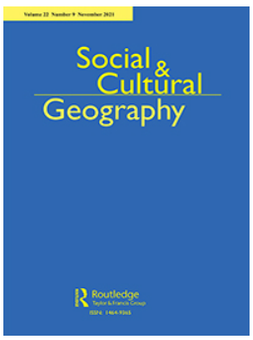

Social & Cultural Geography

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rscg20

‘Are you sure you’re not gay?’: Straight and bisexual male experiences of Eurovision Song Contest fandom

Jamie Halliwell

To cite this article: Jamie Halliwell (2021): ‘Are you sure you’re not gay?’: Straight and bisexual male experiences of Eurovision Song Contest fandom, Social & Cultural Geography, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2021.2000016

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2021.2000016

Published online: 06 Nov 2021.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2021.2000016

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

'Are you sure you're not gay?': Straight and bisexual male experiences of Eurovision Song Contest fandom

Jamie Halliwell

School of Natural Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

The Eurovision song Contest (ESC), amongst others, recognises lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans (LGBT) people internationally. Limited attention has been paid in understanding bisexual and straight male engagement with the event. This article examines how these fans experience shame around their fandom. It argues that the cultural contestation and the associations of the ESC as a widely perceived gay pastime determine how bisexual and straight male fans make visible their fandom. This paper explores how these fans negotiate their fan and sexual identities in domestic and public spaces, and through digital objects, such as laptops, televisions, and social media platforms. It reflects on the positionality of the gay male fan researcher when conducting interviews with straight male ESC fans. The findings prompt further discussions regarding the technological distinctions between social media 'apps' and how users use their respective interfaces to limit exposure to shaming for their fandom and/or sexual orientation. This also includes further examination of the digital objects through which apps are accessed and how they shape socio-sexual lives and identities.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 27 September 2020
Accepted 22 July 2021

KEYWORDS
Eurovision song contest; shame; social media; sexuality

Palabras clave
Festival de la Canción de Eurovisión; vergüenza; medios de comunicación social; sexualidad

Mots-clefs
Concours Eurovision de la chanson; honte; médias sociaux; sexualité

'¿Estás seguro de que no eres gay?': Experiencias masculinas heterosexuales y bisexuales de fans del Festival de la Canción de Eurovisión

El Festival de la Canción de Eurovisión (FCE), entre otros, reconoce a las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y, trans (LGBT) a nivel internacional. Se ha prestado poca atención a entender el compromiso de los hombres bisexuales y heterosexuales con el evento. Este artículo examina cómo estos fans sienten vergüenza por su fanatismo. Argumenta que la disputa cultural y las asociaciones del FCE como un pasatiempo gay ampliamente percibido determinan cómo los fanáticos masculinos bisexuales y heterosexuales hacen visible su fanatismo. Este artículo explora cómo estos fanáticos negocian sus identidades sexuales y como fanes en espacios domésticos y públicos, y a través de objetos digitales, como computadoras portátiles, televisores y plataformas de redes sociales. Reflexiona sobre la posicionalidad del investigador fanático masculino gay cuando realiza entrevistas con fanáticos heterosexuales del FCE. Los hallazgos provocan más discusiones sobre las distinciones

CONTACT Jamie Halliwell jamie.c.halliwell@stu.mmu.ac.uk Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

tecnológicas entre las 'aplicaciones' de las redes sociales y cómo los usuarios usan sus respectivas interfaces para limitar la exposición a la vergüenza por su orientación sexual y/o fanatismo. Esto también incluye un examen más detallado de los objetos digitales a través de los cuales se accede a las aplicaciones y cómo dan forma a las vidas e identidades socio-sexuales.

« Vous êtes sûr que vous n'êtes pas gay ? »: les expériences des hommes hétérosexuels et bisexuels fans du concours Eurovision de la chanson.

Le concours Eurovision de la chanson, entre autres, reconnaît les personnes lesbiennes, gays, bisexuelles et transgenres (LGBT) autour du monde. Il n'y a pas eu beaucoup d'attention dirigée vers la compréhension de l'engagement des hommes hétérosexuels et bisexuels envers le concours. Cet article étudie la manière dont ceux-ci éprouvent de la honte par rapport à leur statut de fan. Il soutient que la contestation culturelle et l'assimilation de l'Eurovision à un loisir largement perçu comme gay déterminent la manière dont les fans du sexe masculin qui sont bisexuels et hétérosexuels rendent visible leur statut de fans. Cet article explore comment ils négocient leurs identités de fans et celles de leurs sexualités dans les espaces domestiques et publics et au travers des objets numériques, tels que les ordinateurs portables, les télévisions et les plateformes de réseaux sociaux. Il se penche sur le positionnement du chercheur gay et fan du concours pendant qu'il interviewait des hommes hétérosexuels eux aussi fans. Les résultats demandent plus de débats sur les distinctions technologiques entre les « applis » des médias sociaux et la manière dont les utilisateurs se servent de leurs interfaces afin de limiter le risque d'être embarrassés à cause leur statut de fan et/ou de leur orientation sexuelle. Cela comprend un examen plus approfondi des appareils numériques avec lesquels ils accèdent aux applis et la façon dont ceux-ci modèlent les vies sociosexuelles et les identités.

Introduction: Let the Eurovision Song Contest begin!

Since its inception in 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) has been a site for the construction and contestation of identity. The ESC was initially developed to unite Europe after the devastation that remained after two World Wars. The literature to date has focused on issues such as national identity, its intersection with music, geopolitics, gender and sexuality (Sieg, 2013). Research has also centred on post-Soviet representations of national identity through gendered performances, such as Jamala – the 2016 winner from Ukraine (Baker, 2020). The expansion of the contest to include these nations, as well as post-socialist nations, in the competition demonstrate their integration in to Europe both geopolitically and socio-culturally (Baker, 2017). National stage performances at the ESC incorporate different expressions and constructions of identity including gendered, sexual, and ethnic stereotypes to articulate visions of European nationhood. This is evident within the stage performances for some post-Soviet nations that attempt to reconfigure relationships with shared Soviet pasts, such as in Russia (Johnson, 2014) and in Ukraine

through drag act Verka Serduchka (Miazhevich, 2012). Serduchka's performance of drag could be seen to represent a Ukraine that is more liberal and European than its homophobic Russian neighbour. Serduchka's performances are portrayed as 'camp' through the media and the ESC fan base because they are staged in an overly exaggerated, theatrical, and audacious way. In contrast, Marija Šerifović who won for Serbia at the ESC in 2007 and identifies as lesbian and Roma, was used by Serbian politicians to claim Serbian belonging in Europe by Šerifović's three-finger salute upon her win (Mitrovic, 2009). The ESC is used to express complex national and European political ideals which intersect with the expression of gender and sexuality.

The contest is widely understood as a global popular event for lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans (LGBT) people and it consistently brings LGBT issues and rights to international attention. Academic analyses regarding ESC audiences have placed greater emphasis on the gay man's love of the event (Singleton et al., 2007) and the way the contest enables international queer belonging and gender and sexual liberation (Baker, 2017). There have been two ESC winners whose victories have held wider significance amongst LGBT people – Dana International and Conchita Wurst. The win of Israeli transgender singer Dana International in 1998 was considered a defining moment in the ESC's coming out. The singer became an icon for representing LGBT identity struggles not only in Israel, but internationally (Lemish, 2007). In 2014, Austrian winner and 'Lady with the Beard' Conchita Wurst became a pioneer for a progressive Europe for tolerance, respect and equal rights (including for LGBT citizens) and who has also spoken about these issues internationally at EU-organised summits (Fricker , 2015).

I argue, however, that the ESC is not solely a gay or queer activity – it incorporates a multiplicity of sexual and gendered identities. This article seeks to understand how heterosexual male fans respond to gay representations of the event. I do not wish to prioritise ESC fandom as an objectively straight activity – I continue to emphasise that the contest is an important international event for genders and sexualities across the LGBT and queer spectrum, and by participating in ESC fan spaces online and offline, it provides a diverse set of spaces through which LGBT identity is expressed. What I seek to do in this article is to understand how participating in ESC fandom, for example, produces new practices of, and challenge normative constructions of heterosexuality (Gorman-Murray, 2013). This research also gives particular attention to experiences of bisexual fans who are underrepresented in ESC research. This article argues that participating in ESC fandom enables bisexuals to negotiate and regulate their fan and sexual identities.

The focus on geographies of sexualities has shifted away from the study of gay urban neighbourhoods and business districts to capture a wide range of sexualised spaces; partly in response to some of the broader societal, legal, and political transformations in specific geographic contexts (Puar, 2006). Some of these analyses focused on the acknowledgement and acceptance of homosexuality in cities (Brown, 2006; Nash, 2013). Additionally, dating apps, such as Grindr, coupled with urban gentrification projects have been argued to be key factors in the decline of gay public space, questioning and re-structuring queer visibility in the city (Bonner-Thompson, 2017; Ghaziani, 2015; Miles, 2018). Gay identity is not necessarily constrained to ghettos, villages or neighbourhoods (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2008) and LGBT life has become much more diversified and

socio-spatially segmented. This paper builds on earlier analyses of the ESC to understand the diverse micro and macro-level spaces through which fans practice their fandom and express a sexual identity.

The ESC – and its fandom – have also transformed as a consequence of the internet and social media and provide one further way through which fans practice their fan and sexual identities. Fricker et al. (2007) have highlighted the importance of the role of ESC back-stage areas where fans' experiences are mediated and shared with other fans via digital connectivity. I argue that digital objects and the smartphone applications through which ESC fans access to practice their fandom allow these fans to express, regulate and negotiate their fan and sexual identities. Before analysing these issues, I will now turn to discussing the cultural contestation of the ESC and how this can produce a shaming culture.

The ESC and shame

The ESC is a global media mega-event with a wide international appeal. In 2021 – after the contest was cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic – the ESC was watched by 183 million viewers across 36 nations, and generated 14 million engagements across its social media accounts including Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter (EBU, 2021). Despite its evident popularity, the contest is routinely denigrated and attacked by (homophobic) cultural commentators. These include a far-right wing journalist condemning the event as 'a homosexual flotilla' (Walker, 2019, p. online), and UK commentator Terry Wogan (Fricker, 2013) positioning the UK audience at an ironic 'distance' from its European neighbours. Arguably, this commentary coupled with the UK's poor performances in the contest in recent years, have fuelled negative attitudes towards the contest, steered Euroscepticism, and Brexit (Wellings et al., 2019). Moreover, the ESC's associations with gay and queer culture coupled with negative perceptions of the event contribute to issues regarding fan and sexual visibility. The ESC is a site of a positive process of identity formation, but also less positive. The contest has earned a reputation as the 'Gay Olympics' (Baker, 2017) or a 'Gay Christmas' (Rehberg, 2007, p. 60). Local ESC events such as the annual London Eurovision Party (up until 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) are assumed to be attended mainly by gay male ESC fans, where gay press and fan websites make up the press corps (Geoghegan, 2016). These representations contribute to wider social perceptions that watching the ESC is something counter-cultural. They show that displaying one's fandom for the event may in turn lead to personal criticism, stigma and shaming of ESC fans – issues which have received very limited attention within the literature.

Coming out as an ESC fan to family, friends and non-fans can trigger a shaming culture, as it is considered non-normative. Shame is constructed through dichotomous, but interrelated processes of attachment/disattachment, concealment/exposure and is often embodied with other feelings, such as disgust and anger (Ahmed, 2013; Munt, 2007). For those that shame and for those who are shamed for their non-heterosexuality, there are embodied feelings of excitement, both positive and negative, that influence self-attention (Munt, 2007). Shame is produced in relation to a socio-cultural and spatial context or interest that triggers enjoyment, but in some way is considered 'strange' and thus non-normative. When shame is activated, the initial enjoyment in the 'object' can be increased

or reduced through which shame is further inhibited. Shame is often linked to humiliation and can produce 'paranoid thinking' which can serve to suppress innovative or different alternatives to the mainstream (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995). Shame can be shared amongst groups of people which enables the forging of connections which can be experienced daily (Probyn, 2000). These understandings of shame are pertinent to the ways ESC fans experience their fandom and the spaces where it is practiced.

The ESC has been described as something 'extraordinary' (Bohlman, 2007), which also suggests that the contest is associated with the non-normative and non-heterosexual. However, where people are 'in the know' about the associations between the ESC and queerness (Baker, 2017; Lemish, 2007; Singleton et al., 2007), LGBT ESC fans can be shamed for their fandom if they are 'found out'. This may threaten the dimensions of the closet, particularly where they are not necessarily out about their LGBT identity in other aspects of their socio-cultural lives. Shame is also co-produced in relation to the closet. The closet is argued to be a defining factor in the organisation of queer life[1] and is a metaphorical and material space where these people conceal their sexual orientations from public view (Brown et al., 2011; Brown, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990). The closet is not a simple in/out binary, but it is a process where queer people regularly come out and stay in the closet about their sexual orientations (Fuss, 1991; Brown, 2005) – hence, the closet is negotiated socio-spatially. The closet and shame are made more complicated by the internet and social media platforms. They produce new socio-spatial dimensions, and are co-produced through inside/outside, publicity/privacy, and sexual visibility.

For LGBT ESC fans, ESC fandom provides an alternative set of spaces through which they can come out of the closet about their sexualities and escape the potential shame and stigma that can be attached to their fan and sexual identities. Even though the contest is often represented as 'queer' or 'gay', it can provide a sense of ambiguity where gender and sexual boundaries can become blurred and broken down. Where there has been important work that has explored the relationship between the ESC and gay identity, I supplement this by shedding light in to straight and bisexual male ESC fan experiences. I explore the diverse online and offline spaces within which straight and bisexual male ESC fans practice their fandom, through which they experience shame and, as a result, how they regulate and negotiate their fan and sexual identities. I proceed to examine how straight and bisexual male ESC fans discipline themselves by concealing, camouflaging, and negotiating their ESC fandom in domestic spaces, and how straight male ESC fans come out as straight on social media platforms and at ESC events.

ESC fandom, sexuality, internet, and social media

Internet and social media platforms are often argued to provide safe spaces and refuge for LGBT people to practice their socio-sexual lives (O'Riordan, 2007). This is also the case for ESC fans who access a dynamic range of internet spaces and social media platforms to practice their fandom. ESC fans define on their own terms what 'lenses' of their socio-cultural lives they make public, or even private, on social media (Leyshon et al., 2013). Research has suggested that people also engage themselves with complex self-management processes where they determine who and who should not have access to aspects of their identities and social lives online (Truong, 2018b, 2018a). This may be necessary as individuals can be shamed for their interests that shape how they express

themselves in public online spaces. This encourages the movement of bodies between different social networking platforms where identities collide and are constructed and performed (Taylor et al., 2014). Social media platforms produce different publics and counterpublics through which individuals engage with their socio-cultural and political lives (Warner, 2002) and how and where they practice their sexualities (Martin, 2000). For example, Facebook groups produce bounded publics which produce feelings of cohesion and Twitter users produce networked publics that are shaped by engagement with hashtags and trends, number of followers, likes, and retweets. These forms of communication and networking through the digital screen produce close, but unfamiliar relationships as participants are known, but also unknown to others (Weiner & Young, 2011). Digital ESC fan practices are interwoven with offline spaces and provide a diverse set of spaces in which fan and sexual identity is shaped and made in/visible.

Practicing ESC fandom online also shapes the expression of straight and bisexual male ESC fan identities. Exploring ESC fandom through a queer lens can challenge normativity and break down gender and sexual identities. Gender and sexuality can be re-invented, as internet spaces provide endless opportunities for performing and queering these identities in unpredictable and creative ways (Cockayne & Richardson, 2017; Zebracki & Luger, 2019). Social media platforms have been conceptualised as performative arenas in terms of political activism (Sandover et al., 2018), expressing feelings towards space and place (Butler et al., 2018) and through the sharing of political memes as sites of public art (Zebracki & Luger, 2019). This article contributes to digital and sexuality geographies and understandings of the ESC in three ways: First, it illustrates how participating in ESC fandom through the internet and social media platforms can shape heterosexual and bisexual male identities and their visibility. Second, how the contest enables participation in/with LGBT culture at a 'distance' through internet-enabled devices and the television screen. Third, I contend that there exists a shaming culture around the ESC which shapes fan in/visibility and its respective 'outness'.

'Making Your Mind Up' about Methods

The wider research project applied mixed methods, using a combination of semi-structured interviews and digital research methods. Interviews with ESC fans took place through video conferencing and on-location at the ESC in Vienna in 2015, and digital focus groups ('group chats') with fans took place on the social media application WhatsApp (Halliwell & Wilkinson, 2021). The data presented in this paper is in the form of interview extracts and is reflective of straight and bisexual male ESC fan experiences. These fans self-identified themselves in terms of their gender, sexual orientation, age, and nationality. In total, 14 straight and 3 bisexual cisgender male ESC fans were interviewed.

Recruitment of participants took place through social media, including my personal Twitter profile and ESC focussed Facebook groups – 'Eurovision Debate', 'OGAE[2] UK', and 'Australian Eurovision chat'. Permission was granted from Facebook group gatekeepers before posting to members of each group. Twitter and these Facebook groups were chosen for their high levels of fan engagement, allowing me to snowball sample ESC fans through these methods. This was necessary as data was collected outside of the main ESC event (July 2017) and interviews took place through one-to-one Skype calls. Participants were required to complete a consent form prior to commencement of data collection.

Some participants I met while attending ESC events, which also assisted in my data analysis as I was aware of their social and demographic profile, for example, in terms of sexual orientation and levels of engagement within the fandom.

I often positioned myself as 'researcher as friend' throughout my data collection. The digital spaces of video conferencing and WhatsApp group chats produced communal, intimate and 'private' spaces for participants to share their experiences and aspects of their lives outside of their fandom (Wilkinson, 2016). This position was helpful as my knowledge of the ESC and my engagement within ESC fandom, coupled with my emotional qualities, helped me build rapport with participants and synthesise empirically charged data. However, maintaining reflexivity throughout the data analysis is also important. This includes my position as a gay cis male ESC fan conducting this research. The data presented is interpreted from both the fan and researcher perspective. My personal experiences of ESC fandom are inflected within the data analysis, which is supported by critical academic inquiry. Consequently, the methodological implications of this research are raising issues regarding how different sexualities are normalised, destabilised or conflicted within the context of the ESC and its respective fan spaces.

Regulating the research/researcher closet

As there is a strong relationship between the ESC and gay culture, I did not make my sexual orientation explicit during my Skype interviews and WhatsApp group chats. This produced a research space that is an extension of the closet (Brown, 2005), and in turn created a 'researcher closet'. I have an active presence online and conducting research with ESC fans who may know me through my Twitter activity or otherwise, it was important to reflect on my emotions and sexual embodiment as a researcher and an ESC fan (De Craene, 2017). This was particularly the case when undertaking interviews with straight male fans, as it made my position of insider/outsider researcher more nuanced. I was an insider, because of my passion and previous involvement with ESC fandom. At the same time, I also had an outsider status on the basis of sexual orientation as straight male participants in my Skype interviews resorted to a process of 'impression management' (Linnekin, 1998), as they would control how they expressed themselves and behaved towards me. This occurred when interviewing Darren on Skype who affirmed to me frequently that he was 'not gay' in his response to questions surrounding the contest and its association with gay culture.

> Well [the contest] it's very camp! Especially for me cos I'm not gay at all so it's sort of like, it's a little bit odd because people see it as a gay event and so it was like when I told my girlfriend that I liked it, she was like 'are you sure you're not gay?'. So, it's certainly a bit weird that a straight person likes Eurovision, because you don't find many of them.

Darren asserts his heterosexuality and he shares his feelings of uncertainty from his girlfriend over his heterosexuality because of his ESC fandom. Throughout the interview he held back on some responses because he questioned his enjoyment of the contest and his level of engagement, which he felt may have led me to question his heterosexuality further. The power relations between researcher and participant here are frequently negotiated. Darren may have had preconceived notions of my sexual orientation which may have impacted on how he saw me and could have produced minimal responses (Cupples, 2002). Darren is also

seen to protect his masculinity/heterosexuality as a consequence of presuming my gay identity because of our conversations around the ESC and gay culture (Vanderbeck, 2005). Thus, I undertook a non-desiring position (Bain & Nash, 2006) and tried to present myself as a researcher where sexual desire was not important (De Craene, 2017). This was difficult, however, as during the interview I was self-conscious about how I expressed myself. At times, I was regulating my 'gayness' towards Darren (in my speech, tone, and questions around gay identity in the contest), which may have shaped his responses.

Most Skype interviews with heterosexual and bisexual male ESC fans took place within the private space of the home, with no invasion from other people during our conversations. This helped pave the way for heartfelt and detailed responses. One straight participant, Alun, ensured that our interview took place while his wife was absent, ensuring he was home alone:

> Alun: Monday might be the most convenient but let me get back to you a wee bit later on that. I'll arrange it for when the wife's out.
>
> Alun: And that's either Mon, Thurs or both evenings. But I'll check.
>
> Alun: Monday evening pls [please].

The decision for Alun to conduct our interview privately and alone in his house can be seen as a way of policing his masculinity and heterosexuality (Vanderbeck, 2005). Like Darren earlier, Alun's reasons to arrange our interview alone may also have been because of the relationship of the contest with gay culture and being a straight ESC fan is considered non-normative. Using Skype as a tool to conduct the interview is also perceived as subversive, and coupled with possible assumptions towards my gay sexuality, can be reasoning for scheduling the interview away from third parties. This also reasserts the idea that the ESC is a furtive practice – for straight male ESC fans – and can be a threat to heterosexuality if their fandom is made public.

Alun constructs his fandom as a private, but semi-public practice, as he has only 'come out' about it to close friends and family. Using Skype as an interview tool brought myself and Alun close together; close enough in which he conveyed heartfelt responses that gave me insight into his desire to attend wider events relating to gay culture, such as Gay Pride (Adams-Hutcheson & Longhurst, 2017). There are wider implications here to suggest that Skype produces a barrier between the researcher and informant that can be both permeable and reaffirmed. Embedding myself within the research and showing an interest in fans' experiences helps blur the boundaries between researcher and informant, which is invaluable in generating rich and empirical data.

Concealing and camouflaging ESC fandom

I begin the data analysis by examining the spaces where straight male respondents conceal, hide, and deny their ESC fandom. The bounded, private space of the bedroom allows these fans to conceal and camouflage their fandom from their parents. At the same time, they also make visible their fandom to other ESC fans online via social media platforms while simultaneously watching national final shows across Europe to discover

European music and culture. Callum discusses how using his laptop, television, and headphones in his bedroom provides opportunities to watch and listen to these shows from across Europe:

> If I'm interested in most of the songs in a national final, I'm more likely to go up to my room and plug into the TV and sit and watch it. But if its, for example, Latvia (I didn't watch that too much), I had it on my laptop and I kept putting my earphones in because I hadn't listened to the songs [. . .] So, I was in and out of it, speaking to my brother and doing other things.

Practicing ESC fandom through multiple digital objects produces alternative layers of fan visibility. Callum explains how he practices his fandom within his bedroom through digital and internet-enabled objects. There is a spatialisation of the home here – Callum's engagement with ESC national finals and his ESC fandom is constructed as a private practice and is hidden away from shared living spaces and other family members (Silverstone, 1994). The laptop and television screens signal alternative levels of ESC fan visibility and muting music and sound from their associated visual representations signals ambiguity in Callum's ESC fan practices to others at home. This ambiguity surrounding fan identity is necessary to 'pass' as a straight ESC fan within the family home. Digital objects, such as laptops, televisions, and headphones are used to negotiate fandom between the public and private within the domestic sphere (Brown, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990).

At different stages of ESC fans' lives, they develop knowledge about the associations between the ESC and gay identity. For straight male ESC fans, this understanding determines when and where they practice their fandom. These associations are identified by Ben who discusses how he concealed his ESC fandom in his bedroom during his teenage years by using camouflaging tactics – by listening to ESC music while he plays on his games console. This was prompted by suspicions that his Spanish teacher at school was gay. These experiences from school thus impose assumptions and stereotypes that relationally construct ESC music with gay identity:

> . . . our Spanish teacher at the time was somebody who we thought was gay and there was a big rumour going around the school [. . .]. But he played us this song and was really into it [. . .]. So, I [. . .] went upstairs, I had a TV for the first year in my bedroom and I had the sound on one volume, and I had my PlayStation going underneath, so I could switch it off straight away if anybody came up the stairs. So, it [watching the ESC] was completely not a family thing at all.

The bedroom provides a furtive space to practice Ben's fandom, whereas fandom must be denied within the classroom because of a fear that it will be perceived as a challenge to other young men's heterosexuality, and that of the fan himself. There is shame attached to Ben's discussion in the following ways: there is the perception that the ESC is not a heterosexual practice and Ben attempts to camouflage his interest in it by playing on his games console in his bedroom, while simultaneously listening to ESC music on low volume to not arouse suspicion. Moreover, Ben believed that his parents would be unsupportive of his ESC fandom; this reproduces ideas surrounding the domestic home as heteronormative (Oswin, 2010) and his fan activity as transgressive and counter-cultural. These ESC fans impose strategies to regulate and negotiate their fandom in social and domestic contexts to avoid shame and assumptions of gay identity.

Organising and attending ESC events

ESC fans of different genders and sexualities attend various ESC events at different micro and macro scales. Some examples of ESC events include the annual 'London Eurovision Party', 'Eurobash' which is organised by OGAE UK, and national final events that take place across Europe, such as Sweden's 'Melodifestivalen' (Andersson & Niedomysl, 2010). ESC fans, however, do not necessarily travel far to organise and attend ESC events. These events can take place both in heteronormative public venues, such as pubs, and in inner-city gay spaces. To gain access to these spaces there is a need to practice an ambiguous fan identity. Ben discusses this in relation to organising an ESC event for his university's ESC society, to gain access to public venues:

> At university, it was very hard to go and find something that was Eurovision friendly for, certainly going out clubbing and stuff like that, but we'd have our own fun around some of the bars and we dress up as artists and things. My favourite one, was the week after Blue was announced we had a 'Blue social', so we all had to wear blue clothing [. . .] So, we were like Smurfs going around university of Durham. [. . .] Like most of the people in the group we had at Durham, they were my football and darts playing mates, so not your typical Eurovision fans.

Ben identifies the struggle in finding 'Eurovision friendly' places to engage with his ESC fandom, which reproduces public space as heteronormative. There is a need to disassociate from ESC fandom and adapt his behaviour to 'fit in' and gain access to local heterosexual clubs and bars. This is achieved by dressing up and pretending to be Smurfs[3] to assert a heterosexual male identity. Dressing up in this way is not necessarily masculine and Ben and his friends are disguising their fandom to some extent, and anybody 'in the know' about Blue participating in the ESC could understand why they are dressed up as Smurfs. There is still the possibility for being shamed for being dressed as a Smurf and an ESC fan in these spaces. Hence, there is an ambiguity surrounding Ben's activities that is necessary to limit suspicion of, and regulate the degree to which he comes out as an ESC fan within domestic and public space (Brown, 2005; Brown et al., 2011; Sedgwick & Frank, 1995).

ESC fandom is not limited in its spatiality – ESC fans travel at various distances to attend the ESC, its associated national final shows, and to organise ESC events. ESC fan spaces are not simply fixed, but they are fluid and permeable because of access to the internet – ESC fandom can be accessed anywhere through internet-enabled objects. Straight male ESC fans also emphasise the importance of the ESC for expressing a more ambiguous straight male ESC fan identity in different spaces. The public venues I have discussed where these fans practice their fandom could be defined as 'heterosexual'. However, by practicing ESC fandom in these spaces these fans stretch the boundaries and regulate the expression of their fan and straight identities in dynamic ways.

Bisexual and straight male ESC fan experiences of the internet and social media platforms

Access to the internet and social media platforms are essential for practicing fandom and to network with other fans in everyday life. These spaces provide semi-anonymity and removes face-to-face barriers that can cause social anxiety (O'Riordan, 2007). Internet and

social media platforms can often make it easier to avoid shame and stigma associated with coming out as LGBT, and around the ESC event that is often perceived as not serious and trite within societies, such as the UK. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become increasingly important for fans to practice their ESC fandom. These practices intersect with the expression of sexuality which allow LGBT fans to determine the 'outness' of their sexual orientation across different internet and social media platforms. This is also the case for bisexual male ESC fans who used filtering tools on Facebook strategically to separate their ESC fandom from other aspects of their socio-cultural lives. This point is illustrated by T (nickname) below.

> I've filtered my Facebook into two streams, so that I can target posts only at Eurovision people, so that way my non-Eurovision friends won't ever see any of my Eurovision posts or if I'm at a Eurovision event they won't see that. So, I have a channel on Facebook where I can just say 'ok, only show this to my Eurovision friends'.

T explains the strategies he enforces in sharing his ESC content publicly: he directs this specifically to his Facebook friends that share an interest with his ESC fandom. There is a digital operation of the closet here as T is also regulating the expression of his bisexuality on Facebook. This is necessary because of the intricate relationship between the ESC and gay identity, which could lead to assumptions that these fans are gay and prompt shaming from other fans and family and friends. Bisexual ESC fans, at the same time, can be in and out of the closet about their sexual orientation and their fandom (Fuss, 1991). Facebook's filtering mechanism can be used to negotiate and determine the boundaries of, and limit exposure of shame towards their fan and sexual identities. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, also constrain the expression of fan and bisexual identities in order to avoid assumptions of a gay identity (Maliepaard, 2017, 2020).

Straight male ESC fans also discussed how they have come out as straight male ESC fans in online social encounters when asked if they are gay. Shaun emphasises this point below by describing how a Facebook group moderator questioned his heterosexuality when requesting his permission to post a message on the group to arrange a meet-up of fans:

> I sent him [the moderator] a message just to say I'd like to arrange a meet up of fans, I'd always get his permission first cos there may be rules and he said that's fine. (In response) 'By the way, I hope you don't mind me asking, are you straight?' [. . .] I've had people ask are you gay, are you straight but some people do [. . .] assume that people in the Eurovision community must be gay, and I'm like 'well, no I'm not, but . . . '.

Facebook Messenger can be a space which is less awkward but direct questions can be asked about Shaun's straight identity. Shaun raises the issue that fans should not make assumptions based on their sexual orientation. Practicing ESC fandom within social media platforms, such as Facebook, enables these fans to play with their heterosexuality (Gieseking, 2017; Sedgwick & Frank, 1995) through a fleeting social encounter that takes place through the digital screen and at a distance (Chen, 2016). Facebook Messenger encourages semi-anonymous identity making as Shaun is known, but also unknown to the Facebook group moderator. Within this socio-digital encounter, Shaun shapes the boundaries through which his heterosexuality is expressed, and to what extent it is negotiated.

Semi-anonymity and expressing a straight male identity through digital ESC fan practices also has implications for shame. Roland, an ESC podcast host, discusses how he negotiates multiple Twitter accounts between his professional, working life and his ESC podcast:

> Roland: . . . The way I present myself on the podcast [. . .] is quite different to how I would present myself through work or generally.
>
> Researcher: How different?
>
> Roland: Probably leaning towards my camper side! Only because Eurovision sort of brings that out of me. But it's quite open, both sort of personally, sexually and sort of talk about relationships and stuff like that, it's quite sort of liberal and open whereas I can sort of go into business mode in sort of other avenues.

Through the podcast, Roland identifies that he embodies a 'camper' identity, which is hidden in other aspects of his social and working lives. He articulates an exaggerated male performance of camp; camp can be inclusive of other sexualities, in this case, Roland's straight identity (Cleto, 1999). The podcast, like Facebook Messenger earlier, encourages semi-anonymity: Roland is known as a podcast host within the wider ESC fandom, and he is also unknown as fans do not necessarily know him intimately. Roland delves into and shares his personal and sexual life more deeply with his wider listenership. By adopting a 'camper' performance of identity, he can open up and feel more positive about the potential shame attached to his previous heterosexual relationships and sex life (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995). The podcast collapses the distinctions between the public and private; it produces intimate engagement between non-proximate humans and non-humans (Cockayne et al., 2017). Roland expresses and manipulates an alternative straight male ESC fan identity in two ways: through the digital mediation of his voice and advertising his podcast using Twitter. Roland's podcast allows him to practice, and simultaneously confine his fandom and his respective camp performance, as he would not necessarily express himself in such a way in other social contexts. Hence, sexual boundaries can be reinforced and broken down when expressing and negotiating straight identities through podcasting and Twitter.

Has 'Eurovision made me gay'? Rethinking sexual desires through the screen

Straight male ESC fan respondents discussed the power of the ESC to encourage them to think about how they define their sexualities. Given the contest's focus on unity, transcendence of social and cultural differences and celebration of the 'extraordinary' (Bohlman, 2007), it has opened some fans up to alternative expressions of their sexual orientation. The perceived ambiguity in identity representation surrounding the ESC event also encourages heterosexual male ESC fans to participate in LGBT culture, particularly where they feel they struggle to 'fit in' to wider urban gay consumer spaces and LGBT events. The results reveal that straight men thought fluidly about how they express their sexual orientation. In an interview with straight ESC male fan Corentin, he explained how he has never attended the ESC but by connecting and networking with ESC fans online through social media platforms, he has been able to meet virtually with fans identifying as LGBT:

> I think being with some LGBT people in the fandom made me think about it [his sexuality], kind of maybe opened my eyes and realised you don't have to be just in a box, you can go beyond that and you don't have to assume anything [. . .]. I guess that maybe one thing that Eurovision did to me, not Eurovision itself, but being in contact with other fans, who happen to be part of the LGBT community, which seems to be rather important [. . .]. I guess this questions myself and who I was, at least when it came to my attraction to genders.

Making regular connections online with LGBT fans shapes a queerness of heterosexuality that allows Corentin to think fluidly about his sexual orientation (Cockayne & Richardson, 2017), but also a queerness about the ESC and its fandom that collapses the distinctions between gay and straight. The results show that straight male fans feel they can transgress their straightness further by attending 'gay friendly' clubs. Participating in online ESC fandom has opened up straight male ESC fans to LGBT issues and culture, which in itself is 'friendly', thus open to inclusivity and easily accessible through multiple digital screens. By watching the ESC and participating in its fandom straight male fans were able to engage in/with LGBT culture. Practicing ESC fandom through multiple digital screens provides a certain level of distance for understanding the roles of gender, sexuality, and behaviour in the contest. Alun elaborates on these points below:

> Now one of the things I have long thought about doing is going to a Pride march, but I've never actually been. One of the reasons that I don't think that if I did go to such an event that it would have the same effect, would be because I don't see myself as being as bisexual or gay. I see myself as being straight, so I would feel like it's not something for me, but I think Eurovision offers an opportunity for . . . it has such a large degree of ambiguity about sexual identity and gender identity, that it allows people to explore different ways of being, without it necessarily being about sexuality.

At the time of interview, Alun explained that he had not attended an ESC event and he experiences the contest by having house parties with family and friends. He watches the contest and practices his fandom simultaneously online, as he shares his thoughts in real-time as the event unfolds using Facebook on his laptop. The television and laptop screens encourage safe distance between Alun and the contest, as he is empowered to construct his own boundaries regarding how he expresses himself during his house party and through his Facebook posts. Alun is involved in complex practices of decoding the contest through the television screen and encoding his thoughts simultaneously via Facebook and amongst his house party guests. Through ESC fan practices, he is able to express alternative ways of being; a male and masculine identity that is 'emotionally expressive' temporarily (Messner, 1993, p. 724) that transgresses gay/straight dichotomies. Yet, these binaries are upheld when Alun discusses attending Pride events as he questions his right to participate (Browne & Bakshi, 2011). The 'liveness' and 'eventness' of the ESC enables him to perform an alternative heterosexuality that is not necessarily expressed in other aspects of his daily life.

Conclusion

In this article, I have analysed a mosaic of ESC fan spaces where bisexual and straight male ESC fans practice their fandom: including bedrooms, the internet, social media platforms, and ESC events. These ESC fans travel through and occupy these different spaces and negotiate their ESC fandom and its visibility. The perceived dominance of queer ESC

fandom, and the ESC's cultural contestation – particularly in the UK context where negative attitudes thrive and where most respondents in this article reside – can lead to feelings of shame and anxieties around assumptions of a gay male identity. Sexual identity is often reproduced as a binary in social encounters, even though ESC fandom is participated in by a dynamic range of gendered and sexual identities. To avoid suspicion and assumptions of a gay identity, the bisexual and straight fans in my analysis regulate how they conceal, camouflage, and come out about their fandom in online/offline spaces.

Access to internet-enabled devices has opened up more space for bisexual and straight male ESC fans to practice ESC fandom, such as watching and engaging with ESC national finals online and attending ESC events. The 'eventness' or 'liveness' of watching the ESC or practicing fandom on the internet and social media is used by some straight male respondents to escape, even temporarily, from their heterosexuality and explore and express something different. Issues around technological savviness and where bisexual and straight male ESC fans are in their life course also shape how they express themselves online and practice their fandom. Watching the ESC and practicing ESC fandom does provide feelings of ambiguity in terms of expressing a sexual identity. Straight male fans can express a more fluid sexuality by engaging in ESC fandom, than they would necessarily be able to in other aspects of their lives. I claim, however, that the straight male fans analysed here seem to be negotiating sexual difference and be aware of it.

Bisexual and straight male ESC fans, however, may experience shame from others about their fandom, but they do not necessarily feel ashamed for being ESC fans and can feel positive about it. ESC fans can share and embrace the shaming culture around the contest which can build fan relationships online and offline (Probyn, 2000). Social media technologies and their respective software often make it easier for shaming to take place as it avoids direct face-to-face communication (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995). Having the knowledge of how social media operates and the tools available (e.g., blocking and muting friends and followers and filtering content) to limit exposure to shaming practices (for ESC fandom and/or sexual orientation) is required and future work could examine these technical processes.

Multiple digital objects help fans camouflage and negotiate their ESC fandom within different public/private socio-spatial contexts. Further research could explore these digital practices by striving to reinvigorate discussions around the operations of the closet. There are many internet, social media platforms, and digital objects that produce different technological distinctions, spatialities and functions of the closet (Brown, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990). Attention must also be given to the socio-sexual lives of people across the LGBT and queer spectrum and their intersections with race and age to understand processes of closeting and negotiating their identities and socio-cultural lives across internet and social media spaces.

This paper also coincides with the more recent victories in the ESC and their representation of bisexuality on the international ESC stage – most notably the recent win of Måneskin for Italy in 2021. Since winning the competition, Måneskin have developed an international profile and have performed in Poland to protest against the Polish government's anti-LGBT legislation. This was also shared on their Instagram account where they posted a video of the two male band members kissing on stage with the caption 'thank you Poland, LOVE IS NEVER WRONG' (Tabberer, 2021, p. online). It is hopeful that these recent trends prompt further work into bisexuality and the ESC, but also not forgetting

other experiences of ESC fandom that require further academic scrutiny, such as straight women, lesbian, and transgender identities. Racial identities have also been largely overlooked within analyses of ESC fandom and require close attention. The 2021 edition sparked controversy regarding the underperformance of black musicians in the public voting which signalled struggles for racial justice in the competition (Baker, 2021). The ESC continues to raise issues regarding the representation of identity which go beyond the event itself which permeate diverse online and offline spaces and socio-cultural and political contexts.

Notes

1. It must also be noted that many LGBT and queer people experience the closet and regulate their gender and sexual orientation expression in many socio-spatial contexts.
2. 'OGAE' stands for the 'Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l'Eurovision' the official ESC fan club, which consists of 42 international branches.
3. 'The Smurfs' created by Belgian cartoonist Peyo, are a Belgian comic franchise that centred on the lives of small blue, anthropomorphic creatures that lived in mushroom shaped houses in a forest.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Jamie Halliwell http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9088-9226

References

Adams-Hutcheson, G., & Longhurst, R. (2017). 'At least in person there would have been a cup of tea': Interviewing via Skype. *Area*, *49*(2), 148–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12306

Ahmed, S. (2013). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.

Andersson, I., & Niedomysl, T. (2010). Clamour for glamour? city competition for hosting the swedish tryouts to the eurovision song contest. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *101*(2), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2009.00520.x

Bain, A. L., & Nash, C. J. (2006). Undressing the researcher: Feminism, embodiment and sexuality at a queer bathhouse event. *Area*, *38*(1), 99–106. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2006.00663.x

Baker, C. (2021, May 26). *If you don't get it, if you, if you don't get it: Eurovision 2021 and the struggle for racial justice (part 2)*. Catherine Baker. Retrieved June 30, 2021, from https://bakercatherine.wordpress.com/2021/05/26/if-you-dont-get-it-if-you-if-you-dont-get-it-eurovision-2021-and-the-struggle-for-racial-justice-part-2/

Baker, C. (2017). The 'gay Olympics'? The Eurovision Song Contest and the politics of LGBT/European belonging. *European Journal of International Relations*, *23*(1), 97–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066116633278

Baker, C. (2020). 'I am the voice of the past that will always be': The Eurovision Song Contest as historical fiction. *Journal of Historical Fictions*, *2*(2), 102–125.

Bohlman, F. (2007). The politics of power, pleasure and prayer in the Eurovision Song Contest. *Muzikologija*, *January*(7), 39–67. https://doi.org/10.2298/MUZ0707039B

Bonner-Thompson, C. (2017). 'The meat market': Production and regulation of masculinities on the Grindr grid in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *24*(11), 1611–1625. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1356270

Brown, G., Browne, K., Brown, M., Roelvink, G., Carnegie, M., & Anderson, B. (2011). Sedgwick's geographies: Touching space. *Progress in Human Geography*, *35*(1), 121–131. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510386253

Brown, G. (2006). Cosmopolitan camouflage:(post-) gay space in Spitalfields. In J. Binnie, J. Holloway, S. Millington, & C. Young (Eds.), *Cosmopolitan Urbanism* (pp. 130–145). Routledge.

Brown, M. P. (2005). *Closet space: Geographies of metaphor from the body to the globe*. Routledge.

Browne, K., & Bakshi, L. (2011). We are here to party? Lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans leisurescapes beyond commercial gay scenes. *Leisure Studies*, *30*(2), 179–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2010.506651

Butler, A., Schafran, A., & Carpenter, G. (2018). What does it mean when people call a place a shithole? Understanding a discourse of denigration in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *43*(3), 496–510. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12247

Chen, C.-P. (2016). Playing with digital gender identity and cultural value. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *23*(4), 521–536. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1013455

Cleto, F. (1999). *Camp: Queer aesthetics and the performing subject: A reader*. University of Michigan Press.

Cockayne, D. G., & Richardson, L. (2017). Queering code/space: The co-production of socio-sexual codes and digital technologies. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *24*(11), 1642–1658. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1339672

Cockayne, D., Leszczynski, A., & Zook, M. (2017). # HotForBots: Sex, the non-human and digitally mediated spaces of intimate encounter. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space*, *35*(6), 1115–1133. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817709018

Cupples, J. (2002). The Field as a Landscape of Desire: Sex and Sexuality in Geographical Fieldwork. *Area*, *34*(4), 382–390. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4762.00095

De Craene, V. (2017). Fucking geographers! Or the epistemological consequences of neglecting the lusty researcher's body. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *24*(3), 449–464. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1314944

EBU. (2021, May 31). *183 million viewers welcome back Eurovision Song Contest as online engagement soars*. Retrieved 8 July 2021, from https://www.ebu.ch/news/2021/05/183-million-viewers-welcome-back-eurovision-song-contest-as-over-half-of-young-audiences-tune-in

Fricker, K. (2015). Eurovision song contest: More than music? In ÖRF (Ed.) , *Eurovision and the 'new' Europe* (pp. 8–15). Vienna: ÖRF: Public Value .

Fricker, K., Moreo, E., & Singleton, B. (2007). Part of the show: The global networking of Irish Eurovision Song Contest fans. In K. Fricker & R. Lentin (Eds.), *Performing global networks* (pp. 139–162). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Fricker, K. (2013). 'It's just not funny any more': Terry Wogan, Melancholy Britain, and the Eurovision Song Contest. In K. Fricker & M. Gluhovic (Eds.), *Performing the 'New' Europe: Identities, Feelings, and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest* (pp. 53–76). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137367983_3

Fuss, D. (Ed.). (1991). *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*. Routledge.

Geoghegan, C. (2016, April 22). *Preparing For Eurovision with song contest superfans in London*. Vice. Retrieved December 4, 2019, from, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/pp4xzg/eurovision-song-contest-europe-party-event-gay

Ghaziani, A. (2015). 'Gay Enclaves Face Prospect of Being PassÉ': How Assimilation Affects the Spatial Expressions of Sexuality in the United States. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *39*(4), 756–771. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12209

Gieseking, J. J. (2017). Messing with the attractiveness algorithm: A response to queering code/space. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *24*(11), 1659–1665. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1379955

Gorman-Murray, A. (2013). Straight–gay friendships: Relational masculinities and equalities landscapes in Sydney, Australia. *Geoforum*, *49*(October), 214–223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.09.014

Halliwell, J., & Wilkinson, S. (2021). Mobile phones, text messaging and social media. In N. Von Benzon, M. Holton, C. Wilkinson, & S. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Creative methods for human geographers* (pp. 259–272). SAGE.

Johnson, E. D. (2014). A New Song for a New Motherland: Eurovision and the Rhetoric of Post-Soviet National Identity. *The Russian Review*, *73*(1), 24–46. https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.10718

Lemish, D. (2007). Gay brotherhood: Israeli gay men and the Eurovision Song Contest. In I. Raykoff & R. D. Tobin (Eds.), *A song for Europe: Popular music and politics in the Eurovision song contest* (pp. 123–134). Ashgate Publishing.

Leyshon, M., DiGiovanna, S., & Holcomb, B. (2013). Mobile technologies and youthful exploration: Stimulus or inhibitor? *Urban Studies*, *50*(3), 587–605. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098012468897

Linnekin, J. (1998). Fieldwork and families: Constructing new models for ethnographic research. In L. Marshall & J. Armstrong (Eds.), *Family and other uncontrollables: Impression management in accompanied fieldwork* (pp. 71–83). University of Hawaii Press.

Maliepaard, E. (2017). Bisexual safe space (s) on the internet: Analysis of an online forum for bisexuals. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *108*(3), 318–330. https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12248

Maliepaard, E. (2020). Spaces with a bisexual appearance: Re-conceptualizing bisexual space(s) through a study of bisexual practices in the Netherlands. *Social & Cultural Geography 21*(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1454979

Martin, F. (2000). From citizenship to queer counterpublic: Reading Taipei's New Park. *Communal/Plural: Journal of Transnational & Cross-Cultural Studies*, *8*(1), 81–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/13207870050001475

Messner, M. A. (1993). "Changing men" and feminist politics in the United States. *Theory and Society*, *22*(5), 723–737. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00993545

Miazhevich, G. (2012). Ukrainian Nation Branding Off-line and Online: Verka Serduchka at the Eurovision Song Contest. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *64*(8), 1505–1523. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.712274

Miles, S. (2018). Still getting it on online: Thirty years of queer male spaces brokered through digital technologies. *Geography Compass*, *12*(11), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12407

Mitrovic, M. (2009). Colours of the new face of Serbia: National symbols and popular music. *Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta*, *57*(2), 7–17. https://doi.org/10.2298/GEI0902007M

Munt, S. R. (2007). *Queer Attachments: The Cultural Politics of Shame*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315245478

Nash, C. J. (2013). The age of the "post-mo"? Toronto's gay Village and a new generation. *Geoforum*, *49*(October), 243–252. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.023

O'Riordan, K. (2007). Queer theories and cybersubjects: Intersecting figures. In K. O'Riordan & D. J. Phillips (Eds.), *Queer online: Media technology and sexuality* (pp. 13–30). Peter Lang.

Oswin, N. (2010). The modern model family at home in Singapore: A queer geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *35*(2), 256–268. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2009.00379.x

Probyn, E. (2000). Sporting Bodies: Dynamics of Shame and Pride. *Body & Society*, *6*(1), 13–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X00006001002

Puar, J. K. (2006). Mapping US Homonormativities. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *13*(1), 67–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690500531014

Rehberg, P. (2007). Winning failure. Queer nationality at the Eurovision song contest. *SQS: Journal of Queer Studies in Finland*, *2*, 60–65.

Sandover, R., Kinsley, S., & Hinchliffe, S. (2018). A very public cull – The anatomy of an online issue public. *Geoforum*, *97*(December), 106–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.08.016

Sedgwick, E. K., & Frank, A. (1995). *Shame and its sisters: A Silvan Tomkins reader*. Duke University Press.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. University of California Press.

Sieg, K. (2013). Cosmopolitan empire: Central and Eastern Europeans at the Eurovision Song Contest. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *16*(2), 244–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549412450639

Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television And Everyday Life*. Routledge.

Singleton, B., Fricker, K., & Moreo, E. (2007). Performing the queer network. Fans and families at the Eurovision Song Contest. *SQS–Suomen Queer-Tutkimuksen Seuran Lehti*, *2*, 12–24.

Tabberer, J. (2021, June 29). *Eurovision winners Måneskin kiss on stage in Poland in protest of homophobia*. Attitude. Retrieved July 7, 2021, from, http://attitude.co.uk/article/eurovision-winners-maneskin-kiss-on-stage-in-Poland-in-protest-of-homophobia/25269/

Taylor, Y., Falconer, E., & Snowdon, R. (2014). Queer youth, Facebook and faith: Facebook methodologies and online identities. *New Media & Society*, *16*(7), 1138–1153. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814544000

Truong, J. (2018a). Attending to others: How digital technologies direct young people's nightlife. *Geographica Helvetica*, *73*(2), 193–201. https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-73-193-2018

Truong, J. (2018b). Collapsing contexts: Social networking technologies in young people's nightlife. *Children's Geographies*, *16*(3), 266–278. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2018.1458214

Vanderbeck, R. M. (2005). Masculinities and Fieldwork: Widening the discussion. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *12*(4), 387–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690500356537

Waitt, G., & Gorman-Murray, A. (2008). Camp in the Country: Re-negotiating Sexuality and Gender Through a Rural Lesbian and Gay Festival. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *6*(3), 185–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766820802647616

Walker, S. (2019, November 27). Hungary pulls out of Eurovision amid rise in anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/nov/27/Hungary-pulls-out-of-eurovision-amid-rise-in-anti-lgbt-rhetoric

Warner, M. (2002). Publics and Counterpublics. *Public Culture*, *14*(1), 49–90. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-49

Weiner, J. J., & Young, D. (2011). Queer Bonds. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *17*(2), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-1163382

Wellings, B., Jay, Z., & Strong, C. (2019). 'Making Your Mind Up': Britain, Europe and Eurovision Scepticism. In J. Kalman, B. Wellings, & K. Jacotine (Eds.), *Eurovisions: Identity and the International Politics of the Eurovision Song Contest since 1956* (pp. 47–72). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-9427-0

Wilkinson, C. (2016). 'Babe, I like your lipstick': Rethinking researcher personality and appearance. *Children's Geographies*, *14*(1), 115–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2015.1039370

Zebracki, M., & Luger, J. (2019). Digital geographies of public art: New global politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, *43*(5), 890–909. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518791734