

The 'Other Side': Exploring the Geographies of Short Form Video Platforms and Spatially Produced Violence Using the Case of Queer British South Asians

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Since 2019, short form video platforms (SFVPs) have rapidly become one of the most popular forms of social media, especially among young people. Queer people increasingly turn to such platforms for identity formation, to find community, and for knowledge sharing. Short Form Video Platforms are also characterised by an extraordinary amount of hatred, and I attempt to understand hate and violence on SFVPs from a geographical perspective. To achieve this, I interviewed 11 queer British South Asians (QBSAs), a community which lies at the intersection of marginalised and, for some, conflicting identities, to find how they understood the geographies of SFVPs, and how their experiences of violence on these platforms connect to these geographies.

I structure the geographies of SFVPs using the concept of a 'side', an instance of platform vernacular borrowed from TikTok, and advance it by considering how it can also be defined by political interest, not just topic and identity. I encountered a divergence between user definitions of a side and technical realities of a side in terms of political interest, which I argue is key to the production of violence on SFVPs. I also find that there are structures of violence inherent in the geographies and algorithms of SFVPs, which sustain and are sustained by individual instances of violence, usually in the form of hate comments or hateful videos.

Comment from Gabi Froden, the Illustrator:



Learning about the absolute indifference of algorithms and how this can lead to violence and the reduction of safe spaces made me think of growing weeds. Gnarly, mean, and impossible to get rid of. It made me furious that spaces where people in need of community congregate to talk about their shared interests could so easily be infected.