

Title	Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies
Author	Steve Fleetwood and Stephen Ackroyd
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Brief Introduction	<p style="text-align: center;">Preface</p> <p><i>Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies</i> is motivated by two beliefs: one positive and the other negative. The positive belief is that critical realism has much to offer in the analysis of Organisation and Management (O&M). Evidence for this is provided not only in the following chapters where contributors have rooted their theoretical and empirical work in critical realism to good effect, but also in the growing number of critical realist inspired articles found in the O&M studies literature. The negative belief is that a great deal of current O&M studies is committed to one of two inappropriate ontological positions. The first is the <i>empirical realist</i> ontology which privileges empirical, observable phenomena and sponsors positivist and scientific-orientated analysis. The second is the <i>strongly social constructionist</i> ontology which privileges, often to the exclusion of all else, discursive, linguistic, or other semiotised phenomena. This ontology sponsors much postmodernist or poststructuralist orientated analysis—although not all analysis carried out under these labels is committed to this <i>strong</i> social constructionist ontology. Be that as it may, the recoil from abandoning positivism appears to have ‘catapulted’ many postmodernists and post-structuralists into substituting one inappropriate ontology for another and could easily take O&M studies down an alley as blind as the positivist one from which it has struggled to escape. Such a trajectory would be tragic given that critical realism can provide an ontology that allows positivism and its empirical realist ontology to be abandoned without having to accept strong social constructionism.</p> <p>Apart from two chapters dedicated to ontology and methodology respectively, <i>Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies</i> is not about critical realism <i>per se</i>. Rather it is about putting critical realism to work in four senses. First, as an underlabourer, that is in the removal of meta-theoretical obstacles that hinder the development of fruitful theoretical and empirical work. Second and third, as a meta-theoretical tool with which to develop appropriate methodological and theoretical frameworks which can then be used to inform appropriate empirical work. And finally, all of this is applied across a broad range of subjects areas including critical management studies, accountancy, marketing, health care management, operations research, the nature of work, human resource management, labour process theory, regional analysis, and work and labour market studies.</p>