

## EDITORIAL

In this issue of *TESG*, our TESG Lecture is a central feature. In 2019, we started the tradition. Elvin Wyly from the University of British Columbia was asked to deliver the first TESG Annual Lecture titled *The Evolution of Geographical Thought* at the AAG Conference in April 2020. The conference was unfortunately cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the lecture was published as a self-standing paper with two commentaries written by Noriko Ishiyama and Cesare Di Felicianantonio.

We now present a second TESG Lecture. This lecture was delivered at the RGS in Newcastle in September 2022 by Professor Kath Browne (University College Dublin) based on her work with Catherine Nash (Brock University) in the context of an ERC-funded project called *Beyond Opposition* ([www.beyondopposition.org](http://www.beyondopposition.org)). It is a powerful and thought-provoking piece that explores the experiences of those who are concerned about and/or actively oppose sexual and gender legislation such as same-sex marriage, gender self-identification/recognition and abortion access.

Interviews were undertaken with people who self-identify as opposed to or concerned about socio-legal changes to sexualities and/or genders and abortion. The terms used by participants to self-identify vary widely, which illustrates the divergent and sometimes contradicting views around gender- and sexuality-related issues. Some pro-same-sex marriage participants, for example, had concerns about the teaching of genders in school and there were many more combinations that were not straightforward, demonstrating that these are not exclusive categories. Participants also distanced themselves from each other around certain gender positionings. Many were worried that participating in the research would align them with those they were expressly opposed to on other issues. How these divisions and differences are contested and negotiated in public space is an important research agenda for the future.

Kath Browne and Catherine Nash's paper also makes an important contribution to the field of privileged geographies. The way they

conceptualise the marginal/privileged binary is theoretically innovative and their openness and honesty about the development of ideas inspiring. An important finding is that the conceptual notions of marginality and privilege are not grasping the 'betweenness' of experience (Rose 1999) of their participants. Calling participants and their positions marginalised implies a relation to power that does not accurately reflect on-going normativities of sexualities/genders. Yet, neither are their positions privileged. Browne and Nash's proposal to rethink the binary of marginality/privilege in order to capture the complex and more nuanced experiences of contemporary sexual and gender landscapes is a great addition to the field.


Privileges are multiple and complex and reconstituted across various scales, but experiences of being a minority within a privileged position have not been conceptualised so far. Some participants perceived public space to be increasingly LGBTQIA+ friendly and therefore unwelcome to them. As they considered their views no longer being in the majority, they spoke of deliberately avoiding certain areas or differing routes to avoid feeling uncomfortable. Space that was once taken for granted and where their views were privileged are now spaces where they understand themselves as a minority.

Prof. Sarah Marie Hall and Dr. Jason Luger provided wonderful commentaries to the lecture, in person at the RGS, and now also in written form in this TESG issue. Sarah Marie Hall reminds us of the importance of seeing space as relational and to recognise that spaces, like identities, are made through interactions with others that are unbound and ever changing. Including how and with whom spaces of socio-legal change are created would be an interesting addition to the analysis, she argues.

An important discussion that also was part of the Q&A in Newcastle and is reflected in both commentaries in different ways regards the implications of giving room and consideration to the views offered by participants in this paper. Jason Luger opens his commentary

with the question: 'How open can, and should queer scholarship be, amidst shifting positions and (non)binaries?' This is not to say sensitive subjects should be avoided by researchers, but both Hall and Luger emphasise the need to think in an ethical way about potential implications to those harmed or at risk of harm when data around oppositions to gender and sexuality social-legal changes are revealed. At the end of the day, queer time is never straightforward and to believe that hetero-activists remain marginalised is not a given as we see all over the world where LGBTQIA+ rights are contested and even taken away at the moment. In their response to the commentaries, Brown

and Nash respond that listening across differences in, at times uncomfortable and unconventional ways, is needed when exploring the multiple ways contemporary social change is experienced.

*Ilse van Liempt*  
Co-Editor-in-Chief 

#### REFERENCE

- ROSE, G. (1999), Performing Space. *In*: D. Massey, J. Allen & P. Sarre eds., *Human Geography Today*, pp. 247–258. Cambridge: Polity Press.