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Sunderland**

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A person wearing a purple hijab is the central focus, holding a large rainbow flag and a light blue sign with the text "SOLIDARITY WITH MUSLIM LGBTQ". The background shows a busy outdoor event with other people, some holding smaller rainbow flags, and a white tent with a red logo that says "ZYWIEC".

Queer Muslims

What challenges do they face?

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An interesting mix?

- 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots (2019).
- Growing acceptability of 'homosexuality' in the U.K (British Social Attitudes Survey, 2013). SRE in 2020.
- Post-closet era? Abandoning gaybourhoods? (Seidman, 2002, Ghaziani, 2014).
- The 'No Outsiders' protests in Birmingham and other cities.
- Pride flag adopted by some Pride events. Divisive in the queer community.
- Queer Muslims in the middle of this.





What problems might queer Muslims face within 'Islamic spaces'?

Geo-political; representations of Muslims and queer citizenship...

- Representations of Muslims (and Islam) altered socio-historically.
- Said (1979) 'Orientalism' – West constructed idea of the 'Other' opposed to Western, secular, enlightened and scientific ideas.
- Occidentalism (Buruma and Margalit, 2004) posits the same idea of the 'Orient' having similar reductive view of the West.
- School protests: 'LGBT is not part of *our* culture.'
- Homosexuality has 'shifted columns' (Bracke, 2012) as it is seen as a marker of civilisation and modernity in the West, in opposition to 'oppressive' nations. David Cameron?
- Pitted Western queer organisations versus regressive, conservative Islamic countries (for example, Syria and ISIS). 'Clash of cultures' argument increasingly part of the narrative in the media (Puar, 2007).
- Rise of homonationalism amongst queer citizens (Puar, 2007) as queer citizens taken into the fold, against the racialised 'Other' especially post 9/11.
- Femonationalism has grown in parallel with this (the White Western woman under threat from racialised and sexualised Others who will curtail her rights and veil her) (Puar, 2007).
- Dangerous Muslim man, the fragile and imperilled Muslim woman and the civilised European.
- The latter deserves citizenship (Kosnick, 2015).



Queer Muslims in Islamic spaces

- **Heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality is acutely active in Islamic ethno-religious communities.**
- **Homosexuality as a Western phenomenon (Balsam, 2011).**
- **Queer Muslims as a ‘minority within a minority’ (Jama, 2013).**
- **Family acts as agent of surveillance and extended family as adult authorities (Kugle, 2013).**
- **‘Izzat’ for family can be held higher than that of the individual.**
- **Religious proclamations of ‘haram.’ Religious heterosexism is prevalent – leads to conflicting identity and lack of reconciliation of identity.**
- **Higher levels of internalised homophobia amongst South Asian queer Muslims (Jaspal, 2017).**
- **‘Intersectional knot’ (Orne, 2017)...**

“As a gay male and a Muslim... I am left feeling like I must defend my faith within my own LGBT community. And to defend my LGBT community in the face of religious attacks.”





What problems might queer Muslims face within the queer community?

Queer Muslims in queer spaces

- Islamophobic attitudes (as a form of cultural racism – see Garner, 2017) have grown in queer spaces.
- Predominantly White gay commercial gay scene British Asians carry a burden of racialisation (Bassi, 2008).
- Presumptions of ‘being a Muslim’ when Islamic identity is ‘obvious.’
- Secular and queer ideals of ‘coming out’ can be problematic for queer Muslims. The ideal queer self is to be atheist/secular. This overlooks religion.
- Overlooked are wider issues such as the affects on Muslim community, tradition, family ‘izzat’ and marriage for siblings.
- Those who do not jettison their Islamic identity may face Islamophobia – the polarisation of faith and queer identity is exacerbated by press and geopolitics (Smallwood, 2015).



Queer Muslims in queer spaces

- A White discourse about coming out may cause conflicting attitudes in queer Muslims (Fox and Ore, 2010).
- Hypervisibility in queer spaces due to ethnicity and Islamic identity – unable to find acceptance and anticipate rejection (Jaspal, 2017).
- Fears of sexual disclosure through association with White queer people who are ‘too open’ and the fear of discrimination from non-Muslims.
- ‘Race’ as a trophy – exoticification of bodies (Brennan, et al, 2013).
- South Asian women ‘read’ and treated as the ‘Other’ (Kawale, 2003).



Queer Muslims in queer spaces

- **Within gaybourhoods, exclusions are often on other social markers other than sexuality.**
- **Gay bars as ‘gated communities’ keeping out classed, gendered and racialised bodies (DasGupta and DasGupta, 2018).**
- **Forms a homonormativity of able-bodied, male and White bodies (Held, 2015).**
- **‘Shared Whiteness’ becomes an unmarked ‘racial norm’ (Held, 2015). Brown and Muslim identities held as problematic, potentially homophobic and heterosexual.**
- **This is reinforced by studies of gay print media whereby POC are less likely to be represented than White people (Roy, 2012).**
- **Queer Muslim asylum seekers?**



Today

lol your racist against white people you

It's okay for coloured people to only look for white

But if white people only want white

Sprint 00:06 10%

Chats We are Paris Edit

Yesterday

23:58 Get that terrorist writing off your fucking profile

23:58 Excuse me?

23:59 You must be one of those isis motherfuckers if you think it's ok to write that hurka durka shit after yesterday

Today

9:46 PM Excuse me?

9:46 PM to iraqistan

9:50 PM Did you get lost on the way to the KKK meeting?

9:50 PM Or are you just ignorant, racist trash on your own?

Today

00:01 They're actually lyrics to a song by an artist from a country whose capital just got bombed a few days ago. Educate yourself.

00:02 You better watch yourself. I'll kick your ass all the way back to Iraq if I ever see you in public

00:03 I'm Lebanese but thank you for proving your continual ignorance.

9:50 PM American patriot

9:50 PM raghead

9:51 PM to whatever Peice muslim country you m

Go

Not if you're Asian bro

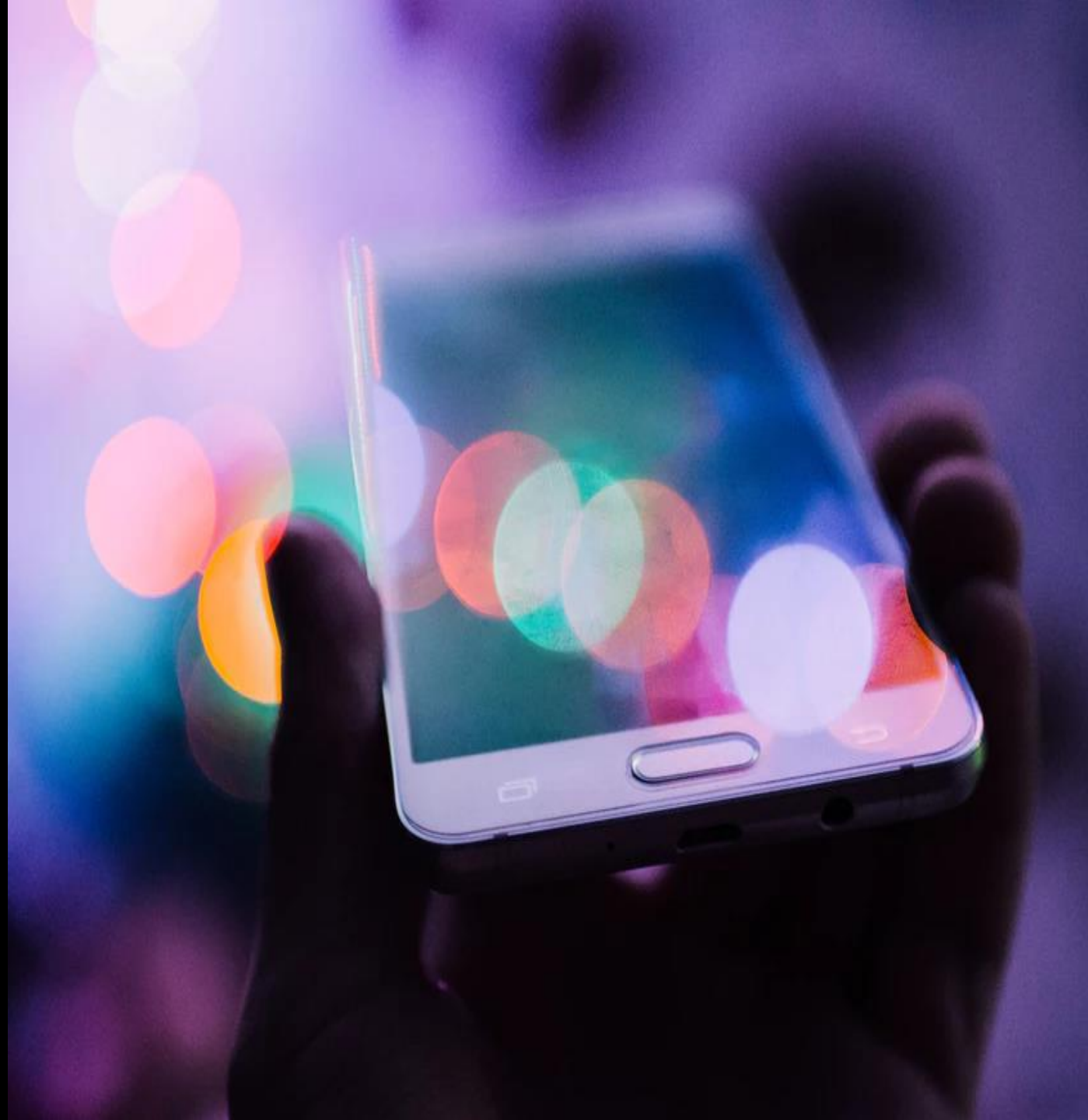
3:59 pm

+ Send

Send

Queer Muslims online

- ‘Sexual racism’ (Icard, 1986).
- ‘Entitlement racism’ whereby aggressors ‘speak their mind’ and justify hate speech (Essed, 2013).
- All of which leads to psychological duress and fragmentation of identity – forced to go with sexual or racial/Islamic identity (Nero, 2005).
- Racism has effects on quality of life and health (Ro, et al, 2013).





What can we do to open up opportunities for queer Muslims?



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Go

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FRIDAY 7TH JULY

INCLUSIVE JUMMAH

NEW UNITY, 277A UPPER STREET
N1 2TZ

