

## Paper 12.

# “Beyond Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas: Review and Assessment of Critical Information Systems Research”



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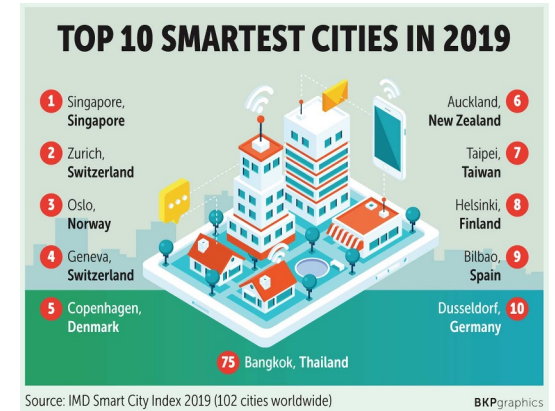
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# Outline

1. **Introduction**
2. Literature Review Method
3. Findings
4. The Landscape
5. Q&A

# Making the world a better place?

- Information Systems as the path to utopia
- Information Systems having a “dark side”
- Critical IS research paradigm based on Critical Theory
- Not just understand/explain but also empower/emancipate (Cecez-Kecmanovic and Kennan 2013)



# How to conduct Critical IS research?

*“A Set of Principles for Conducting Critical Research in Information Systems”* MISQ paper (Myers and Klein 2011):

- Key principle of “using central concepts from critical social theorists” to distinguish from other approaches (incl. interpretivist research)
- Three core examples: Bourdieu, Foucault, Habermas
- “there are many other critical theorists whose work could be very relevant” and anticipating “the introduction of new authors into the critical stream of IS research”

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# Hermeneutic approach with multiple searches

 — Forward citation tracking on Myers and Klein (2011)

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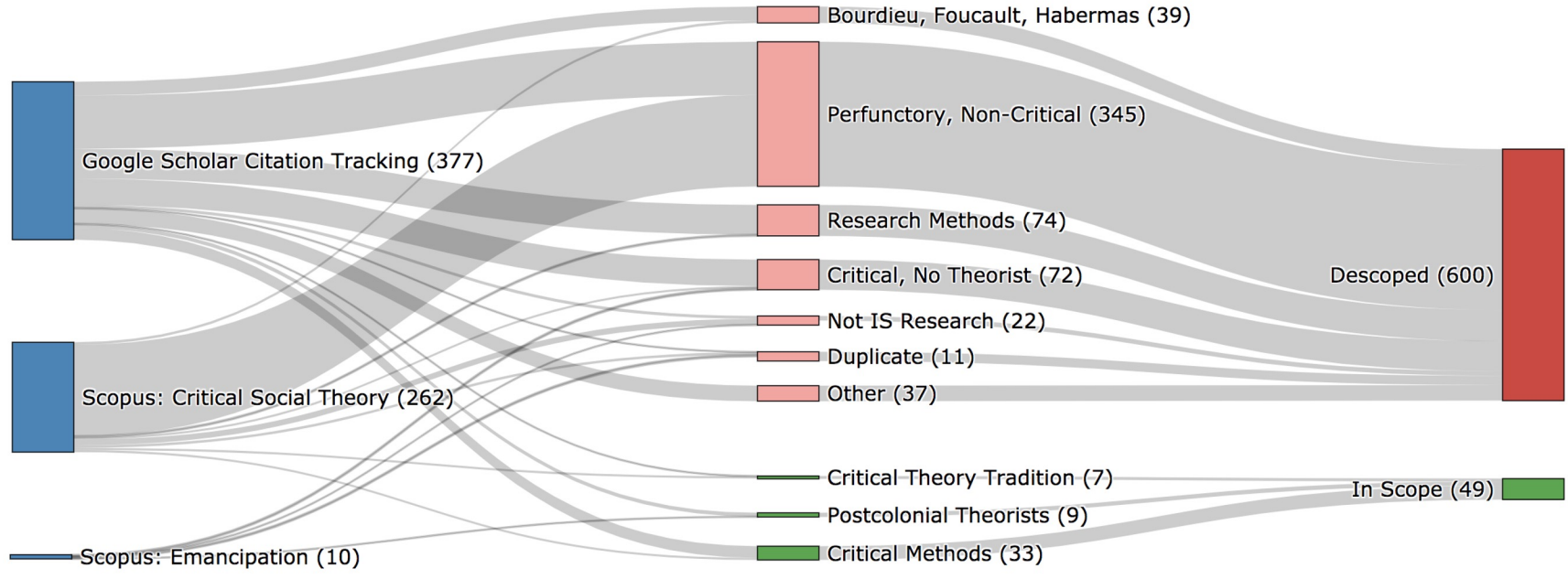
1. critical AND social AND theory
2. emancipation OR emancipatory OR emancipate



**LITBASKETS**

— Developed alongside this project to focus Scopus search on a specific set of journals

# Sankey diagram of database search outcomes



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# Part 1. Critical Grand Social Theory (7 of 49)

- **Same general category as “core” (Bourdieu, Foucault, Habermas)**
- **Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse)**
  - Culture industry, cultural commodification
  - Recently reinterpreted by Christian Fuchs
- **Reinterpretations of Bourdieu’s concept of social capital**
  - Social Stratification Theory (cf. Weber 1978)
  - Social Capital Theory (cf. Putnam 2000) - bonding and bridging capital
- **Humans in the world**
  - World Systems Theory (cf. Fuchs)
  - Heteromation (Ekbja and Nardi 2014, 2017) - human computation
  - Global Brain (Lenartowicz 2017) - humans and machines in mutual cooperation

## Part 2. Postcolonialism (9 of 49)

- **Three streams (Ravishankar et al. 2013; Tsibolane and Brown 2016):**
  - Orientalism (Said 1978)
  - Hegemon and subaltern (Gramsci 1971; Spivak 1988)
  - Mimicry and hybridity (Bhabha 1994)
- **In Critical IS Research, this is typically applied in ICT4D contexts**
- **Typically further supplemented by other theorists:**
  - Avgerou (2008) - ICT often failing to consider sociocultural conditions
  - Escobar (1992) - development theory
  - Chatterjee (2004) - politics of the governed
  - Freire (1970) - pedagogy of the oppressed

# Part 3. Data-Focused Critical Methods (33 of 49)

- **Capabilities Approach** (Sen 1990) - functionings and capabilities
- **Critical Discourse Analysis:**
  - Cocreation of meaning (Fairclough 2012)
  - Discursive power formations (Gee 2008), based on Foucault's work
- **Critical Heuristics and Design:**
  - Process: Critical and Participatory Design (Nold 2015)
  - Guidelines: Critical Social Heuristics (Ulrich 1987) - basis for ADR
- **Framing:** Frame Analysis (Goffman 1974); Technological Frames of Reference from no context to org context to individual interaction (Orlikowski and Gash 1994)
- **Phronetic Enquiry** based on Aristotle's *phronesis*:
  - critical discourse analysis of "wise" and "unwise" decisions (Ngwenyama et al. 2018)
  - consideration of ethics and aesthetics (Pauleen et al. 2016)
  - value-laden social research over value-free natural sciences approach (Krauss et al. 2015)

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# antique philosophy

**Deontological Ethics**  
(De Montaigne, Kant)

**Marx**

**Consequentialist Ethics**  
(Bentham, Mill)

**Virtue Ethics**  
(Aristotle)

# 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Early Frankfurt School**  
(Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse)

## Core Social Theorists

**Critical French Sociology**  
(Bourdieu, Foucault)

**Second Generation Frankfurt School**  
(Habermas)

## Postcolonialism

(Said, Spivak, Bhabha, Escobar, Chatterjee, Freire)

## Theorisations About Emergent Global Structures

(Fuchs, *World Systems Theory*, *Heteromation*, *Global Brain*)

**Social Stratification Theory**

**Social Capital Theory**

# 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Extended Core of Social Theorists**

**Critical Methods**

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

**Capabilities Approach**

**Critical Heuristics and Design** (Nold, Ulrich)

**Frames Analysis** (Goffman, Orlikowski and Gash)

**Phronetic Enquiry**

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# Thank you!



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