# Queered Methodologies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Researchers

Nick Rumens, Middlesex University

## Introduction

A chapter on queered methodologies for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) scholars is apposite at a time when queer theory has made recent inroads into the field of methodology and methods within the social sciences (Browne & Nash, 2010; Warner, 2004; Hammers & Brown, 2004; Haritaworn, 2008; Hegarty, 2008). However, lessons have yet to be drawn from this body of literature for organisational scholars undertaking empirical research on EDI issues in the workplace. This neglect is a missed opportunity to study these research themes from alternative perspectives that mount a challenge to ontologies and epistemologies that have become mired within and reproduce heteronormative constructions of sexuality and gender. As such, this chapter grows out of an effort to examine the potential for queered methodologies to problematize the multifarious expressions of organisational heteronormativity by generating research on how lives are lived *queerly* – at odds with and beyond the reach of heteronormativity – in the workplace. As such, this chapter focuses on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) sexualities and genders which, as I have argued elsewhere (Rumens, 2017), are typically regarded as the standard fare of queer theory research. In this way, I explore how queered methodologies can enable EDI researchers to challenge the heteronormativity of methodological practice, especially as LGBT people have been excluded from important methodological sites in the past or, where they have figured centrally, it has often been to their detriment when research instruments have been used to detect signs of 'homosexuality' within contexts where, for example, it is not tolerated and criminalised. Unpacking these issues across the pages of this chapter, I begin by introducing queer theory before discussing an emergent literature on queer methodologies. Against this backdrop, I draw upon my research to discuss the queer ontologies and epistemologies that are central to my work as an organisational queer theorist within the EDI sub-discipline. The challenges of queering methodologies are discussed before the chapter concludes.

**Queer theory**

Queer theory has a vibrant historical lineage, having been shaped through various intellectual currents including radical feminism, gay and lesbian studies, postmodernism and poststructuralism. It found a particular form and outlet within some US universities during the 1990s, nurtured within the humanities where queer research has subsequently proliferated to the extent that it has infiltrated, albeit unevenly, a wide range of disciplines such as law, communication studies, education, business and management (Leckey & Brooks, 2010; Yep, 2003; Parker, 2002; Renn, 2010). Specifically, queer theory appeared in academic discourse when it was adopted by feminist Teresa de Lauretis in the introduction to the published proceedings of a 1990 conference, 'Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities,' convened in the US at the University of California. Then, queer theory was used to 'theorize lesbian and gay sexualities' (de Lauretis, 1991: iii), focusing on how lesbian and gay identities were discursively constructed through and within the confines of heteronormative discourse in particular. Of concern, for de Lauretis and others, were the pejorative associations these identities evoked at that point in time and still do (e.g. death, perversion, excess, disease), and the violence done to gay men and lesbians through upholding a rigid and restrictive binary gender and sexual order (Sullivan, 2003).

Queer theory demands that we question the dominant assumptions about what is 'normal' and what is 'abnormal' through a process of incessant critique, typically seeking to dislodge claims about the essential nature of sexuality and gender (Ahmed, 2006; Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 1998; Halperin, 1995; Warner, 1993). This impulse of queer theory is animated in the work of feminist theorist Judith Butler, who elaborated in *Gender Trouble* (1990) the argument that gender is not an essential category that is inherently linked to a dualistic concept of biological sex (male/female). Illustrating this, Butler developed the concept of performativity, probably Butler's greatest and most influential contribution to queer theory. Performativity is understood as a way to identify how the category of gender is made 'real' through the recitation of gendered norms. In Butler's words, the performative ontology of gender is premised on her conviction that gender is a corporeal style, an act which 'is both intentional and performative, where "performative" suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning' (Butler, 1990: 177). Through acts of repetition and recitation, gender becomes ritualized, the effects of which make it appear natural. Arguing that 'this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject' (Butler, 1993: 95), Butler emphasises that

subject positions are continually evoked through stylized acts of repetition, including those compelled by heteronormativity through mundane acts of gesture and inflection. Much queer theory research that appropriates Butler's work on performativity interrogates how sexuality and gender are configured in hierarchical binaries within heteronormative cultures, where one element (e.g. heterosexual, masculine) is valued and culturally privileged over the other (e.g. homosexual, feminine). Butler's writing has also inspired research that examines the consequences for those subjects who cannot or will not fit into those gender and sexual categories legitimated and privileged as 'natural' and 'right' within a heteronormative regime (McPhail, 2004).

Mobilising gender performativity as a conceptual resource, queer theorists have examined how gender identities are historically patterned, contextually contingent and ascribed meanings at specific moments in time (Halberstam, 1998, 2005). In this sense, queer theorists have sought to destabilise the foundations upon which identity categories such as 'homosexual', 'heterosexual', 'male' and 'female' have been theorised (Gamson, 1995). Indeed, adopting a poststructuralist strategy of deconstruction, queer theory scholars have problematized the stability of identity categories to the extent that it becomes difficult to speak of 'gay', 'lesbian', 'bisexual' and 'trans' identities, minorities, communities and cultures. This has angered critics of queer theory, such as lesbian feminist scholar Sheila Jeffreys (2002), for whom identities are important rallying points for organising politically. The tension arising from the demands to acknowledge the fictitious quality of identity categories and recognise the need for identity based organising has given rise to all manner of ontological and epistemological questions regarding the limits of heteronormative identity politics.

As a core aspect of queer theory critique, the term queering refers to strategies of reading that go against the grain of heteronormative culture, in order to seek out new ways of becoming (e.g. in terms of identity, subjectivity, relating). Significantly, queering has also cast light on alternative discursive arrangements of power and knowledge. McRuer expresses it thus: queering represents 'a critical perversion that continuously forges unexpected alliances and gives voice to identities our heteronormative culture would like to, and cannot, silence' (1997: 5). True to its roots in sexual radicalism, queering both informs and facilitates a form of politics that is able to challenge sexual categorisation based on a heterosexual/homosexual binary, giving rise to pertinent questions such as: can 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' identities adequately account for the diversity in erotic expression that many people feel as they explore their sexuality and gender over a life time?

This question, and others like it, has occupied the minds of queer theorists for over three decades, producing numerous blistering critiques and deconstructive analyses of the normalising tendencies of a sexual order that privileges heterosexuality (Edelman, 2004; Halperin, 2011; Halberstam, 1998, 2005; Warner, 1993, 1999).

Collectively, this body of work has sustained a much needed interrogation of heteronormativity and its effects on how LGBT live their lives. Heteronormativity, according to Berlant and Warner (1998: 548), is responsible for maintaining damaging binaries within 'institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality not only coherent – that is, organised as a sexuality – but also privileged'. Queer theory has sought to expose the disciplinary effects of heteronormativity on how individuals live meaningful lives, but also examines and celebrates the conditions of possibility for subjects to transcend the confines of heteronormative binaries and identity categories (Butler 1990, 1993, 2004a; Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 1998, 2005; Halperin, 1995, 2011; Warner 1993, 1999). While it is almost commonplace to associate queer theory scholarship with a concern about the impact of heteronormativity on LGBT people, a growing number of inroads into queer theory have opened up debates about 'straight queers', 'straight queerness' and the relationship between heteronormativity and heterosexuality (Allen, 2010; Thomas, 2000, 2009; Rumens, 2017). Pursuing the theme of queer as a practice that is resistant to 'regimes of the normal' (Warner, 1993: xxvi), a number of scholars have tapped into the renewable energy that powers queer theory in order to fuel incursions into disciplines such as law, communication studies, business and management, and education (Leckey & Brooks, 2010; Yep, 2003; Parker, 2002; Renn, 2010). Indeed, the presence of queer theory has surfaced within the social sciences, with a notable flurry of scholarly interventions examining the intersections between queer theory and social science research. In particular, social science scholars have debated the possibilities for thinking through, and putting into practice, 'queer methodologies' (Browne & Nash, 2010; Warner, 2004; Hammers & Brown, 2004; Haritaworn, 2008; Hegarty, 2008; Holliday, 2000; Rooke, 2009).

**Queer methodologies and queered methodologies**

A useful place to start in order to make sense of the literature on queer(ed) methodologies is at the site of debate concerning definition. Here discussions on queer methodologies parallel scholarly claims made by queer theorists about how the search for a definitive description of queer theory is both futile and undesirable. For instance, Hegarty (2008), writing on 'queer

methodologies' in the field of psychology, wonders if being able to articulate such a concept is 'doomed to failure'. Hegarty posits the two terms in a tense dynamic: methodology as a set of 'logics that attempt the impossible task of arranging different ways of knowing into hierarchical orders, based on competing ethical, practical and epistemological values'; while 'queer' is constructed as an 'anti-essentialist counter-disciplinary project, committed to partiality and irony' (2008: 125). Understood in this way, queer theory would seek to undermine the underpinning logics of methodology premised on rationality and coherence, exposing the performative quality of methodology. Queer theory would also problematize the methodological processes that generate heteronormative bodies of knowledge that limit our understanding about the provisionality and instability of sex and gender categorisation. Together, queer theory and methodology might work against each other as contradictions in terms that make the definition of a 'queer methodology' impossible. This contradiction and tension might, as Hegarty avers, condition alternative understandings of queer and methodology in some playful and productive ways that challenge the status quo. Indeed, by acknowledging queer theory's insistence on potentiality for alternative ways of becoming and relating, it is better to speak of queer metholo*gies*, and of all manner of methodological possibilities that might be queer(ied). Crucially, this chapter pivots on the practice of queering methodology that problematises a notion of a 'queer methodology' that assumes stability and uniformity in how some methodologies may or may not be 'queer'. In contrast, through the practice of queering, methodologies can be queered whereby we can destabilise and disrupt the methodological norms that currently govern how organisational research has been and ought to be carried out.

Similarly, Browne and Nash (2010) write about queer methodologies and methods in a way that denies the reader the comfort and reassurance that comes from being able to define concretely either of these terms. They refuse to settle scholarly arguments about whether research methods can be queer and challenge a perspective that suggests some research methods might be inherently queerer than others. This form of refusal is both vital and politically charged. As mentioned above, queer theory is seen to derive strength from its resistance to definition, even if it gives rise to difficult questions about whether we can speak of something that is distinctively 'queer theory' (Sullivan, 2003). The hesitation among some scholars about pinning stable meanings onto queer theory and, by implication, queer methodology, is oxygen for keeping alive the meanings, both current and unforeseen, associated with queer. Of course such a strategy is vulnerable to attack, as Browne and Nash acknowledge in the introduction to their edited text *Queer Methods and Methodologies*:

*The position we have taken for this project is one of not clarifying, and this may be seen by some (more traditional?) scholars as reflecting a lack of 'theoretical sophistication' and a failure to neatly box up our thinking. (2010: 8)*

By refusing to concede to such scholarly conventions, Browne and Nash (2010) avoid reproducing the type of theoretical defensiveness about the presence of queer theory in a landscape dominated by positivistic research methodologies and methods, which finds expression in an apologetic account of queer theory's indeterminable quality.

In contrast, some queer theorists appear more willing to be direct on the issue of identifying and outlining queer methodologies. Halberstam (1998: 10) in particular, defines queer methodologies as being able to provide an approach that is flexible enough to respond to the various locations of data collection on a specific research topic, but also exhibits disloyalty to conventional disciplinary methods. To illustrate, Halberstam (1998) refers to her cultural studies work on female masculinity which deploys textual criticism, historical survey, archival research and ethnographic data, among others, in order to unpack the complexities of female masculinity in specific cultural contexts. As Halberstam (1998) points out, this eclectic methodological approach is susceptible to scholarly criticism on the grounds that it fails to show loyalty and consistency to a particular discipline such as cultural studies. Familiar to many of us is the  notion of methodology premised on rationality and coherence, which is both commonplace and accepted as 'normal'. Indeed, it is frequently demanded of researchers, especially if research is understood as 'valid' and 'reliable', and worthy of publication in 'esteemed' academic journals. But methodological discordance and disciplinarity disloyalty may be necessary if data on how lives are lived queerly (e.g. those lives at odds with heteronormativity) is to be collected and analysed in its fullest, most discordant (queerest) sense. Queer methodologies then may encourage researchers to debunk the assumed stability and rationality of methodological process and procedure, destabilising what we consider to be 'normal' in methodological practice. Acknowledging this, Halberstam describes a queer methodology as a

> *scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behaviour. The queer methodology attempts to combine methods that are often cast as being at odds with each other, and it refuses the academic compulsion toward disciplinary coherence.(1998: 13)*

Queering methodology is a potentially fruitful endeavour because it can generate bodies of knowledge about how subjects live their lives against the grain of heteronormativity. Queer scholarship can yield insights into how subjects can challenge or, to coin Butler's terms, 'un/do' the normative social ordering of identities and subjectivities within the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Butler, 1990, 2004a). This is crucial because some bodies of scientific knowledge within the social sciences have been roundly criticised for their heteronormative bias, influencing, both negatively and positively, how LGBT sexualities and genders are understood within society (LeVay, 1996). Recounting the impact of heteronormative bias on the field psychology, Daniel Warner (2004) criticises psychology's historical role in identifying the figure of the 'homosexual' as deviant and pathologising homosexuality as a mental disorder through the deploying research methods such as the laboratory experiment and the interview. Used in this way, research methods have been pressed into service to curtail the freedoms of LGBT people and silence and discredit their voices, concerns, experiences and identities. At worst, they have been used to detect signs of homosexuality (e.g. in the military) so homosexuals may be identified and penalised (e.g. subject to prosecution, exclusion from organisations such as the military) or subjected to nefarious remedies (e.g. reparative therapies, chemical castration). To counter a methodological legacy within the field of psychology that has been mired in heteronormativity, Warner advocates queer methodologies for facilitating 'queer research': scholarship that seeks to 'understand how subjectivity is formed and unfurled, and does not presume to know what a 'homosexual' is from the outset' (2004: 334). Warner argues that, in the absence of a single truth about sexual identity and sexual oppression, and the methodological innovation required of researchers in order to understand complex contemporary technologies of oppression, 'there can be no one queer methodology, but many methodologies' (2004: 334). In this vein, there can be no single method that can be used to generate the 'best' type of knowledge on these topics. Specifically, Warner suggests that queer methodologies are driven by two heuristics.

First, queer methodologies ought to be reflexively aware of how they constitute the object they investigate, problematizing the researcher's role in generating knowledge with research participants. Of course, feminist scholars have long engaged with such issues (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; Stanley & Wise, 1990). While queer theory owes a debt of gratitude to feminist theorists, it is queer theory's capacity to foster forms of reflexivity about how heteronormativity may shape the research process (see also McDonald, 2013, 2016), a

shortcoming not always acknowledged in feminist methodologies (Browne & Nash, 2010), that is central to Warner's (2004) idea of what is *queer* about queer methodologies and methods.

Second, queer methodologies must 'qualitatively account for its object of inquiry' (Warner, 2004: 334). The idea of queer methodologies producing qualitative research that counters the use of research methodologies and methods that seek to quantify sexuality (e.g. numbers of homosexuals in organisations) is not altogether surprising. Methodologies and methods, although not inherently imbued with ontological and epistemological characteristics, have been operationalised in the pursuit of particular 'truths' about individuals that produce value-laden bodies of knowledge. For example, the heteronormative use of quantitative methods has often corralled subjects into stable identity categories such as 'homosexual', 'heterosexual', 'male', 'female', 'gay', 'lesbian', 'bisexual' and so on. In doing so, forms of knowledge about sexuality and gender are produced that give an incomplete picture about human sexuality, one that frequently cannot account fully for the diverse realities of individual lives, lived within and beyond such identity categories. For Warner (2004), qualitative research is a way to overcome the restrictions imposed by predetermined categories that are frequently the mainstay of quantitative research, and reverse the deadening effect they have on researching the vitality of lives lived beyond restrictive identity categories. Nevertheless, more recent debates on queering methodologies have problematized this ritualised practice of using qualitative research to research queer lives, which has become something of a 'queer orthodoxy' (Browne & Nash, 2010). As Browne (2010) argues, queering methodologies may entail the use of research methods to garner quantitative research on human sexuality, exposing the opportunities and constraints associated with these methods and the types of data about human sexuality they produce.

In summary, debates about queer(ed) methodologies offer some direction to EDI academics, especially those interested in LGBT work identities, lives and relationships, the dominance and maintenance of heteronormativity. One specific direction concerns the value EDI scholars can derive from using queered methodologies to garner insights into queerness, evident in those instances when individual lives are drawn and sustained against the grain of heteronormativity, and the consequences of this for those individuals who cannot and do not conform to heteronormativity. This line of analysis is apparent in a growing organisational literature on LGBT sexualities and genders at work (Colgan & Rumens, 2014; Courtenay, 2014; Ozturk, 2011), although the deployment of queer theory methodologically to that end has yet to be developed fully.

**Queered ontologies and epistemologies**

With the above in mind, in this section I outline what an intellectual commitment to pursuing queered methodologies might involve, using my research for illustrative purposes. Throughout my work I have relied on an understanding of queer as a cacophony of anti-assimilationist and anti-essentialist modes of theorising and organising. I am critically sensitive to the semantic plasticity of the term 'queer' which can, for instance, be used as an umbrella to describe sexual 'deviants' such as LGBT people, operate as an identity category in its own right or refer to a theoretical resource for questioning normative regimes and challenging disciplinary technologies of normalisation (Sullivan, 2003). For me, queer theory informs how I organise politically and serves as a conceptual resource and mode of reflexivity for exploring how lives, my own included, can be lived queerly in the workplace. Queered ontologies and epistemologies have been at the heart of my scholarship, and although the two are analytically distinct they are interconnected.

*Queered ontologies*

Although much of my research is steeped in queer theory it does not use the label of 'queered methodology', which reflects my very recent engagement with the term and practice, rather than my reluctance to come out as queer, methodologically speaking. Nonetheless, I am committed to developing queered ontologies and epistemologies. My research has focused on problematizing the heteronormativity that pervades management as an academic discipline, as a set of practices, as an identity, mode of organising and as a body of knowledge (Rumens, 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2017). I have been at pains to lift the voices of particular subjects – LGBT and queer – who struggle to be heard in the workplace as they negotiate the discursive pull of normative identity categories that seek to contain them within restrictive identity categories. Throughout my work I have tried to cultivate ontologies that prise open sites of debate about how binaries simplify and polarise human existence and social relations (Rumens, 2008a, 2010, 2012; Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009). Put differently, if we accept that ontology is a study of the nature and condition of existence, queer theory turns our attention toward humanist ontologies that essentialise sexuality and gender along binaries such as heterosexual/homosexual, male/female, and masculine/feminine. Sexuality and gender has been the site of ontological inquiry for some considerable time, frequently provoking

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controversy, as illustrated in scientific research that claims to explain the origins of homosexuality in terms of genetics (Brookey, 2002). Questions of ontology have also loomed large in the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, much beloved by queer theorists for his argument that the 'homosexual' is a cultural invention conditioned by the nineteenth century's fixation with taxonomic classification. Foucault's genealogical analysis of the discourses of sexuality across the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (1979, 1984, 1986) have proved to be enduringly popular within queer theory circles. The first volume is of particular note, as it traces the discursive construction of sexuality as a dichotomous, knowable and stable entity through scientific discourses and knowledge. Foucault's focus on discourse paved the way for a performative ontology of sexuality and gender, elaborated later in Butler's seminal work on the subject (1990, 1993, 2004a, 2004b), which has been widely adopted by many queer theorists (myself included). As discussed earlier, a performative ontology of sexuality and gender that follows Butler gives rise to questions about how and why in specific cultural contexts and moments in time sexual and gender difference is solidified within binaries, and who benefits and loses out from this ontological division.

In research conducted on gay men's workplace friendships in the UK (Rumens, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, 2012), I have cultivated a performative ontology of sexuality and gender to examine how friendships at work operate as relational contexts for imagining alternative ways of thinking and living sexual and gender difference beyond heteronormative binaries. Connected to this, my research has analysed the discursive closure levied by heteronormative discourses that enable and constrain the possibilities for intimacy and identity formation within workplace friendships. For example, some gay men I have interviewed hold humanist beliefs of sexuality and gender as absolutes and opposites, evident in how some of them mobilised a discourse of gay male sexuality as a stable and knowable entity that posed no sexual threat to heterosexual women, in order to construct platonic male-female workplace friendships (Rumens, 2012). From a queer theory perspective, this is a problematic strategy because it reproduces restrictive sexual and gender binaries, dealing a blow to challenging heteronormative discourse and practice in the workplace. In that sense, my research provides a more complicated slant on the notion of negotiating sexuality within 'cross-sex' friendships, which has typically been reduced to questions of heterosexual sexual attraction and desire. In conducting this research, queer theory operates as a theoretical resource for destabilising the heterosexual/homosexual binary as a power regime that shapes the ontological ordering of desires and human relations. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that fostering queered ontologies demands an epistemological openness in

regard to research design, choice of methods and issues of embodiment, positionality and subjectivity (Rooke, 2009).

*<c>Queered epistemologies*

Queer epistemology has been coined as a term to refer to ways of knowing and knowledge that problematizes and extends beyond the reach of heteronormativity. Specifically, Eng et al. (2005: 3) argue that the 'subjectless' critique of queer, in which queer has no fixed political referent, has shaped queer epistemology as a 'continuous deconstruction of the tenets of positivism at the heart of identity politics'. They go on to say that attention to queer epistemology 'also insists that sexuality—the organizing rubric of lesbian and gay studies—must be rethought for its positivist assumptions' (2005: 3). In keeping with this approach, which orients queer theory's critical gaze towards a field of normalisation in which sexualities are constituted as 'normal' and 'abnormal', and how this might condition a politics of resistance, I have generated knowledge on how lives are lived queerly at work (see for example Rumens, 2012, Rumens & Broomfield, 2014). Much of this research aims to denaturalise dominant social classifications (e.g. identity categories) and, in turn, destabilise the social order as a normative, hierarchical regime. This is illustrative of a commitment to an epistemology that engages with the various theoretical formulations of queer theory across my work. Much of my research on LGBT individuals in the workplace hopes to foster queer epistemologies that are centrally concerned with issues of normalisation, exposing the ontological and epistemological (dis)comfort that comes from forming and sustaining attachments to seemingly coherent and stable identity categories.

Queer epistemologies may also focus attention on how the researcher is positioned within the research process. Methodologically, queer epistemologies expose how we might become 'undone' as researchers, in the Butlerian sense (1990, 2004a), revealing the façade of ontological stability that some researchers hold on to when entering the field and interacting with participants. For example, Rooke (2010) recalls how the comfort associated with her performativity of a lesbian academic subject position is queered in the research process. Initially mistaking a female to male transsexual interviewee as lesbian, Rooke reflects on the discomfort associated with this misrecognition, but also on how such discomfort can condition a new basis of understanding between researcher and the researched – in this case, it later paved the way for the two of them to engage in an erotic relationship. As Rooke rightly points out, queered methodologies demand from researchers a 'queer reflexivity' that

pays attention to the performativity of a self (as researcher, as the researched) as gendered, sexualised, and how this can change throughout the research process. Significantly, a queer reflexivity is said by Rooke to offer a means of 'theoretical manoeuvring by exploring the connection between ontology and epistemology' (2010: 35). The importance of queer reflexivity has only just been touched upon in the realm of organisation studies (McDonald, 2013, 2016), even within the EDI sub-field where methodological debates about reflexivity have drawn widely from poststructuralism, feminism and postmodernism.

**Queered methodologies in practice**

In regard to EDI research, McDonald (2013) describes one important facet of queer reflexivity that concerns how researchers should always attend to the ways in which their identities, as well as the identities of their participants, are fluid, contingent and subject to alteration throughout the research process. Needless to say, feminist theory has elaborated this argument well before queer theory arrived on the scene. Still, queer theory is distinct in its strategy to deconstruct identity categories, destabilising the heteronormative order in an effort to transcend its normalising impulses. However, there are challenges associated with committing oneself fully to queer reflexivity and, in particular, about taking seriously the study of lives that are lived queerly. Even where organisational research is suffused in queer theory, De Souza et al. (2016) caution that a disjuncture can still occur between the espoused commitment to queer theory and the methodological processes employed to support such an endeavour.

For example, my study on gay men's workplace friendships (Rumens, 2010), despite being immersed in a Butlerian performative ontology of sexuality, arguably falls short of sufficiently problematizing the stability of sexual identity categories throughout the research process. In this study, I developed an eligibility criterion that targeted 'gay men' as research participants which, on reflection, might have inadvertently reinforced the ontological stability of the identity categories of 'gay' and 'man'. Potentially excluded then were those subjects who might have formed queer attachments to the identity categories of 'male' and 'gay' in unforeseen ways: perhaps individuals who identify as 'men who have sex with other men', 'straight', 'straight-queer', 'bisexual', 'intersex' and 'trans' but who might have investments in gay male identity categories at particular moments in time. Furthermore, this recruitment strategy reproduces a heteronormative construction of gay men as only having biologically 'male' bodies. One consequence of this is that deeper insights into how gay men's workplace

friendships may disrupt heteronormative constructions of gender and sexuality at work are obscured, curtailing the diversity of male perspectives and voices the study sought to foreground. Indeed, related to this is another challenge facing EDI researchers more generally; how to deploy methodologies that expose and examine the differences in perspectives, issues and experiences within and between the 'L', 'G', 'B', and 'T' components of the LGBT acronym, rather than succumbing to the temptation of elongating it further as some EDI researchers might seek to do. Queered methodologies represent a valuable tool for exposing the instabilities and incoherencies within such acronyms. For example, Browne's (2008) use of a questionnaire to survey LGBT people as part of the 'Do it with Pride' project, a UK initiative with the Bright and Hove Pride trustees, brought LGBT categories into being as 'positive' fixed signifiers of sexuality. Yet Browne's engagement with queer theory in the same project played a key role in highlighting the contingency of sexual and gender categories in the quantitative research procedure. The tools offered to us by queer theory can also be used to problematize the binary of Western/non-Western sexualities. As Kulpa and Mizielinska (2012) aver, the West/non-West binary is based on the 'Anglo-American experience of sexuality, making the Western experience the normative one'. Queered methodologies may be put to work by researchers to garner empirical insights into the experience of non-Western sexualities and genders (e.g. the Samoan Fa'afafine, recognised as distinct gender identity within Samoan society) to collapse the West/non-West binary.

Pursuing the development of queerer methodological practices, I have worked collaboratively with colleagues from Essex University in the UK and Monash University in Australia, to co-design a methodological framework that is open and flexible enough to study and articulate the shifting performativities of both the researcher/researched (see Riach, Rumens & Tyler., 2014, 2016). Thinking through the methodological possibilities of using Butler's notion of performativity for studying how sexuality, ageing and gender performances are negotiated and experienced by LGBT employees within and through organizations required us to queer conventional methodological practices. Our approach to conducting fieldwork sought to explore the reflexive potential of an anti-narrative methodology, one that would encourage critical reflection on our participants' experiences of performing subject positions compelled by the working life course expectations associated with what Freeman (2010: xxiii) calls 'chrononormativity'. This concept refers to the 'interlocking temporal schemes necessary for genealogies of descent and for the mundane workings of everyday life' (2010: xxiii). In organisational life, chrononormativity produces assumed and expected

heteronormative trajectories that may include (but are not exclusive to) ideas about the 'right' time' for particular life stages surrounding partnering, parenting and caring vis-à-vis career progression, promotions and flexible working. Our 'anti-narrative' approach sought to disrupt the apparent linearity, stability and coherence of organizational performances. At the same time, it encouraged participants to reflect on their own subjectivity through the conditions of organizational viability. In other words, we teased out the ways in which individuals are subject to hegemonic assumptions regarding organizationally appropriate performances of sexuality, age and gender shaped by 'chrononormativity'. For some subjects, this meant undertaking an iterative series of stylized performances in order to conform to heteronormative expectations and norms of being an older LGBT worker. Our anti-narrative approach to interviewing helped participants to reflect on the tensions, conflicts and compromises involved in negotiating heteronormative assumptions regarding organizationally appropriate performances of sexuality, age and gender shaped by 'chrononormativity'. This methodological practice can be deployed by other EDI researchers to encourage participants to reflect on how heteronormativity operates as a normative regime at work that disciplines LGBT identities and subjectivities. .

Methodologically, we were inspired by Stephenson's (2005: 33) use of 'memory-work' as an analytical map for 'undoing' linearity in Butler's terms, which orientates towards 'undoing the subject of linear, causal, biographical narratives and a notion of the subject as collectively constituted'. Specifically, our concern was to develop a methodology that would avoid simply re-presenting the versions of organizational 'reality' that we were trying to disrupt, precisely in order to understand their performativity. As Stephenson (2005: 34) argues,

To the extent that biographical and autobiographical accounts offer linear, causal explanations of individuals as the inevitable products of their past experiences … they tend to occlude the social processes we want to open and interrogate.

While studies exploring the multifaceted aspects of identity in an organizational setting often draw on traditional methods including interviews and participation observation (Alvesson, Ashcraft & Thomas, 2008), Denis (2008) insists that research methodologies must take into account the intersectional dynamics of various elements of the self within the design of both data collection and analysis. This is a particularly important consideration when seeking to avoid normative social scripts that are often conveniently drawn upon in research

interactions, whether they be binary (work/non-work), chronological (age) or categorical (straight, bisexual, gay). To address this, we devised an interview-based methodology that aimed to disrupt chronological narratives and categorical thinking. Underpinning this was a queered methodology designed to disrupt coherence and tease out overlaps, rather than work within and through apparently discrete categories of identity.

In practice, we began by conducting a visually-led interaction, asking participants to draw and then talk through an adaptation of Venn diagrams traditionally used to illustrate connective sets. These were not intended to contribute to our 'data' as such, but rather to provide a reflexive way of exploring the tacit connectivities that are often naturalized in everyday experience or inadvertently categorized as fixed and discrete in research design. In this respect, the diagrams also provided a material artefact that allowed the discussion to focus on participants' own experiences of the dynamics of age, gender and sexuality. We used these drawings as well as a broad interview schedule to guide subsequent discussion in the interviews. The interview schedule encouraged participants to (i) discuss their respective Venn diagrams, focusing on overlaps, connections, contradictions and oppositions; (ii) talk about their experiences of work, both now, in the past and in the future; (iii) reflect on how their experiences have changed, or remained the same, over time, and in different settings, and (iv) discuss how their working lives, and sense of self, are lived and experienced as they grow older. We made no attempt to define or categorize any temporal or life course 'markers' during the interviews, but allowed participants to articulate their own views and experiences in ways that made sense to themselves. In this respect, our anti-narrative approach may help other EDI researchers to conduct interviews designed to enable participants to reflect on and deconstruct their performances of, for example, sexuality, gender and age.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored how EDI researchers can engagein queering research methodologies. Using LGBT sexualities and genders as an example, I have argued that queered methodologies can help scholars to expose and problematize heteronormativity within the research process and in the type of research such processes condition. Focusing on how lives are lived queerly within organisational settings can throw into sharp relief how heteronormativity shapes academic knowledge and organisational practice on LGBT workplace equality, diversity and inclusion. Of course, the discussion of queered methodologies in this chapter is partial, and it is my wish that others will add to an emergent

literature on queer theory and methodology within organisation studies (McDonald, 2013, 2016, 2017; Rumens, 2017). As such, it has been my intention to interrogate the relationship between queer theory and methodology, in the hope that such terms continue to be the subject of ongoing critique and revision. The practice of queering methodology is key to keeping this project alive and alert, particularly in terms of critiquing the 'queer orthodoxies' that may result from methodological engagements with queer theory. This is important for addressing criticism levelled at queer theory about its abstract nature and limited capacity for social change, its tendency to operate as shorthand for gay and lesbian studies, and its focus on white, middle-class gay men (Kirsch, 2000; Jeffrey, 2002). Such criticism is sometimes valid but sometimes greatly exaggerated, neglecting to take into account the richness, both empirical and theoretical, of queer theory in all its contemporary incarnations (Leckey & Brooks, 2011; Halberstam, 2011; Clifford-Napoleone, 2015).

Indeed, acknowledging the variation in how queer theory is currently used across disciplines is to recognise that queered methodologies are not the sole preserve of either a particular discipline, or have a fixed object of study such as LGBT sexualities and genders. Queered methodologies have a vital role to play in problematizing heteronormativity, not least in terms of how it affects the work lives of LGBT employees and how it might be challenged. They may also foster critical research on heterosexualities; arguably, an obvious object of analysis given its relationship with heteronormativity, but one that is strangely under-researched within EDI organisational research (see Rumens, 2017). There might be as yet unforeseen possibilities for heterosexuality to become queered, adding a different facet within EDI knowledge and theory.

These possibilities notwithstanding, as this chapter has shown, queered methodologies are challenging to deploy, potentially making them less attractive than other methodologies currently used by EDI scholars. For example, researchers may be discouraged by the lack of general consensus about defining 'queer methodologies', which has been read as a deficiency in 'theoretical sophistication' (Browne &Nash, 2010: 8). However, this perceived limitation is also a potential strength because when methodology is queered it forces us to question methodological norms relating to the research process itself, training attention on the shifting performativities of the researcher and the researched, and encouraging us to question normative notions of coherence and rationality within methodological practice. In so doing, we can work toward a horizon of possibilities yet to be explored in how queer theory can (re)shape methodology, and in that regard the future of methodological practice within EDI research is very bright indeed.

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