Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

Ghostly matters in organization

Issue Editors: Justine Grønbæk Pors, Lena Olaison and Birke Otto

> Ghosts 'are a ubiquitous aspect of the phenomenology of place', 'ineffable and quasi-mystical' dimensions which emerge in encounters with the material, the mediated, the sensual and the affectual. (Edensor, 2008: 331)

This call for papers asks how organization scholars (in the broadest sense) can relate to the disorderly, the unexplainable, the uncanny qualities of organizational life through the concepts of the ghost and of ghostly matters (a term coined by Gordon, 1997). The ghostly may be 'absent-presences' that haunt, disrupt, distort, trouble, and bother the smooth functioning of work life. Or, it may be benign spirits who enchant, charm, entice, fascinate or enamour organisational members. The ghostly may be found in the unexplainable continuous influence of a dead founder of an enterprise, or in everyday rituals and routines meant to evoke or please organizational spirit(s). The ghostly can attune us to how organizational time is far from linear, but rather consists of a host of intersecting temporalities colliding and merging in landscapes of asynchronous moments. Exploring the ghostly is about being curious about a sense of obduracy that somehow remains (Maddern and Adey, 2008; McCormack, 2010). Yet, the productive qualities of ghosts can be difficult to encounter since it is often only perceivable as the 'sensual, half-recognizable and imaginary' (Edensor, 2008: 313). Thus, inquiring into ghostly matters of organization also poses questions for research and methodology in organization studies.

This special issue argues that the study of ghosts and ghostly matters in organizations can contribute to an understanding of what organization and

organizing is. It directs attention to the work of hidden, sometimes even unspeakable forces and occurrences that may be little more than a trace or an elusively felt presence of something that should no longer be there, but yet affects organizational members and space. Additionally, it aims to learn about fissures between shiny futures and inadequate pasts and entanglements of hopes and fears in organizational life.

Curiously, since Derridean deconstruction has had its heyday in organization studies, the possibility of ghosts and ghostly matters in management and organization has largely been ignored (for exceptions see De Cock et al., 2013; Muhr and Azad, 2013; Orr, 2014). In human geography, cultural theory and sociology (i.e. Gordon, 1997; Vidler, 1999; Degan and Hetherington, 2001; Hetherington, 2004; Hook, 2005; Holloway, 2006; Wylie, 2007; Cho, 2008; Maddern, 2008; Arias, 2010; Fisher, 2014), an analytical attention to ghostly matters have produced apposite and stunning insights i.e. into what urban space is and how it affects us (Edensor, 2001; 2008; Pile, 2002; 2005; Till, 2005). Drawing on such work as well as responding to broader calls in organization studies to explore affective ambivalence (Linstead and Thanem, 2007; Beyes and Steyaert, 2013; O'Doherty et al., 2013) and darkness (Vaughan, 1999; Stein, 2001; Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2010; Linstead et al., 2014), this special issue pursues the idea that perhaps spaces of organizing are haunted *per se*.

To collect insights into the ways in which the concept of the ghost can contribute to an understanding of organizational daily life – how it constitutes, maintains, changes, assembles, disrupts and resists patterns of management and work – this special issue welcomes contributions from a wide range of disciplines that: (1) interrogate and expand the concept of ghostly matters/the ghost through theoretical and empirical explorations; (2) explore how to conduct ghostly research and ask what constitutes a ghostly methodology, i.e. how to shadow the shadows of organizational life; (3) do empirical explorations on the mundane life of organization. Such case studies and ethnographies could, for example, attempt to analyse: how excluded elements or things returning from the past to haunt and enchant daily worklife; how organizations capitalize on ghosts (e.g. how what was formerly considered as waste, risk or unnecessity is turned into value; how the uncanny becomes part of an attraction for marketing purposes or the formation of organizational identities; how ghostly matters are materialized, embodied in materials, stories, artefacts, behaviours, strategies, visions, neglect, suppressions).

Possible topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Revisiting Derrida's hauntology (1994; 1999) after material, sensuous and affective turns in organization studies.
- How do organisational members encounter and live with ghosts?
- Embodied and affective experiences of seething presences.
- How does an attention to ghostly matters re-introduce questions of justice in organizational contexts by reminding us about the conditions of (im)possibility, i.e. of business ethics or corporate social responsibility?
- How do organizations struggle to tame ghosts and create order?
- How do the spirits, pasts or charismatic founders of organizations haunt or enchant daily working life and organizational identity? How are they strategically deployed to advance organizational goals?
- Exploring the sympathetic magic that exists in organization, organizational routines and rituals to please the spirits, everyday magical occurrences.
- Understanding organizational time and organizational memory through ghostly methodologies.
- How do organizations experience themselves as cursed and work to relief such curse i.e. consultancy as ghost busting?
- Haunted or haunting data (Blackman, 2015): How new technologies make possible new sorts of disjointments between futures, presents and pasts and returns of the forgotten and excluded?
- Which benign ghosts help organizations and organizational members navigate uncertainty, i.e. how chance, coincidence opportunities are conceived as ghostly interventions? How organizational members consult spirits outside the ordinary (intuitive feelings, superstitions)?
- Managing with ghostly metaphors.

Deadline for submissions: 30 April 2016

All contributions should be submitted to one of the issue editors: Justine Grønbæk Pors (jgp.mpp@cbs.dk), Lena Olaison (lo.mpp@cbs.dk) and Birke Otto (bo.ioa@cbs.dk). Please note that three categories of contributions are invited for the special issue: articles, notes, and reviews. All submissions should follow *ephemera's* submissions guidelines and should not exceed the 8000 words limit (www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit). Articles will undergo a double blind review process.

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