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CALL FOR SESSIONS (CFS) AND PRESENTATIONS (CFP) FOR THE EUROPEAN GEOGRAPHIES OF SEXUALITIES CONFERENCE 2024 (BRIGHTON, UK)

CONFERENCE THEME: *UNCOMFORTABLE SPACES*

DATES: *MONDAY SEPTEMBER 2ND TO WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2024*

NEW EXTENDED DEADLINES

Feb 16th (sessions) or **Mar 29th** (presentations)

At this conference, we're interested in comfort – and discomfort. We want to take seriously the emotional and affective qualities of comfort and discomfort. We aim to explore their shifting meanings and practices, their spatial contexts and politics, and their use for and relationship to geographies of sexualities.

Comfort and discomfort have their own changing social, spatial and historical contexts (McNally et al, 2020). In some contexts comfort may look entirely apolitical, or even as an expression of privilege (Fox & Ore, 2010). In other contexts, it can be an important way in which safety and inclusion (or exclusion) is produced for multiply-marginalised people (Boulila, 2015; Held, 2015). Creating and working with discomfort can also be productive (Ahmed, 2012). Following these scholars, we think it's important that comfort is accessible to marginalised people and communities. But it's also important to critically interrogate our experiences of uncomfortable spaces. For those without particular privileges, an uncomfortable space could simply mirror or even exacerbate the inequality and marginalisation of everyday life. For those with those privileges, encountering an uncomfortable space could spark productive reflections (Fox & Ore, 2010).

We can see some of the politics and spatialities of comfort at conferences such as the EGSC. Regular EGSC attendees have pointed out that the conference - despite the best efforts of participants and organisers - can often mirror the hegemonic Anglo-centrism (Garcia Ramon et al, 2006; Silva & Ornat, 2016) of global academia. This is about language, but it's also about lacking awareness of and respect for non-Anglosphere scholarship (Müller, 2021) – as Ahmed (2017:15-16) points out, citation is a political practice. Consequently the various spaces and times of the conference may be uncomfortable for many non-native English speakers, who may experience the awkwardness of not speaking 'perfect' English in their presentation; the embarrassment of not being able to express thoughts in a 'sophisticated' way; the loneliness of not getting the joke told over lunch; or the anger of having one's academic institution treated with suspicion when applying for a visa. Native English-speakers, on the other hand, can expect everyone at the conference to speak their language, and to recognise and respect their scholarly literatures and institutions. And, as Rodó Zárate (forthcoming) reminds us, the hegemonic nature of Anglo-centric academia means that most attendees **do** speak English, and **are** familiar with English-language scholarship. Consequently native English-speakers (particularly when monolingual) may get to experience international academic spaces as comfortable, at the expense of other attendees. Following its theme, EGSC 2024 will be a space in which sessions in languages other than English are encouraged. And (particularly because the

conference budget does not extend to professional live translation) it will be a space in which the discomfort that comes with conversing across politico-linguistic differences is critically engaged with.

We invite scholars from across the world to join us in an uncomfortable space, to have uncomfortable conversations. Perhaps we can create more comfortable spaces for those marginalised due to sexualities, and become more comfortable with one another.

We particularly welcome proposals for sessions/presentations in languages other than English, and proposals relating to the following:

- Making comfortable spaces for sexual minorities, particularly those marginalised through race, class, and gender.
- Intersectional, postcolonial and queer approaches to comfort.
- Personal, reflective accounts of uncomfortable academic spaces.
- Emotional, affective and/or atmospheric geographies of sexualities.
- Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic translations of 'comfort' and related discourses.
- The spatial and scalar politics of comfort, as well as wider emotions and affects.
- Strategies of dealing with and managing discomfort in particular spaces.
- Methods for studying and understanding emotions and affects.
- Engaging with comfort and discomfort in art and activism.
- Mapping experiences of comfort and discomfort.
- The role of the more-than-human in producing comfort.
- Embodied experiences of/with dis/comfort.

To submit a proposal for an **Organised Session** (new extended deadline Feb 16th) or an **Individual Paper** (new extended deadline Mar 29th), visit the conference website at <https://2024.egsconference.com/> and complete the appropriate form. Please read our *Guidelines For All Presentations* carefully – these have been written to support multi-lingual communication.

If you have any questions about the conference, feel free to email the Local Organising Committee in Brighton: egsc24@brighton.ac.uk