

## What's Queer About Political Science?

Smith, Nicola J.; Lee, Donna

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## WHAT'S QUEER ABOUT POLITICAL SCIENCE?

NICOLA SMITH (UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM)

DONNA LEE (UNIVERSITY OF KENT)

### Abstract

There is something queer (by which we mean strange) going on in the scholarly practice of political science. Why are political science scholars continuing to disregard issues of gender and sexuality – and in particular queer theory – in their lecture theatres, seminar rooms, textbooks, and journal articles? Such everyday issues around common human experience are considered by other social scientists to be central to the practice and theory of social relations. In this article we discuss how these commonplace issues are being written out of (or, more accurately, have never been written in to) contemporary political science. First, we present and discuss our findings on citation practice in order to evidence the queerness of what does and does not get cited in political science scholarship. We then go on to critique this practice before suggesting a broader agenda for the analysis of *the political* based on a queer theoretical approach.

### Introduction

Contemporary textbooks suggest that the scope of political science has broadened significantly in recent years following the emergence of critical and postmodernist perspectives to add to the traditional, and perhaps still dominant, schools of thought such as behaviourism and institutionalism (see *inter alia* Sharma and Sharma 2000; Hay 2002b; Roskin et al. 2005; Grigsby 2010; Hague and Harrop 2013; Ethridge and Handelman 2009; Marsh and Stoker 2010). As a result of this growing diversity of analytical strategies in political science, the specification of

what the 'political' includes has expanded beyond consideration of processes of power that occur

within the sphere of the government and within the state (and in international relations (IR) the system of states and intergovernmental governance), to consideration of processes of power that take place anywhere within social space. Thus, wherever power is exercised or distributed – be it located in private relations, public relations or global relations – contemporary political analysis, with its diversity of approaches, seeks to capture and study the relations of power.

Arguably, however, this presentation of an all-inclusive contemporary political science is far from reality. Significant (and voluminous) scholarly work by social and political scientists on sexuality, gender, and the body rarely receives sustained attention in the aforementioned leading textbooks. We appear to be teaching our students – and reminding ourselves – that the politics of sexuality, gender and the body are not ‘proper’ political science. Look through any index in the best-selling textbooks for references to sexuality, the body – and, for that matter, gender – and you will be disappointed. Beyond an absence from the pages of textbooks, the large body of work on these issues is also seldom, if ever, cited in the articles of leading political science journals suggesting that, at best, such scholarship lacks the influence of ‘hard’ political science in scholarship and, at worst, is indulgent and frivolous.

Ironically, our research into citation practice has found that it is precisely work on gender and sexuality – and particularly the huge body of work on queer theory – that gets the most citations in the social sciences. This implies that something odd is going on in contemporary political science. Far from being the broad and inclusive discipline it purports to be in modern textbooks, today’s political science is consciously marginalising issues of gender and sexuality and hardly doing justice to the political analysis of social relations.

There are several consequences of these exclusionary practices within political science. One consequence is that the field is impoverished compared to other social science disciplines that

are far more inclusive of issues surrounding gender, sexuality and embodiment. Another is that many scholars who work in these areas find themselves marginalised within the academic profession. In an age when one's academic and professional standing is increasingly measured and judged on the basis of the number of citations your published work receives (using methods such as the H-index<sup>1</sup> and Google scholar), political scientists studying the politics of sexuality and gender will inevitably find their careers (if they can get appointed!) suffer compared to colleagues who focus on what is generally and widely misconceived as the proper stuff of the discipline. In sum, scholarly marginalisation matters and is itself, intellectually and professionally, a political act.

In what follows we discuss how issues of gender and sexuality – and in particular queer theory – are being written out of contemporary political science. Our purpose is entirely normative – we think it needs to be written in and so we also discuss why political science should become more inclusive and seek to explore political processes in all social relations. The article is structured in three parts. First, we present and discuss our findings on citation practice in social science in order to evidence the queerness of what does and does not get cited in political science scholarship. Next, we critique this practice before, finally, suggesting a broader agenda for the analysis of *the political*.

### **Show me your H-index and I'll show you mine!**

Academia has become somewhat transfixed by counting citations and Google Scholar is a popular method scholars (and appointments panels) use for measuring the impact of publications for research, profile, promotions and appointments purposes.<sup>2</sup> Given its growing significance in the academy we decided to use Google Scholar to explore citations praxis within our discipline. Using Google Scholar to search for articles in 'political science' (choosing the

option of the term appearing ‘anywhere in the article’ rather than ‘in the title of the article’), we found that the most cited article is ‘Political Science and the New Institutionalisms’ by Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor (1996), with 3,810 citations. We then searched for articles in what most would consider the most dominant perspectives in political science – rational choice theory; institutionalism; pluralism; elitism; Marxism; and feminism. We found that the most cited ‘rational choice’ article is ‘A Behavioural Model of Rational Choice’ by Herbert Simon (1955), which gains 8,015 citations. The most cited article on ‘institutionalism’, is ‘Games real actors play: actor-centered institutionalism in policy research’ by Fritz W. Scharpf (1997), with 2,510 citations. For ‘pluralism’, ‘Spheres of justice: a defence of pluralism and equality’ by Michael Walzer (1983) gets the most citations, with 5,895. For ‘elitism’, ‘The theory of democratic elitism: a critique’ by Peter Bachrach (1967) gains the most citations at 789. And finally, for ‘Marxism’, ‘Marxism and literature’ by Raymond Williams (1977) comes up top, with 7,065 citations.

Things became a little more interesting, however, when we searched for ‘feminism’ (which is undeniably recognised as part of political science even if, as we shall discuss, its influence is greater in other disciplines). Judith Butler’s (1990) *Gender Trouble* appears at the top as the most cited piece of work, with 21,986 citations. What is interesting about *Gender Trouble* is, first, that it is not taught as a ‘political science’ text and, second, the sheer number of citations that it garners. (Even Anthony Downs (1957) fails to beat it, with a mere 18,723 for ‘An economic theory of political action’, and Robert Dahl’s (2005) score falls far short for *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, with just 4,859). Indeed, *Gender Trouble* is considerably more cited than *The Communist Manifesto*, which gains just 4,625 citations. To continue in this theme, ‘Butler’ is more cited than ‘Marx’ if taken as a stand-alone search term, with 1.49 million citations compared to 1.28 million. ‘Butler’ is, in fact, bigger than ‘feminism’ itself, which gains just 510,000 citations. ‘Butler’ is not bigger than ‘God’, however, which appears 3.59 million times.

Of course, these figures highlight the ludicrousness of using Google Scholar to ‘count’ impact and influence by collating and comparing citation numbers.<sup>3</sup> (According to what was presumably a glitch in Scholar at the time of our search, the most cited Marx was actually Robert, not Karl, who gained 18,596 citations for his co-authored paper on ‘A comparison of particulate allogeneic and particulate autogenous bone grafts into maxillary alveolar clefts in dogs’ (Marx et al. 1984)). This is not to suggest that the figures are made up – they did indeed appear in the search engine results – but neither can they be treated as transparent ‘facts’, at the very least because Google Scholar has been criticised for its ‘massive content omissions’ (Jacsó 2005). And yet: you can’t really argue with 21,986 citations. 21,986 citations suggests that *Gender Trouble* is being read. *Gender Trouble is*, in fact, being read (it has reportedly sold over 100,000 copies internationally) – so much so that it has inspired the publication of a whole series of other volumes dedicated to discussing Judith Butler’s work (see for instance Salih 2002; Kirby 2006; Lloyd 2007; Loizidou 2007; Chambers and Carver 2008; Jagger 2008).

In short, what the figures very clearly show is that Judith Butler is a hugely important social theorist. Continuing a long tradition of what can be loosely defined as ‘poststructuralist critical theory’ in the spirit of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, Butler’s work has been enormously influential across the social sciences and humanities. She has introduced key concepts such as ‘gender performativity’ and has offered philosophical critique of a wide range of social concepts such as power, gender, the subject, agency, ethics, justice, and knowledge. Her work is cited by philosophers, sociologists, law scholars, historians, geographers, literary theorists, among others. Together with scholars such as Eve Sedgwick, Annamarie Jagose and Jack Halberstam, Butler has become intimately associated with a distinct school of thought (if it can be termed a ‘school of thought’ at all), queer theory. Somewhat dismissively labelled by Dennis Altman as ‘the bastard child of the gay and lesbian movement and postmodern literary

theory' (cited in Binnie 2004: 41), queer theory emerged as a challenge to 'the normative social ordering of identities and subjectivities along the heterosexual/homosexual binary as well as the privileging of heterosexuality as "natural" and homosexuality as it's deviant and abhorrent "other"' (Browne and Nash 2010b: 5). Yet queer as a body of thought is by no means exhausted by its concern with gendered and sexual subjectivities; rather, 'it is a philosophical commitment to contesting the logics of normativity' (Rooke 2009). (It is for this reason, for instance, that Lynne Huffer identifies Foucault's *History of Madness* rather than his *A History of Sexuality Vol. I* as marking the birth of queer theory (Huffer 2010)). Yet, while queer theory is not exclusively limited to thinking about gender, sexuality and the body – and it is certainly not synonymous with lesbian and gay studies (Giffney 2004: 73) – it has nevertheless done a great deal to encourage critical reflection on what gender, sexuality and the body might mean in, and for, social theory.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, it is a real worry for some queer theorists that 'queer' is no longer radical but rather has become part of the very orthodoxies it set out to challenge. As Giffney writes (citing Doty): 'what happens when a discourse meant "to challenge and break apart conventional categories" becomes one itself?' (Giffney 2004: 73). While queer as a body of thought has, perhaps above all else, sought to expose and interrogate 'the excesses, the excluded, the margins which are themselves constitutive of the centre' (Doty 1997: 386), queer theory can itself hardly be seen to lie on the margins of academic enquiry, forgotten, ignored and uncited.<sup>1</sup>

### **Bodies that (don't) matter**

What all of this suggests is that it is hardly *avant-garde* to do queer theory. Quite the contrary: issues surrounding gender, sexuality and the body have earned their place as bread and butter topics in the social sciences and humanities – they sell books (10.5 million on 'sexuality' alone



according to Google Books)<sup>5</sup>, they inspire workshops and conferences, they are the focus of undergraduate and postgraduate modules, and entire institutes and academies are built in their name. In other words, there isn't really anything unusual about studying queer theory, gender, sexuality or the body. Ironically, to 'do queer' is pretty normal.

Except, it seems, in political science. In a recent systematic study of 629 modules in political science and IR taught in United Kingdom (UK) universities, Emma Foster *et al.* (2013) find that just one per cent were devoted specifically to feminist or gender studies (none of which were compulsory). As they highlight: 'Very clearly, the findings from our mapping exercise suggest that gender and sexuality are not classified, generally, as core components of a 'politics' or 'international relations' degree' (ibid.: 13). Furthermore, if textbooks can be used to gauge the state of debate in a discipline – as, we argue, they should be because they are key tools through which we define the field to our students – then it appears that political science remains distinctly untroubled by queer theory. UK political science textbooks (and we must assume core undergraduate modules in UK universities) will often include some discussion of both feminism and postmodernism, but queer theory is rarely (if ever) mentioned. To take a few examples: Michael Roskin *et al.*'s (2005) *Political Science: An Introduction* offers 'a thorough introduction to the basic concepts and theories of political science' (cover materials) but makes no reference to queer theory at all (although gender is mentioned several times, and sexuality once). Colin Hay's *Political Analysis* (Hay 2002: 7) aims to 'respect and to reflect as accurately as possible the positions held by genuine (named) protagonists in the controversies which characterise contemporary political analysis' and 'to establish from the outset the range and diversity of strategies in political analysis'. The book does this expertly – but it does so without using the term 'queer' once and neither 'gender' nor 'sexuality' appear in the index. Foucault is discussed (indeed, there is a whole chapter on post-modernism) but this is not in the context of

gender/sexual politics, and Butler and Sedgwick do not appear in the bibliography. Ellen Grigsby's (2010) *Analysing Politics: An Introduction to Political Science* does include one reference to Butler within the context of postmodernism, but not of gender or sexuality. And in *Principles and Theory of Political Science*, the term 'gender' appears once but there is no mention of sexuality, queer theory or queer theorists (Sharma and Sharma 2000).<sup>6</sup> To be clear: our aim here is categorically *not* to aim blame at individual scholars or books – the ones we have just mentioned are all excellent, highly accessible texts and we recommend them to our students as such. We also suspect that – far from resisting the queering of political science – the above scholars would very much welcome and support it (not least if the scholarly and professional consequences of the omission were brought to their attention). Rather, we want to highlight how political science *as a discipline* or discursive terrain (here reflected in core text-books) does not appear to incorporate – or even acknowledge – queer theory as relevant to key debates.

This is not to suggest that there are no queer theorists or people working in and around issues surrounding gender, sexuality and the body within the field of political science. Quite clearly there are (or, more accurately, we are); indeed, this is precisely our point. There are, in fact, many of us working on issues surrounding gender, sexuality and the body and we are doing so here, in the discipline, right now. In fact, quite a few of Judith Butler's citations – and at least one of the books dedicated to discussing her work – come from members of political science departments.<sup>7</sup> What we *are* trying to say, however, is that – despite our presence being an empirical reality – queer scholars, together with people working on sexuality and the body more broadly, are placed on the constitutive outside of the discipline. Put another way: there are many of us 'here' (in that there are many of us working within political science departments), but we are also 'over there' (in that our work does not tend to be recognised as 'political science'). There is a sense – usually unspoken but sometimes spoken – that all of this stuff is very interesting, and yes that must be fun to research, and how delightful that you get to write about this stuff! But,

while you are doing that, we will get on with the real stuff, the hard stuff, the stuff that really matters. You do your 'body stuff' while we do political science.

As Laura Shepherd (2012) notes: "The idea of *a* discipline (noun), in the academic sense, clearly derives from the verb: both relate to establishing clear boundaries between what is right and good (behaviour/research) and what is wrong and bad (behaviour/research); both have ways to correct transgression when an uninitiated (or resistant) person strays [original emphasis]". We would like to take this further and argue that it is *through* the very process of disciplining (verb) that an academic 'discipline' (noun) such as political science comes into being. That is, it is precisely through the construction, maintenance and policing of carefully-delineated boundaries that political science becomes constituted *as* a discipline: the centre is not separate from the margins but is constituted in and through them (Doty 1997). Important here, then, is how political science has come to be defined as a field of study and, in particular, how 'politics' is seen to be the natural preserve of the state. Many of our students have undertaken A-levels in 'Government and Politics' and a number of political science departments in the UK and internationally currently feature 'Government and Politics' in the title.<sup>8</sup> And one of the first – and most central – questions most first-year undergraduate students are asked to address is whether or not politics and government are synonymous (with the tacit message that, no, they are not the same but, yes, they do nevertheless 'naturally' go together, hence why the question is posed).

A key problem regarding queer theory here is that it has not, as yet, had a great deal to say about the state (although see for instance Duggan 1994; Bernstein and Reimann 2001; Brandzel 2005). But it also reflects how states and bodies are nevertheless imagined to reside in different realms: the state is often seen as synonymous with the 'public' sphere of politics – a world of government, power and collectivity – whereas the body is frequently imagined to reside in the

‘private’ sphere – a world of intimacy, selfhood and individuality. Yet feminist scholarship has long sought to highlight that this supposedly straightforward division between states and bodies is, in fact, deeply gendered. Indeed, a central project for feminist theory (and activism) has been to expose how the state itself is often coded as masculine: that is, it is associated with the public realm of political power and decision-making and, as such, with masculine influence and identity (Youngs 2000). The body, in contrast, is frequently coded as feminine in its multiple associations with nature, emotions, sexuality, vulnerability, reproduction and the family (Hooper, 2000). In so doing, feminists have sought to expose and challenge the complex ways in which ‘body politics’ become invisible, denied and erased (for a detailed discussion see Jenkins 2005). Charlotte Hooper (2000: 39), for instance, has explored how rational masculinity is organised around a series of gendered dualisms (including public/private, mind/body, and inside/outside) that include a ‘fantasy of disembodiment’ which ‘depends upon the apparent invisibility or absence of bodies in social discourse, so that masculine reason could be separate from and untainted from the body’. As such, feminists have sought to highlight the ‘problem of the missing body’ in social and political discourse in order to expose and challenge how this very invisibility is steeped in, and (re)productive of, power relations (Youngs 2000: 1). In this way, feminists have also sought to show how bodies and politics are intertwined, for the body is:

a place for political mobilization interconnected with other sites of resistance and political action ... bodies are not external to political processes but firmly enmeshed in them, even if they are not necessarily the defining site for action. The lived experience of the body, the identity and definitions attached to bodies, inform and are connected to all political struggles (Harcourt 2009: 23)<sup>9</sup>.

## **Queer theory and political science**

One of the most crucially important contributions of feminist political analysis, then, has precisely been to ‘gender’ the state (for a review see Kantola 2006) but also, more fundamentally, to show how ‘the personal is political’ and, consequently, to shift the focus from politics-as-government to politics-as-power. This latter notion is, of course, shared by many political scientists – indeed, to quote one of the aforementioned textbooks, Hay’s *Political Analysis* (2002: 168) states: ‘power specifies the sphere of the political: *power is to political analysis what the economy is to economics* [original emphases]’. What is interesting, though, is that although political science has a great deal to say about power, so too does queer theory. Queer theory is, in fact, centrally concerned with the (re)production of power relations; power is, in short, what queer theory is about. Although there is no ‘one’ approach to power in queer studies – rather, power represents a key site of contestation within queer theorising – queer scholars frequently ask questions about power that ‘seek to expose the limitations, unstable foundations and power-laden assumptions of the “straight” political, psychological, cultural and economic discourses that govern us’ (Griffin 2011: 50). At the same time, while queer theory has much to say about power as it relates to sexuality, queer research also has a broader agenda relevant to the study of power<sup>10</sup> – indeed, it can denote ‘any form of research positioned within conceptual frameworks that highlight the instability of taken-for-granted meanings and resulting power relations’ (Browne and Nash 2010a: 4). It is not (just) sexual norms but rather norms *per se* that a great deal of queer theory seeks to expose and destabilise. As Butler writes:

power pervades the very conceptual apparatus that seeks to negotiate its terms, including the subject position of the critic; and ... this implication of the terms of criticism in the field of power is not the advent of a nihilistic relativism incapable of furnishing norms, but, rather, the very (precondition of a politically engaged critique. To establish a set of norms that are beyond power or force is itself a powerful and forceful conceptual

practice that sublimates, disguises and extends its own power play through recourse to tropes of normative universality (Butler 1994: 6-7)

Rather than being (only) interested in what truths *are*, then, queer theory (also) asks us to consider what 'truths' *do* – that is, it asks: 'What gets to be constituted as 'truth' and what are the material effects of this?' So, for example, rather than asking a question such as 'What does it mean to be "human"?' (or, put differently, 'What is the essence or truth of "the human"?'), queer theorists might ask a rather different question: 'What gets to be constituted as "human", and what doesn't? Who gets to be included in "the human", and who is left out? And what are the material effects of this, in terms of the ability of the "less-than-human" to live a fully liveable life?' (for a detailed discussion see Butler 2001). An important purpose of social and political theory is therefore not to discover timeless and universal 'truths' but to critique how specific appeals to 'truth' become naturalised and so legitimise violence and disadvantage within and across particular political, economic and cultural contexts.

Indeed, this is a further reason why queer theory is written out of political science – because it does not seek to discover foundational 'truths', it is dismissed as therefore being apolitical (and even downright unethical) (see in particular Martha Nussbaum's blistering critique of Butler's work in Nussbaum 1999). Yet, as we've noted above, queer theory is fundamentally concerned with questions of power and – far from rejecting ethical enquiry – instead aims to uncover and critique how particular moral orders become naturalised, necessitated and thus positioned as being beyond ethical scrutiny.<sup>11</sup> Equally, what queer theory does is to encourage reflection on what it means for something to *be* 'political'. What gets to be constituted as 'political' and what doesn't? What gets to become an object of 'politics' in academic enquiry and, indeed, public deliberation more broadly? What gets to be studied, discussed, contested, written about, cited, lectured on, and what doesn't? In short: what's in and what's out? More than this, queer theory

also insists that *what gets to be counted as 'political' is itself political* – it is a product of the exercise of power, with real material effects. In this sense, queer theory seeks to politicise ‘the political’ itself.

### **On disciplinary technologies and citation porn**

Let us return to the issue of citation practices in order to illuminate the above themes: it is important to be aware of (and critique) the professional consequences of a citation practice that marginalises scholarly work which focuses on the politics of the body, gender and sexualities. Where and how frequently (and indeed, *if*) scholarly work is cited matters; citation practices impact the career prospects of all scholars; securing an academic post, subsequent promotions, and pay increases are now increasingly (though not exclusively) determined by analysis of citation data. This is because data on citations – presented in supposedly objective metrics such as the H-Index – is a highly prized professional currency used by academics, universities, and research councils, to measure the value and impact of academic research and as such recourse to citation scores is now commonplace in the measurement and management of research performance across all disciplines. The two main – but very different – sources of citation data used in research performance measurement and management processes are *Google Scholar* and *ISI Web of Science*. Both sources are plagued by issues of self-citation and negative citation (that is, citing an article as an example of poor/inaccurate analysis) and the fact that certain forms of publication – such as review articles – are the most highly cited (for detailed analysis of citation sources see Harzing 2010). But these particular difficulties are overshadowed by the more general problem in citation praxis in political science which is that the dominant norms of what is considered appropriate areas of political analysis exclude issues of the body and sexualities. As such the growing volume of work that explores the politics of sexuality, for example, very rarely gets cited in the lead political science journals. This is not because this work has no scholarly or policy

value – since it is cited in other social science lead journals (and as we have shown with the example of Judith Butler’s work on queer theory is among the most cited in social science) – but because it is largely ignored by political scientists.

The professional consequences of this exclusion are immense. With few, if any citations in mainstream journals and textbooks, political scientists working with queer theory will find it difficult to quantitatively demonstrate the value of their work to colleagues and research councils, and as such may face severe employment and career progression constraints.

Citation practices also impact journal rankings, which in turn impact decisions about where to submit articles, which in turn impact universities’ management of research, especially over decisions about which academics working in UK universities will be included in the forthcoming UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) return. In the 2014 REF, only research judged to be 3\* and 4\* by subject panels will be included in government funding calculations.<sup>12</sup> As a result, several universities are reportedly restricting REF entries with lesser scores (following internal university review of publications) and staff unable to submit articles considered to be 3\* and 4\* may be excluded from the REF (*Times Higher Education*, No. 2068, September 2012). This decision matters because academic judgements about the quality of articles are greatly influenced by, among other things, the ranking of the journal in which the work is published which is itself determined by citation practice. Journal rankings are measured by calculating the average number of citations for each article during the last two years. If political scientists are not citing work on queer theory, the most highly ranked political science journals will not include citations of queer theorists. And, as we have already highlighted, queer theory articles are not being published in the top ranked political science journals (though they are published – and are heavily cited – in journals in other fields across the social sciences and humanities). This intellectual marginalisation of queer theorists in political science means they face professional barriers to



having their work judged 3\* or 4\* that colleagues working in areas fully included in the mainstream do not face.

Citation practice will also impact the outcomes of new developments in open access research in the UK, which will hold out the prospect of further professional constraints for political scientists working on research into the power relations of the body and sexuality. The UK government recently announced new plans to ensure open access to publically funded research in response to the recommendations of *The Finch Report* (2012). This means that research produced by academics working in publically funded universities will have to be made freely available on-line to anyone and under this scheme authors will pay an “article processing fee” (APC) of around £2000 per article (*The Guardian*, 15 July, 2012). In addition, following announcements by the Higher Education Funding Council open access will be mandatory for all post 2014 REF submissions.<sup>13</sup> In July 2012 the UK Research Funding Councils (RCUK) set out a new policy on open access whereby, from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, all peer-reviewed articles or conference papers using funding from UK research councils must be freely available on-line to the public and including provision of a block grant to universities from RCUK to cover the anticipated costs of APC.<sup>14</sup> The European Union (2012) has also introduced similar open access requirements for publications and research data from 2014 onwards. While in theory developments on open access have many merits in terms of providing free public access to peer reviewed research, with financial restraints to publishing in peer-reviewed journals, there will be fewer opportunities to publish research in peer reviewed (and thus higher ranked) journals. This is because universities will – for reasons of financial efficiency – be forced to manage article submissions by their staff in terms of restricting the number of articles submitted and intervening in decisions about where articles are placed.<sup>15</sup> Universities will likely use readily available data (to ensure efficient and objective decision making) on journal rankings and citations to inform the management of article submissions by academics.<sup>16</sup> The issue of the

almost certain increased university management of article submission and the author fees will most likely prove to be of greater consequence for scholars working at the margins of political science compared to those working in the mainstream. Recent developments in funding decisions around the 2014 REF and open access of research mean that not being cited just got a whole lot more professionally and politically significant.

It is not just the professional consequences of excluding a particular social theory (queer theory in this case) that must concern us. We should also be wary of the epistemological consequences of writing out particular social theories. As Mark Blasius (2001: 3) remarks, when discussing the absence of work on sexuality in political science, 'which knowledge is getting produced, and which knowledge is not, is itself an issue for further political analysis'. And, for us at least, if such political analysis was driven by a queer theory approach then that would be all the better. This is not to argue for new forms of 'queer fundamentalism' (Browne and Nash 2010b) in political science. Quite the contrary: what we find attractive about queer politics and queer theorising is precisely that they seek to destabilise and rupture pre-existing categories. These include the category of 'queer' itself. So, the essence of queer (although that is an oxymoron) is precisely that there is no one way of doing queer. Queer is not a stable category. Queer itself is contestable as a term and as a discursive terrain – an 'open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning' (although this is in itself only one of the things to which 'queer' can refer) (Sedgwick 1993: 8). Queer theory might, then, be seen as an approach (or, more accurately, a set of approaches) that tries to open up political space for different voices, and is about questioning and challenging those voices – engaging and critiquing but not drowning out. Queer, for us, then, means respecting the voices of others – it is about contestation, but it is also about self-reflection; it does not mean that one cannot make truth claims, or ethical judgements, or engage in political action – for queer theorists (and activists) do all of these things. But what it *does* mean is always being mindful of the effects – whether in

terms of silences or violences – produced by those truth claims, ethical judgements, and political actions. It means interrogating power, for sure, but it also means considering how we, as scholars (and activists), are ourselves constituted by (and constitutive of) unequal power relations and how such power relations are gendered, racialised, classed and – yes – sexualized, too.

## **Conclusion**

There is indeed something very peculiar about political science as contemporary social theory. Although the scope of political science has, mercifully, expanded beyond a narrowly focused analysis of the exercise of power in the public realm of the state and the society of states, it has yet to fully incorporate analysis of the power relations in the private realm and in particular around issues of sexuality, gender, and the body. Yet work on these everyday aspects of social relations is commonplace in other disciplines within the social sciences. The absence, in particular, of serious consideration of queer theory is notable and appears to place political science in something of an intellectual silo compared to other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Our analysis of the content of political science textbooks and citation practices suggests that the discipline is (whether knowingly or not) ignoring issues of sexuality, gender, and the body as well as marginalising a hugely influential body of work in the social sciences – queer theory.

The intellectual consequences of ignoring queer theory and everyday bodily experiences of power relations are clear. Political science is failing to fully account for the ways in which power is exercised in the ‘private’ realm and how this is fundamental to the ways in which we construct and control sexuality, gender and the body. There are also professional consequences for political scientists who analyse power relations in the ‘private’ realm; their work risks being

considered marginal or even irrelevant to the scholarly practice of political science. We should not underestimate the professional injustices that follow from intellectual injustices.

There is an intellectual and professional need for a political science of the ‘private’ realm; for work that focuses on the power relations of sexuality, gender and the body to be written into our discipline to provide a fuller and more inclusive account of power. Universal ‘truths’ around issues of sexuality, gender, and the body have enormous impact on the everyday experiences of us all. How strange it is then that political science fails to consider power relations on issues so central to individual human experience and to social relations. Contemporary political science is queer indeed compared to other social science disciplines and the queering of political science is long overdue.

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<sup>1</sup> H-Index or Hirsch Index claims to measure not only the number of publications but also the impact of a scholar’s publications.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to counting citations, scholars who create profiles and download their papers on [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) can keep track on how many times someone has viewed their paper and/or academic profile.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to downplay the contribution of researchers who have offered systematic analyses of citation practices precisely in order to expose and critique the highly problematic way in which such practices themselves reflect and reinforce unequal power relations. For example, Soreanu and Hudson (2008: 123) map citation networks in the field of IR and find that there is a ‘failure to love’ feminist scholarship even though feminists are ‘part of a ring of creativity connecting the emotional energies of different disciplinary fields’. More recently, a high-profile piece by Maliniak, Powers and Walter (2013: 2) uses data covering more than quarter of a century to show that ‘articles written by women are consistently cited less than articles written by men’ in IR. Our aim here is rather different, which is both *to* queer, and to reveal *as* queer, citation practices: that is, we see citation practices as peculiar – and we want to parody them as such – but we also find it somewhat delicious that a literal (or ‘straight’) reading of Google Scholar itself points to the queerness of citation practice (that is, high numbers of citations of queer scholars).

<sup>4</sup> We do not wish to imply here that the study of gender, sexuality and the body can be collapsed into it each other nor that they are the exclusive terrain of queer theory. But a key contribution of queer theory has nevertheless been

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to show how gender, sexuality and the body cannot neatly be separated from each other, either (and, for that matter, are all deeply implicated in power relations). Nor do we wish to erase differences within and between queer theorising and feminist and post-structuralist thought more broadly. And yet (again) queer theory is not easily separable from these longer-standing traditions of thought, for it has instead emerged out of, and remains in constant dialogue with, them (along with a diversity of other approaches such as post-colonialism, black studies, trans\* studies, crip theory, and so on). Our overarching aim in this paper, though, is to highlight how scholarship on gender, sexuality and the body – and, in particular, queer theory (which explores the intersections between them) – are positioned together as being on the outside of political science and how the discipline is impoverished for this.

<sup>5</sup> Accessed on 22 January 2013.

<sup>6</sup> There are some exceptions, however: for example, all three editions of David Marsh's and Gerry Stoker's *Theory and Methods* include a chapter on feminism (albeit without any sustained reflection on queer theory) (Marsh and Stoker 2010)

<sup>7</sup> It is very much because we, as individual scholars in political science departments, have been so excited and inspired by this very scholarship – and yet have so frequently been met with bemusement, amusement and, very occasionally, open disdain – that we are writing this article.

<sup>8</sup> In the United States, these include Cornell University, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Wesleyan University and in the UK they include the Department of Government at the University of Essex and the School of Government and Public Policy at Strathclyde University.

<sup>9</sup> Here we draw from Cameron, Dickinson and Smith (2013).

<sup>10</sup> See for instance the roundtable discussion on queer studies, crisis and materialism between Crosby et al. (2012).

<sup>11</sup> This is not to suggest for a moment that there is one distinctive queer ethics – for example, we are grateful to one reviewer for rightly noting that a number of queer scholars have highlighted how 'a strict "anti-normative" posture for queer theory and the "ideal queer" promotes a kind of neoliberal flexibility and mobility that excludes many'. An important task for queer scholarship has therefore been to unpick and unpack the 'disconnect between morality and ethics' (Downing 2013). Our key point here, then, is to argue that queer theorists are centrally concerned with – and do not refuse or ignore – ethical questions. It is deeply ironic (and troubling) that queer scholarship is so often characterised as somehow being outside of, or antithetical to, ethical enquiry.

<sup>12</sup> For details of the 2014 REF process see <http://www.ref.ac.uk/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2012/statementonimplementingopenaccess/> (accessed 23 April, 2013)

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<sup>14</sup> For details of RCUK policy on open access see <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk> (accessed 23 April, 2013)

<sup>15</sup> According to Dame Janet Finch the annual costs of open access to UK universities will be around £60 million (*Times Higher Education*, No. 2067, September 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Academics whose universities cannot or will not pay the costs may have to fund publications in peer reviewed journals out of their salaries in order to enhance their career prospects.

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<sup>1</sup> The prominence of queer theory is not least evident in the recent pronouncements its death (see for instance Ruffolo 2009; Penney 2013).