

**Call for Papers****Queer Troublemakers and Intersectional Solidarity in Times of Anti-Queer Backlash****Special Issue Editors**

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Queer communities face persecution and discrimination around the world. Such acts range from violent assaults against queer people to queerphobia in everyday life, despite or perhaps because of decades of queer resistance and greater visibility. In many countries queer repression and criminalization remain an everyday reality, in some cases enforced with the death penalty (Price, 2022). International right-wing leaders, such as Vladimir Putin and Viktor Orbán preach hostility against LGBTQIA+ communities as a central tenet of their politics (Reuters, 2022; Walkers, 2021). In more liberal countries, queer communities experience increasing backlash. Emmanuel Macron speaks of “gender ideology” and mobilizes against transgender people, whose rights are perceived as a threat to cisgender people (Sage, 2021) and several U.S. states ban school discussion and books that feature “LGBTI+ issues” (Gabbat, 2022), often alongside banning books on critical race theory. These incidents are flashpoints in a historic political and legal anti-LGBTQIA+ fight with measures seeking to limit the rights of this group, even after their visibility has advanced (Kindy, 2022). One possible motive of such backlashes is the binary vision of gender and sexuality “to return society to a time when homosexuality was viewed as a sin, if not a crime, and heterosexuality was upheld as the norm for everyone in society” (Encarnación, 2020, p.1).

In times of anti-queer backlash, queerness gathers increasing political and radical meaning and voice. In this special issue of *Gender, Work and Organization*, we call for queer troublemakers to use their disruptive force (Bussey-Chamberlain, 2022) for killjoy activism. Such killjoy activism means taking up “the cause of not making happiness our cause” (Ahmed, 2023, p. 222). As killjoy activists, there is a commitment to become willful subjects that do not succumb to the general will of happiness as a normative state of being (Guschke et al., 2022). This activism involves being attuned to the inheritance gifted by global and local queer activist traditions, movements, and organizing. Queer troublemakers embody such legacies so as to claim a different future - a queer politics that imagines and fights for - a different world, where differently imagined economies create livable conditions for queer lives. Queer troublemakers occupy and reclaim public spaces (Burø et al. forthcoming), which on a smaller scale might require snapping, that is, breaking with existing power relations (be those familial, societal, or institutional) and the status quo to mark and orientate oneself toward new beginnings (Basner et al., 2018; Ahmed, 2017).

Queer troublemakers re-appropriate insults, such as the word queer, which has been and is still used to stigmatize LGBTQIA+ people, including homo/bi/sexuals, people who identify as transgender or non-binary, and those who refute societal norms for sexuality, gender and bodies. Over time and through activism, queer has been reclaimed as a provocative, self-affirming umbrella term for the LGBTQIA+ community; a positive identity category in which to take pride and mark not only difference from certain ideas of normality but also to organize in-group belonging based on sameness (Christensen et al., forthcoming). Queer representation becoming part of the mainstream and the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights and recognition being increasingly appropriated for commercial interests through pinkwashing and queerbaiting (Woods & Hardman, 2022; Conway, 2022; DeGagne, 2020) has sparked new forms of queer online activism taking “disconnective action” against corporate sponsorship at Pride (Just et al., forthcoming). Yet, queer and queering research in work and organization studies has developed a tendency to disaggregate theory from the activist practices rooted in the lived experiences of queer people (Pullen et al., 2016). The decoupling from sexual and gender politics has led to a loss of queer subject positions and experiences in work and organization studies (Parker, 2002, see also Harris & Ashcraft, 2023). This disembodied and apolitical approach to queer(ing) research is particularly problematic in times when queer communities face queerphobia.

For decades queering has been frequently applied as “a critical metaphor for studying, theorizing, and potentially interven[ing] in managerial discourse and organizational practice” (Christensen et al., forthcoming, see also Parker, 2016). This application alludes to a strong connection to the practices of queer activist spaces. Such practices of “queering” foreground the experiences of people marginalized based on their gender identity or sexuality or both and therefore focus primarily on “uncover[ing] and troubl[ing] heterosexual and cisgendered assumptions as underlying norms of management, organizations, and society” (Christensen et al., forthcoming). Thus, a common aim of queer research is to denaturalize dominant institutional, organizational, and social norms; an act of criticality that exposes the contingency of said norms, meaning that existing and interrelated sets of norms could—and maybe should—be changed because there is no inherent necessity to them (Christensen, 2021). In other words, gendered and sexual relations are political, and can be and must be, resisted, contested, and subverted. If for nothing else, paraphrasing Henriksen and Al-Arab (2022), to avoid the queer in us being squeezed out by the embrace of homonormativity (Duggan, 2002) and lack of solidarity in intersectional struggles associated with homonationalist discourses (Puar, 2007; Hansen, 2021), from which individual queer people might reap some benefits while the queer community and movement as a whole pay the price - particularly those whose marginalization pertains to racialization, ableism, and other axes of difference in addition to gender and sexuality.

While cis-heteronormativity is indeed repressive to queer people normativity may also be an activist tool that lays claims about what is “correct, good, to be pursued, acceptable, endorsed, or allowed” and, thereby, opening up new futures (Shotwell, 2016, p. 145) - even if certain queer embodiments to the general will of society appear to be future-negating (Edelman, 2004), as evident from recurring debates about the belonging of kink at Pride (see e.g., Abad-Santos,

2021). For Halberstam (2005, p. 1), disrupting normativity through queer time and space involves that a “‘queer way of life’ will encompass subcultural practices, alternative methods of alliance, forms of transgender embodiment, and those forms of representation dedicated to capturing these willfully eccentric modes of being”. Queer activists - intellectuals and artists - imagine different futures, reminding us that we are “not yet” (Halberstam, 2005) there, and call for political imagination in thinking queer resistance anew, as well as eliminating violences, living liveable lives and consciousness-raising. Intersectional queer solidarity is key to organizing. Interventions including the organization of queer separatist safe spaces as “space-making” (McCartan and Nash, 2022) mobilize intersectional solidarity, safety and activism. Muñoz (1999, p. 146) writes about the creation of counter-publics which are “communities and relational chains of resistance that contest the dominant public sphere” and involve queers of color creating minoritarian public spheres which challenge majoritarian public spheres. Decolonial queer feminists have long critiqued colonial, heteronormative and male dominance, such as Anzaldúa’s (1987) border thinking which calls for decolonizing Western thought that reinforces binary thinking and failure to capture the complexity and fluidity of intersecting marginalized identities, such as those of the Chicana people. Canadians Hunt and Holmes (2015) writing on the importance of allyship, summarize how decolonial queer politics involve queering “White settler colonialism and the colonial gender and sexual categories it relies on—to render it abnormal, to name it and make it visible in order to challenge it” (Riggs, 2010 cited in Hunt and Holmes, 2015, p. 156).

This special issue is a space for queer troublemakers and killjoy activism in organizational research, remembering the legacies of queer activism and the political roots of queer(ing). Queer activism involves acknowledging the struggles of the community in their resistance, but also making space for queer experiences of joy and waves of intersectional solidarity in times of backlash. We welcome empirical insights from queer voices and communities in the context of gender, work and organization studies such as (but not limited to): accounts of queer joy and solidarity but also everyday experiences of queer struggle and resistance; embodied writing from/with/about queer bodies; studies of inclusive queer movements; reflections on cis- and hetero privilege across intersectional (dis)similarities. This could also provide an opportunity to connect such insights into the experience of queer people to research streams in organization studies, covering themes such as identity, employee activism, leadership, temporality, meaningful work, and psychological safety. Moreover, we also encourage conceptual and methodological studies from a queer troubling killjoy perspective. Contributions may consider some of the following or related topics:

- Experiences of everyday queer struggle and resistance.
- Killjoy activism and queer protest in/of/around organizations including alternative organizations/organizing such as queer art and performance in the street.
- Stories of queer joy and diverse communities.
- Queer counterpublics, minority masculinities and femininities and the contestation of White, heteronormative masculinities.
- Queer and LGBTQIA+ subject positions and subjectivities in work and organizational settings, including sex shops, festivals, clubs, theater, etc.

- Queer utopias, queer failures, gender trouble, gender variation, gender deviance, and queer troublemakers (Halberstam, 2011, Muñoz, 2009).
- Intersectionality and decoloniality in queer theorizing, queer intersectionality and postcolonial queer activism.
- Experimental ways of researching, and writing from/with/about queer bodies.
- Reflections on privilege across intersectional (dis)similarities, accounts of solidarity, and global inclusive social movements.
- Experiences of queer troublemakers in academia, within and across the borders of the university.
- Queering and queered methodologies for the study of the specificities of LGBTQIA+ work-life cycles.
- Global LGBTQIA+ rights, risks, and resistances.
- Organizing activist responses to anti-queer attacks, theorizing from everyday affects and entanglements.
- The function and effects of LGBTQIA+ networks and employee resource groups in workplace organizations.
- Separatist safe(r) spaces, ally places in organizations, LGBTQIA+ organizations, movements, and activisms.

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**Deadline for submission is 15 November 2023**

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