Critique as Locus or Modus? Power and Resistance in the World of Work

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Abstract

How and from where can power be criticized and resisted? The advent of new managerial forms of power has brought the question once more to the fore. One salient issue is whether the ubiquity and apparent omnipotence of contemporary forms of managerial power renders critique and resistance difficult. The reason for raising this issue is that critique/resistance tends to be co-opted by managerial power, which means that the former turns out to invigorate rather than undermine the latter. Thus, critique/resistance faces the paradox that it strengthens what it sets out to weaken. It is in this light the article sets out to compare the critical potential of French pragmatic sociology and Foucauldian-inspired genealogy. We argue that both approaches offer viable critiques of contemporary forms of power. Yet, whereas the critique of pragmatic sociology hinges on the position (locus) of those who exercise critique and/or resist, genealogical critique depends on the concrete form (modus) of power that is being scrutinized. While we find it more promising to focus on the forms of power and how they operate than on the source of the critique levelled against these powers, the two approaches can inspire each other methodologically in order to advance critiques of practices of power which are considered repressive.

Keywords: Pragmatic sociology, Foucauldian genealogy, critical theory, managerial power, neoliberalism.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, political and social theorists across a wide range of disciplinary and moral convictions seem to agree that contemporary liberal democracies are pervaded by new and pervasive forms of power that make resistance difficult. Whether seen as neoliberal hegemonic discourses (Bourdieu, 1998; Harvey, 2005), global capitalism (Harvey, 2004; Zizek, 2008), empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000) or network society (Castells, 2000), subtle and usually non-coercive forms of power have permeated every capillary of the societal fabric and have created a new capitalist (work) culture (Sennett, 2006). This type of diagnoses are not new but was devised in various forms by members of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1997; Marcuse, 1964). So effective are contemporary forms of capitalist power that many political and social theorists are increasingly pessimistic about the possibility of resistance and critique. Maybe another explanation is that typical leftist types of "total critique" of capitalism and the system have run into a dead-end.

At least, this kind of total critique often results in the rather pessimistic conclusion that critique often serves to rejuvenate existing power relations rather than upsetting them. Thus, it has been argued that critical discourses and practices are part and parcel of the development and management of organizations (Messner, Clegg, & Kornberger, 2011). Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) have gone further and argued that the anti-authoritarian and potentially revolutionary discourses of autonomy and self-realization that were aired in the 1960s and 1970s have degraded into managerial discourses serving to govern the labour force in new ways, thereby paving the way for new forms of networked or project-based capitalism. Seen from this perspective, critique has turned out to be a contribution rather than an obstacle to the development of capitalism. From this, it is concluded that in today's societies there is hardly room for critical practices that interrogate and modify existing power relations. Nonetheless, one could ask if the co-optation of critique testifies to the fact that power relations have undergone significant changes, even if the novel power relations have not done away with capitalism. The question is if the object of critique has to be capitalism as a whole or whether critique should rather focus on specific arrangements at workplaces and other societal settings?

However, exercising critique in specific and concrete ways is not on the agenda of several influential Marxist-inspired critics for whom total critique necessarily requires revolutionary options. Hardt & Negri (2000, 2005) coined the term 'multitude' to designate a space for revolutionary politics that would supplant the contemporary modality of power, i.e. empire. Similarly, Zizek (2008, pp. 159, 170-171) resorts to quasi-religious notions of divine violence as the only really effective way to unsettle contemporary forms of global capitalism. This vitalistic yet pessimistic predicament of critique found among influential social theorists has to do not only with how they approach critique but also with what they criticize, power, which are in any case two sides

of the same coin. What we get here is a totalizing view of power – be that in the form of neoliberalism, finance capitalism, empire or simply "capitalism". We find this approach problematic, because the anti-system/capitalism of total critique blocks a more adequate take on the nature of power today and forms of critique and resistance.

How to criticize and resist power is a broad question. To be manageable, we embark on a comparative discussion of Michel Foucault's analytics of government and Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot and Eve Chiapello's pragmatic sociology. Over the last two decades, they have engaged in discussions about how to address the relationship between critique and power. We have chosen these two comparable approaches because they represent elaborate attempts to conduct critique without resorting to epistemological and/or normative foundations, i.e. they try to undertake non-normative critique (Hansen, 2016). Here it should be noted that in talking about the two approaches - Foucauldian analytics / genealogy and pragmatic sociology -we are working at a certain level of abstraction. Foucault modified his analytical approach several times during his authorship (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982), and we also find some (growing) differences between Boltanski and Chiapello on the one hand, and Thévenot on the other (Hansen, 2016). In this article, we essentially treat them as two distinct and more or less coherent approaches, though we do touch briefly on certain differences regarding the understanding of capitalism within pragmatic sociology. The choice of genealogy and pragmatic sociology obviously implies excluding several other important strands of critical management and workplace studies (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2011). Notwithstanding this limitation, we seek to provide a more adequate understanding of critique of power by comparing the potential and limitations of pragmatic sociology and genealogy. Our aim is not to synthesize the two approaches (Andrade, 2015), although we conclude by discussing possibilities of mutual methodological inspiration in the study of practices of power and critique of or resistance to these practices.

Our key argument is that both pragmatic sociology and genealogy offer viable critical approaches to contemporary forms of power, and both seek to shed the vestiges of Marxist-inspired critique. Yet, whereas the critique of pragmatic sociology hinges on the position (locus) of those who exercise critique and/or resist and the conception of capitalism as a totalising system that structures critique and resistance via various regimes of engagement and justification, genealogical critique depends on the concrete form (modus) of power being scrutinized. We find it more promising to focus on the forms of power than on the source of the critique levelled against these powers, and the subject position of those engaging in anti-system/capitalist critique. Having said that, however, it will be our argument that the two approaches can inspire each other methodologically in order to advance an understanding of critiques of power relations.

The article is structured in four sections. First, we compare and discuss the genealogical and pragmatic sociological approaches to the relationship between power and critique. We

discuss the implications of where critique positions itself in relation to the norms and epistemological limits defined by contemporary modes of power. Second, using workplace management as our example, we compare the two accounts of contemporary power relations and their critiques. Third, we examine how they explain wider political strategies in modern capitalist states. Finally, we conclude by summarizing similarities and differences, and discuss their respective advantages and limitations. We will argue that the two takes on critique can profitably inspire each other.

Power and critique

Critique and resistance are paradigmatic for the Left, which has been linked up with truth and emancipation, both of which were self-evident reference points at least prior to the postmodern avalanche in the 1980s. Today, the former grand visions of emancipation have lost credibility and have been replaced by commonplace ideas of how people set out to criticise and resist repressive power relations. Although truth, reason and rationality were deconstructed *ad infinitum*, they have somehow managed to survive in certain parts of leftist academic discourses as a relic of the total critique tradition where they seem to be regarded as necessary for getting at the root cause of the malign mechanisms of capitalism. This in turn linked up with the certainty of being cognitively and morally superior to adversarial discourses (Bourdieu 1991, p. 163-170; Hardt & Negri, 2000).

The sublimation of truth and morality authorises emancipatory movement, which is, in its classical formulation, a movement to end class-rule, power and, ultimately, politics. Based on the axiom that power and truth are antithetic, the fundamental strategy of this kind of critique is to reveal the true nature of the actions conducted by those in power. The aim is to show that the strategies used by elites/management serve the overall purpose of advancing their interests through manipulation and domination. The idea is that this will make those being oppressed realise they are exploited. Hence, critique as the speaking of truth to power is the take-off for resistance.

Foucault's power analytics is refuses to take truth as mandatory for critique and resistance. Pragmatic sociology is sceptical about the emancipatory potential of truth too, yet it clings on to the Marxist heritage of total critique inasmuch as capitalism is conceived of as the horizon of intelligibility for critique. This is particularly clear, as we will show below for Boltanski and Chiapello, whereas Thévenot seems to be increasingly sceptical about the use of capitalism as a horizon for understanding the functioning of critique. The issue at stake here is the position of critique vis-à-vis the power being criticised. This requires discussing how power connects with democratic values, and who is regarded as a legitimate subject of critique. This concern is far from new. Yet, present-day capitalism and the proliferation of indirect forms of power accentuate the need to answer these concerns. In the remainder of this section we compare and discuss similarities and differences between the two approaches to power and critique.

Pragmatic Sociological Critique: External or Internal Positioning?

Pragmatic sociology, as expressed in the seminal work *On Justification* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991/2006) and subsequent publications (Boltanski 2006; Thévenot 2006), is preoccupied with examining the moral and political horizons underpinning social action (Blokker, 2011). According to one of its leading exponents, pragmatic sociology is concerned with analysing how actors reflexively do different types of 'justification work', thereby criticising or justifying particular orders of worth in specific situations (Boltanski, 2009b). The term pragmatic refers to discursive pragmatics, stressing the actors' use of grammatical resources in facing certain situations, such as the exercise of power (Boltanski, 2006). Orders of worth is a key analytical device for pragmatic sociology that is utilized to understand the kinds of power, resistance and forms of emancipation that can be justified by a set of actors in a given political situation (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 22-23).

It is this notion of orders of worth that allows Boltanski and Chiapello to make a general distinction between corrective and radical forms of critique (2005, p. 32). The former conducts critique by trying to test existing modes of justification to gauge the possible distance between reality and the regulative ideals espoused by existing forms of justification. This is an internal or reformist mode of critique that seeks to improve existing modes of justification rather than abandon them. The radical form of critique adopts different principles: critique is external to the mode of justification criticized but internal to another regime of justification. Boltanski and Chiapello hold that this form of critique has often been termed 'revolutionary'. Notwithstanding this distance from Marxist-inspired conceptions of critique, Boltanski and Chiapello maintain that critique must take place from a certain normative viewpoint, be that internal or external to that which is criticized.

Apart from the generic distinction between external and internal critique, Boltanski and Chiapello (2005, pp. 37-38) distinguish between artistic and social critique of capitalism. Whilst the former revolves around disenchantment, inauthenticity and oppression, the latter revolves around the egoism of private interests and growing economic disparities. The important thing is that Boltanski and Chiapello regard the relationship between critique and capitalism as dialectical. It is not only critique that feeds on its object, it is also that capitalism develops by taking up strands of critique (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 40). It is due to this functional relationship that "anti-capitalism is in fact as old as capitalism" (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 36). Instead of abandoning the enterprise of critique because it is bound to be taken up by capitalism, they argue that even marginal changes resulting from critique may be worth pursuing. While Boltanski and Chiapello liken critique of capitalism to the work of Sisyphus: they maintain that critique of capitalism does hold an emancipatory potential – however limited and tentative (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005, p. 41). The liberal capitalism in the nineteenth century enabled emancipatory promises of autonomy and self-realization (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p.

425), the organized capitalism of the early twentieth century promised social security (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 201) and the recent neoliberal capitalism enables critique of and emancipation from state authorities and rigid rules in favour of a more flexible lifestyle (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 436). The three forms of capitalisms are functionally correlated with particular registers of critique and emancipatory hopes.

For pragmatic sociology, the ability to conduct effective critique seems to hinge on the question from which vantage point – from within what order of worth or scientific position – critique of and resistance against power can and should be conducted. This affinity between the efficacy of critique and the place of its enunciation hinges on the conception of power in pragmatic sociology; and more specifically, it seems to be a remnant of Marxist theorisation according to which critique is 'effective' if it is a means used by workers to undermine capitalism. Efficiency and locus are thus closely entwined in this conception. In his analysis of regimes of engagement, Thévenot locates various forms of power with the oppression taking place when one regime prevails at the expense of another (Thévenot, 2011). The actors who constitute and navigate within these regimes may do so with 'closed eyes', explicitly or tacitly accepting the costs of such encroachment, or with 'open eyes', whereby they explicitly question such encroachment and open an avenue for different actions (Thévenot, 2011, pp. 53-56). According to Thévenot the critical role of the sociologist is to analyse with 'open eyes' by interrogating and explicating the costs and restrictions of engaging with particular regimes.

Recently, the other founder of pragmatic sociology Boltanski appears to be increasingly dissatisfied with what he regards as the limited critical potential of pragmatic sociology. In *On Critique*, he calls for a supplement by a Bourdieu-inspired critical sociology in order to advance beyond the mapping of the critical actions and capacities of actors, as he finds the critical potentials of this internal approach 'rather limited' (Boltanski, 2011, p. 43). In contrast, critical sociology has the advantage of being able – by the use of sociological methods and a standpoint external to the studied actors – to map the ways by which domination and exploitation take place, which may subsequently be used by the dominated actors to 'increase their critical capacities' (Boltanski, 2011, pp. 44-45). It is necessary to develop a framework combining the mapping of actors' grammar with critical sociology's construction of societal totality. This illuminates patterns of domination and exploitation, allowing the authors to make a normative difference and contribute to the 'emancipation of the dominated classes' (Boltanski, 2011, p. 154).

In brief, pragmatic sociology is articulated both as a general theory of social action and as a critical analysis of social action. The key proponents of the theory largely agree on the general theory evolving around regimes of actions within orders of justification characterising various types of engagement. They also agree that critique is always articulated from within one or, possibly, more regimes of action and the moral horizon it delineates. Moreover, they initially agreed that the critical potential of pragmatic

sociology should be realised by way of mapping the critical capacities of actors moving within and between regimes. Even if Boltanski has disputed the utility of this descriptive approach and opted for a normativity to be explicated by the critical sociologist, the general point remains that the locus – both that of the researcher and that of the analysed actor – is crucial to undertake critical analysis. In other words, for pragmatic sociology the key issue involved in the question of how to conduct effective critique of power revolves more around the (epistemological and normative) *position* of those exercising critique than around the *object* of that critique, namely power in its various forms.

Genealogical Critique: Problematizing Power in its Concrete Forms

Foucault's emphasis on power as government – 'to structure the possible field of action of others', which is 'a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their being capable of action' (Foucault, 1982, p. 220) – suggests that power is a matter of shaping the abilities of individuals by coordinating and directing their space of action in ways that are aligned with contemporary political goals and wider social norms. He does not define power in terms of domination, just as he does not analyse power in terms of conflicting interests. This is not to say that he ignores aspects of domination in power relations. The point is simply to be open to all forms of power, both domination or coercive modalities, and those indirect forms of power that Foucault dubs government, which work by developing and structuring the ways in which individuals govern themselves. It follows that whilst power might encroach upon the freedom of those who are being governed, it also often relies on their freedom.

Power and resistance are inextricably linked, and this implies that critique is a form of freedom that problematizes those exercises of power, which agents for whatever reason find inconvenient, dangerous, unfair, etc. (Foucault, 1986, p. 343; 1989). For Foucault, critique is a mode of resistance against particular forms of power. He offers this initial formulation: 'the art of not being governed like that and at that cost' and 'the will not to be governed is always the will not to be governed thusly, like that, by these people, at this price' (1997a, p. 45, 75). Critique is a way of resisting geared to the relation between those who govern and those who are governed. This is the political authority relation dealing with the practices and reasons for governing (Oksala, 2007, pp. 86-87; Dyrberg, 2014, p. 53). The object of critique is the danger of domination, which is characterised by a subversion of what he calls the strategic game of liberties (Foucault, 1997c, p. 299) that leaves little or no room for agents' ability to criticise and hence resist the ways in which they are governed. This is the case, for instance, '[w]hen an individual or a social group manages to block a field of relations of power, to render them impassive and invariable and to prevent all reversibility of movement' (Foucault, 1997c, p. 283, see also p. 292).

To criticize power is not to reject it as such, which from Foucault's point of view would not make sense, but to contest and possibly refuse specific ways of its exercise (Foucault, 1997a, p. 44). Foucault distinguished between several forms of power in his analyses,

including sovereignty, discipline, biopower and the more recent liberal government. These forms of power link up in very different ways with the freedom of those over whom power is exercised. In very general terms, sovereignty works by way of domination, discipline by individual training and correction, biopower through state regulations targeting the population, whereas liberal government seeks to augment and direct the self-steering capacities of both individuals and organisations (Foucault, 2008). Liberal government then may be seen as a form of power exercised *through* rather than over the subject. The ethical question concerning power and freedom – which is related to the art of government – is how the growth of capabilities can be disconnected from the intensification of repression and domination (Foucault, 2007, p. 116). In short, critique sets out to examine how it is possible to minimize domination in the exercise of power.

Foucault addresses this issue by asserting not only that critique has to be concrete and transformative by targeting specific practices of power; it must also be unprejudiced in two respects. First, one has to accept, contrary to conventional emancipatory wisdom, that those wielding power are able to tell the truth and exercise power in a way that does not have to be motivated by their own interests at the expense of others. Second, the *raison d'être* of critique is not to envision the good life and the normative straitjacket that goes with it, but to expand fields of possibilities. This is probably the reason he could not 'help but dream about a kind of criticism that would not try to judge' (Foucault 1988c, p. 326). It follows that a totalizing type of critique based on the vanguard assumption that it has a privileged access to the truth and adopts a moral high-ground is rejected as authoritarian.

Critique involves adopting a limit-attitude in the sense of interrogating the limitations imposed by power from within existing power-knowledge relations, as it is illusory to think that it is possible to criticize from an external position. There is, says Foucault (1981, pp. 96-97, our italics), '*no single locus of great Refusal,* no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions or pure law of the revolutionary' unaffected by governmentalization. Critique is rarely stultified by power. This is so because power does not make up a unified whole from which no escape is possible, and because such a whole or totality is an ideological abstraction. Obviously, critique cannot take place from somewhere external to the power being criticized, which is from some lofty God's eye view. Yet, because critique for Foucault is not 'a demolition job, one of rejection or refusal' (Foucault, 1988a, p. 107), but has more to do with an investigative job, a reflexive and negotiated act, the practice of critique does not need to be external to power. This act of critical investigation should then consist not in finding a utopian outside of power but in 'analysing and reflecting upon limits' (Foucault, 2007, p. 113). The limits he has in mind are not abstract ideological doctrines but practical and ingrained in mundane set-ups embodied in institutions that govern individuals and populations.

To practice criticism is, says Foucault (1988b, p. 155), 'a matter of making facile gestures difficult'. This is radical as opposed to revolutionary politics: neither abstract nor utopian

but practical and aimed at the political ramifications of everyday life. It is a call for challenging the normal state of affairs, which is to say that critique as thoughtful activity creates a distance vis-à-vis problematization. It is a distancing from types of actions and behaviour, which makes them lose their familiarity and gives way for reflection and action. It is 'the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem' (Foucault, 1997b, p. 388). This mode of critique is a limit-experience driven by engagement and curiosity, and it is the point where critical distance might become dangerous: to be frank and to state what one believes is to expose oneself to risk, which calls for personal integrity and courage. This is of critical importance for cultivating democratic values.

Equally important for the cultivation of democratic values is that critique of and resistance to power involve courageous truth telling. This might take the form of telling truth to power, which is the typical idea of critique, but Foucault also allows for the possibility that political authorities can tell the truth and govern well. Both dimensions are part of his discussions of *parrhesia*. Power and truth do not then have to be antithetical (Foucault, 2001). The kind of truth-telling Foucault deals with in his later works is one that seems at once irrelevant, because it does not suggest a new truth or a new course of action, and dangerous, because it exposes the costs to our freedom by this particular way of managing labour. His focus is thus on the modus of power as opposed to criticizing and resisting practices of power, because they stem from a particular locus such as the subject position of 'the enemy': capital or government.

On the one hand, Foucault's acknowledgement that truth-telling can challenge power relations by unravelling lies and interrogating the wisdom of political decisions is an important supplement to his analyses of the power-laden effects of the production of modern forms of truth-telling. He would readily accept that speaking truth to power may contest and unsettle the latter, which bears a resemblance to Boltanski and Chiapello's 'open eyes' (Hansen, 2016). On the other hand, he rejects that truth telling by default leads to emancipation. He rejects insurrectionary or revolutionary politics informed by a truth available only to the vanguard critic. This kind of reasoning is bound up with a demolition ethos, which implies being against everything associated with the establishment, such as political authorities and capitalist managers. However, if the purpose of critique is to interrogate, destabilize and perhaps reverse existing power relations, then critique must evolve around a meticulous analysis of the concrete assumptions, norms, administrative procedures, and techniques that are engaged in the exercise of power. For Foucault, the effectiveness of critique depends on paying attention to the forms of power being criticized, rather than from whom or where this critique is launched, and whether it takes aim at capitalism. In fact, the critique of such powers might take the form of telling truth to power exercised by academics and workers, but it can also be in the shape of critical reflections made by political authorities and/or workplace managers.

Table 1 Locus and Modus of Power and Critique (of Power)

	Locus	Modus
Power	• Symbolic (knowledge, standards, classification systems, grammars of justification, etc.) • Material (regulations, procedures, techniques, modes of organization, architecture, etc.)	• Via freedom (liberal government) • Repressive (discipline, sovereignty and biopower)
Critique	• Academic (external) • Worker (internal) • Managers (internal)	• Academic analysis • Direct resistance from workers

Table 1 may be used as a crude illustration of the similarities and the differences between the two approaches with regard to their understanding of power and how best to criticize it. Both approaches pay detailed attention to the locus of power – in both its symbolic and material dimensions (upper left quadrant), and both acknowledge the importance of academic analysis and direct resistance from workers as viable forms of critique (lower right quadrant). However, they differ with regard to what it takes to make such critique effective. While Foucault seems to pay more attention to the modus of power, pragmatist sociology is more preoccupied with the locus of critique.

Marco: Network Capitalism or Neoliberal Rationalities of Government

Both pragmatic sociology and Foucauldian genealogy interrogate power relations at a macro or societal level. Both strands of inquiry imply that to render power and resistance intelligible in the world of work we need to address these in the local settings in which they are played out (micro), and through the wider economic and political forces and strategies taking place within and beyond state territories (macro). However, they differ in the ways they address the macro level and hence in their understanding of the relationship between the two levels.

Boltanski and Chiapello: Critique and its Complicity with Capitalism
Let us turn to Boltanski and Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005). While we find several other analyses of the world of work by pragmatist sociologists, they are mainly focused on individual organisations or mechanisms, such as certification (Thévenot, 2015a). *The New Spirit of Capitalism* seeks to explain changing forms of management and the critical discourses informing them in terms of capitalism as an economic, social and discursive system. It is economic by regulating the production and exchange of both material and immaterial goods. It is social by impinging on modes of employment, unemployment systems and the management of private companies. And it is discursive the extent to which the system is considered rational, manageable and

legitimate through technical, managerial and moral discourses. The latter two discourses are especially important for Boltanski and Chiapello, as critique in the form of radical leftist problematizations of capitalism have become part of contemporary management discourses: what used to be a critical discourse on capitalism has turned out to be a source for justifying and rejuvenating capitalism.

To understand the relationship between power and critique on these lines bears a resemblance to Marxist ideology critique although it is divested of dogmatic class analysis. Two points are important here. First, Boltanski and Chiapello see capitalism as a totalizing system that produces societal effects on the production and exchange of goods. Changing management and workplace practices can be explained with recourse to the contemporary morphology and functional needs of capitalism: "While capitalism has changed since its formation, its 'nature' has not been radically transformed"(Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 37). Even if capitalism can take different forms, it remains a system with generic functional needs to ensure its survival and development. Thus, even if the third and most recent form of capitalism (the neoliberal one) enables critique of and emancipation from state authorities and rigid rules, these gains are countered by casualization, job precariousness, and an alienating form of autonomy mainly taking the form of consumption (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, pp. 436-437). Boltanski and Chiapello succinctly capture the limits of liberation in (neoliberal) capitalism this way (2005, p. 437): "Although it incorporates the exigency of liberation into its self-description from the start, capitalism must therefore also always halt it at a certain point if it is to survive". It seems to us that the implication of positing capitalism – be that in its liberal, social or neoliberal form – as the horizon of analysis implies that to become effective, critique has to be revolutionary and ultimately demolish the capitalist system. It is not enough to transform it as the new form of capitalism will serve to produce new visions of emancipation, but it will also establish novel restrictions on the types of emancipation allowed.

Second, Boltanski and Chiapello are careful to avoid typical Marxist reduction, which subsumes the superstructure of ideas, laws and political institutions to the needs of capitalism's material infrastructure. Yet, they do not hesitate to identify the *spirit* of capitalism as the necessary justification of the wider societal acceptance of capitalism:

> 'If … capitalism has not only survived, but ceaselessly expanded its empire, it is because it could rely on a number of shared representations – capable of guiding action – and justifications, which present an acceptable and desirable order of things: the only possible order, or the best of all possible orders' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p.10).

Boltanski and Chiapello (2005, pp. xix-xx, 3) are adamant to point out that the spirit or justification of capitalism cannot be reduced to the objective needs of capital accumulation. Profit making must legitimise itself to be politically and publicly

acceptable, while capitalists must refrain from other uses: 'not all profit is legitimate, not all enrichment is just, not all accumulation ... is licit' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. 25). This potentially opens up for an analysis of ideas, discourses and rationalities that is more nuanced than traditional Marxist analyses. However, this analytical space is limited by their assertion that actions can be justified by their contribution to the common good in a limited number of ways only.

In *On Justification*, Boltanski and Thévenot (1991/2006) had found that six different forms of justification could be identified in modern Western democracies: industrial, domestic, commercial/market, civic, inspirational and reputational. Based on a review of the management literature of the 1960s, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* finds that the industrial mode of justification, emphasising the dutiful and efficient execution of given tasks in a clearly organised structure, was predominant for a long time (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, pp. 136-137). A subsequent review of key management literature from the 1990s reveals the rise of a new regime of justification: the project or network logic (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, pp. 104-105). Capitalist production, they argue, is no longer primarily organised around vast and fixed lines of administrative and productive hierarchies seeking to engender the most optimal division of labour.

Now, capitalist production evolves around rapidly shifting technological and organisational set-ups in which production is often organised as temporary projects that form the occasion and reason for making network connections. This network or projective mode of justification is clear in the tendency to replace a permanently hired workforce working within the auspices of a single domestic organisation with temporary employment of labour often working on short-term contracts for another company in other countries.

If Boltanski and Chiapello cannot be accused of reductionist Marxism, their analysis of managerial discourses is, nevertheless, confined to the dialectics between regimes of justification and regimes of capital accumulation, which is inspired by the French Regulation School (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005, p. xviii). The projective type of justification is linked to a move towards post-Fordist modes of production and consumption, where mass production/consumption is replaced by flexible regimes of production and employment and by rapidly shifting forms of consumption. This shift is threatened by falling rates of domestic purchasing power. The conclusion is that this type of justification acts both to develop and to justify this kind of production. This argument seems close to Marxist-inspired scholars who have argued that desires of self-realisation have been appropriated from the private sphere by capitalist enterprises to maximise exchange value and profits (Hochschild, 1983; van Maanen, 1991).

Foucault: Liberal Rationalities of Government at Work

A Foucauldian approach would largely agree with Boltanski and Chiapello's diagnosis of capitalism during the 1990s: management discourses have undergone substantial transformations and the buzzwords of empowerment, entrepreneurship and flexibility have become regulative norms. The labour force – even the least qualified and lowest paid members – is supposed to emancipate itself through work: each individual must pursue and fulfil his/her inner potential, mobilizing it to conduct his/her work more efficiently and innovatively.

General agreement between the two notwithstanding, pragmatic sociology and genealogy also display a number of differences. These have to do with the unit of analysis and with the empirical account of the mutation of managerial discourses. First, what genealogy is analysing is not capitalism as a comprehensive economic, social and discursive system of exploitation and domination, but instead capitalism as assemblages of political rationalities, bodies of administrative and psychological knowledge, organisational designs, managerial schemes and petty leadership techniques. Foucault (1981, p. 94) does not believe that power in capitalist societies make up a globally uniform hierarchy of domination and subordination in which everybody and everything falls into place. This does not prevent power relations from producing hegemonic effects of domination, but these are always sustained and modified by confrontations throughout networks of power/resistance. Hence the need to be concrete and target the critical analyses on the actual and diverse functioning of various power-knowledge assemblages.

These assemblages may at best serve as dominant templates of action but in no way amount to coherent functional systems. In his lectures at College de France, Foucault outlined two distinct forms of neoliberalism emerging in West Germany and the U.S. after World War II (Foucault, 2008). Whereas classical liberalism evolved around the question of how to avoid the excesses of state intervention in situations that required state power to ensure the security of property, production and trade, neoliberalism emerged around the problem of how to improve the efficiency and legitimacy of state interventions. The market plays a key, albeit differential role, in neoliberal governmentalities. In the U.S. and other Anglophone countries the market is considered a regulatory benchmark against which the efficiency and quality of public interventions should be assessed. In the West German version, the market has to be structured by state interventions, the legitimacy of which stems from its ability to ensure the functioning of the market.

Second, Foucauldian-inspired analyses of managerial rationalities took off in the 1960s and 1970s. This suggests that these are informed less by sociologists' or philosophers' critiques of capitalism and more by psychological knowledges and techniques developed in civil and military institutions. As shown by Rose and others, psychological knowledge and psychological tests and techniques have since the beginning of the 20th century been generous in the sense that they have lent themselves to practical uses far from clinics and

the universities (Hoskin, 1996; Rose, 1996; 1998; 1999b; Triantafillou, 2003). They have been used and developed at workplaces, hospitals, prisons and the military where personal skills, mental development, fatigue, combat stress reactions, group dynamics and later self-development and empowerment were construed, examined, measured and, eventually, rendered susceptible to managerial and political interventions.

These studies show a general mutation in workplace psychology from the 1960s onwards. Organisational psychologists like Abraham Maslow (1973), Chris Argyris (1959), Douglas McGregor (1960), and Rensis Likert (1961) held that the general problem of most companies could be ascribed to a lack of the possibilities for self-actualization and self-development in work. This psychological problematization of lacking possibilities would gradually translate into a generalised call for the need of active and entrepreneurial leaders and employees. Accordingly, managers and employees alike were increasingly expected to adopt an ethos of entrepreneurship attuned to flexibility and innovation, and employees were expected to manage themselves in accordance with organisational values and goals (du Gay, Salaman, & Rees, 1996).

Contemporary management then seems to thrive on regulative ideals of entrepreneurship, innovation and incessant questioning of contemporary procedures and routines. To agree with this diagnosis does not, however, imply that we need to 'go beyond' notions of power and resistance and collapse them into a singular term, such as 'struggle' (Fleming & Spicer, 2008). If power is conceived as the more or less systematic attempt to direct the conduct of others, and resistance as the more or less systematic attempt to thwart such efforts, then they are clearly distinct. While the exercise of power and the attempts to resist may share many of the same rationales and strategies and are mutually constitutive, they remain different practices.[1] What we need to do is analyse how different forms of power are actually enacted in organizations or workplaces and assess the kinds of freedom they allow and disallow.

Micro: Power and Resistance in Organizations

The aim of this section is to identify and compare how pragmatic sociology and genealogy grasp and analyse practices of power and resistance at the local or micro-level in concrete workplaces. We argue that both approaches conceive of power and resistance as two distinct practices, both pay attention to indirect forms of power, but that pragmatic sociology seems less capable of addressing the power relations imbedded in indirect forms of power.

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[1] Foucault was clear on the distinct character of power and resistance interdependence. However, he was less clear on whether power should be given primacy over resistance or vice versa (Checchi, 2014).

Pragmatic Sociology: Mapping Worlds of Justification
The New Spirit of Capitalism analyzes forms of critique exercised in France to change the kinds of exploitation taking place in the post-1990s managerial regime (projective justification). The book does not provide any case studies from workplaces but builds its analyses from oft quoted management publications. In fairness, the book also draws on a number of earlier case studies conducted by Boltanski and Thévenot (1989). However, with very few exceptions (Thévenot, 1997), Boltanski, Chiapello and Thévenot have not engaged in ethnographic accounts of the power struggles taking place at workplaces since the 1990s.

However, a number of less prolific authors have taken up the ideas of the French pragmatic sociologists in order to critically address social relations in various organisations (Charles, 2012). We find several critical analyses of corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes and their attempts to pay attention to the interests of product stakeholders. One such study shows how corporations actively work to shape the ideas and practices of CSR in ways that do not threaten their commercial interests (Shamir, 2004). Others have studied stakeholder networks around sustainable palm oil production in Indonesia (Cheyns, 2014; see also Silva-Castañeda, 2012).

These studies illuminate the difficulties that local communities and small-scale farmers face when making their voices heard and values accepted in these networks, which tend to favour the interests of large corporations. Thus, the stakeholder roundtables promoted by global industry certification standards are lending political legitimacy to a form of negotiation in which all actors are formally equal, but where the critique and voices of smallholders are excluded from the debates (Thévenot 2015a, pp. 213-214). The stakeholder roundtables thus serve to legitimize structural inequality in both its economic and political dimensions. The moral implication of these studies seems to be that if only the local farmers are allowed to participate in policy network in ways that allow them to assert their values and interests - if "real" empowerment is allowed to take place - then this is morally desirable. Of course, the emancipatory potentials of such projects should not be dismissed. Yet, what the studies of these NGO projects do not discuss is the power-laden relations ingrained in the very rationale of the quest to empower citizens. As shown by several studies, empowerment of marginalized citizens is not (only) about transferring of power to those not in power, but (also) a way of governing and disciplining the conduct of the marginalized according to liberal norms of citizen conduct (Cruikshank, 1999; Madsen and Triantafillou, 2016). For some reason, then, it seems that existing pragmatic sociology studies have their 'eyes closed' with regard to this aspect of empowerment.

Genealogy: Mapping Techniques of Power
Foucauldian-inspired organisation and workplace studies have focused on schemes, procedures and techniques used in workplaces and the power, knowledge and ethical conduct they imply (McKinlay & Starkey, 1998).

If the focus on normalising knowledge and disciplinary techniques was a common denominator of those studies of the forms organizational power that deal with the 19th and early 20th centuries (Foucault, 1977; Hoskin, 1982; Savage, 1998), the studies of organisational power in the late 20th century emphasize various form of neoliberal government, that is, power based on the facilitation and structuration of forms of freedom informed by norms of entrepreneurship, flexibility and innovation. We find a number of studies of various forms of managerial power at play in private companies, including human resource management (Townley, 1994), just-in-time and customer-oriented production management (Miller & O'Leary, 1994), communication and value-based management (Alvesson, 1996), management-by-objectives and mentoring (Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, & Samuel, 1998) and team-based management (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014). The reforms of higher education emphasizing performance, efficiency and societal relevance have been the object of several studies of academic organisations (Harman, 2014; Ørberg & Wright, 2009; Shore, 2008). A common theme is the critical analysis of the relationship between new managerial techniques of performance assessment and the remaking of academic subjectivities at both individual and organisational levels.

Many of these studies show, first, that more direct and disciplinary forms of power co-exist with more indirect forms of power (government). This is interesting but hardly surprising and would be expected by pragmatic sociologists with their emphasis of co-existing and competing forms of worth. Second, in contrast to pragmatic sociology, the genealogical case studies also show that the same managerial technology may serve different but nonetheless co-existing purposes, namely power and freedom. Here it is worth quoting at length from the McKinlay and Taylor's conclusion following a long-term study of the now-closed Motorola factory in Easter Inch, Scotland:

> Managing through teams was a technology both to expand individual freedom and to meet the challenges of efficiency, flexibility, and innovation that confront all global factories. Even a decade and more after the plant closed, time and again, Easter Inch managers spoke of their pride in how individuals had improved themselves as a result of their factory experience. Such changed selves were testimonies to the ways that empowerment had *worked* — had served its moral, reforming promise (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014, p. 152, emphasis in original).

The particular form of managerial power put at play to pursue the goals defined by the Motorola company executive hinged on and seemed to allow some degree of employee freedom. True, the self-governing practices granted to employees no doubt came with a number of severe restrictions; and such practices of freedom had to point to ways that would arguably enhance production efficiency and quality. Yet, for all these limitations employees were managed neither by means of physical coercion nor detailed disciplinary techniques. Rather, they were governed through a form of freedom in which the workers were expected to decide in groups on how best to organise their daily work efforts, a form of freedom seemingly enjoyed by the Motorola employees.

Conclusion

This article has explored and discussed how we may critically address power and resistance in the workplace. French pragmatic sociology and Foucauldian-inspired genealogy seek to conduct critique in ways that avoid the implications of the elitist assumptions associated with various types of ideology critique.

While French pragmatic sociology and Foucauldian genealogy share the ambition of opening up critique for less elitist and more democratic forms, they also display two substantial differences, which relate to whether effective critique hinges on its place or its modality. Firstly, with regard to knowledge, genealogy and pragmatic sociology agree that there is no externally given epistemological arbiter that may serve to assess and criticize truth claims. Yet, pragmatic sociology deduces from this premise that critique can only come from the actors themselves, and more specifically, from those on the receiving end of management technologies. Accordingly, there is limited room for knowledgeable intellectual critique except as an ethnographic mapper of existing forms of critique. It is largely because of this implication that Boltanski (2011) found the need for articulating critique from an external vantage point. Genealogy, in contrast, focuses not on the locus of those exercising power or of those criticizing it, but on the ways in which problematizations and expert knowledge inform and justify the exercise of power. Thus, genealogy does not accept the premise that effective critique can only be undertaken by certain actors who have access to a certain kind of knowledge. As shown by Boltanski and Chiapello's study, indirect, governmental forms of management at French workplaces owe their existence not only to the 1968 movement but also to workplace managers adopting these ideas for their own purposes. The managers were thereby instrumental in questioning and replacing more direct and authoritarian management styles. Does this indicate the end of critique as some authors claim? Our answer is clearly "no". Alternatively, critique would have to be anchored in specific loci identified as being anti-system or anti-capitalist. However, this is not, as we have argued, a viable approach to engaging in critique, partly, for political reasons as critique cannot be the prerogative of a specific political programme held by agents who adopt a specific position, and partly because it condones a reductionist account of the nature and effects of critique.

Secondly, both pragmatic sociology and genealogy identify a variety of power forms at the modern workplace. Yet, in its attempt to criticize power, pragmatic sociology tends to focus on domination and repression. This is particularly clear in the writings of Boltanski and Chiapello (e.g. Boltanski, 2011), but even in Thévenot's recent analysis of certification and benchmarking, which he characterizes as soft law that works by coordination and evaluation (Thévenot 2015a, p. 202), he tends to focus exclusively on the repressive dimensions of these forms of power (Thévenot 2015b, p. 102). In contrast, genealogy seeks to address the productive forms of power that are more or less dependent upon the freedom of those through which power is exercised. Both foci, if pursued too

narrowly, are unfavourable for effective critique. Effective critique must address both freedom-based forms of power and the strategic moments at which soft forms of power are backed up by domination (Dean, 2002). To address the shortcomings of these two approaches is not to return to class analysis as suggested by Boltanski (2011, p. 150). Instead, in order to provide a better account of critique, we should improve our analytical attention to its specific forms (both repressive and non-repressive ones), and to the actual outcomes of its exercise (both how freedom and resistance may be appropriated by schemes of power and, vice versa, how non-repressive forms of power may enable new forms of freedom and resistance).

What then are the methodological implications of this comparative analysis of pragmatist sociology and genealogy for the analysis of practices of power and resistance? A full account of this would call for another paper, but it seems fair to assert that both approaches offer some promising methodological principles. Genealogy is above all characterized by "historical document studies" that allows them to unravel the exercise of shifting forms of power. While document studies are not new to pragmatic sociology, its capacity to unravel the interplay between freedom-based forms of power and resistance may be enhanced by paying more attention to policy, expert and NGO documents. Such document studies may unravel the possibilities of freedom and resistance within existing schemes of power and could supplement pragmatic sociology's ethnographic studies of how local actors subject themselves to or resist that power. One of the key methodological strengths of pragmatic sociology is its sophisticated use of *ethnographic studies*. As genealogists often neglect studying what they argue is of pivotal importance for liberal forms of power, namely the freedom of the people subjected this power, they would benefit from adopting ethnographic methods in the study of liberal forms of government. First, this would allow for an analysis of the coercive dimensions of modern managerial power and how employees cope with or attempt to evade such power relations at the workplace. Second, the combination of document studies and ethnographic studies would enable the interrogation and perhaps destabilization of contemporary hegemonic norms and practices not only by exemplifying that things were different in *the past*, but also by showing the existence of norms and practices in *the present* today that differ from the hegemonic ones (Gibson-Graham, 2008).

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