Where is queer theory in organizational studies?

Abstract

The main goal of this article is analyzing how queer theory is being applied in organizational studies. In other words, the goal understands how queer theory ideas and concepts are forged by organizational researchers, mainly searching to analyze the themes that are studied in organization using queer theory lenses as also the concepts approached and methodologies present in empirical research. To accomplish this aim a bibliographical research from 2008 to 2014 in EBSCO Business Source Premier, Emerald, Sage, Willey Online Library, Science Direct Freedom, Taylor & Francis databases, and Ephemera: theory & politics as carried out. Queer theory has been applied to different themes in organizational studies: friendship, humor and control, entrepreneurship, leadership and space. Despite queer theory being applied to many different themes most of these works still use queer theory to study aspects related to gender and sexuality. Research about race, class, ethnicity and the body is neglected in organizational studies and need to be developed by organizational researchers. Beyond that, there is a huge potential to apply queer theory’s concepts to other aspects not related only to the study of minorities.

Keywords: queer theory, organizational studies, themes, concepts, bibliographical research

Introduction

Organizational studies is eminently a theoretical field. In this sense, the one of the main goals in organization studies is to search and develop new approaches to be applied and used in research that has relations with the process of organizing in contemporary society. Then, the main idea we can outline about this statement is that in this specific research organization does not mean an entity but a constant process of organizing our lives. In this sense, organizations are “better understood as the aggregative, unintended outcome of local efforts at ordering and regularizing our otherwise intractable and amorphous life word in order to make it more predictable and livable”. In other words, “organization is more a tedious and interminable process of factioning out the real than a solid, static thing”. One way in which to organize lives is related with gender and sexuality norms. Queer theory is a conceptual approach, among others, commonly used to understand the construction of social categories related with the normalization of gender and sexuality. Despite its intrinsic relation to gender and sexuality studies, there are strong indications that the use of queer theory has expanded beyond the study of gender and sexuality, particularly in other areas of study in the humanities and social sciences. For example, the international scientific congress Queering Paradigms (QP), which is not restricted only to organizational studies, was first held in England in 2008 with the purpose of discussing and questioning homophobic policies. In its latest edition, it starts to incorporate broader debates focused on discussion and questioning the process of standardization and marginalization in contemporary societies that goes beyond issues of gender and sexuality aiming to discuss identity concerns and their implications for theory, analysis, and methodology.

This can be demonstrated in the streams in the 2012 QP congress: Queering Bodies, Identities and Embodiment; Queering Epistemologies and Methodologies; Queering Institutions; Queering Language Practices; Queering Media Practices; Queering Races and Ethnicities and Queering Geographies and Temporalities. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to examine how queer theory is being used in organizational studies. In other words, the goal is understanding how queer theory ideas and concepts are forged by organizational researchers, mainly searching to analyze the themes that are studied in organization using queer theory lenses as also the concepts approached and methodologies present in empirical research. Thus, fulfilling its intention the article will first mean understanding key concepts contained in queer theory to afterward see how queer theory has been used in organizational studies.

Queer theory's concepts

Queer theory emerges in the 1980s as a school of thought that questions the current forms of understanding social identities. Its inspiration comes from gay and lesbian studies, as well feminist theory, the American sociology of deviance and French post–structuralism. Queer theory precursors. However, the emergence of queer theory in the academic field is not precise. For example, Louro asserts that queer theory enters definitely into academic circles in 1986 with the publication of an article by the American historian Joan Scott entitled Gender: a useful category of historical analysis. In this article, Scott does not hide that she took concepts borrowed from Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida to develop her ideas and concepts.

Other authors attributed the book Epistemology of the Closet written by as queer theory’s founder text. About this subject, Halperin also includes the book Gender Trouble written by Judith Butler as a foundational queer theory work. But, definitely, queer theory began years before the publishing of these works with the first edition of History of Sexuality published by Michel Foucault in 1976. According to Seidman, queer theory is therefore a social constructionist approach that challenges essentialist or universalist understandings of gender and sexuality, questioning the operation of the binary logics related to gender and sexuality identities (for instance: hetero/homosexual; masculine/feminine), considering these identities as a social and political organizing principle. Intending to combat the universalizing and essentializing view of gender and sexuality queer theory affirms that identities are unstable categories
and the universality and unity of identities categories are undermined by
the restrictions of the discourse in which they function. Queer
theory’s main concern is related to the conception of human beings
forged by Illuminists and/or Humanists. Then the queer theory is an
attack on response to the universalism and essentialism present in
Illuminist and/or Humanist approaches. Seidman also asserts that
the main target of queer theory is the study of power relations within
a Foucauldian perspective of analysis. Therefore, as Cohen avers,
the central point to queer theory is not only to focus on the cultural
construction of sexuality but to analyze the way which power is
asymmetrically distributed among and within these sexual categories.
In other words, queer theory concerns to problematize the normal.
These ideas developed by queer theorists can be better understood
approaching the following concepts: performativity and performance;
heterosexual matrix and heteronormativity; subjectivity/identity and
identification.

The social heteronormative logic is so present in so many social
institutions in the world that queer has more of a target than to
increase toleration or equal status in specific societies. Its main goal
is challenging these institutions. Normative procreation patterns
structures labeled as heterosexual regulate and produce the gender
binary logic (male/female) producing intelligible genders. In this
sense, intelligible genders are produced by regulatory practices
that produce coherent identities and truths through coherent gender
norms. Butler calls the regulatory practices of coherent gender
norms the heterosexual matrix. She affirms that the internal unity
and coherence of man or woman requires at the same time a stable
and oppositional heterosexuality. Then, “institutional heterosexuality
both requires and produces the univocity of each of the gendered terms
that constitute the limit of gendered possibilities within an oppositional,
binary gender system.” Butler complements her affirmation
showing that this kind of conception of gender “presupposes not only
a causal relation among sex, gender and desire, but suggests as well
that desire reflects or expresses gender and that gender reflects or
expresses desire.”

The heterosexual matrix institutes the heterosexuality as being
the pattern to be followed by individuals. As pattern, it operates as a norm
that compels and regulates lives (heteronormativity). Heterosexual
norms conduct us to think that to be successful in our lives we need
to constitute heterosexual families and capital goods (for example:
own house, car, among other capital goods). If we follow these
heterosexual norms we are seen and considered as ethical people who
obey the natural force of nature. If we do not follow heterosexual
norms we are seen as a person who fails because of the nonconformity
with reproductive lifestyles and capitalist practices, constituting
what Butler called objects. As a set of regulatory practices, the
heterosexual matrix through which identities related to gender and
sexuality become intelligible means that some identities cannot exist,
manly identities which break with and do not follow the determinist
relation of sex–gender–sexuality. The heterosexual matrix is a
political relation instituted by cultural laws that work as a regulator of
the meaning of gender identity categories. However, the heterosexual
matrix cannot be conceived as a fixed and deterministic structure.
Gender norms work and are operated by the heterosexual matrix,
soliciting in us the embodiment of some idealized characteristics
of femininity and masculinity. Based on performativity affirms the
power of the matrix and its norms. For example, Butler describes
that when someone born and they are named as girl heterosexual
norms initiate the symbolic power process that acts producing bodies,
gestures, behaviors, clothes, desires to be mother and wife, and so on.

Then, the naming process produces someone as a viable subject
according to the heterosexual matrix. Then, performativity affirms a
binding power that works as a network of rewards and punishments
which “include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations
of ownership, statements that not only perform action, but confer a
binding power on the action performed”. In this sense, performativity
occurs through discourse and it operates by discourse. Performativity
is the uninterrupted and constant processes of repetitive heterosexual
matrix norm citations.

Therefore, performativity is not a singular and deliberate act it
is power relations that operate by discourse. Performativity is not
an intentional and conscientious act of a person and does not have
its foundations in someone. On the contrary, its foundations are in
binding power related to discourse. Queer theory in questioning the
foundational categories of man and woman wishes to eliminate gender
or proliferate it beyond the male–female dichotomy. Thus, queer
theory tends to see gender as something fluid, negotiated, created
through repeated performances, not something fixed and innate.
Performativity “is neither free play nor theatrical self–representation;
nor can it be simply equated with performance.”

Performativity needs to be thought of as the process that regulates
the repetition of norms. Then, repetition is not performed by a subject;
on the contrary, repetition is what allows, enables and produces the
subject. It means that performativity is not a singular act performed
by a subject, but the temporal condition for the subject; performativity
is the process which the subject is constituted as subject. Behaviors
seem to be real, normal, and natural because the subject is
performatively induced to do performances according to norms and
social conventions.

Then, performativity constitutes the possible performances that
can be enacted in a specific context. Therefore, performance and
performativity are not the same things, and performativity needs
to be understood not as a self–expression/presentation, “but as the
unanticipated resignifiability of highly invested terms”. The subject
is not free and outside of norms, but is produced through the constant
repetition of these norms.

Due to this Butler believes that the “critique of the queer subject
will be central to queer politics to the extent that it constitutes a self–
critical dimension within activism”. This critique of the subject works
as “a persistent reminder to take the time to consider the exclusionary
force of one of activism’s most treasured contemporary premises”. In
queer theory the subject “is understood to be constructed and
contained by multiple practices of categorizations and regulation”.
For queer theory identities are always fluid, heterogeneous, political,
and even paradoxical. The queer theory argues that “identities are
always multiple or at best composites with literally an infinite number
of ways in which ‘identity–components’ (e.g., sexual orientation, race,
class, nationality, gender, age, able–ness) can intersect or combine”.
However, besides queer theory considering identity disperse gender
and sexual identities cannot be seen only as identities, but they need
to be seen as categories of knowledge framed by discourse.

Identity and subjectivity in queer theory need to be understood
as meaning identification or recognition. People e are bound to an
identity in a process of identification. It means that individuals are
induced by power relations to identify themselves in the symbolic
order searching for a compulsory recognition to become subjects.
However, “identification with elements in the symbolic order is
never complete”. For the subject the symbolic order seems to have

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Methodology

This research is not a purely bibliometric study. In this sense Spinak defines bibliometrics in different ways and for the author bibliometrics can be seen as

a) A multidisciplinary discipline;

b) The study of scientific publications to identify authors;

c) Trends and relationships between authors;

d) A quantitative study of published literature;

e) The quantitative study of the production of documents, among other forms.

Thus, one of the main characteristics of bibliometrics is to use statistical methods to analyze the scientific production of a particular area or database. Despite this research looking for trends in organization studies related to the queer theory, it is not characterized only as a bibliometric review. The research intentions are not only to demonstrate statistical information about the knowledge produced related to the queer theory in the organizational field. Beyond some statistical information about queer theory in organizational studies the research also seeks to understand how queer theory is used in the organizational field, characterizing this research as a bibliographic research too, trying to establish an overview of queer theory in organization studies. According to Gill, the bibliographical research goes beyond bibliometric research because it also involves reading, analyzing and interpretation of journals and books. Therefore, you must perform a systematic and careful reading of the material that was collected through a previous screening to use it as the theoretical foundation of empirical research or as a basis for new formulations of a given theory.

Table 1 Data Bases and their Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data base</th>
<th>Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO Business</td>
<td>Academy of Management Journal; Academy of Management Review; Administrative Science Quarterly; California Management Review; Economics; Equality; Diversity and Inclusion (belonged to Emerald too until 2011); Gender Work and Organization (until 2011); Harvard Business Review; Industrial &amp; Labor Relations Review; Journal of Employment Counseling; Journal of Management Studies; Journal of Workplace Rights; Public Administration; The Career Development Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>Action Research; Administration &amp; Society; Administrative Science Quarterly (belongs to EBSCO too); Advances in Developing Human Resources; The American Review of Public Administration; Australian Journal of Management; Educational Management Administration &amp; Leadership; Group &amp; Organization Management; Human Relations; Human Resource Development Review; International Journal of Cross Cultural Management; International Review of Administrative Sciences; International Small Business Journal; Journal of Human Values; Journal of Industrial Relations; Journal of Management Inquiry; Journal of Travel Research; Journal of Vacation Marketing; Labor Studies Journal; Leadership; Management and Labour Studies; Management &amp; Organizational History; Management Communication Quarterly; Management Learning; Marketing Theory; Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly; Organization; Organization Studies; Organizational Research Methods; Public Relations Inquiry; Review of Market Integration; Simulation &amp; Gaming; Small Group Research; Tourism and Hospitality Research; Transactional Analysis Journal; Work, employment and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>Academic Review; Account Perspectives; British Journal of Management; Business Ethics: A European Review; Business and Society Review; The Career Development Quarterly; Gender, Work and Organization (belonged to EBSCO too until 2011); International Labour Review; Journal of Management Studies; Management and Organization Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willey Online Library</td>
<td>Citation: Souza EMD. Where is queer theory in organizational studies?. Social Int J. 2017;1(4):127-134. DOI: 10.15406/sij.2017.01.00021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One hundred and fifty four (154) articles using these criteria in the databases analyzed and ephemera from the period January 2008 to March 2014 distributed in this way: 9 (nine) articles in EBSCO Business Source Premier; 37 (thirty seven) in Emerald; 16 (sixteen) in Willey Online Library; 84 (eighty four) in SAGE; 3 (three) in Science Direct Freedom; 1 (one) in Taylor & Francis and 4 (four) in Ephemera Journal. However, 2 (two) articles found in EBSCO and Willey Online Library databases were the same Gender, Work and Organization belonged to both databases until 2011. After this analysis the real amount of different articles found related to queer theory is 152 (one hundred and fifty two). After this, all 152 (one hundred and fifty two) articles were read to see if they have connections and relations with queer theory (Table 2).

In this primary stage, for a paper to be considered as having some relation to queer theory the following aspects were analyzed: the goal of the article, the concepts used and elaborated by the authors, the theoretical framework of the article and in the case of empirical papers the methodology used. This first analysis intended to eliminate articles that do not have any possibility of connections and relations to queer theory and from the 152 (one hundred and fifty two) articles analyzed only 59 (fifty nine) have some possibility of connections and relations to queer theory. The distribution of these articles can be seen below (Table 3).

![Table 2 Amount Articles Found](data:image/png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data bases</th>
<th>Amount articles found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO Business Source Premier</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willey Online Library</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Direct Freedom</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephemera Journal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 First Analysis Queer Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data base</th>
<th>Total articles</th>
<th>Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO Business Source Premier</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gender, Work and Organization (3 articles); Public Administration (1 article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Career Development International (1 article); Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal (6 articles); Gender in Management: An International Journal (3 articles); Journal of Organizational Change Management (1 article); Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal (1 article) and Society and Business Review (1 article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willey Online Library</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gender, Work and Organization (10 articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Advances in Developing Human Resources (3 articles); Group &amp; Organization Management; Human Relations (8 articles); International Journal of Cross Cultural Management (1 article); International Small Business Journal (1 article); Journal of Management Inquiry (1 article); Journal of Vacation Marketing (1 article); Leadership (1 article); Management Learning (1 article); Marketing Theory (1 article); Organization (9 articles); Organization Studies (2 articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Direct Freedom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of Management (2 articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Culture and Organization (1 article)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No article that could be related to queer theory in the journal Ephemera: theory & politics in organization. Another important consideration is that 1 (one) article that has connections to queer theory was found in Gender, Work and Organization appeared in two databases analyzed: EBSCO and Willey Online Library for reasons sorted above. Then, considering this aspect the correct total amount of articles found that have some relations to queer theory is 58 (fifty eight). However, in the first reading was not so clear that all of the 58 articles selected belong to queer theory. But, in case of doubt if an article belongs or not to queer theory it was decided to classify it as being queer in this first reading to reread it again. Due that, all 58 articles were read again searching to understand if they really use...
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Culture and Organization (1 article).

Journals after second reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data base</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Journals after second reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gender; Work and Organization (2 articles); Public Administration (1 article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Career Development International (1 article); Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/An International Journal (2 articles); Gender in Management: An International Journal (2 articles); Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal (1 article)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Advances in Developing Human Resources (1 article); Human Relations (6 articles); International Small Business Journal (1 article); Journal of Vacation Marketing (1 article); Leadership (1 article); Management Learning (1 article); Organization (2 articles); Organization Studies (2 articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Culture and Organization (1 article)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After that, the 33 (thirty three) articles were read again carefully and deeply to analyze how they use queer theory and their possible contribution to the Organizational field. Just after achieved these studies was possible to analyze where queer theory is used in organization studies, that means to understand the main queer theory concepts used and the objects/themes approached in organizational studies. The next topic analyzes the queer articles found seeking to understand what themes and concepts are developed by organizational researchers. To accomplish this task these 33 articles were reread again carefully searching to understand what queer concepts were used in each article and how these concepts were defined by the authors, the main theme and goal of the article, with the articles, use queer concepts to analyze new themes beyond gender and sexuality and the methodology applied in case of empirical research. All of these article aspects were tabulated for later the data found in the articles to be compared and analyzed.

**Table 4 Second Analysis Queer Articles**

- EBSCO: 3 articles
  - Gender; Work and Organization (2 articles)
  - Public Administration (1 article)
- Emerald: 6 articles
  - Career Development International (1 article)
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/An International Journal (2 articles)
  - Gender in Management: An International Journal (2 articles)
  - Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal (1 article)
- SAGE: 15 articles
  - Advances in Developing Human Resources (1 article)
  - Human Relations (6 articles)
  - International Small Business Journal (1 article)
  - Journal of Vacation Marketing (1 article)
  - Leadership (1 article)
  - Management Learning (1 article)
  - Organization (2 articles)
  - Organization Studies (2 articles)
- Taylor & Francis: 1 article
  - Culture and Organization (1 article)

After that, the 33 (thirty three) articles were read again carefully and deeply to analyze how they use queer theory and their possible contribution to the Organizational field. Just after achieved these studies was possible to analyze where queer theory is used in organization studies, that means to understand the main queer theory concepts used and the objects/themes approached in organizational studies. The next topic analyzes the queer articles found seeking to understand what themes and concepts are developed by organizational researchers. To accomplish this task these 33 articles were reread again carefully searching to understand what queer concepts were used in each article and how these concepts were defined by the authors, the main theme and goal of the article, with the articles, use queer concepts to analyze new themes beyond gender and sexuality and the methodology applied in case of empirical research. All of these article aspects were tabulated for later the data found in the articles to be compared and analyzed.

**Queer in the organizational field**

Many of the 152 articles found in the first search were eliminated mainly due to two reasons:

i. They do not use queer theory concepts and ideas in their theoretical approaches,

ii. The articles were selected by the system because they have the words queer or queering in their text, but the use of these terms does not related to queer theory.

About the use of the term queer, it is relevant to explain that the articles eliminated utilize this term in two different ways none has any relation with queer theory as follows: queer is used as meaning a population represented by all marginalized sexualities present in the acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender); and queer is used as just meaning male homosexuals. Related to the word queering the term was used in some papers as meaning two aspects: the process to bring LGBT issues to management disciplines independently of the conceptual approach used; and queering (Q) to another different sort of specific sexual identity supplementing the acronym LGBT to become LGBTQ. The forthcoming topics will discuss how queer theory has been used in the organizational field by the analysis of the 33 (thirty three) articles found. Therefore, to better understand the uses of queer theory in management studies the next topic identifies the concepts used by these articles, the themes worked through in the papers, the objects of analysis and the type of methodology used in empirical research to try to understand how the organizational field has appropriated queer theory.

**Analysis of queer theory’s uses in management**

This section intends to analyze how queer theory has been appropriated by the organizational field. To accomplish this goal the queer concepts used will be analyzed, themes and objects worked through in the articles and the methodology used in empirical research. Before starting these analyses it is valuable to explain that some of the 33 articles employ the term queering in their text meaning a verb and not another kind of sexual identity nor a process to bring LGBT issues into the management discipline. In this sense the term queering is employed as meaning the reflexive action to problematize what is considered socially, culturally or biologically natural, universal, essential, reified, solid, stable and unproblematic. Therefore, the expression queering in queer articles does not mean a different sort of sexual identity or a curricular content, but the reflexive academic action that seeks to disrupt the established social order.

Queer ideas and concepts appear for the first time in organizational studies with the article ‘Unpacking Priscilla: Subjectivity and Identity in the Organization of Gendered Appearance’ by. But, despite without a shadow of doubt being an original queer text in which queer concepts are deeply discussed and developed, Brewis and others do not use the expression queer theory in their text. The first author to bring this label to the management discipline was Parker with the article Faking Management: Queer, Theory and Reflexivity. Henceforth, queer theory begins to be used more widely in organizational studies, mainly in studies about aspects of gender and sexuality in the workplace as will be shown late.

About the queer concepts utilized by the authors, it is important to explain that some articles analyzed use more than one queer concept in their theoretical framework. Due to this, some papers appear more than once in (Table 5). The main concepts used by the authors of their papers can be organized into six categories: performativity and performance; the heterosexual matrix and heteronormativity; subjectivity, identity and identification; debating concepts related to gender; embodiment; and knowledge. However, as (Table 5) shows, it can be affirmed that only three main conceptual categories are largely worked through and used in organizational studies:

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Table 5 Queer Concepts and Ideas Used in Organization Studies Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queer concepts used</th>
<th>Articles' authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performativity and Performance</td>
<td>26,29,32,34,36,38,43,44,47,51,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual Matrix and Heteronormativity</td>
<td>25,28,30,34,44,45,47,49,51,52,55,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivity, Identity Categories and Identification</td>
<td>26,35,36,37,40,41,44,46,47,50,53,54,55,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating Concepts about Gender</td>
<td>42,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embodiment</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, most of the articles are focused and centered on applying Butler’s concepts in the organizational field, as Butler is the main author utilized by organizational researchers in this regard. Butler’s concepts related to performativity, heteronormativity and identity construction are the main approaches and directions of construction of the ideas and analysis presented by the articles’ authors. Important queer concepts developed by other queer theorists like are not regularly used in organizational studies (Table 5).

There is a huge diversity of themes studied in the organizational field that use queer theory concepts. Finding this diversity is very interesting because it shows the connections established between queer theory and management. In other words, the connections highlight which organizational phenomena are analyzed using queer theory. Table 6 points to ten different themes that are connected with queer theory in this regard: appropriation of queer theory by different management disciplines and approaches; studies of friendship at work; identity/subjectivity construction; studies of beauty; diversity programs and policies; humor and comedy in the workplace; spatial division; entrepreneurship; leadership; and discrimination at work (Table 6).

Table 6 Themes and Objects Analyzed in Organizational Studies Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Aspect analysed (object of analysis)</th>
<th>Articles' authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation of Queer Theory by Management Disciplines and Theoretical Approaches</td>
<td>Bringing Sexuality (LGBT) issues to Human Relations Discipline</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problematizing the discipline of public administration</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problematizing Critical Management Studies as a Performative Approach</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Sexuality and Gender</td>
<td>30–33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivity/Identity</td>
<td>Gender and Sexuality</td>
<td>19,25,37,41,42,46,51,52,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expatriates</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intersection among Race, Gender and Class</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problematizing Binarity in gender, race and sexual identity</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Gender and the Body</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Diversity Policies and Programs</td>
<td>Sexuality and Gender</td>
<td>39,40,47,48,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and Comedy</td>
<td>Control and Subversion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Gender and Sexuality</td>
<td>45,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Charisma</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender and Body</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination at Work</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, when our attention is directed to the main object and aspect analyzed under these themes their diversity collapses. From the thirty three articles found twenty seven relations to and have as their main object of analysis aspects of gender and sexuality. Therefore, despite the diversity of themes presented by the articles queer theory continues to be utilized mostly to study aspects of gender and sexuality inside these themes. Only six articles do not have any kind of relation to sexuality and gender studied, having as their main objects of analysis charisma, control and subversion, identity of expatriates and the knowledge produced in management studies. But despite most articles analyzed have relation to gender and sexuality the themes explored in these articles are diversified as highlighted.

Analyzing the themes studied by the organizational authors can be verified in the last decade a significant increase of empirical research that uses queer ideas in the management field. Queer concepts have been used to study a large range of themes in management: friendship in the workplace; leadership; subjectivity and identity; beauty and body; sexual orientation and sex agenda; gender and performativity; humour; and relations between space and gender. From the thirty three works found twenty four reports empirical research.

As Table 7 shows the empirical studies accomplished use eight different sorts of methods and sometimes more than one kind of
method was used in the same piece of empirical research. The most usual method is the interview as follows: semi-structured/structured interviews (13 articles); ethnography including auto-ethnography (4 articles); netnography (1 article); document analysis (4 articles); participant observation (1 article); multi-modal approach (1 article); focus group (1 article), and even quantitative survey (1 article). The papers that simultaneously used two different kinds of methodologies are11,44 (Interview and Focus Group) and21 (Interview and Quantitative Survey) (Table 7). Although the main object of analysis of the queer articles analyzed is some relation to gender and sexuality, some of these articles bring new insights about queer concepts. They develop new ideas related to these objects mainly about identity construction and organizational knowledge.45–50

### Table 7 Methods Used In Queer Empirical Research in Organizational Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Articles’ authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>15.25–34,36,40,41,49,51,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography and Auto-ethnography</td>
<td>15.31,17,42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netnography</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Analysis</td>
<td>19,34,35,1,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-modal Approach</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Survey</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

As demonstrated queer theory has been already applied to different themes in organizational studies: friendship, humor and control, entrepreneurship, leadership and space. However, despite being applied to different themes many of these works still use queer theory to study aspects of gender and sexuality in friendship, entrepreneurship, leadership and space.41–45 Research about race, class, ethnicity and the body is marginal in studies that use queer theory concepts and need to be more developed by organizational researchers. Beyond that, the use of queer theory in management studies about gender and sexuality is restricted only to studying identities related to minorities and it is necessary to expand its use to race, gender and sexual identities considered hegemonic like men, white, heterosexual, for instance. Therefore, queer theory is not an umbrella for studying minorities and it studies all kind of processes of normalization which produce both the normal and abnormal. Just proceeding that way the binary logic where difference means only a question of us–them can be broken.

Hence, the queer theory should not be defined as a study of gay men, lesbians, transsexuals, bisexuals, women, black people, and so on. Firstly, studying these minority identities does not make a piece of research queer. In other words, it is not having as a subject of study gay men that makes research queer.46 Then, what allows research to be considered queer is not only studying gay men or lesbians, but the way which identities are understood and worked through in the research independently whether the subjects studied are gays or not.

The analysis accomplished in the articles allows expanding queer concepts to other organizational aspects not related to gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality only.51–56 Hence, in addition to the analysis of the production of difference among human beings that operates classifying them under a normal/abnormal and minority/hegemonic binary logic two main objects/themes of study were identified to which queer theory can be applied these are not related to the productions of differences related to sexuality and gender:

i. Identity construction in the workplace;

ii. Epistemological issues about management disciplines and

iii. Ontological aspects about the concept of organization.

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### Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

### References


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