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Essay

# Cynical Treatise – Queer Theory and Geography

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**Abstract:** This essay critically discusses the integration of queer theory into human geography while emphasizing its ties to the principles of traditional geography. The need for a separate sub-discipline called queer geography is questioned. At the same time, legitimate concerns about possible departures from the fundamental goals of geography and the risks of anachronistic interpretations in applying modern concepts to historical landscapes are acknowledged. In this discourse, we strongly advocate for values such as freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and international human rights. It is important to emphasize that it is not the intent of this essay to denigrate campaigns for feminism or equality or to disparage the scholarship that emerges from the application of queer theory. On the contrary, we recognize the emergence of gender theories out of a need to advance social justice approaches. We believe that traditional human geography, itself, is capable of comprehensively examining space, time, and the complexity of human experience and offering workable solutions within its established framework. We therefore believe that the inclusion of queer theory can be harmoniously integrated into the contours of human geography, eliminating the need for a separate sub-discipline while preserving the integrity and purpose of the discipline.

**Keywords:** queer theory; human geography; sub-discipline; new perspectives; scholarship

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## 1. Introduction

In contemplation of this matter, one must concede that while the subject is not very novel, its expansion beckons. As custodians of knowledge, scientists bear the solemn responsibility to safeguard the bedrock of a given discipline, ensuring its pristine essence endures, transmitted unmarred to posterity. And so, with unwavering purpose, let us embark upon this literary voyage, seeking to weave a tapestry of profound insight. For within these pages, we will discuss the interplay of ideas and visions, a dance of wisdom and wonder, ensconced in the enigmatic realms of knowledge. May our intellectual odyssey kindle enlightenment and propel us towards ever-ascending heights of understanding. Thus, with the quill poised in anticipation, let the essay commence, revealing the boundless realms that await our explorations.

During the 1960s, the emergence of “Queer Theory” coincided with significant civil rights, feminist, and indigenous rights movements, driven by prevailing societal homophobia and the embedded oppression within governmental legal systems (McCann & Monaghan, 2019; Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). Many writers like Judith Butler (b. 1956), Eve Kosofki Sedgwick (1950-2009), Lee Edelman (b. 1953), and Jack Halberstam (b. 1961) played pivotal roles in establishing “LGBT studies” as an academic discipline, evidenced by the establishment of LGBT programs at prestigious universities such as Yale, University of Maryland, UCLA, University of Birmingham, and King's College London. Rooted in poststructuralism, “Queer Theory” challenges the fixed categories imposed by dominant ideologies of sexuality and gender. Evolving into a transformative force, it empowers members of the “LGBT community” to embrace their identities on their own terms. Libraries actively support and are supporting “LGBT programs”, showcasing enlightening art exhibits, “pride” events, and “safe spaces” for marginalized groups (Bain, 2022). In recent times, queer theory has expanded its scope, permeating various disciplines, scientific works, and social justice discourse, championing freedom and human rights (Jayakumar, 2022). Notably, it has also found its way into the realm of geography, gaining prominence in scholarly publications. Within the confines of this narrative, we endeavor to proffer cogent contentions in direct opposition to the

prevailing notion that queer theory, an intellectual construct conceived by the minds of gender theorists and geographers alike, inherently epitomizes anti-normativity, thereby subverting the perceived interrelations that exist amongst gender, sex, sexuality, race, disability, and sundry other social distinctions (Johnston, 2018). We posit that within geography, "queer theory" serves as a theoretical framework for sexuality studies. However, it is crucial to subject this framework to critical examination, questioning whether it serves the discipline's "best interests" or veers towards a broader critique of normative hierarchies and power relations, challenging dominant systems of oppression (refer to Knopp, 2007; Oswin, 2008; Knopp, 2017; March, 2021). Additionally, sub-disciplines like "*Lesbian and Gay Geography*" (see Bell, 1991) and "*Geopolitics of Sexuality*" "warrant" scrutiny to determine their "relevance" (refer to Kearns, 2023) and "impact". While such inquiries may yield diverse perspectives, they also provoke thought among those who resist being confined by categorical labels.

So, this essay is penned from the standpoint of an ordinary individual, upholding essential values like freedom of speech, thought, conscience, religion, and international human rights. It seeks resonance with geographers who cherish a marketplace of ideas to explore and challenge concepts, fostering societal development. Crucially, it is essential to clarify that this essay does not aim to undermine feminism, anti-racist activism, or campaigns for [LGBT](#) equality (Stone, 2018). Rather than denouncing, this essay acknowledges the emergence of gender theories driven by apprehensions surrounding the implications of social justice approaches for our steadfast dedication to gender, racial, and overall human equality, manifesting prominently in contemporary dialogues. Significantly, the essay abstains from mounting an assault on scholarship or academia as a whole (acknowledgment is extended to [Pluckrose & Lindsay \(2020\)](#) for inspiring the last statements). Instead, it presents a philosophically liberal critique of queer geography scholarship and activism, suggesting that such endeavors may not entirely align with the fundamental objectives of geography. In this simple essay, our fervent endeavors are dedicated to shedding luminous insights upon the profound misgivings that have taken root within us concerning the widespread proliferation of "queer theory" in the realm of geography and its kindred disciplines. Let it be unequivocally stated that we approach this subject not with the intent of undermining the validity or significance of this theory, for we acknowledge existing contributions made by interdisciplinary people who, in their pursuit of knowledge, have bestowed upon us scientific and practical works steeped in the tenets of this paradigm. Nevertheless, the ever-evolving nature of scientific thought beckons us to ponder with genuine curiosity whether geography, in all its splendor and potential, can truly thrive and reach its pinnacle under the banner of such theoretical frameworks. As we stand amidst the ephemeral ebbs and flows of scientific paradigms, the question lingers, lingering like a wisp of mist, whether the intrinsic essence of traditional, time-honored geography might elude capture in the embrace of these novel perspectives. Thus, while we concede the possibility of harmonious coexistence, our firm conviction remains unwavering in asserting that these theories, albeit significant in their own right, may not entirely encapsulate the profound ethos and authenticity that lie at the heart of classical geography. In addition, we duly acknowledge that the possession of divergent views and perspectives within our intellectual realm does not, in any measure, diminish the scientific acumen or inherent potential of an opposing party. Science, in its quintessence, thrives on the plurality of ideas, where the interplay of contrasting thoughts bestows upon it the richness and depth akin to a luminous constellation against the night sky. The very essence of true inquiry lies in the robust exchange of disparate insights, thus fostering an atmosphere of enlightenment where novel discoveries emerge like radiant stars in the celestial expanse.

Thus, throughout the course of this essay, we earnestly embark on a profound journey, sharing our contemplations and pertinent moral deliberations concerning the emergence and integration of queer theory within the scientific realm. As we delve into the intricate interplay between queer theory and its entrenchment in geography, we are cognizant that the perspective we present is inherently personal, an expression of our own views. It is crucial to emphasize that our intention is not to assail or diminish the viewpoints or concepts underpinning queer theory, nor is it an endeavor to appraise or undermine the scholarly endeavors founded upon this theoretical framework. Rather, as

geographers, advocates of the internationally recognized principle of freedom of speech, and ardent proponents of unfettered expression within the scientific arena, we find it imperative to foster an environment where diverse perspectives find nourishment and flourish within the domain of geography. Indeed, it is our unwavering commitment to embracing the rights of free expression of opinion that impels us to share our thoughts on the matter. In doing so, we endeavor to contribute to the richness of scholarly dialogue and the continual evolution of knowledge in this esteemed discipline. So, we reiterate that our reflections on queer theory's integration within geography are rooted in the profound belief in the significance of unfettered intellectual discourse. By championing the free exchange of ideas, we fortify the fabric of scientific inquiry and pave the way for a robust and inclusive advancement of this revered science.

## 2. What is Queer Theory?

Let us first embark on an enlightening journey to unravel the essence of queer theory by exploring its profound foundations and, in the course of its fascinating rise, taking a close look at the ways in which it has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of scientific research. "Queer Theory" is a philosophical framework that seeks liberation from societal norms, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality. It challenges the notion of fixed categories for sex, gender, and sexual orientation, viewing them as oppressive constructs. Rooted in postmodernism, this theory takes a radical stance by questioning the biological basis of these categories and viewing them as artificial products of language and discourse (McCann & Monaghan, 2019). Biologically based explanations are largely rejected, and the focus is on the influence of social constructs (see also, Stoppard, 2014). This perspective may seem confusing to some because of its rejection of the conventional understanding of identity. The queer theory holds that categorization itself leads to oppression, as language creates and maintains rigid norms that impose predetermined roles based on sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Consequently, the main goal of queer theory is to critically examine, challenge, and overcome these boundaries (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

To achieve its goals, Queer Theory relies on two fundamental postmodern principles (McDonald, 2015):

*First*, it rejects the idea of an objective reality, emphasizing that understanding is subjective and contextual.

*Second*, it recognizes the power structures inherent in society that maintain and reinforce unjust systems.

Using these principles, queer theory seeks to demonstrate how language perpetuates oppression through categorical existence. In doing so, it often blurs the boundaries of these categories to reveal their arbitrary and oppressive nature. As a result, the queer theory emphasizes complexity, ambiguity, and nonconformity, making it difficult for adherents of traditional views to understand. Despite its intentional ambiguity, Queer Theory has significantly influenced various academic disciplines such as gender studies, trans activism, disability studies, and fat studies. It has played a crucial role in shaping postmodern theory and its practical application in contemporary contexts (McCann & Monaghan, 2019). Although Queer Theory remains an enigmatic and self-contained framework, its undeniable influence on contemporary discourse cannot be overlooked (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

The queer theory emerged in response to historical contexts, particularly under the influence of radical groups that revolutionized feminist, gay, and lesbian studies beginning in the 1960s. It gained momentum from the [AIDS crisis](#) of the 1980s, which made gay rights an urgent social and political concern (see also Bell, 2020). The theory challenges traditional views of sexuality and recognizes that historical perceptions of homosexuality and gender roles have changed significantly. In the past, male homosexuality was considered a grave sin in Christian and Islamic history, while ancient Greek culture accepted same-sex relationships. However, the concept of "being homosexual", as opposed to "homosexual acts", did not emerge until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and shaped public perceptions of homosexuality as a perversion or psychiatric disorder. Over time, liberal attitudes toward homosexuality evolved, and acceptance was promoted with the slogan, "Some people are gay. Get over

*it*" (see: Clarke, 2019). Queer theory, an applied postmodern theory, criticizes this liberal idea as problematic because it treats "LGBT identities" as stable categories and fails to foreground their character as social constructs maintained by powerful entities to enforce dominance and oppression (McCann & Monaghan, 2019).

So, the understanding of sex and gender has also changed. Previously, gender roles were deeply rooted in biological essentialism, but as feminism gained ground, the need to distinguish between sex and gender became apparent. In fact, the term "gender" emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (refer to Nicholson, 1994) and distinguishes behaviors and traits from biological sex. Queer Theory views sex, gender, and sexuality as social constructs shaped by prevailing cultural norms. The founders of queer theory drew inspiration from Michel Foucault's concept of biopower, which refers to the influence of scientific discourses on biology (refer to Cisney & Morar, 2020). Although the theory raises concerns about the cultural power dynamics that arise from normative categories, it is important to note that the biological legitimization of sex, gender, and sexuality has contributed to progress even without explicitly drawing on postmodern theories (also see Table 1). Queer theory, for example, has evolved from historical movements and continues to challenge social norms regarding gender and sexuality, emphasizing the character of these categories as social constructs. Its development has been influenced by critical thinkers and their exploration of power dynamics and biological discourses (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

**Table 1.** Queer Theory and its famous founders.

Scholar	Contribution to Queer Theory
Gayle Rubin	Pioneered the concept of the "sex/gender system" and contributed to early queer activism.
Judith Butler	Known for her groundbreaking work on gender performativity, a central aspect of Queer Theory.
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick	Introduced the concept of "queer performativity" and contributed to queer literary studies.
Michel Foucault	Influential in shaping the theoretical framework of Queer Theory, particularly with his analysis of power and sexuality.
Adrienne Rich	Prominent feminist poet and essayist who explored LGBTQ+ themes and challenges to gender norms in her work.
Audre Lorde	An influential African American poet and essayist who discussed intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in her writings.

Source: McCann & Monaghan, 2019. Note: *This table provides a brief listing of some scholars who have played an important role in highlighting and supporting Queer Theory through their research, writings, and contributions to related fields. Keep in mind that there are many other scholars who have also contributed to the development and advancement of Queer Theory.*

Queer Theory, an intellectually invigorating and potent approach, presents an ardent challenge to societal norms and conventional notions pertaining to sex, gender, and sexuality. Through an emphasis on problematizing discourses and deconstructing established categories, it brilliantly showcases the malleability of these constructs over time. Inspired by the profound insights of Foucault, Queer Theory conducts a critical examination of history, illuminating how once widely accepted truths can be reevaluated as society progresses. At the core of Queer Theory lies a central argument, asserting that the seemingly fixed categories of today, such as "male/female," "masculine/feminine," and "heterosexual/homosexual," are not inherent but rather socially constructed through dominant discourses (McCann & Monaghan, 2019; Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). This pivotal idea opens the door to the possibility that these categories are not immutable but rather fluid and subject to transformation in the future. The term "queer" plays a crucial role in this theory as it dauntlessly challenges binary constructions and their associations with sex, gender, and sexuality. By adopting a "queer" identity, individuals liberate themselves from societal expectations

and embark on an exploration of diverse identities and sexualities, thus becoming a political statement against the rigidity imposed by societal norms in matters of sex, gender, and sexuality.

Beyond being a mere theoretical endeavor, Queer Theory takes the form of a political project with the aim of dismantling the notion that individuals must conform to rigid binary positions concerning sex and gender, while also challenging the assumption that sex or gender should dictate one's sexuality. It boldly critiques normativity and dislodges the notion that certain traits are more commonplace or morally superior to others. The process of "queering" involves dismantling fixed categories and embracing unconventional perspectives, thereby liberating individuals from the constraints of societal norms (see also, Giffney & Hird, 2016). This far-reaching concept extends beyond gender and sexuality to encompass broader notions of time, space, and even theory itself. Nevertheless, grasping this concept in its entirety can prove challenging, as it consciously distrusts language and resists conventional categorization (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020).

In the realm of academia, the term "queer" assumes a dual role as both an adjective and a potent verb, signifying a profound departure from normativity and a wholehearted embrace of alternative perspectives. Within the expanse of Queer Theory, an engrossing battle unfolds against the hegemonic power dynamics embedded in normative constructs, those that seek to constrain and confine individual agency. This theoretical framework draws profound inspiration from the philosophical wisdom of postmodern luminaries like Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), whose methodologies fuel a transformative exploration of established societal norms. The essence of critique lies in the acknowledgment that power operates as the pivotal force behind every articulation, thus serving as a catalyst for this paradigmatic examination. While Foucault's resolute perspective on the omnipresence of power may captivate and resonate with those experiencing marginalization and disenfranchisement, we must remain cognizant of the potential peril that lurks within this seductive worldview. Therein lies the danger of intellectual corruption, eclipsing the very pursuit of truth. In response, a clarion call emerges, urging us to shift our focus beyond the mere recognition of the power and towards a more profound inquiry: "Who speaks the truth, and what forces propel their utterances?" The essence of genuine human engagement, embodied in the "*I-thou*" relationship, wanes in the absence of a shared understanding of truth. The concept of truth, intertwined with authentic connections and meaningful dialogues, forms the bedrock of this intellectual pursuit. In the realm of education, this postmodern approach leaves an indelible imprint on the curriculum, subjecting various facets of culture, from writers and philosophers to musicians, to scrutiny in the light of this transformative paradigm. As we traverse this philosophical terrain, it becomes imperative to strike a delicate balance between the allure of power critique and the steadfast pursuit of truth, thereby fostering a richer tapestry of human understanding and genuine interaction.

### 3. Queer "Legacy"

As we mentioned above, queer theory represents a paradigm shift in that it challenges conventional notions of gender, sex, and sexuality by asserting their social constructivist nature. It takes a radical, postmodern approach that challenges scientific claims that promote biological essentialism, drawing inspiration from Michel Foucault's concept of biopower, in which scientific discourse reinforces the dominance of the powerful. Foucault's understanding of power permeating society, influencing truths, and shaping discourse have become a cornerstone of applied postmodernism and social justice activism (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). This perspective underscores the importance of examining discourse for underlying biases perpetuated by those in power. As we are repeating, the queer theory rejects fixed categories of gender and sexuality, advocates social constructivism, and examines the role of language in disguising power as knowledge (McCann & Monaghan, 2019). By challenging social norms, queer theory promotes a more inclusive and fluid understanding of identity. The legacy of queer theory, then, is to challenge established views of sex, gender, and sexuality in order to create an accepting and diverse society. The emphasis on social constructivism, skepticism of biological essentialism, and analysis of language and power dynamics makes queer theory an effective tool for promoting social change and inclusivity. Queer Theory

emerged as a postmodern perspective on sex, gender, and sexuality and was influenced by three key figures: Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020). They challenged traditional views and emphasized the socially constructive nature of these categories.

**Table 2.** "Fairy godmothers" of Queer Theory and their works.

Fairy Godmothers of Queer Theory	Works
Gayle Rubin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Thinking Sex" (1984)</li> <li>- "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex" (1975)</li> <li>- "Deviation" (1984)</li> </ul>
Judith Butler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity" (1990)</li> <li>- "Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex" (1993)</li> </ul>
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Epistemology of the Closet" (1990)</li> <li>- "Tendencies" (1993)</li> <li>- "Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity" (2003)</li> </ul>

Source: Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020. Note: *The table serves as a concise reference, offering readers a quick glimpse of the key figures and their major works within the realm of Queer Theory.*

So, Gayle Rubin's essay "Thinking Sex" (2002), for example, rejected "sexual essentialism" and argued for the political necessity of believing in social constructions of sex, gender, and sexuality. She called for the rejection of biology in order to advocate for the liberation of "non-sexed" and "non-heterosexual" individuals (Rubin, 2002). Judith Butler's concept of "gender performativity" also assumes that gender is a social construct shaped by language and actions, rather than a fixed aspect of identity (see also: Salih, 2007, ÇINAR, 2015). Her approach aims to subvert normative roles and create space for different gender expressions. Furthermore, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work emphasized that she resists binary thinking and embraces fluidity. She viewed language, particularly speech acts, as influential in constructing and maintaining unjust binaries and sought to deconstruct hierarchies (see also Edwards, 2008). Thus, queer theory challenges normativity, encourages incoherence and fluidity, and uses language as a tool to disrupt oppressive constructions. It goes beyond sexuality and questions different aspects of society by "queering" various issues.

Besides, Queer Theory, rooted in the principles of postmodernism, challenges traditional understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality, viewing them as social constructs shaped by discourse (see also, Duignan, 2023). It rejects the notion of stable reality, emphasizes systems of power, and questions the legitimacy of scientific authority. The theory blurs boundaries and focuses heavily on language or discourse. It also exhibits cultural relativism and assumes that gender and sexuality are cultural constructs. Queer theory intersects with other forms of marginalized identity, and its deconstructive approach is consistent with applied postmodernism. However, it departs from earlier liberal feminism and LGBT activism in that it seeks to change or reframe the concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality that can alienate and marginalize some people (Stone, 2018). Although it advocates for LGBTQ+ individuals, it is criticized for ignoring biological realities and making universal liberation difficult. Consequently, many in the LGBTQ+ community do not fully support or embrace Queer Theory (see also, Campkin, 2023).

#### 4. Discussion: Moral Views

In modern times, we encounter terms such as "non-binary" and "genderqueer" or "queer" that were not present in the historical vocabulary. These terms now serve as "umbrella" terms for "gender identities" that go beyond the traditional male or female binary. Non-binary individuals fall under the category of transgender because they often identify with a gender other than their assigned

gender. However, it is important to note that not all non-binary people identify as transgender. The non-binary spectrum includes those who see themselves as an intermediate or separate third gender, those who identify with multiple genders, and even those who perceive themselves as genderless or with a fluctuating gender identity. It is important to understand that gender identity is not synonymous with a person's sexual or romantic orientation, as non-binary individuals may have different orientations. It is also important to distinguish between non-binary and intersex people, as most intersex people still identify as either male or female. Non-binary people may express their gender identity in a variety of ways, and some may even reject traditional gender designations altogether. It is worth noting that some non-binary people may undergo medical treatments such as surgery or hormone therapy to alleviate gender dysphoria, much like transgender men and women. However, the idea of non-binary identities is questioned, rooted in the belief that God created humanity and all living things in binary forms. From this perspective, a non-binary identity is seen as an attempt to deviate from the natural order created by God, as it runs counter to the binary condition of male and female. According to this view, no one can escape their binary nature, whether they identify as male, female, or hermaphrodite (i.e., intersex). It is argued that the concept of non-binary identities is at odds with religious teachings and established norms. Indeed, claiming non-binary or queer things is related to spiritual immaturity or lack of spirituality, in our opinion. Esteemed scholars among us posit that such fervent fluctuations arise from a dearth of understanding regarding the intricate workings of the world. Thus, when one finds themselves perturbed or vexed, it can be attributed to a form of spiritual immaturity, for true wisdom lies in comprehending that all emanates from the divine source - God, shaping a wholly different perspective of reality. Furthermore, it is in this same vein that the queer theory finds its genesis, originating from souls who too lack knowledge about the world's intricate tapestry or remain devoid of the profound comprehension of pure reality. Allow us to clarify that this perspective is tendered with sincerity, devoid of mockery or diminishment of others' viewpoints. Instead, it conveys the notion that the theory of queerness, or the aspiration to "queer" every domain of scientific inquiry, is a manifestation of limited awareness and a skewed understanding of reality's essence.

Interestingly, some historical Islamic texts of jurisprudence (called Fiqh) delve into discussions of homosexuality, acknowledging that some people are born with same-sex attractions or may develop them as a result of life experiences. Scholars have recognized bisexuality for centuries, noting that some people feel they are in the wrong body, akin to today's discussions of gender dysphoria and transgender experiences. In the past, people with such feelings were often ostracized in some Muslim societies, but there were also cases of tolerance. The critical point of view is rooted in the belief that religious teachings and traditional knowledge are inconsistent with the concept of non-binary identities. Adherents of this perspective argue that adherence to religious values and established norms challenge the acceptance of non-binary gender identities. This stance raises questions about the role of interpretation and relativism in religious understanding and the importance of maintaining established beliefs. In summary, the discussion reveals a critical perspective on the notion of non-binary identities, examining it in light of religious beliefs and established norms. While we acknowledge the presence and experiences of non-binary individuals, they argue that the concept may be at odds with religious teachings and traditional understandings of human nature as binary. With these considerations in mind, we shall now begin a moral discourse in which we will address the intricacies of a particular stance. Subsequently, we will conclude this essay by offering our perspective on the harmonization between queer theory and the field of geography.

## 5. Queer Theory in Geography – Challenging Assumptions

So, the emergence of queer theory in geography represents a significant departure from traditional geographic thinking and practice. Scholars have introduced terms such as "queer mapping" and "queer geography" to deconstruct the assumed heteronormative nature of spaces and places (Gorman-Murray & McKinnon, 2015). While queer geographies aim to celebrate diversity and challenge fixed identities, they have also raised legitimate concerns about their practical implications.

We contend that the application of queer theory to geography sometimes overemphasizes sexual and gender identities, diverting attention from other important geographical issues. For example, in this pursuit of deconstruction, the study of place, space, and society, which are key elements of human geography, can be obscured. Let us consider a scenario in which research focuses primarily on the fluidity and ambiguity of sexual and gender identities in a particular urban setting. While this type of research illuminates important issues related to queer experiences in this context, it risks overlooking equally important factors that shape geographic experience. Take, for example, the impact of urban development and gentrification on marginalized communities. These processes can significantly alter physical and social landscapes, affecting not only queer individuals but other vulnerable populations as well. A focus on sexual and gender identities may inadvertently overshadow the lived experiences of people who face socio-economic challenges due to displacement, loss of cultural heritage, or such urban transformations. It is also possible to consider a case study exploring unusual places and safe havens in urban environments. While such research is invaluable in understanding the importance of inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals, we must also remember that the dynamics of place and space extend beyond this singular perspective. An example of this is that the environmental and ecological aspects of a region can influence the sense of belonging and attachment to place for different communities, not just defined by their sexual or gender identity.

Moreover, the fluidity emphasized by queer theory raises questions about its compatibility with the idea of geographic stability. While it is important to challenge rigid notions of identity, we argue that an overemphasis on fluidity could undermine the foundations of geography as a discipline concerned with understanding stable and recognizable patterns in the world (Johnston, 2018). Then there are questions about the practicality of queer geographies in addressing broader social issues. While some consider it important to examine how sexuality and gender intersect with race, feminism, postcolonialism, and globalization, the extent to which queer theory effectively informs policy or produces tangible social change remains uncertain. In essence, while queer theory has opened new avenues of inquiry and understanding within geography, it is important to strike a balance and not lose sight of the discipline's core principles. Thus, when adopting a critical stance, it is essential for scholars to thoroughly question the inherent flaws of queer theory and related concepts such as "queer mapping" or "queer geography". Even though these concepts purport to offer enriching perspectives, it is essential to question their validity and potential consequences (Gorman-Murray & McKinnon, 2015).

So, let's delve into the impact of queer theory's emphasis on deconstructing fixed identities and celebrating diversity. While the intention is to foster inclusivity and acceptance, there is a risk of inadvertently undermining the importance of normalcy and stability in geographic analysis. Understanding and valuing the normal and predictable aspects of human experience and spatial relationships remain essential in comprehending societal dynamics. To illustrate this, we may consider any study examining the cultural practices and social norms within a traditional community. While queer theory might prompt us to question and challenge existing norms, it is equally crucial to recognize the stability and coherence that these norms bring to the community's social fabric. Overemphasizing deconstruction might overlook the significance of such norms in maintaining harmony and cohesion. Also, the promotion of fluidity and ambiguity of identity within queer theory raises concerns about the potential erosion of coherent social constructs. As human geographers, our role involves exploring and comprehending the patterns and structures that shape societies and communities. By prioritizing ambiguity, there may be challenges in effectively analyzing and addressing critical social issues. For example, we may consider any case where urban planning is underway to address housing needs for various communities. A holistic understanding of identity and social structures is essential in ensuring that the housing projects align with the diverse needs of different communities. If the focus solely remains on fluidity and ambiguity, there may be a lack of coherence in the planning process, potentially neglecting the specific requirements and preferences of certain social groups. So, as far as we are concerned, while queer theory presents valuable insights into diversity and inclusivity, it is crucial to strike a balance in geographic analysis.

Acknowledging the importance of normalcy and stability alongside celebrating diversity allows us to develop comprehensive solutions for critical social issues, ensuring a harmonious and inclusive coexistence of various identities and communities.

Moreover, queer theory's fixation on the study of sexual and gender identities may distract attention from other important geographies. The disproportionate focus on these specific identities risks marginalizing other relevant dimensions of human geographies, such as economic factors, cultural practices, and historical influences. Also, the practical application of queer theory's insights in real-world contexts is questionable. While it claims to illuminate the intersection of sexuality and gender with race, feminism, postcolonialism, and globalization, it remains uncertain how these theoretical explorations translate into tangible and meaningful change in society. Ultimately, the promotion of terms like "queer mapping" or "queer geography" in studies reflects an anti-normal ideology that seeks to challenge and sabotage social norms and conventions. However, it is important to recognize that normalcy and tradition play an important role in fostering stable communities and providing a sense of belonging and continuity. All in all, our geography scholars need to critically evaluate the implications of incorporating queer theory into human geography. It is important to strike a balance between celebrating diversity and recognizing the importance of normalcy and stability in geographic analysis. By questioning the merits and limitations of queer theory, we can ensure a comprehensive understanding of spaces and identities that incorporates all essential aspects of human geography.

## 6. Conclusion

The introduction of subdisciplines such as queer geography, and the utilization of terms like queer mapping or queer space, have ignited a profound debate within the domain of geography. These novel concepts, when combined with queer theory, indeed offer insightful contributions to the understanding of space production and the challenge of heteronormative paradigms. However, this development has also raised concerns among critics, who express apprehensions regarding potential overemphasis on queer perspectives, which might lead to a diversion from the core objectives of the field. There is a concern that essential geographic matters of vital importance might be overshadowed, historical landscapes interpreted through the lens of contemporary social constructs, and certain communities may feel alienated as a consequence.

On the other hand, proponents of queer theory and/or queer geography ardently advocate for the significance of their critical approach, asserting that it engenders a more comprehensive comprehension of spaces and identities. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that this perspective may not be universally embraced among all geography scholars, and it stands as our own subjective interpretation. In the pursuit of comprehensive and inclusive geography, embracing diverse viewpoints undoubtedly enriches the discipline. However, it is imperative to maintain a balance and remain grounded in enduring norms that have found acceptance among global communities across millennia. This journey in geography necessitates a multifaceted exploration, firmly rooted in the fundamental principles of scientific inquiry. As we navigate this path, the synergy between insights from queer theory and the time-honored wisdom and rigor of geography's established methodologies becomes crucial.

Undeniably, queer geography's claim to question established norms and explore the fluid dimensions of gender and sexuality can shed light on the intricate power structures shaping spatial arrangements. Yet, we must recognize that geography, at its core, remains a science centered on the human element, wherein the human experience is of utmost importance. Looking ahead, a harmonious balance is vital, encompassing a wide array of perspectives related to space, place, and beyond, while upholding geography's timeless focus. As we move forward, prioritizing scientific studies grounded in the tradition of human geography, enriched by the insights of queer theory, will lead us toward a deeper and more encompassing understanding of the complex tapestry of geographic phenomena, encapsulating the essence of human experience within the ever-evolving world of geography.

## 7. Declaration

I declare that this study has no competing interests or controversial matters.

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