

Call for Papers for a Special Issue
Critical diversity, philosophy and praxis

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Critical diversity studies examine the relations of power that determine which ‘diversity issues’ or ‘minority subjects’ are examined in the first place. This is important for examining the binary relationship that produces the marginal as a consequence of the authority invested in the center (Pullen and Knights, 2007). We suggest that part of this problem stems also from the historical separation of theory and practice. This Special Issue aims to attract papers in critical diversity studies that bridge philosophy and praxis; suggesting that furthering philosophical contributions enhance praxis, emancipation and change. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt argues that western philosophy has too often focused on the contemplative life and has neglected the active life. To engage in social change towards justice and equality, we stress, following Arendt (1958/2013), the relevance of philosophical ideas to real life. Arendt specifically calls “praxis” the highest and most important level of the active life and more philosophers need to engage in everyday political action or praxis. This praxis forms the basis of solidarity and action for change, a participatory democracy vital for political change, and as Arendt reminds us, this alternative form of organising stands in contrast to the bureaucratized and elitist forms of politics. As such, this Special Issue creates a space for politically driven, philosophically and practice based papers in order to address some of the difficulty in diversity/difference research. Cultural and women’s studies have given us a means to engage from what Moraga calls ‘theory of the flesh’ (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981). It is here where ‘embodied theory emerges from the material reality of multiple oppression and in turn conceptualizes that materiality’ (Yarbro-Bejarano, 1994: 6).

Contributions of critical management scholarship to *social change* have recently been called into question including organizational diversity and inequality (Cukier et al., 2013). Foster and Wiebe (2010) argue that a weak conception of praxis has limited the ethical potential of critical management. Within critical theory, praxis - or the elimination of oppression through new systems that liberate the individual - has equal importance to critique. However, these authors argue that praxis has consisted mainly of critical pedagogy and participatory research, both valuable but insufficient to bring research to the service of change. In diversity and inequality research, scholars have sought to interrogate prevailing methodologies for their potential to aid agency and community action (Gagnon & Cukier, 2012). Zanoni et al. (2010) have called for ‘radical, alternative diversity projects’ that advance new forms of organizing to help effect change. Pullen and Rhodes (2013) explore a corporeal ethics as practical and political acts that seek to defy the negation of difference in organizations. We seek approaches that might assist in

mitigating a ‘critique-application divide’: despite on-going advances in research, theory and some strategies for change, evidence of emancipation and equity remains disappointing (Benschop et al., 2012).

Within *diversity research*, methodologies that reflect experiences of ‘minority groups’ have been largely absent. Most studies tend to be embedded in the US and UK cultural contexts, engaging western narratives of knowledge (Jack & Westwood, 2009) that tend to ignore practices of indigenous communities. We welcome papers that articulate experiences of subjects through their own discourses in a manner that reflects truths and experiences that may be outside frameworks of the global north. These may provide an account not embedded in the language, concepts and constructs of the west, including in post-colonial contexts where the ‘inequality space’ emerges from a melding of historical and contemporary elements. Papers may engage with the complexities and the promise of developing alternative knowledge(s) that ultimately assist the disruption of inequality regimes (*c.f.* Benschop et al., 2012; Acker, 2006). Equally, feminist epistemologies of knowledge only recently adopted in philosophy (Lennon and Whitford, 1994) reinvigorate feminist debates within organization studies to explore the doing and undoing of organisational diversity. These feminist debates have been mainly from a privileged perspective, we strongly recognise that women of different cultures perceive the world from a unique social context (Harding, 2004; hooks, 2004), where they move between western and their own spaces with different identities (Kamenou & Fearfull, 2006).

There was a time when debates concerning *philosophy and organization* were almost exclusively about white male middle-class organizational theorists discussing white male middle-class philosophers. This is no longer exclusively the case, with some of the most recent significant advances in work and organization studies being developed through the philosophical problematization of gender, class, ethnicity, and other forms of diversity, especially as it builds on the contemporary continental philosophical tradition (Harding et al, 2013; Höpfl, 2000; Vachhani, 2012). Recognizing and enacting this (un)doing may make possible a political commitment to praxis - living difference and activating social change. Diversity discourses at an institutional level can also enable change given their powerful influence on organizational practitioners (Prasad et al., 2011). Praxis oriented research might be aided by a focus on freedoms and rights (Gagnon and Cornelius, 2000, Cornelius and Gagnon, 2004). Expanding the ways in which feminist philosophies, amongst others, can productively inform how we understand and practice diversity politics in organizations, we ask the question: What ethical responsibility do we have as researchers and writers to challenge the taken for granted norms of the field of work and organization in order to effect social change?

Building on these ideas, this call seeks to shape new forms of engagement with the philosophical antecedents of praxis and seeks to attract empirical and conceptual papers about how critical diversity scholarship can itself be a form of praxis and social change. It also calls for interrogation of how praxis can be supported by philosophical debates. The special issue particularly welcomes international, theoretically and philosophically informed empirical and conceptual papers that consider praxis or change oriented agendas for diversity and inequality, including but not limited to the following themes:

- post/anti colonial praxis-oriented studies in work and organization.
- feminist epistemologies of knowledge that embrace diverse ways of knowing and doing.
- gendered marginalisations and exclusions from philosophy; and emerging masculinities and femininities in philosophical writing.
- embodied writing as praxis and philosophy.

- papers centered on faith and its importance for research on social change in diversity.
- indigenous methodologies for critical diversity.
- whiteness, difference and diversity research.
- collaborative community projects in race relations.
- emerging research in migration within diversity and equality studies.
- multiple identities, relations and praxis.
- historical and political re/reading and re/writing of philosophers, for example, through deconstruction and critical theory.
- resistance for equality and against homogeneity - towards more egalitarian organizations
- research tied to political action, resistance, activism or freedoms-oriented approaches to promoting difference and equality.
- social justice perspectives, e.g. promoting equality through educating the dominant ethics, praxis and diversity/difference.
- alternative organizational forms and new working arrangements that support diversity.
- social justice movements and organizations that fight against inequality, discrimination, oppression and violence.

Submission guidelines: Papers must be submitted electronically to:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/gwo>. Papers should be no more than 7000 words, excluding references, and will be blind reviewed following the journal's standard review process.

Manuscripts should be prepared according to GWO submission guidelines -

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-0432](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-0432)

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