources best of all, but it is a group free will, as the community will look after only the group and not a particular individual.

Fichte, who implies that freedom and necessity go hand in hand and that there is no absolute freedom, supports this. However, this raises a question “Freedom from what?” The answer vaguely is that freedom ought not to be oppressive. One must not suffer from freedom.
Dewey takes a different approach by stating that freedom is the power taken by the individualized self, meaning that the utility of freedom is to the individual and not particularly the community in which the individual lives.

Jean-Paul Sartre takes another twist to defining freedom: “We are condemned to be free.” We can make something of ourselves but society determines what that something will be. I define this to be the situation of a form of enslaved freedom. This means that we are free with constraints about what we can do within the limits society allows. One can only look at Europe’s historical relationship with its Jewish population, and this prior to 1932. The Jews were free but severely constrained by the societies in which they lived. Today in many places, legal strangers or immigrants are as free as the general population, but that general population, whether a majority or not, if able, will tend to constrain their immigrant, but legal population.

Spinoza uses freedom religiously, that is from a Christian viewpoint of his time. God delivers freedom, and therefore freedom is God-given and God-driven. Unfortunately, most of Europe at that time took this to mean only the Christian population.

Spencer brought into the arguments, ‘equal freedom for all.’ This is the modern mainstream thinking of today as well as Ricoeur’s “Freedom must be seen.”

I have given a synopsis of the thinking of freedom and its co-relation liberty for the sole purpose of attempting to show that freedom/liberty, Freiheit, Libertat, and the other single European language words that try to describe these two words in English, is not only a personal battle, but also a societal battle, a battle that is never ending as times and opinions evolve and sometime return to old descriptions of what we mean by freedom.
Positive and Negative Freedom

Positive and negative freedom, is discussed under the title of *Positive and Negative Liberty* (Carter, 2003) seen in the discussions on slavery. Originally published in 1958, by Isaiah Berlin using the term liberty, while “many authors prefer to talk of positive and negative freedom … [however, neither freedom nor liberty] can be translated into other European languages, which contain only one term …where English contains two” (Ibid., p. 1). ‘To be free, you must be self determined, which is to say you must be able to control your own destiny in your own self interests” (Ibid., p. 2). Berlin is quoted in this article stating-

“…we use the negative concept of liberty in attempting to answer the question ‘What is the area within which the subject – a person or group of persons – is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?’ whereas we use the positive concept in attempting to answer the question ‘What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that” (Ibid., p.2)?

The splitting of the person into a higher-self and a lower-self, that is between “…the rational, reflecting self, the self that is capable of moral action and taking responsibility for what she does … [which] marks us off from other animals’ and “…the self of the passions, of unreflecting desires and irrational impulses” respectively determines whether one is free or enslaved (Ibid., p. 3). Christman is also quoted-

“... [a] person is positively unfree if her desire to conform was somehow oppressively imposed upon her through indoctrination, manipulation, or deceit. She is positively free …if she arrived at her desire to conform while aware of other reasonable options and she weighed and assessed these other options rationally” (Ibid., p. 5).

In short, negative freedom is *freedom from*, positive freedom is *freedom to* and also *autonomy* or *self-rule* (Cherniss & Hardy, 2005 p 19). On Berlin’s life, “He was sharply aware of the
pain of humiliation and dependency, the hatefulfulness and hurtfulness of paternalistic rule (Ibid., p. 22). Perhaps we are now getting closer to a point that defines freedom for the information systems professional.

In discussing negative and positive liberty/freedom, we are nearing the central position of this work. What freedoms do information systems professionals have within their workplace as compared with the others in similar professional positions? I would suggest that they would all have the same freedoms from, that is freedom from workplace harassment, and so on. It is within the influence of freedoms to and autonomy or self-rule that difference will arise. The freedom to shift careers or career paths ought to be self evident as the professional matures and develops, yet this does not seem to happen, so can we assume that there are real obstacles to such a move in any profession or just information systems? In conversations concerning this apparent reality, no one has apparently, offered a pathway forward for the person concerned, for the organisation or the community as we allow needed talent with intelligence to waddle in the mire or swamp at the base of the ivory tower.

**Limitations Concerning Freedom**

I feel that I cannot give freedom a decent run in this limited space, so I must be brief and perhaps shallow in the explication of such things as freedom. There are deep beliefs as to what freedom is and what it is not, and a great deal of what has been written about freedom has been written during or just after war or great social unrest, when freedom was considered expendable so that they may be restored later.

This work does not intend to support government interference in the daily affairs of a corporation; it will only describe the interpretation of a corporation’s possible weakness or even demise from a simple string of restrictive policies concerning the freedoms of its human workforce. The imposition or continuance of these restrictions within the micro-society that is a corporation will not let freedom and moral utilitarianism
evolve to where it is intuitive to that enclosed corporate micro-society.

This does not mean anarchy, it means process, it means that mobility is natural, it means demanding the very same freedoms that some others have and take for granted, that are denied to some others. It is that simple, and perhaps that is why this idea is rarely implemented.

**Compatibilism**

In his article on Compatibilism, (McKenna, 2004a) states “According to one strand of Compatibilism, freedom of the sort pertinent to moral evaluation is nothing more than an agent’s ability to do what she wishes in the absence of impediments that would otherwise stand in her way” (Ibid., p. 7). However, there is a responsibility for one’s actions, irrespective of the moral content of those actions.

If we jump to the current thinking concerning Compatibilism, (McKenna, 2004b) dealing with manipulation and responsibility, where he mainly deals with the acts of manipulation and who bears the ultimate responsibility for the acts, the agent or the manipulator? This creates a duality of “internal and external theories of free will and responsibility” (Ibid., p. 1) and that “internalist theories are time-slice or current time-slice properties or snapshots” and are instant determined, that is what happened at a given time. “Externalist theories are historical theories” and they require a history to determine cause (Ibid., pp. 1-2), but I add here the victors write history.

**Free Will**

O’Connor describes free will as follows:

“‘Free Will’ is a philosophical term of art for a particular sort of capacity of rational agents to choose a course of action from among various alternatives. Which sort is the free will sort is what all the fuss is about. ...Philosophers who distinguish
freedom of action and freedom of will do so because our success in carrying out our ends depends in part on factors wholly beyond our control. …much of the debate about free will centres around whether we human beings have it, yet virtually no one doubts that we will do this and that” (O'Connor, 2005 p 1).

“…free will suggests that a –perhaps the – root issue is that of control. …our capacity for deliberation and potential sophistication of some of our practical reflections are important conditions on freedom of will. But any proposed analysis of free will must also ensure that the process it describes is one that was up to, or controlled by the agent” (ibid., p.5).

My response to this short and too brief discussion on free will is that we all have freedom of action and freedom of will; it is the direction of each of these that determines a result. In the model presented, it means that information systems professionals have these apparent characteristics to determine their fair and considered treatment by their employers to join in the mainstream operation of their organisation. That is, outside of the purposeful and technical to include the operational reason of being that the organisation possesses.

**Existentialism**

“…‘Existentialism’ is a term that belongs to intellectual history” according to Crowell (Crowell, 2004 p 1) whether or not this statement is correct, I will let history itself decide.

“…existentialism was as much a literary phenomenon as a philosophical one” (Ibid., p. 1) and “…‘existentialism’ may be defined as the philosophical theory which holds that a further set of categories, governed by the norm of authenticity, is necessary to grasp human existence” (Ibid., p. 2).

It is apparent from Crowell’s manner of writing that he uses the ‘anti-establishment’ tendencies of existentialism to predetermine its demise, when he states that
“...the themes popularly associated with existentialism—dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, commitment, nothingness, and so on—find their philosophical significance in the context of the search for a new categorical framework, together with its governing norm” (Ibid., p. 2)

Within this article, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are discussed as part of the historical content of existentialism.

With Kierkegaard and interesting idea is raised, that of, firstly a religious concept of the individual’s conflict of ethics and faith, and secondly the individual and the crowd, where Kierkegaard states, “the crowd is untruth” (Ibid., pp. 3-4). This in itself, must also mean that the team (at work), the organisation where the team works, and so on is also untruth.

Untruth has the meaning of the subordinating of self to the crowd, as being a self can be difficult if the demands of the crowd are different than the demands of the self, again the MBA problem of personal goals against corporate goals is still to be resolved. Perhaps this is because the differentiated human being is not being considered, however, in the words and pictures of the model, the goals of an anthill dweller are different from those of the critical-thinker Condor and are yet different again at the artist-writer Guru level. What complicates matters further, I posit is that perhaps at any given stage, there is an admixture of a human being dealing with an admixture of an organisation, where certain components fit and others do not and the result is a compromise that works or not and is the source of the tension between both parties.

Another consideration is Nietzsche’s Will to Power,

“where the Judeo-Christian moral order is used to thwart the power exercised by the strong over the weak, ...creating a herd animal that has trained itself to docility and un-freedom by conforming to the ‘universal’ standards of morality. The normative is nothing but the normal” (Ibid., p. 5).

As Sartre’s
“existence precedes essence’ creates another outlook upon the rationality and definition of existentialism, is that it offers no definition of what a human being is, “since meaning is decided in and through existing itself” (Ibid., p. 6).

“Existential moral psychology emphasises human freedom and focuses on the themes of mendacity, self-deception, and hypocrisy in moral consciousness” (Ibid., p. 10).

“As Sartre points out ‘...the consciousness of freedom, is not something that human beings welcome; rather we seek stability, identity, and adopt the language of freedom only when it suits us... We are condemned to be free’” (Ibid., p. 12).

This latter quote is probably the crux of this whole idea of freedom, particularly in the information systems industry. By seeking stability in a rapidly changing profession, the information systems professional gains identity, that identity I believe is one of a person who can internalise rapid change and cope with it productively. That is they make change work for all as a vanguard that establishes the direction of localised change, particularly within a given organisation. At a higher level, such as the role of Condor, we see the relationship of change and critical-thinking, as de Beauvoir describes above. Above the Condor, the model presents the Guru or as de Beauvoir describes, the artist-writer, the holder of this role determines the acting-roles that the others will play in the future.

Not one of these however, is an island of professionalism, the common thread with the model itself relates them all, and this thread is their profession, whether this profession is information systems, accounting, or engineering, they are all within the presented model’s range.

Liberalism

“This might be called the Fundamental Liberal Principal (attributed to Gaus, G. 1996 – Justificatory Liberalism: An Essay on Epistemology and Political Theory): freedom is normatively basic,
and so the onus of explanation is on those who would limit freedom” (Gaus & Courtland, 2003 p 1). Gaus also quotes Berlin, 1969, page 122, “You lack political liberty or freedom only if you are prevented from attaining a goal by other human beings.”

Without a strong streak of liberalism in a professional’s armoury, the justification for the freedom limiting actions of a client, an organisation, a university, or any other organisation may be, when a freedom limiting action is questioned, a platitudinous answer is to be expected, such as ‘it’s corporate policy’, ‘it’s for the common good,’ ‘orders are orders,’ ‘my hands are tied,’ and the list goes on. If things go wrong, however, the Nuremberg Defence comes into play – ‘I was following legal orders, therefore I am blameless.’

**Personal Autonomy**

“To be autonomous is to be a law to oneself; autonomous agents are self-governing agents. Most of us want to be autonomous because we want to be accountable for what we do, and because it seems that if we are not the ones calling the shots, then we cannot be accountable. More importantly, perhaps, the value of autonomy is tied to the value of self-integration. We don’t want to be alien to, or at war with, ourselves; and it seems that when our intentions are not under our own control, we suffer from self-alienation” (Buss, 2002 p. 1).

In addition to the above quote, “every agent has an authority over herself that is grounded, not in her political or social role, nor in any law or custom, but in the simple fact that she alone can initiate her actions” (Ibid., p. 2). “The demand to be permitted to govern ourselves reflects the conviction that we are, in essence, self-governors” (Ibid., p. 9).

The points made here are mainly that it is up to the individual professional to make the necessary changes to reinforce their authority over their lives and careers. That this is described philosophically means that personal autonomy is considered a serious topic and that some do not take it seriously or are ignorant of the sources of thought on this topic.
Unfortunately, few are willing or able to discuss this to the person concerned as they may be a competitor for the benefits of activating such knowledge, or that it may disadvantage the managerial position they may hold by discussing this topic with that person.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory has the most involvement in three areas of this work, emancipation, freedom, and power (the next topic). With this amount of coverage, it is little wonder why this topic is so important to this work as well. Though Marxist in its foundations, its survival within the Frankfurt School during the 1930’s and 1940’s within a National Socialist rabid anti-Marxism and anti-communism reign, must be a story worthy of the telling.

“In both the broad and the narrow senses... critical theory provides the descriptive and normative bases for social enquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their senses” (Bohman, 2005 p. 1).

“Democratic norms of freedom can be made explicit in various rights, including civil rights of participation and free expression. Such norms are often violated explicitly in exercises of power for various ends, such as wealth, security, or cultural survival” (Bohman, 2005 p. 6).

One of the more interesting themes to come out from this discussion is the idea that freedom originates from the state, and that a corrupt state that attacks freedom, is unanswerable to its people except through revolution. From this, I posit that a business organisation cannot be described as a paragon of democratic freedoms when its hierarchy is nominated and usually supported by those under its control, whether for self-preservation, attempting a favourable impression for future favours, or for generally seeking a positive relationship irrespective of the true feelings of the individual concerned. This is corporate domination, the very antithesis of Critical Theory as critical theory supports “the democratic value of freedom from domination” (Bohman, 2005 p. 12). Yet, the prerogative of
management is to issue orders and these orders are interpreted and then followed. Thus, domination can be a tool of management and used to corrupt an organisation until a revolutionary movement begins and is successful in synthesizing a new tool of management.

**Narrative explanations - Edward Wong**

In the above section, the author determines the key elements.
1) The relationship between freedoms and Ivory Tower;
2) The relationship between freedoms, freewill, and existentialism;
3) And Critical theory

Freedom in all of its guises perhaps is at its apex when used with the adjective *academic*. Academic Freedom is where the Ivory Tower creates, in the minds of the general population, apparently valuable ideas, which one day, maybe, will be of immense value to someone somewhere. With such an indefinable description of academic freedom, the reality is immensely different. This freedom to think about is also part of the freedom to publish and the freedom to publish in the academic world, has become the requirement to publish in recognised quality journals. I would then conclude that academic freedom is not very free, and the Ivory Tower is perhaps more of a carceral than a carousel. Yet the freedoms of academe may not be freedoms at all, as the nature of a freedom requires options and the ability or right to choose a particular option at a given time and place. As O’Connor implies above, freedom is perhaps an issue of control, who controls the availability of freedom, and what is the method of that control and from that method, a rationale for controlling freedom in the first instance.

In the case of Academic Freedom, perhaps it is a question of protecting the reputation of the educational institution, the reputation of the academic concerned, and the reinforcement of a Pan-Opticon carceral method, where the prisoners conform to a set of rules that passes control of the actions of the individual away from the prison’s administration to the prisoner concerned. The sum of people so controlled means a particularly quiet
prison, university, or other similar institution, without them being aware of their controlled situation, and actively participating in their own directed control supporting actions.

Yet, the Pan-Opticon prison was never built, perhaps it never will be because it is shown to be unnecessary, as we as humans are able to build our own, personal carcerals and then call it good manners.

Here I will quote Isaiah Berlin “You lack political liberty or freedom only if you are prevented from attaining a goal by other human beings.” Liberalism, originally ‘the greatest good for the greatest number,’ if this is acceptable in a community, then if may be applied to employment as well as the social, political and other descriptions of a society. Yet, when one is stonewalled or otherwise obstructed in an employment situation, I suggest that it is not only freedom at risk, it is a power game as well, and everything is at risk. It is the autonomous person who protects their freedom at all times, the erosion of their personal power or even its substitution by another form or type of power is a constant threat to their autonomy. The entrapment or perhaps the term Golden Handcuffs often heard, read about, or even experienced, is, in my opinion the ultimate entrapment – the exchanging of freedom for money and other benefits.

If as Sartre proposed, it is not freedom that we welcome and desire, but stability, identity, and then we use the language of freedom when it suits us, then freedom by itself is of little value. What gives freedom value is the power to control it in as many areas as the reach of one’s power will allow.

Critical Theory finds itself in three areas of this chapter – emancipation, freedom, and next power. Though founded in the ideas of emancipation, and then finding a use for emancipation as source of freedom, critical theory finds that freedom without power has few advantages, as freedom alone does not guarantee free access to power.
Power

Introduction

In this journey, so far, we have examined slavery, enslavement, emancipation, freedom and now the final topic prior to examining the three major supports of this work, structuralism, post-structuralism, and post-modernism, is power.

For the most part, secondary references are used, however there is one primary reference included here. The philosophers used are Nietzsche, Spinoza, Ricoeur, Foucault, Baudrillard, and Sartre. The philosophical topics are Personal Autonomy and Fatalism. This is by no means exhaustive, it is only indicative of the thinkers and topics concerning power.

Nietzsche’s Moral and Political Philosophy

“‘The noble human being,’” says Nietzsche, “‘honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness’” (Leiter, 2004 p. 14). In other sections of Leiter “The Will to Power” is discussed, however I posit that this will is to have power over other people, animals, and things. Applied to information systems, it can be shown that information systems professionals have indirect power over people, things and animals, by controlling the information flow that controls these very same items. These professionals have stepped back and control their world far more effectively than mere men, their ideas, and their concepts of reality as they actually control the machines and information that controls men, but they are denied the trappings of their true power.

Yet the actual power to change is determined by those without such powers, the information systems professional can only control what they are given to control. This almost symbiotic relationship is the power structure of information systems. The changing of the attitude of an information systems professional to the use of power and its sources is the crux of this
work. It is shown that the powers controlling information systems ought to control an organisation that is at least three levels deep – anthill, condor, and guru. Currently however, the structuralist organisation, the anthill although it is at the bottom level, it seems to retain the financial power to determine the height of the information systems group within the organisation.

“Nietzsche philosophizes from ‘the perspective of life’ which he regards as ‘beyond good and evil,’ and challenges the deeply-entrenched moral idea that exploitation, domination, injury to the weak, destruction, and appropriation are universally objectionable behaviours. Above all, Nietzsche believes that living things aim to discharge their strength and express their ‘will to power’ -- a pouring-out of expansive energy which, quite naturally, can entail danger, pain, lies, deception and masks” (Wicks, 2004 p. 6).

My point on this quote is why people do not think like this. Is it a closed or ignorant society that demands that you are part of that society or you are not, and if you are not an active member, you will be cast out into the wilderness for some perceived anti-community act or immoral acts by expressing a will to power? What amount of courage or whatever measure you would name, would someone deliberately eschew their community and suffer the individual costs of such an action as an exercise to express this will to power?

In addition, what are the benefits of such a move to both parties?

**Baruch Spinoza**

“Spinoza’s conception of adequate knowledge reveals an unrivalled optimism in the cognitive powers of the human being” (Nadler, 2005 p. 8).

“Our affects are divided into actions and passions. When the cause of an event lies in our own nature -- more particularly, our knowledge or adequate ideas -- then it is a case of the mind acting. On the other hand, when something happens in us the
cause of which lies outside of our nature, then we are passive and being acted upon [by others]. Usually what takes place, both when we are acting and when we are being acted upon, is some change in our mental or physical capacities, what Spinoza calls ‘an increase or decrease in our power of acting’ or in our ‘power to persevere in being’. All beings are naturally endowed with such a power or striving. This conatus, a kind of existential inertia, constitutes the ‘essence’ of any being. ‘Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being.’ An affect just is any change in this power, for better or for worse. Affects that are actions are changes in this power that have their source (or “adequate cause”) in our nature alone; affects that are passions are those changes in this power that originate outside of us” (Ibid., p. 9).

“Because of our innate striving to persevere -- which, in the human being, is called ‘will’ or ‘appetite’ -- we naturally pursue those things that we believe will benefit us by increasing our power of acting and shun or flee those things that we believe will harm us by decreasing our power of acting” (Ibid., p.9).

“‘On Human Bondage, or the Powers of the Affects,’ he explains that the human being’s ‘lack of power to moderate and restrain the affects I call Bondage. For the man who is subject to affects is under the control, not of himself, but of fortune, in whose power he so greatly is that often, though he sees the better for himself, he is still forced to follow the worse’” (Ibid., p.10).

These four quotes support the proposition that it is up to ourselves to change things for the good of ourselves, else we are enslaved, as discussed previously, to something we cannot support, and that does not support us. We always have the capacity to think of ways to accomplish this task, and to use the facilities that we possess, can borrow, or buy, to free ourselves from particular classes of problems. Spinoza uses the term perseverance to describe the desire to change for the better, and the word is apt here as well.

Paul Ricoeur
(Dauenhauer, 2002) in his article on Ricoeur presents a model called power-in-common –

“...power-in-common ...springs directly from the capacity people have to join with one another in common action. Together they can do things that none could do alone” (Ibid., p. 13). “…the ultimate objective of all defensible political practice is to make power-in-common prevail as far as possible over domination. But because domination is never wholly eliminable, defensible politics is inherently fragile” (Ibid., p. 13).

Though the above quotes are used, they are used in the context of the Dauenhauer’s writing about Ricoeur, and the overall impact presented is one of political as well as personal power that is able to initiate change. One can imagine a sole information system professional or any other professional attempting to alter the reasoning of an organisation towards its promotional and career policies for those outside the anointed and chosen ones able to pursue a career in management. One can also imagine the increased competition for available management positions other than what has been historically successful.

If we can assume that a business organisation is as political as any other is, then it ought to be responsive as a government when employment and individual promotional possibilities are concerned. However, this is not the case. Democratic processes are not part of the management processes of a business organisation, even the shareholders who have such rights, rarely if ever exercise them to anywhere near their maximum level unless a clear disaster has occurred such as bankruptcy or major criminal activity within the organisation.

**Michel Foucault**

By being marginally within the hated bourgeois society, Foucault and Sartre alike, dealt with the margins of their French society to, if nothing else, explain the powerlessness of being a marginal, and from there to find ways of improving and
explaining ways of influencing society to take these margins seriously (Gutting, 2002).

As a passing note, I have approximately 150 references to Michel Foucault on my computer, the rationale for such a large repertoire of writings by Foucault and about Foucault, is his development as a source on the topic of power. In discussions with others, some who knew nothing, something, or where quite familiar with his works, most, as I recollect, seem to think that because he was in fact on the margins of society, his homosexuality but one of the factors of his social marginality, perhaps gave him insights into modern interpersonal, person-group, person-organisation, and person-society power relationships and structures, and from this situation developed the idea of bio-power.

The modern form of disciplinary power, to enforce ‘normalcy’ Foucault shows that the modern factory, hospital, and school are modelled on the modern prison, and that this is the result of convergence of “hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination.” This means that by failing to met normalcy means that a person is to undergo a reform process, not a further punishment or death to correct deviant behaviour” (Ibid., p. 4).

Foucault also links power and knowledge in human beings so that they cannot be separated and by knowing we control and in controlling we know (Ibid., p. 5) or “to know is to participate in complicated webs of power” (Foucault: Key Concepts, 2002).

The term power is in itself inadequate to describe power according to Foucault, so the terms bio-technico-power (bio-power) and disciplinary power are used to describe power in Foucault’s sense. Bio-power is confessional based, “where people are taught that their liberation requires them to ‘tell the truth,’ to confess to someone who is more powerful, and this truth telling will somehow set them free.” Disciplinary power has the goal of creating ‘docile’ people that may be “subjected, used, transformed, and improved,” and this is done with a “form
of surveillance which is internalized ...where each person disciplines him or herself.”

There is another aspect of power only briefly considered here, and that is critical organizational theory, where “reason can be seen in its central goal of emancipation” (Feldman, 1997 p. 2). There is also the other side of the coin—

“...without a stable organizational culture in which common sense and common standards act as a safeguard against the openness or ‘freedom’ that these theorists [Foucault inspired organizational theorists] call for, we become vulnerable to totalitarianism” (Ibid., p. 9).

Feldman determines that it is through constraint and limitations to freedom that “we have a truth that is independent of power.” “Truth/knowledge is the essence of culture. By making truth a subcategory of power, Foucault relativizes culture, making truth impossible” (quoting Taylor, 1984). [Quoting Arendt, 1968] “…our truth exists in the present, while based on the past and pressing into the future” (Ibid., p. 9).

In the afterword of (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) we see how Foucault views power. Foucault determines that he is not presenting a theory or methodology but “My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Ibid., p. 208). Foucault then describes the struggles against an immediate enemy not a chief enemy,

“...as men exercise their power over women, parents over children, psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live” (Ibid., p. 211).

Therefore, the struggle is against a form of power, not institutions of power.

“It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by
control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to” (Ibid., p. 212).

From a religious outlook of power, Foucault addresses what he call “Pastoral Power”, basically the power of an organisation, a church in this example, over the individual, by its promise of an after-life which cannot be proved, or disproved. As the West has advanced, and the power of organised religion has lessened, I posit, that organisations have used the same type of promise to satisfy its employees about their future, as IBMers, for example. Where promises were made to me that would if the real odds were quoted, probably would never have to be fulfilled.

There is however, one basic premise put forward by Foucault that rings true,

“Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. …Consequently there is no face to face confrontation of power and freedom which is mutually exclusive (freedom disappears everywhere power is exercised)” (Ibid., p. 221).

So are also the enslaved unable to possess power? I think that is the case.

In Foucault’s lectures on Parrhesia (Foucault, 1983) he emphasises truth and the truth-teller and truth-telling as an activity and concludes with what can be described as a description of reflective practices and trace this method back to Plutarch.

“One can comport oneself towards oneself in the role of technician, of a craftsman, of an artist, who – from time to time – stops working, examines what he is doing, reminds himself of the rule of his art, and compares these rules with what he has achieved thus far. This metaphor of the artist who stops working, steps back, gains a distant perspective, and examines
what he is actually doing with the principles of his art can be found in Plutarch’s essay, ‘On the Control of Anger’ (Ibid., p.64)

Jean Baudrillard

“In the 1980s, Baudrillard posited an “immanent reversal,” a flip-flop or reversed direction of meaning and effects, in which things turn into their opposite. Thus, according to Baudrillard, the society of production was passing over to simulation and seduction; the panoptic and repressive power theorized by Foucault was turning into a cynical and seductive power of the media and the information society; the liberation championed in the 1960s had become a form of voluntary servitude; sovereignty had passed from the side of the subject to the object; and revolution and emancipation had turned into their opposites, trapping individuals in an order of simulation and virtuality. Baudrillard’s concept of “immanent reversal” thus provides a perverse form of Horkheimer and Adorno’s “Dialectic of Enlightenment” (1972 [1947]), where everything becomes its opposite. For Adorno and Horkheimer, within the transformations of organized and hi-tech capitalism, modes of Enlightenment become domination, culture becomes culture industry, democracy becomes a form of mass manipulation, and science and technology form a crucial part of an apparatus of social domination” (Kellner, 2005 p. 12).

If power is shifting as Baudrillard posits, is it truly shifting towards a powerful media and information society? Or is it a revolutionary movement waiting and biding its time? As I stated elsewhere in this work, I believe that a managerial revolution is upon us, and I add here, it will be also evolutionary as management is replaced by systems that are one place removed from a human being. A product is purchased, delivered and installed will minimum human involvement, an almost total de-skilling of all occupations is nearly upon us, where an artisan is no longer necessary to produce a quality product at a price commensurate with its value to the purchaser. In such a situation, true power will not reside with the management, but with the technologist that keeps the processes functioning. Yet the technologists do not yet realize, or perhaps they do not care
about their real power, or is it they are kept ignorant and away from the now management quasi-centers of power for the purpose of continuing an unreality?

Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre invests in the power of art by proposing that art, through its special powers communicates among freedoms without alienation or objectification (Flynn, 2004 p. 8). This perhaps is the source of de Beauvoir’s artist-writer, described by her as the highest form of human endeavor. In the model presented here, it is the Guru level of the information systems professional, and though I posit they exist, they are not recognized or organized to function as a group of independent thinkers, they are, analogously, prophets in the wilderness, until, I posit, someone allows them to join in the broader world.

Personal Autonomy

As the first of the philosophical topics in the explanation of power, it is here that the fundamentals of an individual’s power resides,
“every agent has an authority over herself that is grounded, not in her political or social role, nor in any law or custom, but in the simple fact that she alone can initiate her actions...Despite the special inalienable nature of our authority over ourselves, it is possible for us to fail to govern ourselves” (Buss, 2002 p. 2).

“The puzzle... is a puzzle about the relationship between the agent’s power and the power of the forces that move her. Also it is a puzzle about the relationship between the agent’s authority and the status of these motivating forces. What distinguishes motives whose power is attributable to the agent herself from motives whose power is external to the agent’s? What distinguishes motives on which the agent has conferred her authority from motives whose power has reduced her authorization to a mere formality? When the governing agent and the agent she governs are the very same self, we cannot answer either of these questions without answering the other.
This is why it is so difficult to produce a satisfactory account of personal autonomy “ (Buss, 2002 p. 3).

The major question here seems to evolve concerning the idea of what right do we have to control our decision-making, and what rights do we forgo in allowing others to make certain decisions for us. The role of information systems professionals is one of using their power productively for the organization that hires them and their skills. Yet the final power resides in the hands of those who do not have the skills to utilize their facilities best. The decisions of management concerning information systems are not those of information systems, but of management. The power without control over that power is no power at all; similarly, responsibility over that which one has no control is a disaster for the one holding that appointed responsibility.

**Fatalism**

“Fatalism is the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do” (Rice, 2002 p. 1). Throughout this article we are confronted with logical arguments that attempt to prove the logic of whether or not we can change the future or is it ordained that certain events will happen because they must as a line of logical and perhaps supernatural events occur that allow a certain event to occur at a certain time and place. Perhaps a discussion of fatalism has no place in this work, but I use the word, as do others, serendipity, and a happy unexpected event that yields positive result. Is that not fatalism seen in a positive light?

**Narrative explanations - Edward Wong**

Here, the author explores the philosophy of power, power synergy, personal autonomy of power and freedom, and how Nietzsche, Spinoza, Ricoeur, Foucault, Baudrillard, and Sartre explored the dimension of authority.
In the West, we have various aphorisms that describe the dangers of power: drunk with power, power-hungry, power without equal, overstepping the mark, and so on. The reality is that these aphoristic descriptions are usually describe short term actions and my experience is that they are due to the lack of training by the power donor, or they are the result of a power grab, this latter situation more of a political rather than a business or trading nature, as the costs can be excessive.

In describing power and change, there is the French aphorism: You have to break eggs to make an omelette, but how far is too far, too fast, and too revolutionary?

Spinoza addresses this as the power of acting and the power to persevere in being, and that the power of the affects means that a person can allow themselves to be under the control of a fickle fortune and not themselves and this bondage is undesirable because it can lead to the worse for the individual.

Ricoeur uses groups for his arguments to create a power for change, however, business is not a democracy, and such groups may be short lived if not supported by the business itself. This leads to the marginal individual and to marginal groups.

Foucault and Sartre put forward the ideas that marginal groups ought to be taken seriously, as they are in total powerful, as they may not be a docile part of the population. Docility comes from the aspect of demanding truth telling that is meant to lead to freedom by using the confessional actions of an individual or group. However, all that those who partake in this type of action gain is a tendency to docility and then a serious vulnerability to totalitarianism is exposed. However, they may still maintain a form of culture, which can become a form of self-discipline to counter the Pastoral Power, this overly paternalistic power so antagonistic to the freedoms that lead to forms of power. It must not be forgotten that as Foucault stated, power is exercised over free subjects insofar as they are free and freedom disappears when power is exercised. This ultimately means that power seekers are seeking the means to reduce the freedoms of those whom it wishes to exercise this power. I note here that power
can include power over one’s personal life outside of one’s life at a place of employment.

Baudrillard uses the terms simulation and seduction to show that modern ideas of power are actually controlling a set of opposites. Freedom become domination, culture becomes an industry, and democracy means manipulation using science and technology.

If personal autonomy is the relationship between power and freedom and the right to make decisions, then it is fatalism that emphasizes powerlessness, then the conundrum is if fatalism is correct, then all of this is nonsense. If fatalism is wrong, then we have a problem that is yet to be resolved. If some of one is true, as would some of the other, the problem is unresolvable. In any case, if we find true freedom, as de Beauvoir stated, within the critical-thinker and the artist-writer, we still have hope to allow us to discover or to hint at a discovery of a solution to the freedom and power puzzle.

**Structuralism**

“Most structuralists share a conviction that individual human beings function solely as elements of the (often hidden) social networks to which they belong” (Kemerling)

**Introduction**

Structuralism originally comes from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, in his works in the structure of language, and not its use, and by bracketing, enabled him to view the way a thing is experienced in the mind (Quigley, 1998 p. 2).

The connection between structuralism and the anthill part of the model can be described as firstly, the anthill is a structure with various symbols and symbolic structures which make it what it is, a center for information harvesting. The language is unique and the communication is by strict structures of symbols in a near verbal series of stages. Klages states that structuralism has three arguments-
“that the structure of language itself produces ‘reality’,
“language speaks to us; meaning doesn’t come from individuals,
but from the system that governs what any individual can do with it,
“Rather than seeing the individual as the center of meaning,
structuralism places The Structure at the center—it’s the structure
that originates or produces meaning, not the individual self.
“Derrida and deconstruction looks at philosophy (Western
Metaphysics) to see that any system necessarily posits a Center, a
point from which everything comes, and to which everything
refers or returns. He also states that speech is always more
important than writing as writing is just the transcription of
speech” (Klages, 2003 p. 2).
(Velibeyoglu, 1999) states (sourced from Jones,
http://www.roga.demon.co.uk/frames.htm)

“For the structuralist the individual is shaped by
sociological, psychological, and linguistic structures over which
he/she has no control, but which could be uncovered by using
their methods of investigation.”

I posit that what a structuralist world consists of is a
symbiotic relationship. This relationship consists of people,
language, and tools where each reinforces, modifies, and
recreates their environment when necessary to perpetuate the
world in which they live. There is no apparent escape from this
world, even though there are no physical walls preventing
escape, one can leave at any time, but the value of the persons
learned skills evaporates to the point that they have little to offer
the non-structuralist world except as a curiosity, and coupled
with remote experiences that may have no relevance in any other
world. I posit this describes an anthill.

Post-structuralism

Introduction

In the presented model, post-structuralism is structuralism
with less structure and more critical-thinking. This jump for an
individual undertaking such a personal strategic move is one
where one is no longer concerned with processes and symbols, but with critical-thinking, similar to the ideas of de Beauvoir and her seven groups. In this grouping of seven types, only two are meaningful — the critical-thinker and the artist-writer, the rest are of little or no consequence in discussions concerning the value of freedom.

(Lye, 1997) expresses the idea that post-structuralism sees things differently than does structuralism. “Post-structuralism sees ‘reality’ as being more fragmented, diverse, tenuous, and culture specific than does structuralism.” Commenting on Foucault “Foucault is post-structuralist in his insistence that there is no great causal flow or plan or evolution of history, that what happens is mainly by chance.” (Ibid., p. 3)

Additionally,

“Post-structuralism and deconstruction can be seen as the theoretical formulation of the post-modern condition. Modernity, which began intellectually with the Enlightenment, attempted to describe the world in rational, empirical, and objective terms. It assumed that there was truth to be uncovered, a way of obtaining answers to the question posed by the human condition. Post-modernism does not exhibit this confidence, gone are the underlying certainties that reason promised. Reason itself is now seen as a particular historical form, a parochial in its own way as the ancient explanations of the universe in terms of Gods” (Jones, 2003 p.1).

**Post-modernism**

“In philosophy, postmodernists typically express grave doubt about the possibility of universal objective truth, reject artificially sharp dichotomies, and delight in the inherent irony and particularly of language and life” (Kemerling).

The topic of ultra-philosophy, seems to go through the thesis-antithesis-synthesis cycle and as (Jackson, 1996 p. 3) implies the cycle is now ‘counter-philosophy-meta philosophy-post philosophy, where the latter is the
“...limit of ultra philosophy [and] is reached in the post-modernism which declares both the dogmatic and the critical forms of the opposition to philosophy self defeating, and proposes instead to expose the whole legacy of reasoned discourse as spurious and annulled in itself.”

Jackson complains of too many answers, perhaps to too few questions. Within this article, Jackson, strips post-modernism of its credentials, and denies that philosophy, as the Prince of university faculties, is doomed to irrelevance, it can only be so if philosophers allow philosophy to be so mistreated.

However, if post-modernism is to be discarded as a semantic term, with what shall we replace it? De Beauvoir uses the term artist-writer to indicate the highest form of character, and in the case of the model presented, I use the term guru to indicate the highest form of information systems professional, though I do call gurus post-modern, what then shall I call the guru in philosophical terms? If Jackson calls post-modernism an overthrow of reason, perhaps unreason as Foucault calls it, has a place as well.

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**Narrative explanations - Edward Wong**

In the above section, the author explores the phenomenon of Structuralism, Post-structuralism, and Post-modernism as a universal concept.

Structuralism is what we see in almost every aspect of western life. Business, government, the military, education, almost everything is built around a structure, a social grouping, and within that grouping and a person’s status within that grouping tells the world, for good or bad, who and what you are. Modern humankind seems to be as tribally determined as were his distant forebears as such structures gives meaning to the life of a person. Structure is not only a hierarchical representation of a system of power and responsibility, but also a system of language, the oral system being more important than writing, and what an individual can do with that language to produce a self-sourced
Philo sophy in Management

This structure is power laden and therefore reduces the freedoms of those members of a structure. Yet one is able to leave at any time and join another structure, or create one of their own.

Post-Structuralism considers reality as not a structure but as something trying to be a form only in the eyes of a structuralist. Reality is not causal, but a given without a definable form, using some rules applicable to reason which is still considered a fundamental given. Explanation is for the particular and not the general, and even then, such explanations are tentative and suspicious.

Post-modernism accepts no rules concerning objective truth, and sometimes denies truth is available, there are too many questions and insufficient available answers. Philosophy itself is at risk of irrelevancy if reason is overthrown for unreason.

Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and Post-Modernism are but three approaches to the modern equations presented not as mathematics but as language, that concern explanation of the world, as we know it. Perhaps it is language itself that is inadequate to the task, perhaps it is that we are searching for the questions to explain the answers presented to us in our everyday living, perhaps it is none of these. As post-modernism is the current explanation, what comes next? Post-post-modernism or do we accept that post-modernism is a constantly moving target, an amorphous explanation for the questions pertaining to productive human existence? We do live in interesting times.

Conclusions

The difference between a tribe and a community is not the desire to join. You are a member whether you like it or not. If the alternative to freedom with power is enslavement with some or no power, what then is the alternative to power if power does not exist?

I would suggest that the enslaved and powerless gain power by taking that one step away from the responsibility that
the empowered would foist upon them. Responsibility without the power over that which one is responsible is at least unfair and at best poor management practice. Without necessary controlling power, they cannot be legitimately be given responsibilities, yet this responsibility transfer is done by using power dominance, and the only choice for the powerless is to take one step back from assuming responsibility. Having done so, the powerful would respond by using the words, ‘untrustworthy,’ ‘lack of commitment,’ and so on in order to isolate the powerless and thereby appeal to their own superiors to gain and keep power which ought to have been passed on with the given responsibility. However, this retained power also has little value to the manager other than to state that control resides in their hands rather than those who truly need power to support their responsibilities, but are kept ignorant of the value of their surrendered power. This power also could be used to control the actions of their managers in certain areas, and perhaps this is the reason why power is so greedily possessed.

From the reference presented above, I posit that I have more than triangulated the model by engaging with the literature. The three sections are supported by several recognized writers and philosophical topics, and I warrant that the model can be seen to satisfy the validity and other tests.

Narrative explanations- Edward Wong:

In these excerpts, the conclusion section, the author explores the themes and shows the reader how a researcher can assemble a coherent piece of valuable academic work. The author also explains why the project was worthwhile, and what is the expected result, not just for readers themselves, but also for the world.

As we re-examine the power theorists, it would seem that the apparent essence of a civilised human being is the controlled use of power, yet we find in the world of trade and commerce, an almost unbridled use of power to support corporate and group
entities and not the person. It is not that these entities are without people of honour and honesty, it is the fact that they are and will be supported and rewarded by the amount of extra revenue or savings that their efforts apply to the bottom line, that is, net profit before tax. Not only is this considered a desirable result, but also a time critical result as well. If what is quietly stated that quarterly results determine notoriety, positive notoriety being quite valuable and negative notoriety being much less so, then such forces determine the actions of the people concerned.

If this means a multi-level form of enslavement to the quarterly result figure, how then may these people emancipate themselves and then enjoy the fruits of freedom and those of power? If they consider themselves well paid or underpaid, under-worked or over-worked, does this taint their attitude towards themselves and their employer? It is probably a grand assumption that these situations do affect the employee’s attitude towards their work and their employer, but I remain unconvinced that it does. Why then do we hear of 80 plus hour weeks and 52-week working years? The situation may arise that someone will stand up for himself or herself, say enough is enough, and begin social changes to the current employee situation. This is the Marx method, revolution by force. We may see apparently extreme approaches to work, so that they become the new norm, and the sanity of shorter working weeks for all through technology to ensure a form of social rewards. This has been spoken of for many years, but has not been broadly accepted; maybe the time has come to get serious about what technology really is meant to do for humanity.

The work presented here is part of a doctoral thesis concerning the effects upon technology workers and how they have been denied a seat at the table of power within organisations, because they are possibly too powerful where they are currently positioned, that is within their information synergy facility. If they were to be promoted upwards into top management, their knowledge about the information lifeblood of their organisations would advantage them greatly over their top management competition, and they would then be able to short-cut long-term
career personnel without such skills. The organisational structure, a structuralist paradigm, would be at risk, and the information technologist could engage in post structuralist paradigms that would ignore the structure of an organisation and determine a structure-less relationship among similar or diverse industries, but not as the current term, virtual organisation describes. The post-modern is to predict and encourage change with or without rules, to both the structuralist and the post-structuralist parts of the model.

The structuralist part is a competent enslaved to that part of the model and accepts that there is no way out of this anthill. However, there are some competent who will question this enslavement, and attempt to escape. If they leave one organisation for another, they may well be put into another structure similar to the one they had left. This is similar to jumping from one merry-go-round to another, the scenery is the same, and little else has changed.

The post-structuralist is the beginning of the process of becoming and expert, and I posit that in information systems there are very few, perhaps none, who are post-structuralist experts in information systems. These would be the people who having escaped the structuralist situation, have become critical-thinkers, as De Beauvoir would call them, beginning to experience freedom but cannot yet explain what it is. Their role in the organisation is to ensure that the information synergy facility is truly a part of the productive processes of a structuralist or other organisation, but without the rules that constrain thinking.

The post-modernists are currently in position, but rarely at a corporate level, they are at the supplier level of management systems and they have no rules to constrain their thinking. They are in fact the de Beauvoir artist-writer who explains freedom to the structuralist, if they will listen, but mainly to the critical-thinkers who listen to the anthill and examine the situation and then pass on messages to the post-modernists who in turn make things for the anthill and possibly the post-structuralists to use.
The research problem, which requires a decision to be made, here it is basically ‘How can knowledge management personnel denied openings to top management find these openings and what sort of openings into the power base of an organisation will be made for them?’

For example, the research problem requires a decision, and this part is meant to be a guide to making a decision based upon your research, and yield a direction to make a decision possible, one that has the over-riding quality of utility.
Chapter Five

Critical and Interpretive Social Science Theory: A Case Study Approach

Dr. Mohammad Nazri

This article presents a vignette focusing on the link between interpretive theory and critical theory using case study research. The paper discusses how different research approaches provide fundamentally different ways of looking at a case. It demonstrates how theory can provide useful yet markedly different interpretations of organizational events. Critical theory and interpretive theory operate from within what can be termed the transitive epistemological dimension, and tends to emphasize the importance of ontological issues. Each has important things to say about the situation and improves our understanding overall. The paper argues that, for the particular case under examination, critical realism provides the most useful tool from the employee point of view.

Key words: critical theory, interpretive theory, marketing strategy

Introduction

Critical theory has some similarities with postmodernism. Critical theory focuses upon the inherent connection between politics, values and knowledge and, thereby, provokes a deeper consideration of the politics and values which underpin and legitimize the authority of `scientific' knowledge (Alvesson and Willmott, 1988). In this paper the authors focus on two potential categories of readers. The first are fellow academics who will judge its worth by the usual academic criteria. The second are professional practitioners, possibly in Marketing or in other fields. Clearly in order to academically successful, the authors need to satisfy the first group. However, the second group may
gain the greatest value. From the authors’ writings, the authors hope to affect a focussed adult pedagogical source of information and communication that will allow others to improve their practices. By writing and detailing the authors experiences and what was learned, the authors can present a picture that enables a transfer insights into your own field and utilise the knowledge to solve similar problems. In this sense, this article is an educational narrative. It is also an interpretive approach, where reality is only given meaning by understanding social interactions and the social construction of reality (Luckman, 1969). Hence, understanding may not depend upon the revelation of some hitherto unknown scientific truth but rather on human behaviour, the situational context, leading to appropriate generalisations. As Crotty (1998, p. 9) put it “meaning is not discovered but constructed”.

Interpretive social science theory describes and interprets how many people conduct their daily lives. It contains concepts and limited generalisations, but does not dramatically depart from the experience and inner reality of the people being studied (Neuman, 2000). The term for the study of interpretation is called Hermeneutics after the Greek God Hermes who was the messenger for the Greek Gods. Socrates (in common with most Greek thinking at the time) regarded words as a vehicle for ambiguity and possibly dishonesty and trickery (Couzen-Hoy, 1981). Given Marketing’s poor reputation for sophistry it may be that he is the rightful true patron Saint (or God) of the art and craft.

Hence, this paper describes a case vignette focusing on the link between interpretive theory and critical theory with case study research. It then examines how research may be developed from a critical, and interpretivist perspective.

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) classify case study research traditions as basically following three major philosophical approaches – positivist, interpretive and critical, the interpretive
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and the critical responding to shortcomings in the positivist. In its neglect of contemporary realist approaches such a division reflects a commonly held view equating realism with positivism. This article calls for a recognition that modern realist approaches can also address many of the criticisms of positivism.

The Case Vignette

When the author (Phd candidate) joined the planning group in the mid 2000’s, the organization DHL had recently completed the first draft of the new Global Marketing Business Plan (GMB Plan). The plan formulated along the same lines as the other internal business plans (covering money, assets, and people, respectively), formed a part of a detailed planning process that involved planning across corporate, business, and branch levels across the globe.

At the time, the organization could be characterized as a traditional engineering-focused organization with little time for global marketing strategic department, as the supply chain was seen as a cost centre with a primarily non-core role. The development of the first Global Marketing Business Plan was a major coup for the supply chain department, in that it placed the importance of marketing at the same level as the other organizational businesses, that of money, assets, and people. This enthusiasm was however, short-lived, as soon after the completion of the Global Marketing Business Plan the organization began to move toward the outsourcing of deemed non-core activities.

Prior to the decision to outsource, the organization saw the supply chain department as providing a service function:

*The organisation in those days saw supply chain as a domain department. They were focused on one of two things, logistic or financial considerations and the supply chain was something they had to have, but they didn't really want to spend any money on it and all the money they had spent, was considered too much - 'where was the return on the investment?' - that was the continual question.*

(Interview - Marketing Planning Manager post outsourcing)
The development of the first Global Marketing Business Plan was a major achievement in an engineering focused organization, yet there was a degree of opposition to this idea as an employee later pointed out:

*The prevailing view of executives at the time was that it was completely inappropriate to describe the information thing as a business. That caused quite a bit of grief and controversy - it is merely a process. No way is it a core business, it is just a support process or function.*

In order to properly complete the Global Marketing Business Plan (GMB Plan) there was an initial need to examine the information requirements of the various business processes - the marketing manager led this modeling exercise. Over the period 2000-2003 the marketing manager developed the Global Marketing Business Plan and continued work on process modeling and investigations into outsourcing of non-core processes:

*On the practical side of delivering a service we were starting to shine, we were winning TQM awards, the quality of our service was very good, and we were getting accolades in the press, the cost of our service was benchmarked internationally in the top six in the world. So things were going very, very well.* (Marketing Manager).

This observation was confirmed in later interview with the then Managing Director. He indicated that the Supply Chain Department benchmarked very well as being one of the leaders internationally within the industry sector as well as being towards the top in other similar industries.

The Marketing Manager originally felt that the investigation into outsourcing was simply an exercise with no real plan to move ahead with outsourcing:

*In fact I went to a board meeting where the question was raised “Why the hell are we looking at outsourcing supply chain, when we've just had*
supply chain successfully benchmarked internationally; we know we run efficiently, effectively - we've just given these guys the first TQM award in the organisation because they're working so well. So why the hell do we even bother looking at it?” And what came back was it's a governing directive that we look at it. So we really told the staff don't worry, it's an exercise that the governing powers wants to go through and that we know that the results and figures will show there's no way people can come and run it any cheaper than we do. And that wasn't true, the exercise was "this gets outsourced, whether it was economic or not". It took a while for me - I believed, and my director believed that this was a paper exercise and we were looking at outsourcing of many areas. It was an agenda simply to force supply chain out whether it was economic or not. (Marketing Manager)

IT came to be considered as non-core and was one of the first areas to be targeted for outsourcing. In the mid-1990s the outsourcing project was initially termed a Global Marketing Business Plan (GMB Plan) project. Staff initially accepted this GMB Plan tag but over time they came to reject the term, as they felt that it did not reflect what was actually happening—they felt that the study was basically an investigation into the feasibility of outsourcing, not GMB Plan. This dissatisfaction emanated from the planning manager and other staff and prompted a change in the title of the project to corporate repositioning and then again, at a later date, to outsourcing. According to the IS Manager at the time, the term BPR annoyed staff:

Well, the staff simply refused to call it that “Let’s call a spade a spade – Bugger this, we won’t call it GMB Plan any more,” they said – “It’s a false term. Let’s not pretend.” After a while it became obvious what the agenda was and some of the directors who pushed GMB Plan objected themselves to hiding outsourcing under the term GMB Plan.
The Research Question

Critical Theory

Critical theory has lofty aims in that the purpose of critical theory is seen as enabling members of a society to alter their lives for the better by fostering in them important self-knowledge and understanding of the social conditions under which they operate, such knowledge then providing a basis for emancipatory change.

Alvesson and Willmott (1992) argue that “central to critical theory is the emancipatory potential of reason to reflect critically on how the reality of the social world, including the construction of the self, is socially produced and, therefore, is open to transformation. The task of critical theory is to combine philosophy with social science to facilitate the development of change in an emancipatory direction.” Flood and Jackson (1991, p. 49) see emancipation as an interest in freeing “individuals from constraints imposed by power relations and in learning, through a process of genuine participatory democracy, involving discursive will-formation, to control their own destiny.” The individual’s power to reason and consequent self-emancipation plays a major role in critical theory.

Habermas (1984) highlights the important role that language and communication play within critical theory when he suggests that people can follow two fundamental postures in a social situation—achieving success or communication. Actions directed toward achieving success (purposive rational) can be either instrumental or strategic. Instrumental action treats participants as inanimate constraints who can be manipulated to serve the self-interests of the main actor. In contrast, strategic action treats participants as intelligent, involved players with their own self-interests and aims—thus requiring a strategic approach to achieve properly, the main actor’s self-interest.

The second fundamental posture that actors may represent is that of communication - the primary desire is to achieve a consensus and understanding. Hirschheim and Klein (1994) argue that a communicative orientation is directed toward sense making - an emergent process that involves mutual understanding and shared appreciation of situations based on common shared
background assumptions and beliefs. Where such a common base does not exist, discursive action may ensue. Discursive action may result when participants have some doubts as to the clarity, truthfulness, correctness, or appropriateness of any communicated message. Instrumental and strategic action fundamentally emphasizes control, whereas communicative and discursive action emphasizes sense making and argumentation.

For the case example critical theory could emphasize the role that language plays in social situations. The name change from GMB Plan to outsourcing could be presented as an example of the important role that language plays in social situations and how language can implicitly construct a particular reality. Critical theory emphasizes the importance of identifying inequitable structures – such identification providing the opportunity for understanding and consequent self-emancipation. This emphasis on understanding and description suggests the research would be directed towards an examination of the role that language plays in the corporate change process and the possible emancipatory opportunity provided by changing the name of the change process. There would not be a single research question on which to base the research but an emphasis on identification and understanding.

The original naming of the process as ‘The GMB Plan’ can be seen from a critical perspective to reflect instrumental action on the part of management in that their aim can be seen to force the change process through. The GMB Plan at the time was very faddish and the tag would have been useful as a means to internally and externally justify and support the severe change that was intended to follow. The change in name to ‘Outsourcing’ represented a mellowing of this approach and can be seen to reflect the important acceptance by management that personnel concerned were intelligent involved players with their own self-interests and aims that needed to be recognized. The employee appreciation of the falsity of the GMB Plan tag can be seen to be emancipatory from their perspective. The identification of this language structure being used by management allowed employees to push for greater honesty on the part of management. For the employee targeted for outsourcing, severance terms and conditions needed to be
defined and the change in name to ‘Outsourcing’ provided an important basis for this concentration.

**Interpretive Theory**

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991 p. 13) present interpretivism as emphasizing the social nature of reality:

> Interpretivism asserts that reality, as well as our knowledge thereof, is social products and hence incapable of being understood independent of the social actors (including the researchers) that construct and make sense of that reality

Klein and Myers (1999, p. 69) describe interpretive research from a practical, methods based focus:

> Case study research can be classified as interpretive if it is assumed that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such a language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts.

They suggest a number of principles for good interpretive practice and specifically argue that a major problem with many interpretive projects is their failure to clearly define the emergent nature of research - “we are [often] given little understanding of how the researcher’s analysis developed over the course of the project. As it stands, we are presented with a finished piece of interpretive research with few indications of its emergent nature” (p. 84).

Walsham (1993, p. 4) suggests that interpretive methods of research focus on understanding the context in which the information system is placed and how the information system influences and is influenced by that context. He states:

> Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others...
Interpretivism is thus an epistemological position, concerned with approaches to the understanding of reality and asserting that all that knowledge is necessarily a social construction and thus subjective (p. 5)

Subtle differences between the three definitions of interpretivism emphasize the divergent nature of research approaches within this paradigm. Walsham/ Klein and Meyers present a weaker constructivist argument than Orlikowski and Baroudi who suggest that reality itself is socially constructed. Walsham, Klein, and Meyers present a somewhat weaker constructivist position, when they suggest that interpretivism presents our knowledge of reality as socially constructed rather than the reality itself.

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991, p.18) summarize the weaknesses of the purely interpretive approach (based on Fay 1987):

First, the interpretive perspective does not examine the conditions, often external, which give rise to certain meanings and experiences. Second, research in this perspective omits to explain the unintended consequences of action, which by definition cannot be explained by reference to the intentions of the humans concerned...Third, the interpretive perspective does not address structural conflicts within society and organisations and ignores contradictions which may be endemic in social systems...Finally, the interpretive perspective neglects to explain historical change; that is, how a particular social order came to be what it is, and how it is likely to vary over time.

Klein and Meyers incorporate critical aspects within their underlying principles and perhaps suggest a critical interpretive approach in their demand for suspicion and contextualization. The principles they suggest help to address the shortcomings identified within Orlikowski and Baroudi’s article.

For the case example, an interpretive approach would attempt to critically describe and understand the happenings from the perceptive of the organizational players. Such examination may well reflect on the low level of morale over the time of
outsourcing examination and the anger of the lower level management as they come to realize the dishonesty of naming the change process a GMB Plan process. Perhaps the researcher may have an important role in initiating this process through their questioning of the reasons behind the GMB plan tag.

The research question may well be vague at the outset of the project in that the research is largely emergent from interaction and subsequent reflection. Multiple perspectives need to be appreciated and included – such variance helping to negate the criticism that interpretivism tends to ignore external structures and their effects. Often the more junior levels of management may not have sufficient knowledge to be able to fully describe impacting influences. The neglect of senior management levels is not however, an immediate failure for the interpretive researcher in that the target is to appreciate the situation from the perspective of those interviewed – as long as the limitations of the knowledge derived are made clear such description can still be valid. Similarly, the concept of the hermeneutic circle can help to obviate this neglect of external influences (or macro-level impositions) through reflection based around the continual movement from the whole to the parts and back again.

Clearly for the interpretive researcher there are two major stories – that for the researcher and that for the researched – each story needs to be told. Reflective examination of the extent to which each are affected by the other also needs to be included and continually examined.

**Conclusion**

Clearly this article is realist in focus. It suggest that critical theory, interpretive theory and interpretive approaches can provide useful insights into a research situation but the conclusions generated are largely dependent on the particular approach selected. As Archer (1995) suggests:

> The nature of what exists cannot be unrelated to how it is studied . . . the social ontology endorsed does play a powerful regulatory role vis-a-vis the explanatory methodology for the basic reason that it conceptualizes social reality in certain terms, thus
identifying what there is to be explained and also ruling out explanations in terms of entities or properties which are deemed nonexistent (p. 16–17).

Craib (1992) suggests there are two fundamental purposes for social research – explanation or description. He argues for the importance of explanation in comparison to description and notes the increasing emphasis on description. He sees this concentration on description rather than explanation growing out of “a general skepticism about the possibility of explanations, of a totalizing theory, and this in turn has led to theory concerning itself with description” (p. 26). Interpretivist and critical approaches can be seen to emphasize description rather than explanation. For the realist the critical and interpretive emphasis on the knowledge based dimension suggests that identification and description tend to be the major focus of such approaches. A modern realist approach such as critical realism also seeks to unearth impacting objects, but its greater emphasis on ontological matters directs its focus towards explanation and a deeper level of analysis.

The authors aim to interpret to gain insights that can be used to build up a framework from which theory can evolve. Hermeneutics originally was concerned with ancient religious texts and hence designed to give meaning to the unfamiliar and alien (Moustakas, 1990). Whilst the reader may not consider marketing especially “alien”, post modernism does not seem to take adequately into account the shifting structures of capitalism (Morgan, 2003). Indeed some writers regard post modernism to be but the cultural arm of multinational capitalism (Stephanson, 1989). The popular protests in Wall Street and London in 2012 following a deep global recession perhaps reflect not so much alien as alienation.

However, the key point that the author wish to make about interpretation is that it grounded in something that we have in advance “Vorhabe” (Heidegger, 1962), our own understanding of the context colours the picture that we are seeing. Interpretation is not something that one does it is something that one is directly involved in (Gallagher, 1992). Praxis (Schwandt,
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2002) is the name given to the engagement embedded in communally shared understandings and values and depends on their everyday linguistic usage (Dunne, 1993). Hence, the two categories of reader of this article will necessarily both receive slightly different interpretations of what the authors are saying because their “vohabe” and experiences are also different. This may or may not be desirable, but it is most certainly unavoidable.

Reference


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