Call for papers for a special issue of 
*Gender, Work and Organization*

**Sexual Politics, Organizational Practices:**
Interrogating queer theory, work and organization

Guest editors: 
Alison Pullen, Swansea University 
Torkild Thanem, Stockholm University 
Melissa Tyler, University of Essex 
Louise Wallenberg, Stockholm University

*Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant.* (Halperin, 1997: 62)

When queer theory arrived on the academic scene some twenty years ago, it had scholarly and political ambitions, to scrutinize normativity and heteronormativity in particular, and to disturb, transform and indeed *queer* academia itself (de Lauretis, 1991; Doty, 1993; Warner, 1993, 1999; Sullivan, 1999). Since then, it has continued to challenge essentialist constructions and categories of gender and sexuality by interrogating how subjectivity is constructed and deconstructed through everyday and extraordinary discursive practices (Halberstam, 2005; see also Wallenberg, 2004). Moreover, queer theory has had a significant impact on LGBT politics and activism (see e.g. Gamson, 1995; Hennessy, 1995; Highleyman, 2002; Warner, 2002), and in some countries so much so that it has affected policy-making in the areas of health care and sex education (see e.g. Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2011).

Notwithstanding its appeal across the humanities and social sciences and its impact on sexual politics (Bad Objects Choice, 1991), queer theory has enjoyed an ambivalent position in the study of gender, work and organization. While Butler’s (1990, 1993, 2000, 2005) work on gender performativity has been pivotal in rethinking gender and sexuality beyond dualistic and stereotypical conceptions of masculinity and femininity (see e.g. Linstead and Pullen, 2006; Schilt and Connell, 2007; Thanem, 2011), queer theory and explicit queer subject positions have (notwithstanding a few exceptions such as Parker [2002], Tyler and Cohen [2008]) attracted less attention. The queer project has been criticized for reducing sexuality to discourse (Edwards, 1999), trivializing sexual difference (Jagose, 1996), reproducing white hegemony (Barnard, 1999), being disinterested in the everyday lives of people who identify as queer (Namaste, 1996), replacing a collective identity politics of LGBT rights with a commercialized and depoliticized individualism (Clark, 1991; Hennessy, 1995), and ignoring the material, economic, social and institutional conditions of sexuality (Field, 1995; Edwards, 1998; Green, 2007).

A prominent feature of the queer project, which this special issue highlights, is that it has never been static, and queer scholars are increasingly directing their attention beyond discursive constructions of sexuality and gender towards multiple materialities and lived
experiences of queer embodiment and sexuality (Halberstam, 1998, 2005; Probyn, 1996; Dahl and Volcano, 2009). Relatedly, there have been attempts to connect the queer agenda to the politics of class, race and ethnicity (e.g. Warner, 2000; Binnie and Skeggs, 2004; Ahmed, 2006). Moreover, queer theory and politics has actively (been) incorporated (by) subject positions previously excluded from lesbian and gay studies (Highleyman, 2002; Davidson, 2007). Along with the widespread borrowing and interrogation of queer theory concepts in contemporary organizational scholarship and the fact that people continue to identify as queer, these developments suggest that queer theory and politics demand more attention in studies of gender, work and organization.

This special issue actively engages with, challenges and extends contemporary debate surrounding queer theory and politics in work and organization. Contributors may wish to reengage with some of the early writers on queer such as de Lauretis (who coined the term in 1990 but distanced herself from it three years later); Kosofsky Sedgwick (who broke the silence on oppressive discursive regimes and presented performative taxonomic frameworks for thinking, living and theorising queer); Butler (who has traced and challenged hegemonic heteronormative practices); through to Halberstam (whose theorising of queer time and space through popular culture, art and the media has inspired political activism). At the same time, we recognize that this might require contributors to critically interrogate and go beyond queer theory and politics to ask what comes next in opening up new areas of theory and praxis which seek to liberate individuals from institutional constraints, work settings and organizational processes.

The aim of this special issue is therefore to engage critically with queer theory and politics in order to interrogate how gender and sexual politics is played out through organizational practices. More specifically, we aim to create a politically transgressive space, which makes it possible to challenge heteronormative forms of thinking, working and organizing in our scholarly field as well as in everyday work organizations. We encourage contributions that bring forth accounts of how queer identities and non-identities, bodies and sexualities, are lived and expressed in settings of work and organization. Partly a phenomenological task, this may involve embodied and emotional accounts of how people experience and challenge sexual discrimination and stereotyping in social and organizational life. Finally, we anticipate that this will spur debate about the future of queer theory and politics in the study of gender, work and organization. For instance, in what ways may such a future involve re-membering the advancements already made, which have challenged the relationship between gender and sexuality, identity and non-identity, materiality and corporeality, gender and post-gendering? And in what ways may this involve exceeding the limitations of queer theory and politics to create ways of thinking, living, working and managing that are more politically transgressive?

Possible topics include, but are not restricted to:

- Heteronormativity and homonormativity in organizations
- Queer performance and performativity at work
- Queer workplaces, spaces and temporalities
• Queer theory, methodology and representation in the study of gender, work and organization
• Queer identities, non-identities, sexualities and corporealities in settings of work and organization
• Queer politics, activism and social movements
• Queer identity politics, class politics and sexual politics
• The post-gender debate and the management of diversity in organizational life

Deadline for submission of full papers: October 1st 2013

Manuscripts should be no longer than 7,000 words. Manuscripts considered for publication will be peer-reviewed following the journal’s double-blind review process. Submissions should be made via the journal’s ScholarOne Manuscript Central at: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/gwo. Author guidelines can be found at the journal’s website at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-0432/homepage/ForAuthors.html

Further enquiries about the special issue can be directed to Alison Pullen (a.pullen@swansea.ac.uk), Torkild Thanem (tt@fek.su.se), Melissa Tyler (tyler@essex.ac.uk) and Louise Wallenberg (louise@fashion.su.se).

References


